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ASER Survey 2020

Why in News

Recently, the **Annual State of Education Report (ASER)** survey has been released which provides a glimpse into the **levels of learning loss that students in rural India are suffering**, with varying levels of access to technology, school and family resources resulting in a **digital divide** in education.

This year, in the wake of the **pandemic**, the survey was **conducted via phone calls**, reaching 52,227 rural households with school-age children in 30 States and Union Territories (UTs).

Annual Status of Education Report

- It is a **nationwide survey of rural education and learning outcomes** in terms of **reading and arithmetic skills** that has been conducted by the **NGO Pratham** for the last 15 years.
- It uses **Census 2011** as the sampling frame and continues to be **an important national source of information about children's foundational skills** across the country.
- **ASER 2018** surveyed children in the age group of 3 to 16 years and included almost all rural districts in India and generated estimates of foundational reading and arithmetic abilities of children in the age group 5 to 16 years.
- **ASER 2019** reported on the pre-schooling or schooling status of children in the age group 4 to 8 years in 26 rural districts, focused on the “early years” and laid emphasis on “developing problem-solving faculties and building a memory of children, and not content knowledge”.
- **ASER 2020** is the **first ever phone-based ASER** survey and it was conducted in **September 2020**, the sixth month of national school closures.

Key Points



- **Enrollments:**

- **5.5%** of rural children are **not currently enrolled for the 2020** school year, up from 4% in 2018.
 - This **difference is the sharpest among the youngest children** (6 to 10) where 5.3% of rural children had not yet enrolled in school in 2020, in comparison to just 1.8% in 2018.
 - Due to the **disruptions caused by the pandemic, families are waiting for the physical opening of schools** to enrol their youngest children, with about 10% of six-year-olds not in school.
- **Among 15-16 year-olds**, however, **enrollment levels are slightly higher** than in 2018.
- The **proportion of boys** enrolled in government schools **has risen** from 62.8% in 2018 to 66.4% in 2020, while **for girls, that number has gone up** from 70% to 73% in the corresponding period.
- Patterns show a **slight shift toward government schools**, with private schools seeing a drop in enrolment in all age groups.
- The **Centre has now permitted States to start reopening schools** if they can follow Covid-19 safety protocols but the majority of the country's 25 crore students are still at home.

- **Availability of Smartphones:**

- Among enrolled children, **61.8% live in families that own at least one smartphone** which was merely 36.5% in 2018.
 - About **11% of families bought a new phone** after the **lockdown**, of which 80% were smartphones.
- **WhatsApp is by far the most popular mode of transmitting learning materials** to students, with 75% of students receiving input via this app.

- **Availability of Learning Material:**
 - **Overall more than 80%** of children said they **had textbooks for their current grade**.
This proportion was **higher among students enrolled in government schools** (84.1%) than in private ones (72.2%).
 - In Bihar, less than 8% got such materials from their schools, along with 20% in West Bengal, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
 - More than 80% of rural children in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala and Gujarat received such input.
- **Learning Activities:**
 - **Most children (70.2%) did some form of a learning activity** through material shared by tutors or family members themselves, with or without regular input.
 - 11% had access to live online classes, and 21% had videos or recorded classes, with much higher levels in private schools.
 - About 60% studied from their textbooks and 20% watched classes broadcast on TV.

Suggestions

- **Fluid Situation:** When schools reopen, it will be important to continue to **monitor who goes back to school** as well as to understand **whether there is learning loss** as compared to previous years.
- **Building on and Strengthening Family Support:** Parents' increasing levels of education can be integrated into planning for learning improvement, as advocated by **National Education Policy, 2020**. **Reaching parents at the right level** is essential to understand how they can help their children and **older siblings also play an important role**.
- **Hybrid Learning:** As children do a variety of different activities at home, effective ways of hybrid learning need to be developed which **combine traditional teaching-learning with newer ways of "reaching-learning"**.
- **Assessment of Digital Modes and Content:** In order to **improve digital content and delivery** for the future, an **in-depth assessment** of what works, how well it works, who it reaches, and who it excludes is **needed**.
- **Mediating the Digital Divide:** Children from families who had **low education** and also **did not have resources** like smartphones had **less access to learning opportunities**. However, even among such households, there is evidence of effort with family members trying to help and schools trying to reach them. These children **will need even more help than others when schools reopen**.

Way Forward

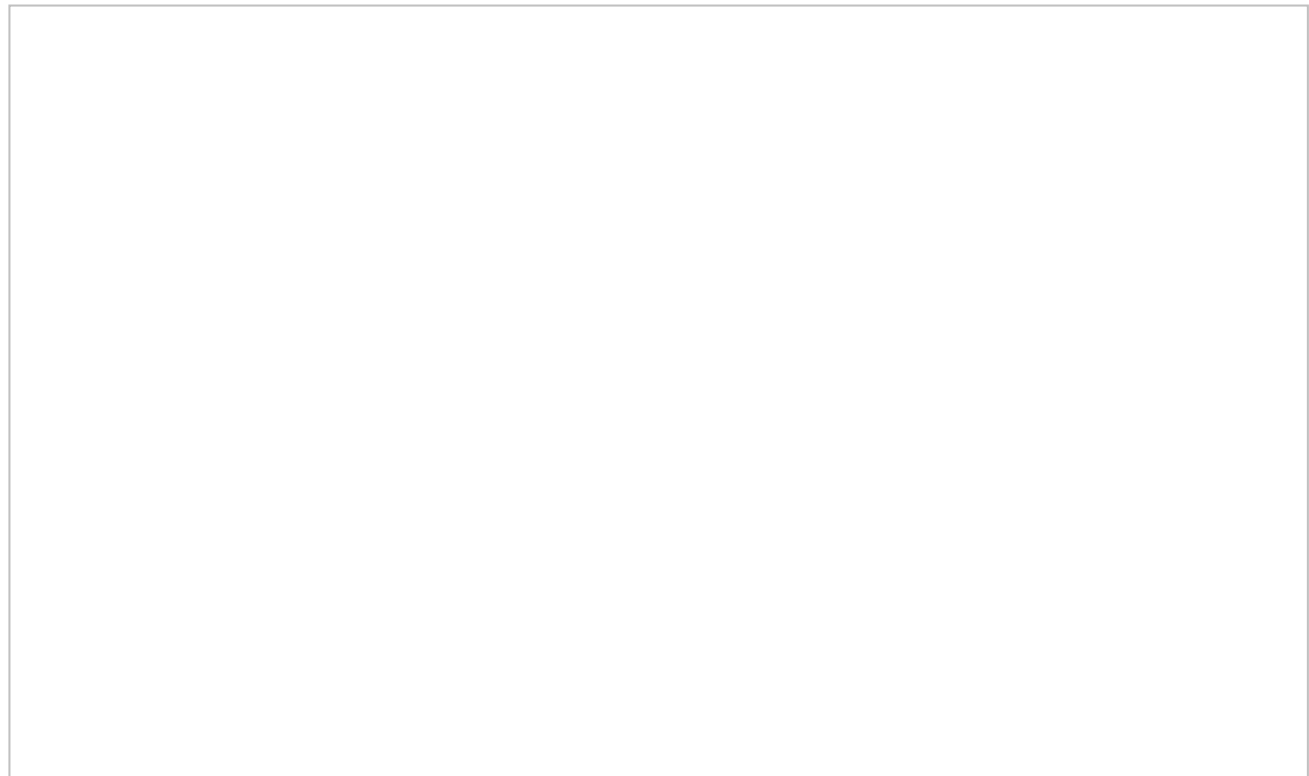
- Covid-19 has left the nation with deep economic distress and uncertainty over school-reopenings and thrown open new challenges in every sector.
- The nationally representative sample highlighted the role played by the families where everyone in the family supported children regardless of their education levels.
- This strength needs to be leveraged by reaching out to more students and reducing the distance between schools and homes.

Source: TH

India in Support of France

Why in News

Recently, **India came out in support of France's President** who has been criticised by Pakistan and Turkey for strongly defending the French people's right to freedom of expression.



Key Points

- **Background:**

- Recently, a French schoolteacher was murdered for showing caricatures of the Prophet to his students.
- Condemning the murder, French President defended the **freedom of expression and secular values**.
- In response, Turkey and Pakistan accused French President of running an anti-Islamic agenda and provoking Muslims.

Iran and Saudi Arabia too condemned the cartoon. There was a call in the entire muslim world to boycott French products.

- **India's Support to France:**

- **India condemned the criticism of Turkey and Pakistan** on French President, by calling the criticism in violation of the **most basic standards of international discourse**.

India also condemned the murder of schoolteacher as brutal terrorist attack.

- While France has seen repeated violent incidents around caricatures and cartoons that are deemed offensive, **it is unusual for India to wade into a controversy over religion in another country**.

In 2015, after the attack on Charlie Hebdo journalists and cartoonists, India condemned the incident by calling that India was on the side of those who condemn this barbaric incident.

- India's support for French President could have been influenced by the fact that the charge against the French President has been led by **Turkey and Pakistan, two countries that have repeatedly attacked India over Jammu and Kashmir and alleged human rights violations**.

- **India-France Ties:**

- **Strategic:** India has close strategic ties with France, especially on issues of mutual interest from **counter-terrorism to defence, and nuclear to space**.
 - **Terror:** France backed the India's proposal for a global conference on terrorism. Both the countries also support organising a new "**No Money for Terror**" - an International Conference on Fighting Terrorist Financing.

Two countries agreed to enhance their operational cooperation and launch fresh efforts to fight radicalisation, especially **Online Radicalisation**.
 - **Defence:** Both countries have a **defence dialogue** at the Ministerial level.
 1. The three services have regular defence exercises; viz.
 1. **Exercise Shakti** (Army)
 2. **Exercise Varuna** (Navy)
 3. **Exercise Garuda** (Air Force)
 2. Recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has **received its first batch (5 out of 36) of French Rafale aviation** combat aircraft at Ambala Air base (Haryana).
 - **Space:** Both have decided to deepen space cooperation to meet new challenges together, whether it concerns planetary exploration or human spaceflight.
 1. France has agreed to be part of India's Venus mission, scheduled for 2025.
 2. ISRO's Venus instrument, **VIRAL (Venus Infrared Atmospheric Gases Linker)** has been co-developed by Russian and French agencies.
- **Multilateral Platform:** France has been **extremely supportive of India at the UN Security Council** on Kashmir and Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, among other issues.

The **Prime Minister of India was a special invitee at the 45th G-7 Summit in Biarritz, France** where India was one of the "**Goodwill**" partners.
- **Climate:** The two countries have a close cooperation on climate change, and have formed the **International Solar Alliance**.

Way Forward

- India's relations with France is built on a foundation of shared democratic values and are informed by a commonality of interest in issues such as sustainable development and climate change.

- France also opens the pathway for deeper engagement with Europe on global issues, especially after uncertainty in the region due to **Brexit**.
- The new partnerships with France, Germany and other like-minded countries like Japan would hopefully turn out to be far more consequential for India's influence on the global stage.

Source: IE

Second Meeting of India-Central Asia Dialogue

Why in News

Recently, India virtually hosted the second meeting of the **India-Central Asia Dialogue**.

The **first meeting of the dialogue** was held in Samarkand, the Republic of Uzbekistan in January 2019.

Key Points

- **Combat Terrorism:** All the nations strongly **condemned terrorism and reaffirmed their determination to combat** it by destroying terrorist safe-havens, networks, infrastructure and funding channels.
They also underlined the need for **every country to ensure that their territory is not used to launch terrorist attacks** against other countries.
- **Afghan Peace Process:** All countries called for the **settlement of the Afghan conflict** on the basis of Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process.
- **Infrastructure:** They appreciated **India's efforts to modernise the infrastructure of the Chabahar port in Iran**, which could become an important link in trade and transport communications between the markets of Central and South Asia.

- **Initiatives Announced by India:**

- An additional **USD 1 billion Line of Credit by India** for the Central Asian countries.

It is expected that the money will be **spent on major infrastructural and connectivity projects.**

- **Grant financing for high impact community development projects** in the countries.
- **Establishment of working groups by India Central Asia Business Council** comprising the key chambers of all participating countries.
 - The council was launched by the Government of India along with the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry** (FICCI) in February 2020.
 - It aims to promote business in the region and to collaborate and provide an industry view to the governments of the six countries.

Line of Credit

- It is a **credit facility** extended by a bank or any other financial institution to a government, business or an individual customer, that **enables the customer to draw the maximum loan amount.**
- The borrower **can access funds from the line of credit at any time as long as they do not exceed the maximum amount** (or credit limit) set in the agreement and meet any other requirements such as making timely minimum payments.

India-Central Asia Dialogue

- It is a **ministerial-level dialogue** between **India** and the **Central Asian** countries namely **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.**

All five nations became independent states after the **collapse of the USSR in 1991, post-Cold war.**

- All the countries participating in the dialogue, **except for Turkmenistan**, are also members of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.**
- The dialogue focuses on a number of issues including ways to **improve connectivity and stabilise war-ravaged Afghanistan.**
- In the first dialogue, **India proposed** setting up of '**India-Central Asia Development Group**' to take forward development partnership between India and Central Asian countries.

The group will enable India to **expand its footprints in the resource-rich region** amid an ongoing **standoff with China** and to **fight terror** effectively, including in Afghanistan.



Source: TH

Amendment Related to Land in Jammu and Kashmir

Why in News

Recently, the Centre notified '**Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of Central Laws) Third Order, 2020**', which states that **any Indian citizen can now buy land in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)** without being a domicile.

□

Key Points

- The introduction of the UT of J&K Reorganisation (Adaptation of Central Laws) Third Order, 2020 has resulted in the **repeal of at least 11 land laws in J&K**, including the J&K Big Landed Estates Abolition Act that had resulted in famous 'Land to tiller' rights.

- **Features of Latest Order:**

- **No domicile or permanent resident certificate is required to purchase non-agricultural land** in the UT.
 - **People as well as investors** outside J&K can now purchase land in the UT, ending the exclusive rights of locals over the land granted under Article 370 (now abrogated).
 - The Centre has been arguing that Article 370 hampered development in the U.T. as investors were unable to purchase land prior to 5th August 2019.
- **Amended the Jammu & Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996**, under which only agriculturists of J&K can purchase agricultural land.

However, **it doesn't bar the agricultural land to be used for non-agricultural purposes**. A District Collector can allow the agricultural land to be used for non-agricultural purposes.
- The Centre also notified the **Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016**, which paves the way for the acquisition of land in J&K by all Indian citizens.

Previously, **Article 35-A** of J&K Constitution placed prohibitions on the sale of land to those who were not state subjects.
- Abolished the **Big Land Estate Abolition Act, 1950** – this provided for redistribution of land which paved the way for rural prosperity and ended landlordism in J&K.
- Empowers the Centre to declare any area in J&K as 'strategic' and intended for the direct operational and training requirement of the **armed forces**.

However, this can be only done by an **army officer of or above the rank of a corps commander**.
- **Spouses** of a J&K domicile shall also be **deemed as a domicile**.
 - Earlier, spouses of domiciles were not considered domiciles.
 - Children of central government officials posted for over ten years in J&K will also continue to be considered domiciles.

- **Issues Involved:**

- For more than two years now, J&K has been without an elected government. All the changes being introduced in the UT have been steamrolled by the Centre rather than being legislated by elected representatives of the people.
- This has created suspicions in the J&K that the Centre is gradually disempowering the local population and consolidating control through executive power.

Land Reforms in Kashmir

- The Kashmir Valley had a history of cruel exploitation of tillers through the periods of Afghan, Sikh and Dogra rule.

- The Sheikh Abdullah's government brought the **Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, in 1950**, through a slogan **land to the tiller**.
 - The Act **placed a ceiling on land ownership** at 186 kanals (about 22 acres).
 - The rest of the **land of a landlord was redistributed** among share-croppers and landless labourers, without any compensation to the landlord.
- This led to most **radical land reform anywhere in the world outside the Communist bloc**. It brought a **social transformation** that has few parallels. It **ended landlordism in J&K and paved the way for rural prosperity**.
- This land reform was so popular in Kashmir that it continued to be pushed for the next quarter-century. The ceiling was gradually decreased until the last of the reform Acts in 1975.

Source: TH

Dashboard for Monitoring Air Quality

Why in News

CarbonCopy and Respirer Living Sciences, two environmental organisations, have released a **dashboard** which presents a **comparative picture of particulate matter (PM) for 122 Indian cities** since 2016.

- The dashboard establishes a **three-year rolling average trend for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ levels** across the cities from **2016 to 2018**.
Recently, the **State of Global Air 2020** revealed that **India had faced the highest exposure to toxic air** in the world last year.
- 122 cities are referred to as **non-attainment cities** under the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**.

Particulate Matter

- Also called **particle pollution**, it is a term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air.
- **It includes:**
 - **PM₁₀**: inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller; and
 - **PM_{2.5}**: fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.

- **Sources of PM:** Some are emitted directly from a source, such as **construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, smokestacks or fires.**

Most particles form in the atmosphere as a result of **complex reactions of chemicals** such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, which are pollutants emitted from power plants, industries and automobiles.

- **Harmful Effects:** Small particles less than 10 micrometers in diameter pose the greatest problems, because they can get deep into the lungs, and some may even get into the bloodstream. Particle pollution exposure has been **linked to a variety of problems**, including irregular heartbeat, aggravated asthma, decreased lung function and increased respiratory symptoms, such as irritation of the airways, coughing or difficulty breathing.

National Clean Air Programme

The Centre had launched the National Clean Air Programme in 2019 to **address air pollution in 122 cities.** These cities are referred to as **non-attainment cities** as they **did not meet the national ambient air quality standards** for the period of 2011-15 under the **National Air Quality Monitoring Programme.**

Key Points

- **About the Dashboard:**

It is a **National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP) based dashboard**, built on data from the **Central Pollution Control Board's National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring (NAAQM) Network** which was started in 1984-85 and covers 344 cities/towns in 29 states and 6 UTs.

- Under the NAMP, each station records about 104 observations a year covering **four pollutants**– Sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), suspended particulate matter (SPM), and respirable suspended particulate matter (RSPM).
- **State pollution control boards** and the **National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI)**, Nagpur **carry out the monitoring**, and the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** oversees the operation under the NCAP.

- **Other Monitoring Systems:**
 - **SAFAR:** System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research, known as "SAFAR", for **greater metropolitan cities of India** to provide location specific information on air quality in near real time. It was introduced by the **Ministry of Earth Science**.
 - **AQI:** Air Quality Index (AQI) is a tool for **effective communication of air quality status to people** in terms, which are easy to understand. There are **six AQI categories**, namely Good, Satisfactory, Moderately polluted, Poor, Very Poor, and Severe. AQ sub-index has been evolved for **eight pollutants** (PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO₂, SO₂, CO, O₃, NH₃, and Pb) for which short-term (upto 24-hours) National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed.
 - **Graded Response Action Plan for Delhi and NCR** has been prepared for implementation under different AQI categories.
- **Significance:**
 - A majority of health models which establish the relationship between air pollution and public health are based on western models due to a lack of health data available in Indian context.
 - When this data can be made available, it will give a true sense of the **burden of respiratory diseases in the country by geographical distribution**.
- **Performance on PM 2.5 level:** A total of **59 of 122 cities** had PM_{2.5} data available.
 - **Noida ranked the worst** with 119, followed by Agra, Delhi, Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Muzzaffarpur, Kanpur, Chandigarh, Howrah and Kolkata.
- **Performance on PM 10 level: Delhi ranked as the most polluted state** on an average of 3 years' PM₁₀ monitoring data, followed by **Jharkhand** and **Uttar Pradesh**.
 - **Maharashtra**, which has the **maximum number of non-attainment cities** in the NCAP, has seen air quality worsen since 2016. State capital, Mumbai, for instance witnessed a year-on-year increase in PM₁₀ levels from 119 in 2016, to 151 in 2017 and 165 in 2018.
 - **Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu** has recorded **progressive and substantial improvements in PM₁₀ levels** between 2016 and 2018 - by 24% in 2017, in comparison to 2016 levels, and another 23% in 2018 in comparison to the previous year.

Way Forward

The dashboard can help identify the need for more monitoring stations and address data gaps. At a time when the Central government aspires to bring out a new law to address air pollution in the National Capital Region, it is important to evaluate the existing regulations as the first step towards effective crisis management.

Earth Observation Satellite EOS-01: ISRO

Why in News

India would launch its latest **earth observation satellite EOS-01** and **nine international customer satellites** from **Satish Dhawan Space Centre** in Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota.

The **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle** (PSLV-C49) of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** will launch these ten satellites on 7th November 2020. It will be **PSLV's 51st Mission**.

Key Points

- **EOS-01:** It is an **earth observation satellite** and is **intended for applications** in agriculture, forestry and disaster management support.
 - Earth observation satellites are the satellites **equipped with remote sensing technology**. Earth observation is the gathering of information about Earth's physical, chemical and biological systems.
 - Many earth observation satellites have been employed on **sun-synchronous orbit**.
 - **Other earth observation satellites** launched by ISRO include RESOURCESAT- 2, 2A, CARTOSAT-1, 2, 2A, 2B, RISAT-1 and 2, OCEANSAT-2, Megha-Tropiques, SARAL and SCATSAT-1, INSAT-3DR, 3D, etc.

- **Nine Customer Satellites:** These are being launched **as part of a commercial agreement with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**, Department of Space.
 - NSIL, incorporated in 2019 (under the Companies Act, 2013), is a **wholly owned Government of India company**, under the administrative control of Department of Space (DOS).
 - NSIL is the **commercial arm of ISRO** with the primary responsibility of enabling Indian industries to take up high technology space related activities and is also responsible for promotion and commercial exploitation of the products and services emanating from the Indian space programme.
 - The **major business areas** of the NSIL include:
 - **Production** of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)** through industry.
 - Production and **marketing of space-based services**, including launch services and space-based applications like transponder leasing, remote sensing and mission support services.
 - **Building of Satellites** (both Communication and Earth Observation) as per user requirements.
 - **Transfer of technology** developed by ISRO centres/ units and constituent institutions of Dept. of Space.
 - **Marketing spin off technologies** and products/ services emanating out of ISRO activities.
 - **Consultancy** services.
 - Recently, the Government of India has created the **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACE)**, an independent nodal agency under the Department of Space, to provide a boost to the private sector participating in space-related activities or using India's space resources.

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle

- India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is the **third generation** launch vehicle.
- PSLV is the **first launch vehicle which is equipped with liquid stages**.
- PSLV's first successful launch was in October 1994. PSLV was used for **two of the most important missions**. These are **Chandrayaan-1** in 2008 and **Mars Orbiter Spacecraft** in 2013.

- **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mark II** and **GSLV MkIII** are other two launch vehicles.
 - **GSLV Mk II** is the **largest launch vehicle developed by India**, which is currently in operation. This **fourth generation launch vehicle** is a three stage vehicle with four liquid strap-ons. The indigenously developed **cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS)**, which is flight proven, forms the third stage of GSLV Mk II.
 - **GSLV MkIII**, chosen to launch Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft, is a **three-stage heavy lift launch vehicle** developed by ISRO. The vehicle has two solid strap-ons, a core liquid booster and a cryogenic upper stage.

GSLV Mk III is designed to carry a 4 ton class of satellites into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) or about 10 tons to Low Earth Orbit (LEO), which is about twice the capability of the GSLV Mk II.

Source: TH

RBI's Annual Report on State Finances

Why in News

Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released its annual report on state finances.

Key Points

- **Covid-19 Impact:** The double whammy (also termed as **scissor effect**) of the **Covid-19 pandemic** — a **collapse in revenue** and **rise in health-related and other costs** — is likely to have a significant impact on state government finances.
- **Fiscal Deficit:** As most states presented their budgets before the onset of the pandemic, their budget estimates of deficits are **unlikely to capture the true picture of the ongoing fiscal year (2020-21)**.
 - The average value of **gross fiscal deficit to GSDP** (Gross State Domestic Product) for the states which presented their budget before the outbreak of the pandemic is 2.4%, while the average for the remaining states that made post-outbreak budget presentations is 4.6%.
 - This indicates that the **gross fiscal deficit of states is going to double for the 2020-21 period**.
 - **Fiscal Deficit** is the difference between the total income of the government and its total expenditure.

- **Capital Spending:** Capital spending by the states is going to be **lower than budgeted levels** this year. Also, States may treat **capital expenditure as a residual element**.
 - Lower spending is a result of states **not being able to start a lot of projects** due to the lockdown in the first quarter and monsoon in the second quarter.
 - Capital expenditure undertaken by states is generally treated as a residual and is **prone to adjustment, conditional upon revenue generation**.
 - Capital expenditure is the **money spent on the acquisition of assets like land, buildings, machinery, equipment**, as well as **investment in shares**.
 - It accounts for more than 60% of general government (centre + states) capital expenditure.
- **Tax Buoyancy:** The implied tax buoyancy for 2020-21 is higher than budgeted on the basis of 2019-20 revised estimates.
 - Tax buoyancy is the **ratio of change in taxes and GSDP** (Gross State Domestic Product). **Higher tax buoyancy implies that tax collection would rise at a faster pace for the same rise in incomes**.
- **GST Revenue:** States Goods and Service Tax (SGST), the component of the **GST**, which accrues directly to the states, would suffer the biggest hit.
 - SGST collections fell by 47.2% during the April-June 2020-21 quarter.
 - State receipts will also suffer because of a fall in the divisible pool of the Centre's tax revenue.
- **Overall Impact:**
 - **States' indebtedness is set to rise**, and if it is not accompanied by an acceleration in growth, fiscal sustainability will become the casualty, overwhelming the modest gains of the prudence in recent years.
 - Due to a surge in contingent liabilities (guarantees), **state governments may have to put investment projects on hold**.
 - To give a **boost to aggregate demand**, state governments are **reducing various kinds of expenditure**. These include deferment and deduction of salaries and allowances and rationalisation of travel and establishment expenses.

Source: IE

Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana

Why in News

Recently, electric pottery wheels to 100 potter families in Maharashtra were distributed under the **Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana (KSY)** of **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.

Key Points

- **Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana (KSY)** was launched in 2018.
- **Aim:** To strengthen and improve the living of potters in the country by making them self reliant (**Atma Nirbhar**).
- **Features:** Providing potters with modern equipment and training to reconnect them with the society and revive their art.
- **Implementation:** KVIC has created proper marketing channels including tie-up with the Indian Railway for selling the products of potters.
- **Benefits:** Proper training and distribution of advanced equipment under the scheme has **eliminated drudgery** from the process of pottery making and also **resulted in increasing the production by 3-4 times**.

This has led to an **increase in income of potters** manifolds.

- **Other Initiatives for Potters:** The **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** has announced expansion of and doubling of support to potters. This include:
 - Encouraging successful traditional potters to set up units under the **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)** scheme.
PMEGP is a credit-linked subsidy scheme which promotes self-employment through setting up of micro-enterprises.
 - Setting up of **clusters in Terracotta, Red clay pottery**, with new innovative value added products to build pottery to crockery/tile making capabilities under the **SFURTI scheme**.

The **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)** aims to make traditional industries more productive and competitive by organizing the traditional industries and artisans into clusters.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)

- KVIC is a **statutory body** established under the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956**.
- The KVIC is charged with the **planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programmes** for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.

Source: PIB

59th Raising Day of the ITBP

Why in News

The **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** celebrated its 59th Raising Day on 24th October 2020.

Key Points

- Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force (ITBPF) is a **Central Armed Police Force** functioning under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, Government of India.
Other Central Armed Police Forces are: Assam Rifles (AR), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), National Security Guards (NSG) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
- The ITBP was **raised on 24th October, 1962 during the India-China War** and is a border guarding police force specializing in high altitude operations.
 - Presently, ITBP is **deployed on border guarding duties from Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh covering 3488 km of Indo-China Border.**
ITBP Border Out Posts are of the height upto 18,750 feet where the temperature dips down minus 40 degree Celsius.
 - The Force is also deployed for **Anti Naxal operations** and other **internal security duties.**
- ITBP was **initially raised under the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Act, 1949.** However, in 1992, parliament enacted the **ITBPF Act** and the rules were framed in 1994.

Source: PIB
