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China as a Security Risk: NATO

Why in News

The recently held **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** summit for the **first time** has explicitly described China as a security risk.

The other two threats identified by the NATO 'declaration' are **Russia** and **terrorism**.

Key Points

- **North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO):**
 - **Formation:** NATO was established by the **North Atlantic Treaty** (also called the **Washington Treaty**) of **4th April, 1949**, by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.

It is **headquartered at Brussels, Belgium**.
 - **Political and Military Alliance:** NATO's primary goals are the **collective defence** of its members and the maintenance of a **democratic peace in the North Atlantic area**.

The collective defence principle enshrined in **NATO's Article V** states that "an attack against one ally is considered as an attack against all allies".
 - **NATO's Forces:** NATO has a **military and civilian headquarters** and an **integrated military command structure** but very few forces or assets are exclusively its own.

Most forces remain under full national command and control until member countries agree to undertake NATO-related tasks.
 - **NATO's Decisions:** A "NATO decision" is the expression of the collective will of **all 30 member countries** since all decisions are taken by consensus.

- **Analysis of NATO's Performance:**

- **Cold War Era:** NATO was completely successful in its mission of protecting the “Euro-Atlantic area” from Soviet expansion and preventing war between the two superpowers.

The formation of NATO, and its Soviet counterpart, the **Warsaw Pact**, in 1955, inaugurated the **Cold War era** (approximately 1945 until 1991).

- **Post-Cold War Era:** When **Soviet Union collapsed in 1991**, NATO witnessed a paradigm shift from collective defence, which implied a known adversary, to collective security, which is open-ended, and might require action against any number of threats, including unknown ones and non-state actors.

When the Balkans conflict broke out in 1999, NATO got the chance to prove its utility in a post-Cold War Europe.

- **Mutually Beneficial Arrangement:**

- **For Europe**, it was an attractive bargain where, in **exchange for a marginal loss in autonomy, it enjoyed absolute security** at a cheap price.

Not having to spend massively on defence allowed Europe to focus on building powerful economies and invest its surplus in a strong welfare state.

- NATO also **offered the added bonus of keeping Germany down**, historically a major factor for peace and stability in the region.
- A collective military force organised and managed by the Europeans themselves may offer a way out of American oversight and occasional bullying.

However, it carried the **danger of one or two of the stronger and wealthier states, such as Germany or France, dictating terms to the smaller ones**, a danger attractively absent in the NATO arrangement.

- **NATO and China:**
 - NATO leaders **declared China a constant security challenge** and said the Chinese are working to **undermine global order**.
 - This is **in sync with US President efforts** to get allies to speak out with a more unified voice against China's trade, military and human rights practices.
 - The **US' growing conviction** is that **China is a threat to its global supremacy** and must be contained.
 - However, both **France and Germany sought to put some distance between NATO's official position and their own perception** of China.
 - **NATO's European member states may view China as an economic rival and adversary, but they are unconvinced by the American line that it is an outright security threat.**
 - **China's Stand:** It has urged NATO to "view China's development rationally, stop exaggerating various forms of 'China threat theory' and not to use China's legitimate interests and legal rights as excuses for manipulating group politics artificially creating confrontations".
- **NATO and Russia:**
 - Tensions with Russia are an inevitable outcome of **NATO's bid to expand eastward into what Russia considers its sphere** of influence.
 - Trying to bring countries such as **Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova** under the NATO umbrella has led to a confrontation with Russia.
 - As Russia sought to protect its interests by "annexing" Crimea and stationing troops in Georgia and Moldova, NATO accused it of acting irresponsibly and breaking the "**rules-based international order**".

Conclusion

China's own economy is already deeply integrated into Western markets. China, nonetheless, is perceived as posing a 'threat'. It remains to be seen how far an ageing Europe would be willing to commit itself to a strategic path that prefers confrontation to collaboration, given that NATO is essentially a military alliance, and for all the talk of hybrid and cyberwar, there is zero risk of China invading the Euro-Atlantic area.

Source: TH

Suicide Worldwide in 2019: WHO

Why in News

Recently, a report titled **Suicide worldwide in 2019** was published by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.

Suicide is defined as **death caused by self-directed injurious behavior** with intent to die as a result of the behavior.

Key Points

- **Unmet Target:**

- Reducing the **global suicide mortality rate** by a third is both, an indicator and a target (the only one for mental health) in the **United Nations**-mandated **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. But the world will not be able to reach this target.
 - The SDGs call on countries to **reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by a third, by 2030** through prevention and treatment and to promote mental health and well-being.
 - They ask countries to **strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse**, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol. They also call for **universal health coverage**, which mental health is part of.
- Although some countries have placed suicide prevention high on their agendas, too many countries remain uncommitted, the report said.
Currently, only **38 countries are known to have a national suicide prevention strategy.**

- **Suicides in 2019:**

- The **Covid-19-pandemic** has increased mental stress globally. However a crisis was already in place in 2019. Approximately **7,03,000 people or one in a 100**, died by suicide in 2019.
The **global age-standardized suicide rate was 9.0 per 1,00,000 population** for 2019.
- Many of these were **young people**. More than half of global suicides (58%) occurred before the age of 50 years. Suicide was the **fourth-leading cause of death among young people aged 15-29 globally in 2019.**
- Some **77% of global suicides in 2019 occurred in low- and middle-income countries.**

- **Regional Data :**

- Africa, Europe and South-East Asia **recorded suicide rates higher than the global average.**
This number was **highest in the Africa region** (11.2) followed by Europe (10.5) and South-East Asia (10.2).
- In 20 years (2000-2019), the **global suicide rate had decreased by 36%.**
The decrease ranged from **17% in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to 47% in the European Region and 49% in the Western Pacific Region.**
- The Region of the **Americas recorded a substantial 17% increase** in the suicide rate during the same period and has been an exception.

- **Suicides in India:**

India has the **highest suicide rate in the Southeast Asian region.**

- A total of **1,34,516 cases of suicide were reported in 2018** in India, according to the **National Crime Records Bureau.**
- While the rate of suicide was **9.9 in 2017, it increased to 10.2 in 2018.**

- **WHO Guidelines to Reduce Suicides:**

- The WHO had published **new LIVE LIFE guidelines** to help countries reduce the global suicide mortality rate by a third by 2030. These are:
 - Limiting access to the means of suicide, such as highly hazardous pesticides and firearms.
 - Educating the media on responsible reporting of suicide.
 - Fostering socio-emotional life skills in adolescents.
 - Early identification, assessment, management and follow-up of anyone affected by suicidal thoughts and behaviour.
- These needed to go hand-in-hand with foundational pillars like situation analysis, multi-sectoral collaboration, awareness raising capacity building, financing, surveillance and monitoring and evaluation.

- **Legal Status of Attempted Suicide in India:**

- According to **Article 21 of the Indian constitution**, “No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by the law”. While the constitution covers the right to life or liberty, **it does not include the ‘right to die’.**

The attempts at taking one's own life are not considered to fall under purview of constitutional right to life.

- **Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)** states whoever attempts to commit suicide and does any act towards the commission of such offence, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine or both.

It is to be noted that the **abetting of the commission of suicide** (but not the abetting of attempt to commit suicide) is covered under **Section 306 IPC** and the abetment of suicide of a child is covered under **Section 305 IPC.**

- Section 115 (1) of the **Mental Healthcare Act 2017** of the Act provides, “Notwithstanding anything contained in section 309 of the IPC, **any person who attempts to commit suicide shall be presumed, unless proved otherwise, to have severe stress and shall not be tried and punished under the said Code.**

However, this law applies only to those suffering from mental illness. There is presumption of severe stress in case of an attempt to die by suicide.

- **Related Indian Initiatives:**

- **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017**
- **KIRAN**: The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has launched a 24/7 toll-free helpline to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns.
- **Manodarpan Initiative**: It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Education** under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. It is aimed to provide psychosocial support to students, family members and teachers for their mental health and well-being during the times of Covid-19.

Source: DTE

Delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir

Why in News

Recently, the delimitation exercise has started in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

The completion of the delimitation exercise will **mark the political process in the Union Territory (UT)** that has been **under Centre's rule since June 2018**.

MAP OF UT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR AND UT OF LADAKH



Key Points

- **Delimitation:**

- Delimitation is the **act of fixing or redrawing the limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies** (Assembly or Lok Sabha seat) in a country or a province having a legislative body, as per the **Election Commission**.
- The delimitation exercise is **carried out by an independent high-powered panel known as the Delimitation Commission** whose orders have the force of law and cannot be questioned by any court.
- The exercise has been carried out over the years **to redefine the area of a constituency-based on its population size (based on the last Census)**.
- Aside from changing the limits of a constituency, the process **may result in change in the number of seats in a state**.
- This exercise also **involves reservation of Assembly seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs)** in accordance with the Constitution.

- **Aim:**

The key aim is **to have equal representation to equal segments of the population** in order to ensure a fair division of geographical areas so that all political parties or candidates contesting elections have a level playing field in terms of a number of voters.

- **Constitutional Basis for Delimitation:**

- Under **Article 82**, the Parliament enacts a **Delimitation Act** after every Census.
- Under **Article 170**, States also get divided **into territorial constituencies** as per Delimitation Act after every Census.
- Once the **Act is in force**, the Union government sets up a **Delimitation Commission**.
- However, the **first delimitation exercise was carried out by the President (with the help of the Election Commission) in 1950-51**.
The **Delimitation Commission Act** was enacted in 1952.
- Delimitation Commissions **have been set up four times** — 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002 under the Acts of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002.

There was **no delimitation after the 1981 and 1991 Censuses**.

- **Delimitation Commission:**

- The Delimitation Commission is **appointed by the President of India** and **works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India**.
- **Composition:**
 - Retired Supreme Court judge
 - Chief Election Commissioner
 - Respective State Election Commissioners.

- **Delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir:**
 - The delimitation exercise in J&K in the past **has been slightly different** from those in the rest of the country because of the **region's special status**.
 - The **delimitation of Lok Sabha seats** was then governed by the **Indian Constitution** in J&K, but the **delimitation of Assembly seats** was governed separately by the **Jammu and Kashmir Constitution and Jammu and Kashmir Representation of the People Act, 1957**.
 - However, Jammu and Kashmir lost its special status and was **divided into two Union Territories (J&K and Ladakh)** after the **abrogation of its special status under Article 370, on 5th August, 2019**.
 - Following this, a **special delimitation commission** was constituted on **6th March, 2020** to carve out Assembly and Parliament seats in the UT.
- **Issues with Delimitation:**
 - **States that take little interest in population control could end up with a greater number of seats** in Parliament. The southern states that promoted family planning faced the possibility of having their seats reduced.
 - In 2002-08, Delimitation was done based on the 2001 census, but the total number of seats in the Assemblies and Parliament decided as per the 1971 Census was not changed.
 - The Constitution has also **capped the number of Lok Shaba & Rajya Sabha seats to a maximum of 550 & 250 respectively** and increasing populations are being represented by a single representative.

Source: IE

Inoperable Provision of NDPS Act: Tripura High Court

Why in News

Recently, the Tripura High Court has discovered that an oversight in drafting the 2014 amendments to the **Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985** had unintentionally rendered a key provision (**Section 27A**) of the Act inoperable.

Key Points

- **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985:**

- India is a signatory to the **United Nations (UN) Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs 1961**, the **Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971** and the **Convention on Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988**.

They **prescribe various forms of control** aimed to achieve the dual objective of limiting the **use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances** for medical and scientific purposes as well as preventing the abuse of the same.

- The basic legislative instrument of the Government of India in this regard is the **NDPS Act, 1985**.
- The Act provides **stringent provisions for the control and regulation of operations** relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- It also provides for **forfeiture of property** derived from, or used in, illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- It also provides for **death penalty in some cases** where a person is a repeat offender.
- The **Narcotics Control Bureau** was also constituted in 1986 under the Act.

- **Section 27A of the NDPS Act:**

- The provision reads that whoever indulges in financing, directly or indirectly, any of the activities specified in **sub-clauses (i) to (v) of clause (viiia) of section 2** or harbours any person engaged in any of the aforementioned activities.
- He shall be punishable with **rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than ten years** but which may **extend to twenty years** and shall also be liable to fine which shall not be less than one lakh rupees but which may extend to two lakh rupees:

Provided that the court may, for reasons to be recorded in the judgment, impose a fine exceeding two lakh rupees.

- **Reason of Section 27A getting Inoperable:**

- The text of the provision says that **offences mentioned under Section 2 (viiia) sub-clauses i-v** are punishable through Section 27A.
- However, **Section 2 (viiia) sub-clauses i-v**, which is supposed to be the catalog of offences, **does not exist after the 2014 amendment**.
- So, if Section 27A penalises a blank list or a non-existent provision, it can be argued that it is virtually inoperable.

- **NDPS Act 2014 Amendment:**

- It was made **to allow for better medical access to narcotic drugs**. Since the regulation under NDPS was very stringent, despite being a leading manufacturer of morphine, an opioid analgesic used as a painkiller, it was difficult to access the drug even for hospitals.
- The 2014 amendment essentially **removed state-barriers in transporting, licensing drugs classified as “essential narcotic drugs”**, and made it centralised.
- This was done by defining **essential narcotic drugs, and allowing the manufacture, possession, transport, import inter-State, export inter-State, sale, purchase, consumption and use of essential narcotic drugs**.
 - The amendment to add the definition of essential narcotic drugs **re-lettered the old Section 2(viia) that was the catalog of offences as Section 2(viib)**, and under the Section 2(viia), defined essential narcotic drugs.
 - However, the **drafters missed amending the enabling provision in Section 27A** to change Section 2(viia) to Section 2(viib).

- **High Courts Ruling:**

- It **directed the Central Government, Ministry of Home Affairs** to take appropriate steps for **amending section 27A of the NDPS Act 1985**.

It noted that the amendment is yet to take place. However, **criminal laws cannot be amended retrospectively**. So even if the amendment is brought in, the result of **the drafting error could lead to more constitutional questions** being raised.
- Ordered that both the **Central Government and the State Government shall publish a notification bringing about the content of this order** in short for the **public notice** so that the requirement of **Article-20** of the Constitution of India is not diminished.
 - **Article 20** of the Constitution guarantees **protection against double jeopardy**.
 - **Article 20(1)** says that **no person shall be convicted of any offence except for violation of the law in force at the time of the commission of the act** charged as an offence, nor be subjected to a penalty greater than that which might have been inflicted under the law in force at the time of the commission of the offence.

Source: IE

Electronic Weighing Machines at Fair Price Shops

Why in News

The Central Government has **asked the States Governments to buy electronic weighing machines** for ration shops **from electronic Point of Sale devices (ePoS) savings**.

For this, the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs** has **amended the Food Security (Assistance To State Government Rules) 2015** to encourage the states to generate savings through judicious use of e-PoS devices.

Key Points

- **About the Food Security (Assistance to State Government Rules) 2015:**
 - **Additional Margin to Fair Price Shops:** The rules were notified to **give additional margin to fair price shop dealers** for sale through e-PoS as an incentive to ensure transparent recording of transactions at all levels.
 - The margin on food grain sold through ePoS is provided as “**Fair Price Shop dealers margin**”.
 - It is meant to go towards the **cost of purchase, operation and maintenance of the point of sale device**, its running expenses and incentive for its use.
 - **Benefits of Amendment:**
 - The **integration of ePoS devices with electronic weighing scales** will **ensure the right quantity to beneficiaries** in the distribution of subsidised food grains under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** as per their entitlement.
 - It will ensure **greater transparency in the Public distribution system (PDS) regime**. It will **reduce food grain leakages**.
 - The **distribution through ePoS devices** ensures that subsidised food grains are provided to the **rightful beneficiary** through **biometric authentication**.

- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**

- **Notified on:** 10th September, 2013
- **Objective:** To provide for food and nutritional security in the human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantities of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity.
- **Coverage:** 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for receiving subsidized foodgrains under **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**.
 - **Overall, NFSA caters to 67% of the total population.**
 - **NITI Aayog** has recommended reducing the rural and urban coverage under the NFSA to 60% and 40%, respectively.
- **Eligibility:**
 - **Priority Households** to be covered under TPDS, according to guidelines by the State government.
 - Households covered under existing **Antyodaya Anna Yojana**.
- **Provisions:**
 - **5 Kgs of foodgrains per person** per month at Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.
 - The **existing AAY household will continue to receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month.**
 - **Meal and maternity benefit** of not less than Rs. 6,000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers during pregnancy and six months after the child birth.
 - **Meals to children** upto 14 years of age.
 - **Food security allowance** to beneficiaries in case of non-supply of entitled foodgrains or meals.
 - Setting up of **grievance redressal mechanisms** at the district and state level.

- **Public Distribution System (PDS):**

- The PDS is an **Indian food Security System** established under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution**.
 - PDS evolved as a system of management of scarcity through distribution of food grains at affordable prices.
 - In **June, 1997**, the Government of India **launched the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)** with focus on the poor.
- **Functioning:**
 - The **Central and State Governments share responsibilities** in order to provide food grains to the identified beneficiaries.
 - The centre procures food grains from farmers at a **minimum support price (MSP)** and sells it to states at central issue prices. It is responsible for transporting the grains to godowns in each state.
 - States bear the responsibility of transporting food grains from these godowns to each fair price shop (ration shop), where the beneficiary buys the food grains at the lower **central issue price**.
 - Many states further subsidise the price of food grains before selling it to beneficiaries.

Source: TH

Proposal to Ban ‘Flash sales’ on E-commerce Sites

Why in News

The government proposed changes to the **Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules 2020**, **banning all “flash sales”** in order to monitor the deep discounts offered on e-commerce websites.

CONSUMER PROTECTION (E-COMMERCE) RULES, 2020



APPLICABLE TO
E-TAILERS
REGISTERED IN
INDIA OR
ABROAD BUT
OFFERING
GOODS AND
SERVICES TO
INDIAN
CONSUMERS

TPC Trade Promotion
Council of India
www.tpci.in

PROVISIONS FOR E-COMMERCE FIRMS

- 1 Mandatory display of 'country of origin' on products
- 2 Display total price of goods & services offered for sale (+ break-up of other charges)
- 3 Mention the 'expiry date' of goods offered for sale
- 4 Specify details about return, refund, exchange, warranty and guarantee, delivery and shipment
- 5 No manipulation of prices for unreasonable profit
- 6 No cancellation charges
- 7 Provide information on available payment methods
- 8 Information about the 'sellers' offering goods and services
- 9 Violation to attract penal action under Consumer Protection Act, 2019

Key Points

- **Rationale for Making Changes:**
 - **Conventional flash sales by third party sellers are not banned on e-commerce platforms but only the predatory ones.**
 - Small businesses complain of **misuse of market dominance** and **deep discounting** by e-commerce marketplaces such as Amazon and Flipkart.
 - The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has been receiving complaints against **widespread cheating and unfair trade practices** being observed in the e-commerce ecosystem.
 - Certain e-commerce entities are engaging in **limiting consumer choice** by indulging in 'back to back' or 'flash' sales wherein one seller on a platform does not carry any inventory or order fulfilment capability but merely places a 'flash or back to back' order with another seller controlled by platform.

- **Other Important Proposals:**

- The e-commerce sites are also directed to ensure **appointment of Chief Compliance Officer (CCO)**, a nodal contact person for 24x7 **coordination with law enforcement agencies**.
- These companies will also have to name a **resident grievance officer** who has to be a company employee and a citizen of India.
- To tackle growing concerns of **preferential treatment**, the new rules propose to ensure none of the related parties are allowed to use any consumer information (from the online platform) for 'unfair advantage'.
- The companies will also have to **identify goods based on their country of origin** and provide a **filter mechanism** at a pre-purchase stage for customers.
They will also have to **offer alternatives to these imported goods** to provide a **"fair opportunity" to domestic sellers**.
- In the event a seller fails to deliver a good or service, the final liability will fall on the e-commerce marketplace.
- E-commerce firms operating in India will also have to **register under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

- **Significance of Proposals:**

- This would ensure effective compliance with the provisions of the Consumer Protection Rules, 2020 and also strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism.
- The proposal comes at a time when large e-commerce marketplaces are being investigated by the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** for **alleged abuse of market dominance** and giving **preferential treatment** to sellers in which they hold indirect stakes.

E-Commerce

- Electronic commerce or e-commerce is a business model that lets firms and individuals **buy and sell things over the Internet**.
- Propelled by rising smartphone penetration, the launch of 4G networks and increasing consumer wealth, the **Indian e-commerce market is expected to grow to USD 200 billion by 2026 from USD 38.5 billion in 2017**.
- The Indian e-commerce industry has been on an upward growth trajectory and is expected to **surpass the US to become the second-largest e-commerce market in the world by 2034**.

Major Types of E-commerce

TYPE OF E-COMMERCE	EXAMPLE
B2C—Business to Consumer	Amazon.com is a general merchandiser that sells consumer products to retail consumers.
B2B—Business to Business	eSteel.com is a steel industry exchange that creates an electronic market for steel producers and users.
C2C—Consumer to Consumer	eBay.com creates a marketplace where consumers can auction or sell goods directly to other consumers.
P2P—Peer to Peer	Gnutella is a software application that permits consumers to share music with one another directly, without the intervention of a market maker as in C2C e-commerce.
M-commerce—Mobile commerce	Wireless mobile devices such as PDAs (personal digital assistants) or cell phones can be used to conduct commercial transactions.

Source:TH

Integrated Power Development Scheme

Why in News

A 50 kWp **Solar rooftop in Solan, Himachal Pradesh** was inaugurated under **Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS)** of the Ministry of Power.

The project **further reinforces the ‘Go Green’ Initiative** of the government envisaged in the Urban Distribution scheme.

Key Points

- **About IPDS:**
 - **Launch:**

December 2014.
 - **Nodal Agency:**

Power Finance Corporation Ltd. (PFC), a **Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)** under the administrative control of the Ministry of Power.
 - **Components:**
 - Strengthening of **sub-transmission and distribution networks** in the urban areas.
 - **Metering of distribution transformers / feeders / consumers** in the urban areas.
 - Schemes for **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and IT enablement** of the distribution sector.

ERP helps in integrating the important parts of a business.
 - **Underground cabling** to include additional demand of States and **smart metering** solution for performing **UDAY States and Solar panels on Govt. buildings** with net-metering are also permissible under the scheme.
 - **Objectives**
 - 24×7 Power supplies for consumers.
 - Reduction of AT&C (aggregate technical and commercial) losses.
 - Providing access to power to all households.
 - **Eligibility:**

All Power Distribution Companies (Discoms) are eligible for financial assistance under the scheme.
 - **Funding Pattern:**
 - **Gol (Government of India) Grant:** 60% (85% for special category States).
 - **Additional Grant:** 15% (5% for special category States) - linked to achievement of milestones.

- **Power Sector in India:**

- India's power sector is **one of the most diversified** in the world. Sources of power generation range from **conventional sources** such as **coal, lignite, natural gas, oil, hydro and nuclear power** to viable **non-conventional** sources such as **wind, solar, and agricultural and domestic waste**.
- India is the **third-largest producer** and **second-largest consumer** of electricity in the world.
- **Electricity is a concurrent subject** (Seventh Schedule of the Constitution).
- The **Ministry of Power is primarily responsible for the development of electrical energy** in the country.
 - It administers the Electricity Act, 2003 and the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
- The Government has released its roadmap to achieve **175 GW** capacity in renewable energy by 2022, which includes **100 GW of solar power** and **60 GW of wind power**.
 - The Government is preparing a '**rent a roof**' policy for supporting its target of generating 40 gigawatts (GW) of power through solar rooftop projects by 2022.
 - The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** is the nodal Ministry for all matters relating to new and renewable energy.
- **100% FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) is permitted** under **automatic route** in the power sector.

- **Related Government Initiatives:**

- Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya): To ensure electrification of all willing households in the country in rural as well as urban areas.
- Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY): The rural electrification scheme provides for (a) **separation of agriculture and non-agriculture feeders**; (b) strengthening and augmentation of sub-transmission and distribution **infrastructure in rural areas** including metering at distribution transformers, feeders and consumers end.
- GARV (Grameen Vidyutikaran) App: To monitor transparency in **implementation of the electrification schemes**, Grameen Vidyut Abhiyanta (GVAs) have been appointed by the government to report progress through the GARV app.
- Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY): For operational and financial turnaround of Discoms.
- **'4 Es' in the Revised Tariff Policy**: The 4Es include **Electricity** for all, **Efficiency** to ensure affordable tariffs, **Environment** for a sustainable future, **Ease of doing business** to attract investments and ensure financial viability.

- **Achievements:**

- **Solar tariffs in India have reduced** from Rs. 7.36/kWh in FY15 to Rs. 2.63/kWh in FY20.
- As of December 2020, over 36.69 crore LED bulbs, 1.14 crore LED tube lights and 23 lakh **energy-efficient fans** have been distributed across the country, saving 47.65 billion kWh per year.
- In the first half of November 2020, India's power consumption increased 7.8% to 50.15 billion units (BU), indicating **an improvement in economic activity**.
- **Energy generation from thermal sources** stood at 472.90 billion units (BU) in April-September 2020.
- **India's rank jumped to 22 in 2019** from **137 in 2014** on **World Bank's Ease of doing business** - "**Getting Electricity**" ranking.
- As of 28th April, 2018, **100% village electrification** was achieved under **DDUGJY**.

Source: PIB

Krivak Stealth Frigates

Why in News

Recently, the Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff has inaugurated the construction of the **second frigate of the Krivak or Talwar class**.

The construction of the first ship was laid in January, 2021. It would be **delivered in 2026 and the second ship after six months**.



Key Points

- **About:**
 - The Krivak class stealth ships are **being built with technology transfer from Russia by Goa Shipyard Ltd. (GSL)** under '**Make in India**'. Engines for the ships are supplied by **Ukraine**.
 - In October 2016, **India and Russia signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)** for four Krivak or Talwar stealth frigates.
 - The **first two frigates will be built in Yantar Shipyard, in Kaliningrad, Russia**. The following two will be built in GSL.
 - The new Krivak frigates will have the **same engines and armament configuration as Yantar's last three frigates** - INS Teg, Tarkash and Trikan. These will be armed with **BrahMos** anti-ship and land attack missiles.
- **Use:**

They are primarily **used to accomplish a wide variety of naval missions** such as finding and eliminating enemy submarines and large surface ships.
- **Existing Frigates:**

The navy already **operates six Krivak III frigates**. The first three joined the fleet between June 2003 and April 2004, followed by another three between April 2012 and June 2013. With the **current contract, the navy will operate 10 Krivak frigates**.

India-Russia Defence Relation

- **About:**
 - Defence cooperation is an important pillar of the **India-Russia strategic partnership**.
 - The two **Defence Ministers meet annually**, alternately in Russia and India, to discuss and review the status of ongoing projects and other issues of military technical cooperation.
 - As India has been spreading its supplier base with Israel, US and France, **Russia still remains a major supplier**.
 - The two sides are successfully moving towards the implementation of an AK-203 rifle contract and 200 Ka-**226T utility helicopter** supplies.
 - **According to a paper** published by Stimson Center, 86% of the equipment, weapons and platforms currently in military service in India are of Russian origin.
- **Joint Exercises:**

Exercise **INDRA**, is a joint, tri services exercise between India and Russia.

- **Russia's Military Equipment Deployed by India:**

- **Navy:**

The Navy's only active aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya is from Russia. A **nuclear attack submarine** Chakra II is also in service.

- **Army:**

- Army's **T-90** and T-72 main battle tanks.

- **S-400 Triumph missile system.**

- **Air Force:**

IAF's **Su30** MKI fighter.

INDIA-RUSSIA DEALS IN THE PIPELINE



AKULA CLASS NUCLEAR-POWERED ATTACK SUBMARINE

\$3 bn or ₹21,000 cr
(to be delivered by 2026)
STATUS: Signed



KAMOV KA-226 LIGHT UTILITY HELICOPTERS

JV between HAL and
Russian helicopters for
production
(200 Kamov Ka-226)

\$1 bn or ₹7,000 cr
STATUS: MoU signed
in June 2018

AK-203
\$1.6 bn or ₹12,000 cr
(700,000 rifles)



Indo-Russian joint venture to make AK-203 rifles
at an idle Ordnance Board Factory in Korwa
STATUS: Signed. JV to be established soon

4 KRIVAK CLASS FRIGATES

Two built in Russia, two to be
built at the Goa shipyard

\$2.5 bn or ₹17,000 cr

STATUS: Signed



18 ADDITIONAL SUKHOI SU-30MKI AIRCRAFT

\$700 mn or ₹5,000 cr

STATUS: Being negotiated

21 MOTHBALLED MIG-29 AIRFRAMES

\$800 mn

or ₹5,600 cr

STATUS: Being negotiated



10 KAMOV KA-31 AEW&C HELICOPTERS

\$500 mn or

₹3,600 cr

STATUS: Approved.
Contract yet to be signed



Source: TH

Antibodies against Nipah Virus in Bats

Why in News

A recent survey has found the **presence of antibodies** against the **Nipah virus (NiV)** in some **bat species** from a cave in **Mahabaleshwar**, a popular hill station in **Maharashtra**.

The survey was conducted by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** - **National Institute of Virology (NIV)**.

Key Points

- **About the Survey:**
 - The NIV team looked at **Rousettus leschenaultii** and **Pipistrellus pipistrellus bats** that are common in India.
 - Pteropus medius bats**, which are large **fruit-eating bats**, are the **reservoir for NiV in India** as both **NiV RNA** and antibodies were detected in the samples of these bats collected during previous NiV outbreaks.
 - A **bat's immune system** is especially **adept** at withstanding **viral infection** because of its **ability to limit excessive inflammation** — which uniquely allows viruses to thrive without proving deadly to the mammal.

- **Nipah virus (NiV):**

- **About:**

- It is a **zoonotic virus** (it is transmitted from animals to humans).
 - The **organism which causes** Nipah Virus encephalitis is **an RNA or Ribonucleic acid virus of the family Paramyxoviridae, genus Henipavirus**, and is **closely related to Hendra virus**.

Hendra virus (HeV) infection is a **rare emerging zoonosis** that causes severe and often fatal disease in both **infected horses and humans**.

- It **first broke out in Malaysia and Singapore in 1998 and 1999**.
 - It **first appeared in domestic pigs** and has been found among several species of domestic animals including dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep.

- **Transmission:**


- The disease **spreads through fruit bats or ‘flying foxes,’ of the genus Pteropus**, who are natural reservoir hosts of the Nipah and Hendra viruses.
 - The virus is present in bat urine and potentially, bat faeces, saliva, and birthing fluids.

- **Symptoms:**

The human infection presents as an **encephalitic syndrome** marked by fever, headache, drowsiness, disorientation, mental confusion, coma, and potentially death.

- **Prevention:**

Currently, there are **no vaccines** for both humans and animals. Intensive supportive care is given to humans infected by Nipah virus.

FIRST NIPAH DETECTION IN MAHARASHTRA		The Disease
<p>THE VIRUS</p> <p>Nipah Virus (NiV) is on the top 10 pathogen list of WHO</p> <p>➤ First identified in Malaysia in 1998–99 during an encephalitis-like outbreak among pigs and pig handlers, with a case fatality rate (CFR) of 40%</p>	<p>NIPAH IN INDIA</p> <p>India has experienced four NiV outbreaks, with CFR ranging from 65 to 100%</p> <p>2001 in Siliguri district, West Bengal</p> <p>2007 in Nadia district in West Bengal</p> <p>2018 in Kozhikode district in Kerala with 18 deaths</p> <p>2019 in Kozhikode</p>	<p>➤ Infected bats shed the virus in excretion & it can jump to humans</p> <p>➤ NiV can be fatal, causing swelling of brain (encephalitis) after signs of respiratory illness</p>
	<p>MAHABALESHWAR FINDINGS</p> <p>➤ Large fruit-eating Pteropus medius bats said to be NiV reservoir in India</p> <p>➤ 65 Rousettus leschenaultii (medium fruit-eating) bats and 15 (tiny, insectivorous) Pipistrellus pipistrellus</p>	<p>from a Mahabaleshwar cave tested in 2020</p> <p>➤ Antibodies found in 33 leschenaultii and one Pipistrellus bat</p> <p>➤ First report of possible NiV infection in R leschenaultii bats in India</p>
 <p>Researchers test bats in Kozhikode in 2018</p>		

Land for Life Award: UN

Why in News

Recently, Shyam Sundar Jyani, a Rajasthan-based climate activist, has won the prestigious **United Nations' Land for Life Award** for his environment conservation concept, **Familial Forestry**.

- The winner was announced on **17th June 2021** which is the **World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought**.
- **Familial Forestry** means transferring the care of the tree and environment in the family so that a tree becomes a part of the family's consciousness.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - **Every two years**, the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** organizes the Land for Life Award. The Award recognizes excellence and innovation in efforts towards land in balance.
 - The **past editions shed light on inspiring initiatives of recovery and restoration of degraded landscapes** worldwide.
 - They all made a significant contribution towards achieving **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15: "Life on Land"**, in particular Target 15.3 Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN).
 - This year the award will put the **spotlight on individuals/organizations that made an outstanding contribution to land degradation neutrality on a large scale.**

Which means with **long-term changes and dedicated actions for 25 years or longer** and remarkable **positive impacts on land, people, communities, and society.**

- **Launch:**

The Land for Life Award was launched in 2011 at the UNCCD **Conference of Parties (COP)10** in the Republic of Korea as part of the **Changwon Initiative**.

- The **Changwon Initiative** intends to complement activities being undertaken in line with The Strategy (for 2008-18) and in accordance with COP 10 decisions.
- The **main components of the Changwon Initiative** include:
 - Enhancing the scientific process of the UNCCD.
 - Mobilizing additional resources and facilitating partnership arrangements.
 - Supporting a global framework for the promotion of best practices.

- **2021 Theme:**

Healthy Land, Healthy Lives.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

- **Established in 1994**, it is the **sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management**.
- It addresses specifically the **arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands**, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.

The convention **obliges national governments to take measures to tackle the issue of desertification**.
- It is **one of the three Rio Conventions**, the other two are **Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)** and **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.

India is among the select few countries to **have hosted the COP of all three Rio conventions**.
- The new **UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework** is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in order to restore the productivity of vast expanses of degraded land, improve the livelihoods of more than 1.3 billion people, and reduce the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations to build.

Source: TH
