



News Analysis (26 Feb, 2021)

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New IT Rules 2021

Why in News

Recently, the government has notified **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021**.

- These new rules broadly deal with **social media** and **over-the-top (OTT) platforms**.
- These rules have been framed in exercise of powers under section 87 (2) of the **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000** and in supersession of the earlier **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011**.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Identify 'first originator' of content that authorities consider anti-national
- Appoint grievance officer, resolve complaints in 15 days
- File monthly compliance report on complaints received, action taken

DIGITAL NEWS

- Follow Press Council of India, Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act norms.
- Self-regulatory bodies to oversee adherence to Code of Ethics
- I&B Ministry to form panel, oversight mechanism

OTT PLATFORMS

- Self-classify content into five age-based categories: U (universal), U/A 7+ (years), U/A 13+, U/A 16+, and A.
- Parental locks for any content classified as U/A 13+ or above.
- Age verification mechanism for content classified as 'A' (adult)

Key Points

- **Background:**

- **2018:**

- The **Supreme Court (SC)** had observed that the Government of India may **frame necessary guidelines** to eliminate child pornography, rape and gangrape imageries, videos and sites in content hosting platforms and other applications.

- **2020:**

- An Ad-hoc committee of the Rajya Sabha laid its report after studying **the alarming issue of pornography on social media** and its effect on children and society as a whole and recommended for enabling identification of the first originator of such contents.
 - The government brought **video streaming over-the-top (OTT) platforms** under the ambit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

- **New Guidelines for Social Media/Intermediaries:**
 - **Categories of Social Media Intermediaries:**

Based on the number of users, on the social media platform intermediaries have been divided in two groups:

 - **Social media intermediaries.**
 - **Significant social media intermediaries.**
 - **Due Diligence to be Followed by Intermediaries:**
 - In case, due diligence is not followed by the intermediary, **safe harbour provisions** will not apply to them.
 - The safe harbour provisions have been defined under **Section 79 of the IT Act**, and protect social media intermediaries by giving them immunity from legal prosecution for any content posted on their platforms.
 - **Grievance Redressal Mechanism is Mandatory:**
 - Intermediaries shall **appoint a Grievance Officer** to deal with complaints and share the name and contact details of such officers.
 - Grievance Officer shall acknowledge the complaint within **twenty four hours and resolve it within fifteen days from its receipt.**
 - **Ensuring Online Safety and Dignity of Users:**
 - Intermediaries shall **remove or disable access within 24 hours of receipt of complaints** of contents that exposes the private areas of individuals, show such individuals in full or partial nudity or in sexual act or is in the nature of impersonation including morphed images etc.
 - Such a complaint can be **filed either by the individual or by any other person on his/her behalf.**
 - **Additional Due Diligence for the Significant Social Media Intermediaries:**
 - **Appointments:** Need to appoint **Chief Compliance Officer**, a **Nodal Contact Person** and a **Resident Grievance Officer**, all of whom should be **resident in India.**
 - **Compliance Report:** Need to publish a **monthly compliance report mentioning the details of complaints received and action taken** on the complaints as well as details of contents removed proactively.
 - **Enabling Identity of the Originator:**
 - Significant social media intermediaries providing services primarily in the nature of messaging shall **enable identification of the first originator of the information.**
 - Required only for the purposes of prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of an offence related to **sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, or public order,**

Or of incitement to an offence relating to the above or in relation with rape, sexually explicit material or child sexual abuse material punishable with **imprisonment for a term of not less than five years.**

- **Removal of Unlawful Information:**

An intermediary upon receiving actual knowledge in the form of an **order by a court or being notified by the Appropriate Govt. or its agencies** through authorized officer **should not host or publish any information which is prohibited under any law** in relation to the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, public order, friendly relations with foreign countries etc.

- **Rules for News Publishers and OTT Platforms and Digital Media:**
 - **For OTT:**
 - **Self-Classification of Content:**

The OTT platforms, called as the publishers of online curated content in the rules, would self-classify the content into five age based **categories- U (Universal), U/A 7+, U/A 13+, U/A 16+, and A (Adult).**
 - **Parental Lock:**

Platforms would be required to implement parental locks for content classified as U/A 13+ or higher, and reliable age verification mechanisms for content classified as “A”.
 - **Display Rating:**

Shall prominently display the classification rating specific to each content or programme together with a content descriptor informing the user about the nature of the content, and advising on viewer description (if applicable) at the beginning of every programme enabling the user to make an informed decision, prior to watching the programme.
 - **For Publishers of News on Digital Media :**

They would be required to observe Norms of **Journalistic Conduct of the Press Council of India** and the Programme Code under the **Cable Television Networks Regulation Act 1995** thereby providing a level playing field between the offline (Print, TV) and digital media.
 - **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:**

A three-level grievance redressal mechanism has been established under the rules with different levels of self-regulation.

 - **Level-I:** Self-regulation by the publishers;
 - **Level-II:** Self-regulation by the self-regulating bodies of the publishers;
 - **Level-III:** Oversight mechanism.
 - **Self-regulation by the Publisher:**
 - Publisher shall appoint a Grievance Redressal Officer based in India who shall be responsible for the redressal of grievances received by it.
 - The officer shall take decision on every grievance received by **it within 15 days.**
 - **Self-Regulatory Body:**
 - There may be one or more self-regulatory bodies of publishers.
 - Such a body shall be headed by a retired judge of the SC, a High Court or independent eminent person and have not more than six members.
 - Such a body will have to register with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
 - This body will **oversee the adherence by the publisher to the Code of Ethics and address grievances** that have not been resolved by the publisher within 15 days.

- **Oversight Mechanism:**
 - **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** shall formulate an oversight mechanism.
 - It shall publish a charter for self-regulating bodies, including Codes of Practices. It shall establish an Inter-Departmental Committee for hearing grievances.

Source: PIB

President's Rule in Puducherry

Why in News

President's Rule has been imposed in the Union Territory of Puducherry, on the recommendation of the Lieutenant Governor, after the established government lost power during **a vote of confidence**.

The President was satisfied that a situation had arisen in which the administration of the Union Territory of Puducherry could not carry on in accordance with the provisions of the **Government of Union Territories Act, 1963**.

The **Government of Union Territories Act, 1963** enacted by the Parliament in accordance with the **provisions of article 239A**.

Key Points

- **Administration of Union Territories:**
 - **Article 239 to 242 under Part VIII** of the Indian Constitution deals with the administration of **Union Territories**.
 - Every union territory is **administered by the President acting through an administrator** appointed by him.
 - An **administrator** of a union territory is an agent of the President and not head of state like a governor.
 - The President can specify the designation of an administrator; it may be **Lieutenant Governor** or Chief Commissioner or Administrator.
 - The **Union Territories of Puducherry (in 1963), Delhi (in 1992) and Jammu and Kashmir (in 2019) are provided with a legislative assembly** and a council of ministers headed by a chief minister.
 - But, the establishment of such institutions in the union territories **does not diminish the supreme control of the President** and Parliament over them.
 - The **Parliament can make laws on any subject of the three lists** (including the State List) for the union territories.

- **Provision in Case of Failure of Constitutional Machinery (as per the 1963 Act):**
 - If the **President, on receipt of a report from the Administrator** of (the Union territory) **or otherwise**, is satisfied,—
 - that a situation has arisen in which the **administration of the Union territory cannot be carried on** in accordance with the provisions of this Act, or
 - that **for the proper administration of the Union territory** it is necessary or expedient so to do,
 - The President may, **by order, suspend the operation of all or any of the provisions of this Act** for such period as he thinks fit, and
Make such incidental and consequential provisions as may appear to him to be necessary or expedient for administering the Union territory **in accordance with the provisions of Article 239.**

- **President's Rule in a State:**

- **Meaning:**

- President's Rule **implies the suspension of a state government and the imposition of direct rule of the Centre.**
- It is also known as '**State Emergency**' or '**Constitutional Emergency**'.

- **Constitutional Provisions:**

- The President's Rule is **imposed through the invocation of Article 356 of the Constitution** by the President on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers.
- Under Article 356, President's Rule is imposed if the President, upon receipt of the report from the Governor of the State or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

- **Parliamentary Approval and Duration:**

- A proclamation imposing President's Rule **must be approved by both the Houses of Parliament within two months** from the date of its issue.
- The approval **takes place through simple majority** in either House, that is, a majority of the members of the House present and voting.
- **Initially valid for six months**, the President's Rule **can be extended for a maximum period of three years** with the approval of the Parliament, every six months.

- **Consequences of President's Rule:**

- The state governor, on behalf of the President, carries on the state administration with the help of the chief secretary of the state or the advisors appointed by the President.
- The President can declare that the powers of the state legislature are to be exercised by the Parliament.
- The President either suspends or dissolves the state legislative assembly.

- **Revocation:**

- A proclamation of President's Rule **may be revoked by the President at any time** by a subsequent proclamation. Such a proclamation **does not require parliamentary approval.**
- This happens, in case, the leader of a party produces letters of support from a majority of members of the Assembly, and stakes his claim to form a government.

Recommendations/Judgments on President's Rule

- **The Administrative Reforms Commission (1968)** recommended that the report of the governor regarding the President's rule has to be objective and also the governor should exercise his own judgment in this regard.

- The **Rajamannar Committee (1971)** recommended the deletion of Articles 356 and 357 from the Constitution of India. The necessary provisions for safeguards against arbitrary action of the ruling party at the Centre under Article 356 should be incorporated in the Constitution.
- **The Sarkaria Commission (1988)** recommended that Article 356 should be used in very rare cases when it becomes unavoidable to restore the breakdown of constitutional machinery in the State.
- **S.R. Bommai Judgment (1994).**
 - The Supreme Court enlisted the situations where the exercise of power under Article 356 could be proper.
 - One such situation is that of ‘Hung Assembly’, i.e. where after general elections to the assembly, no party secures a majority.
- **Justice V.Chelliah Commission (2002)** recommended that Article 356 must be used sparingly and only as a remedy of the last resort after exhausting all actions under Articles 256, 257 and 355.
- The **Punchhi commission (2007)** recommended that these Articles 355 & 356 be amended. It sought to protect the interests of the States by trying to curb their misuse by the Centre.

Source: TH

FATF Retains Pakistan In Grey List

Why in News

The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** has decided to retain Pakistan on the “greylist” till the next review of its performance on its recommendations during the June Plenary session.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - During the **October-2020 Plenary**, **due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Pakistan was given an extension** for full compliance with the 27-point action plan till February 2021.
It had then not fully complied with 6 of the 27 directives.
 - The **FATF had issued the 27-point action plan** after placing **Pakistan on the ‘Grey List’ in June 2018**. The action plan pertains to curbing **money laundering** and terror financing.

- **About:**
 - FATF **acknowledged Pakistan’s significant progress in combating terrorism**, however it was **still to fully comply with three of the 27-point action plan**.
 - The **three points** pertain to **effective steps in terms of financial sanctions and penalties** against the terror funding infrastructure and the entities involved.
 - After assessing the measures taken during the June 2021 session, the FATF would verify the implementation and test the sustainability of reforms undertaken by Pakistan, to review its inclusion or exclusion on the grey list.
- **Significance:**
 - In Pakistan's case, the **FATF has taken cognisance of the inaction against several banned organisations** involved in raising funds for terror activities and those linked to global terrorists like Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar and **Lashkar-e-Taiba’s** Hafiz Saeed and its operations chief Zaki-Ur Rahman Lakhvi.
 - On several occasions, India has also raised the involvement of elements within Pakistan in a number of terror cases, including the **26/11 Mumbai** and **Pulwama attacks**.
 - Perpetual containment of Pakistan on the grey list of FATF would further pressurise Pakistan to take adequate measures to prevent such terrorist attacks on India from its soil.

Financial Action Task Force

- **About:**
 - It is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 during the **G7 Summit** in Paris.
 - The FATF assesses the strength of a country’s anti-money laundering and anti-terror financing frameworks, however it does not go by individual cases.
- **Objectives:**

To set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- **Headquarters:**

Its Secretariat is located at the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** headquarters in **Paris**.
- **Member Countries:**

The FATF currently has **39 members** including two regional organisations — the European Commission and **Gulf Cooperation Council**. **India** is a member of the FATF.

- **Lists under FATF:**
 - **Grey List:**
 - Countries that are considered **safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering** are put in the FATF grey list.
 - This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.
 - **Black List:**
 - Countries known as **Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist.**
 - These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities.
 - The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.
- **Sessions:** The **FATF Plenary** is the decision making body of the FATF. It meets **three times per year.**

Source:TH

PLI Scheme for IT Hardware and Pharmaceuticals

Why in News

Recently, the Union Cabinet has cleared **Production-Linked incentive (PLI)** schemes for **pharmaceuticals** and **IT hardware**, including laptops, which would cost the government as much as Rs. 22,350 crore.

Earlier, the government had announced the **PLI scheme for medical devices, mobile phones** and specified active pharmaceutical ingredients, with a proposed outlay of Rs. 51,311 crore.

Key Points

PLI Scheme:

- It aims to give companies **incentives on incremental sales** from products manufactured in domestic units.
- It invites foreign companies to set units in India, however, it also **aims to encourage local companies** to set up or expand existing manufacturing units.

HOW DOES THE INCENTIVE WORK

It is a kind of subsidy to the sector

Is a direct	Amount	Is based on
payment from the budget to goods made in India	varies from sector to sector	disadvantage /disability faced by a sector

- **IT Hardware Sector:**

- **About:**

- The scheme, worth Rs. 7350 crore, will **offer 1-4% cash incentives** on net incremental sales (over **base year 2019-20**) for IT products manufactured in India.
 - The **Target Segments** include Laptops, Tablets, All-in-One PCs and Servers.
 - **Duration:** 4 years

- **Benefits:**

- India will be well positioned as a global hub for **Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM)** on account of integration with global value chains, thereby becoming a destination for IT Hardware exports.
 - **Employment Generation** potential of over 1,80,000 (direct and indirect) over 4 years.
 - Provide impetus to **Domestic Value Addition** for IT Hardware which is expected to **rise to 20-25% by 2025**.

- **Pharmaceutical Sector:**

- **About:**

- The **Rs. 6,940-crore PLI scheme implemented in 2020** focuses on the critical bulk drugs, whereas **this scheme is likely to focus on other types of bulk drugs.**
 - It intends to give **incentives between 2020-21 and 2028-29 (9 years).**
 - **Drug manufacturers** applying for the scheme will have to be registered in India and **will be placed into one of three categories** based on their Global Manufacturing Revenue (GMR).

- **Categories of Drugs Targeted by the Scheme:**

- **First Category:**

- It includes biopharmaceuticals, complex generics, patented and **orphan drugs**, often expensive for which India relies a lot on multinational drug makers.

- **Second Category:**

- It comprises **Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)**, Key Starting Materials (KSMs) and Drug Intermediates (DIs).

- **Third Category:**

- It includes other critical repurposed, auto-immune, anti-**cancer**, anti-diabetic, **anti-retroviral**, anti-infective and **cardiovascular** drugs as well as in-vitro diagnostic devices and drugs not manufactured in India.

- **Incentives:**

- **For First and Second Category:**

- 10%** of incremental sales value for the first four year of the scheme, followed by **8%** for the fifth year and **6%** for the sixth year of production under the scheme.

- **For Third Category:**

- 5%** of incremental sales value for the first four years, **4%** for the fifth year and **3%** for the sixth year.

- **Benefits of PLI in Pharmaceuticals:**

- **Reduced Dependency on China:**

- India's capabilities in APIs have reduced over the years, mostly due to **cheaper alternatives from China.**
 - The pharmaceutical industry here is currently dependent on the bordering country for nearly **70% of the bulk drugs it imports.**

- **Enhance Exports:**

- The Indian pharmaceutical industry is the third-largest globally in terms of the volume term of production and is worth **USD 40 billion in value.**
 - The country contributes **3.5% of total drugs and medicines exported globally.**

Source: IE

State of Environment Report 2021: CSE

Why in News

Recently, the **State of Environment Report, 2021** was released by the **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)**.

CSE is a public interest research and advocacy organisation based in New Delhi. It researches into, lobbies for and communicates the urgency of development that is both sustainable and equitable.

Key Points

- **Findings:**
 - **Pandemic Generation:**

India is all set to usher in a ‘**pandemic generation**’, with 375 million children (from newborns to 14-year-olds) likely to **suffer long-lasting impacts**, ranging from being underweight, **stunting** (low height-for-age) and increased child mortality, to **losses in education and work productivity**.
 - **Increased School Dropouts:**

Due to the **Covid-19 pandemic**, over 500 million children were forced out of school globally and India accounted for more than half of them.
 - **Rise in Extreme Poverty:**

Covid-19 has made the world’s poor poorer. Over **115 million additional people** might get pushed into extreme poverty by the pandemic and most of them live in South Asia.
 - **Pollution Levels Worsened:**
 - India’s air, water and land have become more polluted between 2009 and 2018.
 - Of 88 major **industrial clusters** in the country, according to the **Central Pollution Control Board**, 35 showed overall environmental degradation, 33 pointed to worsening air quality, 45 had more polluted water and in 17, land pollution became worse.
 - **Tarapur in Maharashtra** emerged as the **most polluted cluster**.
- **Regarding Sustainable Development Rankings:**
 - **India ranked 117 among 192 nations** in terms of **sustainable development** and was now behind all South Asian nations except Pakistan.
 - **States’ Performance In Sustainable Development Goals:**
 - **Best Performing States:** Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.
 - **Worst Performers:** Bihar, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh.

- **Other Similar Reports:**
 - **UN Report on the Impact of Covid-19 on Children.**
 - **Report on Winter Pollution: CSE.**

Source:TH

Sitanadi-Udanti Tiger Reserve: Chhattisgarh

Why in News

Thousands of **tribals** living in villages located in the **core areas of Sitanadi Udanti Tiger Reserve** are protesting and demanding the recognition of their **Community Forest Resource rights**.

- Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights are given under the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA)**.
- The **tiger reserves** are constituted on a **core/buffer strategy**. The core areas have the legal status of a national park or a sanctuary, whereas the buffer or peripheral areas are a mix of forest and non-forest land, managed as a multiple use area.

Key Points

- **Provisions of the Forest Rights Act (FRA):**

- **About:**

- The Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 recognizes and vest the forest rights and occupation in Forest land in **Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDST)** and **Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD)** who have been residing in such forests for generations.
 - It strengthens the conservation regime of the forests while ensuring livelihood and food security of the FDST and OTFD.
 - The **Gram Sabha is the authority** to initiate the process for determining the nature and extent of Individual Forest Rights (IFR) or Community Forest Rights (CFR) or both that may be given to FDST and OTFD.

- **Individual Rights:** Encompasses Rights of Self-cultivation and Habitation.

- **Community Rights:** Such as Grazing, Fishing and access to Water bodies in forests, Habitat Rights for **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**, right to protect, regenerate or conserve or manage any community forest resource for sustainable use etc.

- **Community Forest Resource Rights:** These are rights of Adivasi and OTFDs over customary common forest land within the traditional or customary boundaries of the village or seasonal use of landscape in the case of pastoral communities.

These **can be recognised over any forest land** including reserved forests, protected forests and protected areas such as **Sanctuaries and National Park.**

- **About Sitanadi-Udanti Tiger Reserve:**

- **Establishment:**

Sitanadi-Udanti Tiger Reserve **came into existence in the year 2008-09**, are two separate reserves (Udanti & Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuaries) combined together.

- **Location:** It is located in the **Gariaband district, Chhattisgarh.**

- **Ecological Diversity:**

- It contains various types of **forest crop** mixed with **Sal forest.**
 - **Asiatic Wild Buffalo** is the key endangered species found in the Core Area.
 - Apart from the tiger, other endangered and rare species are Indian Wolf, **Leopard, Sloth Bear** and Mouse Deer.

- **Rivers:**

- **Sitanadi River** originates in the middle of Sitanadi Wildlife sanctuary.
 - **Udanti River** flows from the west to east covering a major part of the Udanti Wildlife sanctuary.

- **Other Tiger Reserves in Chhattisgarh:**

- **Achanakmar Tiger Reserve.**

- Indravati Tiger Reserve.

National Parks & Sanctuaries of Chhattisgarh



	State Capital
	National Parks
	National Highway
	Sanctuaries
	International Boundary

Source: IE

Airline Mapping of Ocean Floor

Why in News

The **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** is planning to conduct **airline mapping of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep** to get a better picture of the ocean floor.

Lakshadweep Islands are located in the Arabian Sea. These are **coral islands** located off the coast of Kerala. The **Andaman and the Nicobar Islands** lie to the southeast of the Indian mainland in the Bay of Bengal.

Key Points

- **About ICOIS:**
 - INCOIS is an **autonomous organization** under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**.
 - It is located in **Hyderabad** & was established in 1999.
 - It is a unit of the **Earth System Science Organization (ESSO)**, New Delhi. The ESSO operates as an **executive arm of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** for its policies and programmes.
 - **Mandate of INCOIS:** To provide the best possible ocean information and advisory services to society, industry, government agencies and the scientific community through sustained ocean observations and constant improvement through systematic and focused research.
- **Recent Initiative:**
 - The INCOIS is planning to take the help of the **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)** to conduct '**bathymetric**' study of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.
 - **NRSC:** It is one of the primary centres of **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, Department of Space (DOS).
 - **Bathymetry:**
 - It is the study of the "beds" or "floors" of water bodies, including the ocean, rivers, streams, and lakes.
 - The term "bathymetry" originally referred to the ocean's depth relative to sea level, although it has come to mean "submarine topography," or the depths and shapes of underwater terrain.
 - NRSC has already done a similar high resolution topographic **Airborne Laser Terrain Mapping (ALTM)** for entire coastal areas of the country.
 - ALTM is an active remote sensing technology that employs **Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR)** to measure topography at high spatial resolution over large areas.
 - ALTM pulses a laser to measure the range between an airborne platform and the Earth's surface at many thousands of times per second.
 - Using a rotating mirror or other scanning mechanism inside the laser transmitter, the laser pulses can be made to sweep through an angle, tracing out a line or other patterns on the reflecting surface.
 - The scientists are in the **process of integrating the data for a 3D multi-hazard mapping of both the east and west coastline** for a more precise picture of the ocean floor.
- **Significance:**
 - Such a study has become imperative **in view of the recent tsunamis warning**.
 - Recently, at Indonesian coasts, where more than the quake related high waves, **damage was due to landslides that had under the sea beds** causing sudden wave surge leading to much damage without giving sufficient time to alert people.

- **Other Initiatives:**

- It had also **identified ‘gaps’ across the coast of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha** for installing more tide gauges for better monitoring of the sea and more accurate prediction of impending disasters like **cyclones**.
- The INCOIS scientists in association with their counterparts in the **Chennai-based National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)** and an United States independent scientific agency, **Massachusetts-based Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI)**, have been mining the data recorded by a unique **‘Flux Buoy’** retrieved from the Bay of Bengal off the Kolkata coast.

The buoy was dropped off into the sea to monitor the temperatures, pressures, salinity, radiation and geo-chemical changes at various depths in a high resolution scale, compared to other buoys in the seas.

- **Similar Global Initiative:**

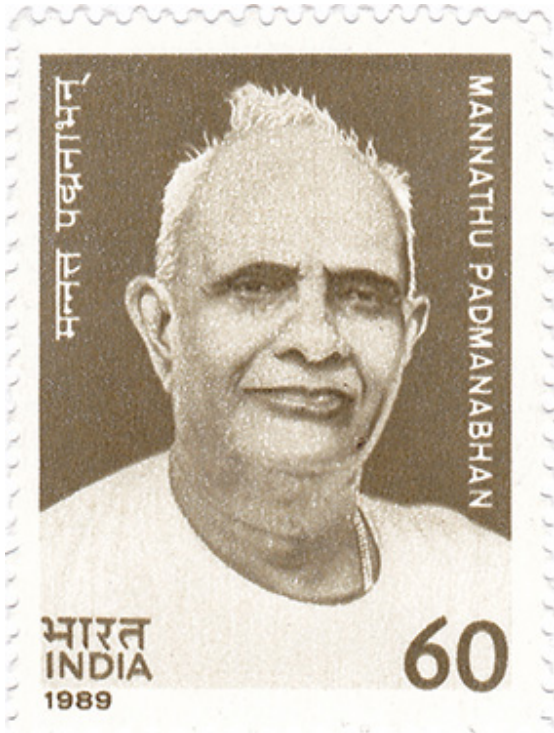
- **Seabed 2030** is a collaborative project between the Nippon Foundation of Japan and the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO).
- The project **aims to bring together all available bathymetric data to produce the definitive map of the world ocean floor by 2030** and make it available to all.

Source: TH

Mannathu Padmanabhan

Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister paid tributes to **Mannathu Padmanabhan** on his Punya Tithi (Death Anniversary).



Key Points

- **Birth:**

He was born on **2nd January 1878** in Perunna, **Kottayam district of Kerala.**

- **About:**

- He was an Indian **social reformer** and **freedom fighter** from the south-western state of Kerala.
- Sardar K M Panicker called him '**Madan Mohan Malaviya**' of Kerala.
- He began his career as a **teacher in 1893** in a Government primary school.
- In **1905** he changed his profession and **started practicing law**, in the Magistrates Courts.

- **Political and Social Contribution:**

- He took part in the **Vaikom (1924)** and **Guruvayoor (1931)** temple-entry Satyagrahas and the anti-untouchability agitations.
 - **Vaikom Satyagraha** was a movement in Travancore (modern-day Kerala) for **temple entry of the depressed classes**. It took place near the Shiva Temple at Vaikom, Kottayam district, Kerala during 1924-25. Vaikom was at that time a part of the princely state of Travancore.
 - **Guruvayur Satyagraha** was a Satyagraha (non-violent protest) to allow entry for untouchables into the **Guruvayur Temple** in present Thrissur district, which was then part of Ponnani Taluk of Malabar district, now part of **Kerala**.
 - He is regarded as the reformer and moral guide of the members of **Nair community**. He inspired the **Nair community** community members to end practicing bad and orthodox customs.
 - He led the Nairs to demand temple entry for all castes and to put an end to **untouchability**.
 - In 1914 he established the **Nair Service Society**.
 - He became a member of the **Indian National Congress in 1946** and took part in the agitation against Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer's administration in Travancore.
 - He was arrested for the **Indian Freedom Movement** on 14 June 1947.
 - In 1949, Padmanabhan became a **member of the Travancore Legislative Assembly**.
 - In 1964 he was instrumental in the formation of **Kerala Congress**, the **first regional party in India**.
- **Awards & Recognition:**
 - He received **Padma Bhushan** in 1966.
 - He was honoured with the title **Bharata Kesari** by the President of India.
 - **Death:**
 - He died on **25th February 1970** at the age of 92.
 - **Mannam memorial (or Samādhi)** is located at NSS Headquarters Changanacherry which is a municipal town in **Kottayam district**, Kerala.

Source:PIB

Vijayanagar King Krishnadevaraya

Why in News

The **first-ever epigraphical reference (an inscription) to the date of death of Vijayanagar king Krishnadevaraya** has been **discovered at Honnenahalli in Tumakuru district, Karnataka**.

Normally, the death of kings was not recorded in the inscriptions and this was one of those rare records.

Key Points

- **Findings:**
 - As per the inscription, Krishnadevaraya, one of the greatest emperors of India who ruled from the South, died on 17th October, 1529 (Sunday).
Incidentally, this day was marked by a **lunar eclipse**.
 - The inscription is **engraved on a slab** kept on the north side of the **Gopalakrishna temple** at Honnenahalli in Tumakuru district.
 - The inscription **also registers the gift of village Honnenahalli in Tumakuru** for conducting worship **to the god Veeraprasanna Hanumantha** of Tumakuru.
 - The inscription is **written in Kannada**.
- **Krishnadevaraya:**
 - He was the ruler of the **Tuluva dynasty** of **Vijayanagar empire** (1509-29 AD).
 - His rule was characterised by expansion and consolidation.
 - He is credited with building some fine temples and **adding impressive gopurams** to many important south Indian temples.
 - He **also founded** a suburban township near Vijayanagar called **Nagalapuram** after his mother.
 - He composed a work on statecraft in Telugu known as the **Amuktamalyada**.
- **Vijayanagara Empire:**
 - Vijayanagara or “city of victory” was the name of both a city and an empire.
 - The empire **was founded in the fourteenth century** (1336 AD) by **Harihara and Bukka** of the Sangama dynasty.
They made Hampi the capital city. In 1986, Hampi was declared a **World Heritage site by UNESCO**.
 - It stretched from the river Krishna in the north to the extreme south of the peninsula.
 - Vijayanagar Empire was **ruled by four important dynasties** and they are:
 - Sangama
 - Saluva
 - Tuluva
 - Aravidu

Source: TH

Ancient Buddhist Monastery Found in Jharkhand

Why in News

The **Archeological Survey of India (ASI)** has unearthed a **Buddhist** monastery, believed to be at least 900 years old, buried under a mound in a village near Juljul Pahar of Sitagarhi Hills in Jharkhand.

Earlier an ancient Buddhist shrine, buried under a similar mound was found, close to this site.

Key Points

Artifacts Unearthed:

- Four statues of **deity Tara in Varad Mudra** (gesture of hand showing dispensing of boons).
 - Nagri Script on Tara Statue:** Nagri was a **previous version of Devnagri script** and the words indicate Buddhist religious affiliation.
- Six statues of the **Buddha in Bhumisparsha Mudra** (gesture of hand showing five fingers of right hand towards the earth symbolising the Buddha's enlightenment).
- A **sculpture** which appears to be that of **Shaivite deity Maheswari** - with a coiled crown and chakra - indicating cultural assimilation in the area.



Bhumisparsha Mudra
Touching the earth as Gautama did, to invoke the earth as witness to the truth of his words.



Varada Mudra
Fulfillment of all wishes; the gesture of charity.



Dhyana Mudra
The gesture of absolute balance, of meditation. The hands are relaxed in the lap, and the tips of the thumbs and fingers touch each other. When depicted with a begging bowl this is a sign of the head of an order.



Abhaya Mudra
Gesture of reassurance, blessing, and protection. "Do not fear."



Dharmachakra Mudra
The gesture of teaching usually interpreted as turning the Wheel of Law. The hands are held level with the heart, the thumbs and index fingers form circles.



Vitarka Mudra
Intellectual argument, discussion. The circle formed by the thumb and index finger is the sign of the Wheel of Law.



Tarjani Mudra
Threat, warning. The extended index finger is pointed at the opponent.



Namaskara Mudra
Gesture of greeting, prayer, and adoration. Buddhas no longer make this gesture because they do not have to show devotion to anything.



Jnana Mudra
Teaching. The hand is held at chest level and the thumb and index finger again form the Wheel of Law.



Karana Mudra
Gesture with which demons are expelled.



Ksepana Mudra
Two hands together in the gesture of 'sprinkling' the nectar of immortality.



Uttarabodhi Mudra
Two hands placed together above the head with the index fingers together and the other fingers intertwined. The gesture of supreme enlightenment.

Significance of the Findings:

- The findings are significant since the **monastery is on the old route to Varanasi, 10 km from Sarnath**, where the Buddha gave his first sermon.
- The presence of statues of deity Tara shows **possible proliferation of Vajrayana form of Buddhism** in this region.

Vajrayana

- Vajrayana means “The Vehicle of the Thunderbolt”, also known as **tantric Buddhism**.
- This Buddhist school **developed in India around 900 CE**.
- It is **grounded on esoteric elements and a very complex set of rituals** compared with the rest of the Buddhist schools.

Source: IE
