



India- UAE Virtual Summit

For Prelims: Location of UAE and the Neighbourhood, CEPA, Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, Gift City, Gulf Cooperation Council.

For Mains: India and its Neighbourhood, Bilateral Groupings & Agreements, India- UAE Relations.

Why in News?

- Recently, a virtual summit was held between **India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.
- Earlier in September 2021, India and the UAE **[formally launched negotiations on the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement \(CEPA\)](#)**.



What are the Key Highlights of the Meeting?

- **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership:** Issued a Joint Vision Statement "Advancing the India and UAE **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: *New Frontiers, New Milestone***".

- The Statement **establishes a roadmap for a future-oriented partnership** between India and UAE and identifies focus areas and outcomes.
- The shared objective is to **promote new trade, investment and innovation dynamics in diverse sectors.**
- **Defence and Security:** Agreed to enhance maritime cooperation contributing to maintenance of peace and security in the region.
 - **Reaffirmed joint commitment to fight against extremism and terrorism**, including cross-border terrorism, in all forms, at both regional and international levels.
- **Climate Action and Renewables:** Agreed to **support each other's clean energy missions** and establish a joint **Hydrogen Task Force** to help scale up technologies, with special focus on production of [Green Hydrogen](#).
- **Emerging Technologies:** Agreed to expand cooperation on critical technologies and **mutually promote e-businesses and e-payment solutions** and promote start-ups from both countries.
- **Education Cooperation:** Agreed to establish an **Indian Institute of Technology** in the UAE.
- **Health Cooperation:** Decided to collaborate in research, production and development of reliable supply chains for vaccines and enhance investments by UAE entities in the health infrastructure in India as well as collaborate in **providing healthcare in underprivileged nations.**
- **Food Security:** Acknowledged the need to enhance the **resilience and reliability of food supply chains.**
 - Also **decided to expand cooperation through enhanced bilateral food and agriculture trade** and, promote and strengthen the infrastructure and dedicated logistic services connecting farms to ports to final destinations in the UAE.
- **Skills Cooperation:** Agreed to enhance cooperation in skill development so as to align with the market needs and address the changing needs for the future of work.
- **Released Joint Commemorative Stamp** on the occasion of [75th anniversary of India's independence](#) and [50th year of UAE's foundation](#).
- **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):** In a significant development, the two sides inked a [CEPA to further boost trade and investment ties](#).
 - **Plastic, agriculture, food products, automobile, engineering, pharmaceuticals** are some of the areas that will be boosted because of the pact.
 - The deal will **open up to 10 lakh jobs for the young people in the country** and would also **open access to broader African and Asian markets** for India.
 - The CEPA is expected to **increase bilateral trade** from the current level of USD 60 billion to USD 100 billion in the next five years (2022-27).

What is CEPA?

- It is a kind of **free trade pact which covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment**, and other areas of economic partnership. It may even consider negotiation on areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and [Intellectual Property Rights](#).
- Partnership agreements or cooperation agreements are more comprehensive than Free Trade Agreements.
- CEPA also **looks into the regulatory aspect of trade** and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues.
- India has signed **CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.**

What is the Current State of India-UAE Relations?

- **About:**
 - India and the UAE enjoy **strong bonds of friendship** based on age-old cultural, religious and economic ties between the two nations.
 - The relationship flourished after the accession of H.H. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan as the Ruler of Abu Dhabi in 1966 and subsequently **with the creation of the UAE Federation in 1971.**
- **Political Relations:**

- In 2019, UAE awarded the [ZAYED Medal](#), their highest civilian award, to the Prime Minister of India for consolidating the long-standing friendship and joint strategic cooperation between the two nations.
- The Indian Prime Minister's visit to the UAE in **August 2015 marked the beginning of a new and comprehensive and strategic partnership.**
- **Economic Relations:**
 - India-UAE trade was around USD 60 billion making UAE, **India's third-largest trading partner for the year 2019-20 after China and the USA.**
 - The **UAE is the second-largest export destination of India** with an amount of over USD 29 billion for the year 2019-20.
 - For the UAE, **India is the second-largest trading partner** for the year 2019 with an amount of around USD 41.43 billion for non-oil trade.
- **Cultural Relations:**
 - The two nations share historical ties and have **maintained regular cultural exchanges both at official and popular levels.**
 - They signed a Cultural Agreement in 1975 and the embassies continue to organise various cultural activities on their own as well as by collaborating with other cultural organisations.
- **Indian Community:**
 - The **UAE is home to the Indian expatriate community of more than 2.6 million**, the largest expatriate community in the UAE, which has played a major role in the economic development of the UAE.
 - Recently, India has asked the members of the [Gulf Cooperation Council \(GCC\)](#) which also includes UAE, to facilitate the return of Indians who want to resume work with the relaxing of [Covid-19](#)-related restrictions.

[Source: PIB](#)

Legislation for Refugees

For Prelims: NHRC, 1951 Refugee Convention.

For Mains: India's Refugee Policy, Article 21 of the Constitution.

Why in News?

The [National Human Rights Commission \(NHRC\)](#) recently held a discussion on "protection of the basic human rights of refugees and asylum seekers in India".

- Many participants raised the issue of **India not having a specific law for refugees and asylum-seekers.**
- The discussion noted that, though **India has not signed the United Nations Refugee Convention, 1951**, the refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to the rights in [Articles 14 \(Right to Equality\), 20 \(Protection with Respect to Conviction of Offences\) and 21 \(Right to Life\) of the Constitution.](#)

What is India's Refugee Policy?

- India lacks **specific legislation** to address the problem of refugees, in spite of their increasing inflow.
- India is **not a party to the [1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol](#)**, the key legal documents pertaining to refugee protection.

- Moreover, the **Foreigners Act, 1946**, fails to address the peculiar problems faced by refugees as a class.
 - It also gives unbridled power to the **Central government to deport any foreign citizen.**
- In spite of not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, India has had a stellar record on the issue of refugee protection.
 - India has a moral tradition for **assimilating foreign people and culture.**
- Further, the constitution of India also respects the life, liberty, and dignity of human beings.
 - The Supreme Court in the **National Human Rights Commission vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh (1996)** held that “while all rights are available to citizens, persons including foreign citizens are entitled to the right to equality and the right to life, among others.”
- Further, **Article 21 of the Constitution** encompasses the **right of non-refoulement.**
 - Non-refoulement is the principle under international law which states that a **person fleeing persecution from his own country should not be forced to return** to his own country.

Why Hasn't India Framed a Law on Refugees Yet?

- **Refugees vs Immigrants:** In the recent past, many people from neighboring countries tend to illegally immigrate to India, not because of state persecution but in search of better economic opportunities in India.
 - While the reality is that much of the debate in the country is **about illegal immigrants, not refugees**, the two categories tend to get bunched together.
- **Misuse of Law:** Such a law could be misused by **anti-nationals, terrorists and criminal elements** and it would cause a financial burden on the country.
- **Open Scope of Maneuver:** Absence of legislation has allowed India to keep its options open on the question of refugees. The government can declare any set of refugees as illegal immigrants.
 - This was the case that has happened with **Rohingya** (They are stateless, Indo-Aryan ethnic group who reside in **Rakhine State, Myanmar**), despite the **UNHCR verification**, the government decided to deal with them as trespassers under the **Foreigners Act or the Indian Passport Act.**

Why is there a Need for a law on Refugees?

- **Long-term Practical Solution:** India frequently experiences a large influx of refugees. Therefore, a long-term practical solution requires that India make a shift from its **charitable approach to a rights-based approach** by enacting a national refugee law.
- **Adhering to Human Rights:** A national refugee law will **streamline refugee- status** determination procedures for all kinds of refugees and will guarantee them the rights they have under international law.
- **Addressing Security Concerns:** It could sufficiently address **India's security concerns**, while at the same time **ensuring that there is no unlawful detention** or deportation carried out in the garb of national-security concerns.
- **Inconsistency in the Treatment of Refugees:** The bulk of the refugee population in India originates from Sri Lanka, Tibet, Myanmar and Afghanistan.
 - However, only Tibetan and Sri Lankan refugees are recognized as such by the government. They are provided protection and assistance directly through specific policies and rules formulated by the government.

Refugee	Asylum-seeker	Migrant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A refugee is a person who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution there. ▪ The risks to their safety and life were so great that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An asylum-seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ However, he/she 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no internationally accepted legal definition of a migrant. ▪ Migrants can be understood to be people staying outside their country of origin, who are not asylum-seekers or

<p>they felt they had no choice but to leave and seek safety outside their country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is because their own government cannot or will not protect them from those dangers. ▪ Refugees have a right to international protection. 	<p>hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeking asylum is a human right. ▪ This means everyone should be allowed to enter another country to seek asylum. 	<p>refugees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some migrants leave their country because they want to work, study or join family, for example. ▪ Others feel they must leave because of poverty, political unrest, gang violence, natural disasters or other serious circumstances that exist there.
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Way Forward

- **Revision of Model Laws by Expert Committee:** Model laws on asylum and refugees that were drafted by the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** decades ago but not implemented by the government could be revised by an expert committee.
 - If such laws are enacted, it would give legal sanctity and uniformity, ensuring the protection of human rights.
- **Law can Act as a Deterrent:** If India had domestic legislation regarding refugees, it could have deterred any oppressive government in the neighborhood to persecute their population and make them flee to India.

[Source: TH](#)

First Information Report (FIR)

For Prelims: First Information Report (FIR), ZERO FIR, Cognizable Offence & Non-cognizable Offence.

For Mains: First Information Report (FIR), Cognizable Offence & Non-cognizable Offence.

Why in News?

An **First Information Report (FIR)** is a very important document as it sets the **process of criminal justice in motion**. It is only after the FIR is registered in the police station that the police take up **investigation of the case**.

What is a FIR?

- First Information Report (FIR) is a **written document** prepared by the police when they receive information about the commission of a **cognizable offence**.
- It is a report of information that reaches the police first in point of time and that is why it is called the **First Information Report**.
- It is generally a complaint lodged with the police by the **victim of a cognizable offence or by someone on his/her behalf**. Anyone can report the commission of a cognizable offence either orally or in writing.
- The term FIR is **not defined** in the **Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure**

(CrPC), 1973, or in any other law.

- However, in police regulations or rules, information recorded under Section **154 of CrPC** is known as First Information Report (FIR).
- There are **three important elements** of an FIR:
 - The information must relate to the **commission of a cognizable offence**,
 - It should be given in **writing or orally** to the head of the police station,
 - It must be written down and **signed by the informant**, and its key points **should be recorded in a daily diary**.

What happens after an FIR is filed?

- The police will investigate the case and **will collect evidence in the form of statements** of witnesses or other scientific materials.
 - They can arrest the alleged persons as per law.
- If there is sufficient evidence to corroborate the allegations of the complainant, then a **charge sheet will be filed**. Or else, a **Final Report** mentioning that no evidence was found will be filed in court.
- If it is found that no offence has been committed, a **cancellation report** will be filed.
- If no trace of the accused persons is found, an **'untraced' report** will be filed.
- However, if the court does not agree with the investigation report, it can order further investigation.

What if the police refuse to register an FIR?

- Under **Section 154(3) CrPC**, if any person is aggrieved by the refusal on the part of the officer in charge of a police station to register an FIR, she can send the complaint to the **Superintendent of Police/DCP concerned**.
 - Who, if satisfied that such information discloses the commission of a cognizable offence, will either investigate the case, or direct an investigation by a subordinate police officer.
- If no FIR is registered, the aggrieved persons can file a complaint under Section 156(3) CrPC **before a concerned court** which, if satisfied that a cognizable offence is made out from the complaint, will direct the police to register an FIR and conduct an investigation.

What is a Zero FIR?

- When a police station receives a complaint regarding an alleged offence that has been committed in the **jurisdiction of another police station**, it registers an FIR, and then **transfers it to the concerned police station** for further investigation.
 - This is **called a Zero FIR**.
- **No regular FIR number is given**. After receiving the Zero FIR, the concerned police station registers a fresh FIR and starts the investigation.

What is Cognizable Offence & Non-cognizable Offence?

- **Cognizable Offence:** A cognizable offence is one in which the police may arrest a person without warrant.
 - They are authorised to start investigation into a cognizable case on their own and do not require any orders from the court to do so.
- **Non-cognizable Offence:** A non-cognizable offence is an offence in which a police officer has no authority to arrest without warrant.
 - The police cannot investigate such an offence without the court's permission.
 - In case of non-cognizable offences, an FIR under **Section 155 CrPC** is registered.
 - The complainant will be asked to approach a court for an order. The court may then direct the police to conduct an investigation on the complaint.

What is the difference between a complaint and an FIR?

- The CrPC defines a **"complaint"** as **"any allegation made orally or in writing to a**

Magistrate, with a view to his taking action under this Code, that some person, whether known or unknown, has committed an offence, but **does not include a police report.**"

- However, an FIR is the document that has been **prepared by the police after verifying the facts of the complaint**. The FIR may contain details of the crime and the alleged criminal.
- If, on the basis of a complaint, it appears that a cognizable offence has been committed, then an FIR under **Section 154 CrPC will be registered**, and police will open an investigation. If no offence is found, the police will close the inquiry.

[Source: IE](#)

Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan

For Prelims: Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan.

For Mains: Education and related schemes.

Why in News?

The Government has approved the scheme of [Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan \(RUSA\)](#) for continuation till 31st March, 2026 or till further review, whichever is earlier.

- The proposal entails an expenditure of Rs. 12929.16 crore out of which Central Share is Rs. 8120.97 crores and the State Share is of Rs. 4808.19 crores. It has been envisaged to support around 1600 projects under the new phase of the scheme.

What is RUSA?

- It is the [centrally sponsored scheme](#) launched in **October 2013** that aims at providing **strategic funding to higher education institutions** throughout the country.
- The **central funding** (in the ratio of 60:40 for general category States, 90:10 for special category states and 100% for union territories) is norm based and outcome dependent.
- The **funding flows from the Ministry of Education** through the state governments/union territories **to the State Higher Education Councils** before reaching the identified institutions.
 - The funding to states **would be made on the basis of critical appraisal of State Higher Education Plans**, which would describe each state's strategy to address issues of equity, access and excellence in higher education.

What is envisaged in the News Phase?

- New phase of RUSA targets to reach out the unserved, underserved areas, remote/ rural areas, difficult geographies, [LWE \(Left-Wing Extremism\)](#) areas, NER (North Eastern Region), [Aspirational Districts](#), tier-2 cities, areas with low [GER \(Gross enrolment ratio\)](#) etc., and to benefit the most disadvantaged areas and SEDGs (Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups).
- The new phase of the scheme has been designed to **implement some of the recommendations and aims of the [New Education Policy](#)**, which suggests some key changes to the current higher education system to revamp and re-energize it and thereby deliver quality higher education, with equity and inclusion.
- State Governments will be supported for **Gender inclusion, Equity Initiatives, ICT, Enhancing employability through vocationalisation & skill upgradation**.

- States will also be supported for creation of **new Model Degree Colleges**.
- State Universities will be supported for **Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research**.
- Grants will be provided for strengthening both accredited and non-accredited Universities and Colleges for undertaking various activities including teaching-learning in Indian languages.

What are the Objectives?

- Improve the overall quality of state institutions by conforming to the prescribed norms and standards.
- Adoption of accreditation (certification of competency) as a mandatory quality assurance framework.
- Promoting autonomy in state universities and improving governance in institutions.
- Ensure reforms in the affiliation, academic and examination system.
- Ensure adequate availability of quality faculty in all higher educational institutions and ensure capacity building at all levels of employment.
- Create an enabling atmosphere for research in the higher education system.
- Correct regional imbalances in access to higher education by setting up institutions in unserved and underserved areas.
- Improve equity in higher education by providing adequate opportunities to the disadvantaged.

[Source: PIB](#)

Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System Project

For Prelims: Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System, Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems, e-Forensics for e-Courts Courts, e-Prosecution, e-Prisons, National Crime Records Bureau, National Informatics Centre.

For Mains: Cyber Security, Role of Media & Social Networking Sites in Internal Security Challenges, Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System Project.

Why in News?

Recently, the central government approved the implementation of Phase II of the **Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System** (ICJS) project by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- It has been approved at a total cost of **Rs 3,375 crore during the period from 2022-23 to 2025-26**.
- Earlier in 2018, a [Supreme Court](#) panel had launched a pilot project in Telangana's Warangal district to [integrate two crucial pillars of the criminal justice delivery system- the courts and police stations](#).

What is ICJS?

- ICJS is a **national platform for enabling integration of the main IT system used for delivery of Criminal Justice** in the country.
- It seeks to **integrate the five pillars of the system** viz Police (through [Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems](#)), e-Forensics for Forensic Labs, [e-Courts](#) for Courts, e-Prosecution for Public Prosecutors and e-Prisons for Prisons.

- The ICJS system would be made available through a dedicated and secure cloud-based infrastructure with high speed connectivity.
- **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** will be responsible for the implementation of the project in association with **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
 - The project will be **implemented in collaboration with the States and Union Territories.**

What are the Different Phases of ICJS?

- In **Phase-I of the project**, individual IT systems have been implemented and stabilised even as search of records have been enabled on these systems.
- Under **Phase-II**, the system is being built on the principle of 'one data one entry' whereby data is entered only once in one pillar and the same is then available in all other pillars without the need to re-enter the data in each pillar.

What is the National Crime Records Bureau?

- NCRB, **headquartered in New Delhi, was set-up in 1986** under the Ministry of Home Affairs to function as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- It was set up based **on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the MHA's Task Force (1985).**
- NCRB brings out the annual comprehensive statistics of crime across the country ('Crime in India' report).
 - Having been published since 1953, the report serves as a crucial tool in understanding the law and order situation across the country.
- The inaugural function of the **2nd CCTNS Hackathon and Cyber Challenge 2020-21** of NCRB was held in New Delhi.

[Source: IE](#)

ISRO's Launch Vehicles

For Prelims: Launch Vehicles, Satellites.

For Mains: Space Technology.

Why in News?

Recently, the **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** launched an **Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-04)** along with two other smaller satellites into space using a **PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) rocket**. This was the 54th flight of the PSLV rocket.

What are Launch Vehicles and Satellites?

- The **rockets have powerful propulsion systems that generate the huge amount of energy required to lift heavy objects like satellites** into space, overcoming the gravitational pull of the earth.
- **Satellites** carry one or more instruments that do the scientific work for which they are sent into space. Their **operational life sometimes extends up to decades.**

- But **rockets, or launch vehicles, become useless after the launch.** Rockets' only job is to take the satellites to their intended orbits.
- **Rockets have several detachable energy-providing parts.**
 - They burn different kinds of fuels to power the rocket. Once their fuel is exhausted, they detach from the rocket and fall off, often burning off in the atmosphere due to air-friction, and getting destroyed.
 - Only a small part of the original rocket goes till the intended destination of the satellite. Once the satellite is finally ejected, **this last part of the rocket either becomes part of space debris, or once again burns off after falling into the atmosphere.**

What are the Types of Launch Vehicles?

- **For Lower Earth Orbits:**
 - Several satellites need to be deposited only in the **lower earth orbits, which starts from about 180 km from earth's surface and extends up to 2,000 km.**
 - Most of the earth-observation satellites, communication satellites, and even the **International Space Station**, a full-fledged laboratory in space that hosts astronauts, function in this space.
 - It takes a smaller amount of energy to take the satellites to low-earth orbits, and accordingly smaller, **less powerful, rockets are used for this purpose.**
- **For Higher Orbits:**
 - There are other satellites which need to go much deeper in space.
 - Geostationary satellites, for example, have to be deposited in orbits that are about 36,000 km from earth's surface.
 - The planetary exploration missions also need their rockets to leave them much deeper in space.
 - For such space missions, **much more powerful rockets are used.**
 - In general, there is a **trade-off between the weight of the satellite that needs to be launched, and the distance it needs to be taken to.** The same rocket can take smaller satellites much deeper into space compared to a heavier satellite.

What are the Launch vehicles used by ISRO?

Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The first rocket developed by ISRO was simply called SLV, or Satellite Launch Vehicle. ▪ It was followed by the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle or ASLV.
Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SLV and ASLV both could carry small satellites, weighing up to 150 kg, to lower earth orbits. ▪ ASLV operated till the early 1990s before PSLV came on the scene.
Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PSLV's first launch was in 1994, and it has been ISRO's main rocket ever since. Today, it is and several times more powerful than the ones used in the 1990s. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ It is the first Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages. ▪ PSLV is the most reliable rocket used by ISRO till date, with 52 of its 54 flights being successful. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ It successfully launched two spacecraft - Chandrayaan-1 in 2008 and Mars Orbiter Mission in 2013. Chandrayaan-1 later traveled to Moon and Mars respectively. ◦ ISRO currently uses two launch vehicles - PSLV and GSLV (Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle). There are lots of different variants of these.
Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GSLV is a much more powerful rocket, meant to carry heavier satellites much deeper into space. It has carried out 18 missions, of which four ended in failure. ▪ It can take 10,000-kg satellites to lower earth orbits. ▪ The indigenously developed Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS), forms the third stage of the rocket. ▪ Mk-III versions have made ISRO entirely self-sufficient for launching its satellites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Before this, it used to depend on the European Ariane launch vehicle to take satellites into space.
Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SSLV is targeted at rising global demand for the launch of small and micro-satellites. ▪ SSLV is meant to offer cost-effective launch services for satellites up to 500 kg. ▪ It is supposed to carry an indigenous earth observation satellite EOS-03 into space.
Reusable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The future rockets are meant to be reusable. Only a small part of the rocket would be reusable.

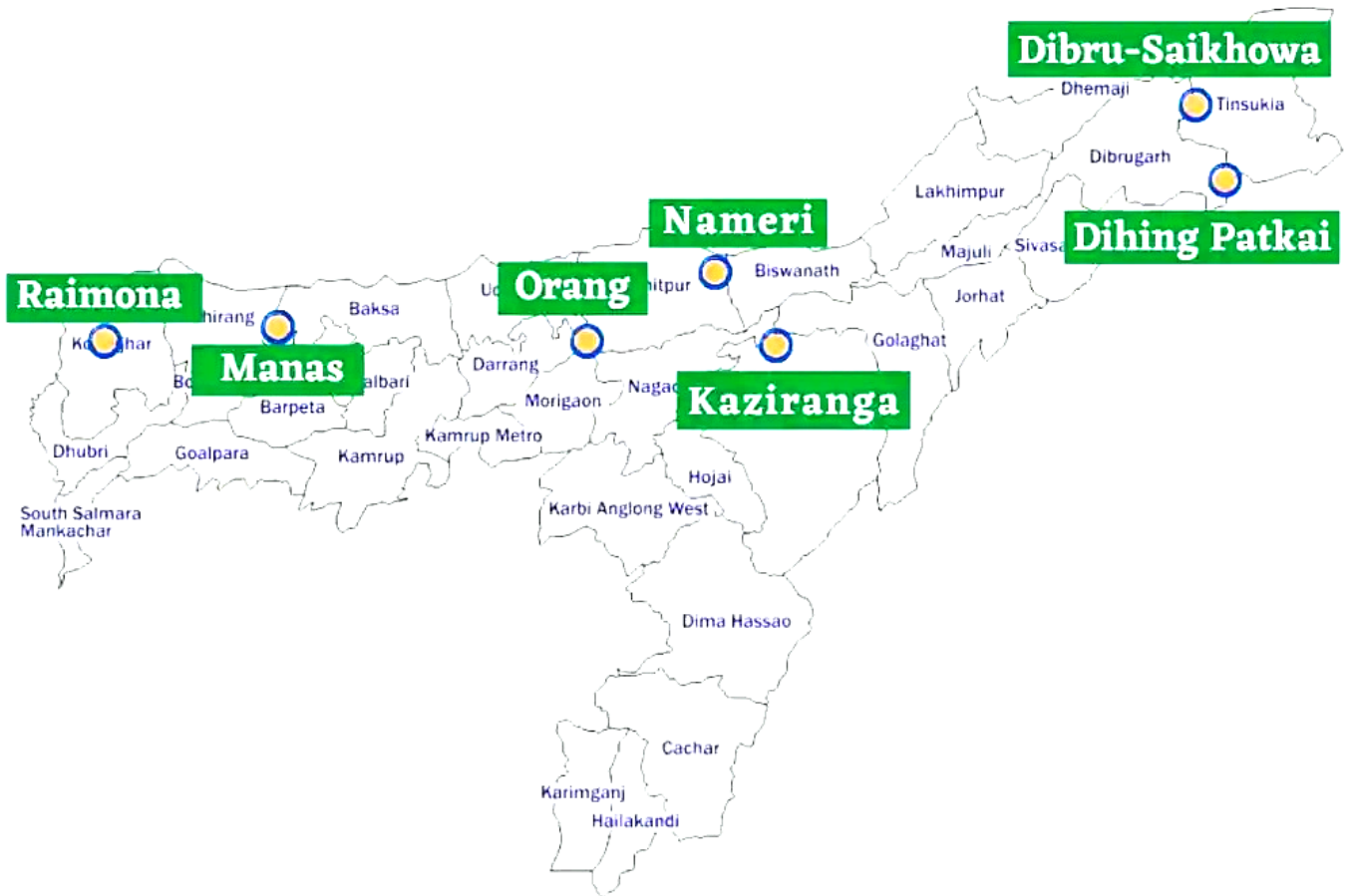
Rockets/ Future Rockets:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The bulk of it would re-enter the earth's atmosphere and land very much like missions.▪ Reusable rockets would cut down on costs and energy, and also reduce space debris problem because of the large number of launches.▪ Fully-reusable rockets are still to be developed, but partially-reusable launch vehicles are being developed.▪ ISRO has also developed a reusable rocket, called RLV-TD (Reusable Launch Vehicle) which has had a successful test flight in 2016.
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[Source: IE](#)

Greater One-Horned Rhino

Why in News?

Recently, a case of poaching of the world-famous one-horned rhino has been suspected inside the Kaziranga National Park in Assam.



7 NATIONAL PARKS IN ASSAM

- 6th : Raimona National Park (Notified in 2021)
- 7th : Dihing Patkai National Park (Notified in June 2021)

What are the Key Points related to One-Horned Rhino?

▪ **About:**

- There are **five species of rhino** - **white and black rhinos in Africa**, and the **greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran rhino species in Asia**.



- **IUCN Red List** Status:

- **Black Rhino**: Critically endangered. Smaller of the two African species.
- **White Rhino**: Near Threatened. Researchers have created an embryo of the northern white rhino by using In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) process.
- **One-Horned Rhino**: Vulnerable
- **Javan**: Critically Endangered
- **Sumatran Rhino**: Critically Endangered. It has gone extinct in Malaysia.
- Only the Great One-Horned Rhino **is found in India**.
- Also known as Indian rhino, it is the largest of the rhino species.
- It is identified by a **single black horn and a grey-brown** hide with skin folds.
- They primarily graze, with a diet consisting almost entirely of grasses as well as leaves, branches of shrubs and trees, fruit, and aquatic plants.

- **Habitat:**

- The species is restricted to small habitats in Indo-Nepal terai and northern West Bengal and Assam.
- In India, rhinos are mainly found in Assam, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.
- Assam has an estimated 2,640 rhinos in four protected areas, i.e. **Pabitora Wildlife Reserve**, Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, Kaziranga National Park, and **Manas National Park**.

- About 2,400 of them are in the **Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR)**.

- **Protection Status:**

- **IUCN Red List**: Vulnerable.
- **CITES**: Appendix I (Threatened with extinction and CITES prohibits international trade in specimens of these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial, for instance for scientific research).
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**: Schedule I.

- **Threats:**

- Poaching for the horns
- Habitat loss
- Population density
- Decreasing Genetic diversity.

What are the Conservation Efforts?

- The **five rhino range nations** (India, Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia) have signed a declaration 'The New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019' for the conservation and protection of the species.
- Recently, the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has begun a project to create **DNA profiles of all rhinos** in the country.
- **National Rhino Conservation Strategy**: It was launched in 2019 to conserve the greater one-horned rhinoceros.
- **Indian Rhino Vision 2020**: Launched in 2005, it was an ambitious effort to attain a wild

population of at least 3,000 greater one-horned rhinos spread over seven protected areas in the Indian state of Assam by the year 2020.

[Source: IE](#)

Army Tag for New Gecko

Why in News?

Recently, a team of **herpetologists** have recorded a new species of **bent-toed gecko** from a wooded part of the **Umroi Military Station in Meghalaya**.

- Its scientific name is *Cryptodactylus exercitus* and its English name is **Indian Army's bent-toed gecko**.
- Further, another new bent-toed gecko, the *Cryptodactylus siahaensis* named after Mizoram's Siaha district where it was found.
- A herpetologist is someone who specializes in the **study of reptiles and amphibians**.



What are Geckos?

- Geckos are **reptiles and are found on all the continents except Antarctica**.
- These colorful lizards have adapted to habitats from **rainforests, to deserts, to cold mountain slopes**.
- Over a long period of time, **geckos have developed special physical features** to help them survive and avoid predators.
- Gecko tails serve many purposes. They help balance their weight as they **climb branches**, they act as fuel tanks to **store fat, and as camouflage** to help them disappear into their environment.
 - Geckos are also able to shed their **tails if a predator grabs them**.
- Most geckos are **nocturnal**, which means they are active at night, but day geckos are active during the day and **nibble on insects, fruits, and flower nectar**.
- Most geckos make noises such as **chirping, barking, and clicking** when they are defending their territory or attracting a mate.
- There are many species of geckos. Depending on the species, their **endangered status can range from least concern to critically endangered**.

Source: TH

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