



Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

For Prelims: WTO, Ministerial Conference, India's Fisheries Sector, Special and Differential Treatment

For Mains: Significance of India's Fisheries Sector, Effects of Policies of International Groupings on India's Interest & Economy

Why in News?

Recently, **Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS)** was concluded at the [World Trade Organization \(WTO\) Ministerial meeting](#).

What is the WTO Ministerial Conference?

- **WTO:**
 - It came into being in **1995**.
 - The WTO is the successor to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** established in the wake of the Second World War.
 - Its objective is to **help trade flow smoothly, freely and predictably**.
 - It has **164 members**
- **WTO Ministerial Conference:**
 - It is the WTO's **top decision-making body** and usually **meets every two years**.
 - All members of the WTO are involved in the MC and they can take decisions on all matters covered under any multilateral trade agreements.

What do we know about the Agreement?

- **About:**
 - It will **prohibit subsidies** from being provided for **Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU)** fishing and overfished stocks.
 - The agreement also **prohibits** providing subsidies for **fishing** on high seas, which are **outside the jurisdiction of coastal countries and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations/ Arrangements**.
- **Transition Period Allowance:**
 - Under the [Special and Differential Treatment \(S&DT\)](#), Developing Countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) have been allowed a **transition period of two years** from the date of entry into force of this Agreement.
 - They will have **no obligation** to implement disciplines for the specified period.
- **Exempted Areas:**
 - **No prohibition** has been imposed on a WTO Member regarding granting or maintaining subsidy to its vessel or operator **as long as it is not carrying out IUU**.
 - **No prohibition** on providing subsidies has been imposed for fishing regarding **overfished stocks as long as such subsidies are implemented to rebuild the stock** to a biologically sustainable level.

▪ **Benefits:**

- It will **eliminate the subsidies** granted to fishing vessels or fishing operators engaged in IUU fishing.
- It will check **large-scale IUU fishing** which deprives coastal countries like India of fisheries resources, thereby significantly impacting the livelihoods of our fishing communities.

What is India's Stand?

- India is one of the **lowest fisheries subsidisers** despite such a large population and one of the **disciplined nations in sustainably harnessing the fisheries resources**.
- India **does not exploit the resources** indiscriminately like other advanced fishing nations and India's fisheries sector primarily depends on several millions of small-scale and traditional fishers.
 - Therefore, those WTO Members who have **provided huge subsidies in the past**, and engaged in large-scale industrial fishing, which is responsible for the depletion of fish stocks, should take more obligations to prohibit subsidies based on the **'polluter pay principle'** and **'common but differentiated responsibilities'**.

What do we know about India's Fisheries Sector?

▪ **About:**

- Fishing is the **capture of aquatic organisms in marine, coastal and inland areas**.
- Marine and inland fisheries, together with aquaculture, provide food, nutrition and a source of income to **millions of people around the world, from harvesting, processing, marketing and distribution**.
- For many it also forms part of their traditional cultural identity.
- One of the greatest threats to the sustainability of global fishery resources is **illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing**.

▪ **Indian Scenario:**

- India is the **second largest fish producing country in the world** accounting for 7.56% of global production and contributing about 1.24% to the country's **Gross Value Added (GVA)** and over 7.28% to the agricultural GVA.
- Fisheries and aquaculture continue to be an **important source of food, nutrition, income and livelihood to millions of people**
- India aims to achieve a target of producing 22 million metric tonnes of fish by 2024-25.
- The fisheries sector has witnessed three major transformations in the last few years:
 - The growth of inland aquaculture, specifically freshwater aquaculture.
 - The mechanization of capture fisheries.
 - The successful commencement of brackish water shrimp aquaculture.

▪ **Related Government Initiatives:**

◦ **Fishing Harbours:**

- The development of five major **Fishing Harbours** (Kochi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Paradip, Petuaghat) as hubs of economic activity.

◦ **Seaweed Park:**

- **Multipurpose seaweed park in Tamil Nadu** would be the center of production for quality **seaweed**-based products, developed on a hub and spoke model.

◦ **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana:**

- It strives to create direct **employment** to 15 lakh fishers, fish farmers, etc. and about thrice this number as indirect employment opportunities.
- It also aims to double the incomes of fishers, fish farmers and fish workers by 2024.

◦ **Palk Bay Scheme:**

- The Scheme, **"Diversification of Trawl Fishing Boats from Palk Straits into Deep Sea Fishing Boats"** was launched in 2017 as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.
 - It was launched as part of the umbrella **Blue Revolution Scheme**.

◦ **Marine Fisheries Bill, 2021:**

- The Bill proposes to only grant licenses to vessels registered under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, to fish in the **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. The terms 'Agreement on Agriculture', 'Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures' and 'Peace Clause' appear in the news frequently in the context of the affairs of the (2015)

- (a) Food and Agriculture Organization
- (b) United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change
- (c) World Trade Organization
- (d) United Nations Environment Programme

Ans: (c)

Explanation:

- The terms 'Agreement on Agriculture', 'Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures' and 'Peace Clause' are associated with World Trade Organization (WTO):
 - The WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) provides a framework for the long-term reform of agricultural trade and domestic policies with the aim of leading to fairer competition and a less distorted sector.
 - The WTO's Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) aims to provide the balance between the right of governments to protect food safety, plant and animal health, and prevent these sanitary and phytosanitary measures from being unjustified trade barriers.
 - Peace Clause holds that domestic support measures and export subsidies of a WTO member, which are legal under the provisions of the Agreement on Agriculture cannot be challenged by other WTO members on grounds of being illegal under the provisions of another WTO agreement.
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. What are the key areas of reform if the WTO has to survive in the present context of 'Trade War', especially keeping in mind the interest of India? (2018)

Source: PIB

5G & Fiberisation

For Prelims: 5G, Fiberisation, Components of Optical Fibre, Related Government Initiatives

For Mains: Significance of Internet in Economy, Evolution of Internet, Challenges in Fiberisation, Government's Initiative

Why in News?

India is preparing to auction off airwaves to rollout **5G** services in the country.

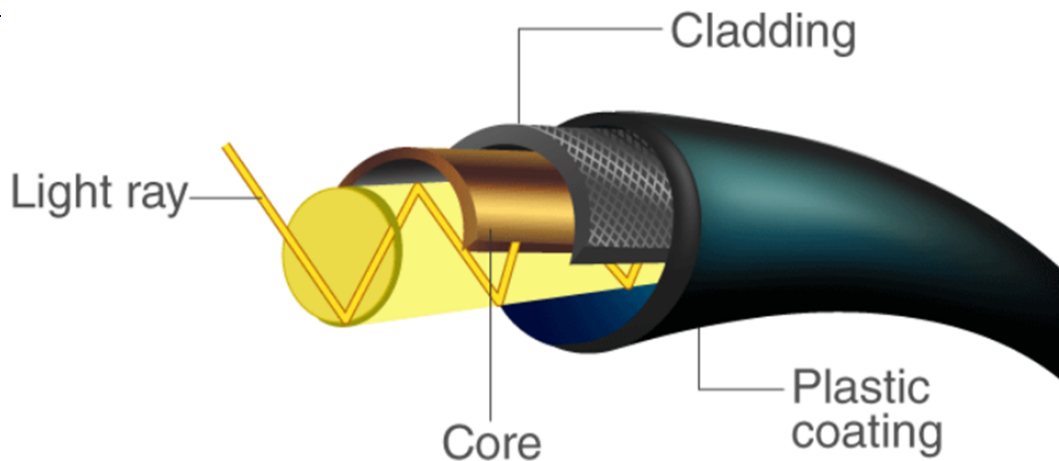
- The infrastructure needed for such a rollout requires existing radio towers to be connected via **optical-fibre cables**.

What do we know about Optical Fibre?

▪ About:

- Optical fibre is the **backbone of the digital infrastructure** — the data is transmitted by **light pulses travelling through long strands of thin fibre**.
- **Metal wires** are preferred for transmission in optical fibre communication as **signals travel with fewer damages**.
 - The optical fibre works on the principle of **total internal reflection (TIR)**.
- **Light rays** can be used to transmit a huge amount of data (In case of long straight wire **without any bend**).
 - In case of a bend, the optical cables are designed such that **they bend all the light rays inwards (using TIR)**.

//



▪ Benefits:

- **High Speed:**
 - Fiber provides **more bandwidth** and has standardized performance up to 10 Gbps and beyond, something that it is **impossible to achieve when using copper**.
 - More bandwidth means that fiber can **carry more information with far greater efficiency** than copper wire.
- **Range of Transmission:**
 - Since data travels in the form of light in fiber-optic cables, **very little signal loss occurs during transmission** and data can move at higher speeds and greater distances.
- **Not susceptible to interference:**
 - Fiber-optic cable is also much **less susceptible to noise and electromagnetic interference than copper wire**.
 - It is so efficient, in fact, that **roughly 99.7% of the signal reaches the router in most cases**.
- **Durability:**
 - Fiber-optic cable is **completely immune to many environmental factors** that affect copper cable.
 - The core is made of **glass, which is an insulator, so no electric current can flow through**.

What do we mean by Fiberisation?

- **About:**
 - The process of **connecting radio towers with each other via optical fibre cables** is called fiberisation.
 - The backhaul is a component of the **larger transport that is responsible for carrying data across the network.**
 - It represents the part of the network that **connects the core of the network to the edge.**
 - It is necessary to **increase the density of mobile towers** to provide better coverage to consumers and businesses.
- **Challenges in Fiberisation:**
 - **Resources:**
 - To reach the targeted level of fiberisation, **India requires about Rs 2.2 lakh crore of investment to help fiberise 70% towers.**
 - About Rs 2.5 lakh crore will be needed to set up **15 lakh towers in the next four years.**
 - **Demand:**
 - Government programmes like [BharatNet](#) and [Smart Cities](#) adds to the demand of **fibre deployment**, necessitating a **complete tower fiberisation.**
 - India laid out the vision in 2020 to **connect every village in the country with optical fiber cable (OFC) in 1,000 days.**
 - To achieve that vision, cables must be laid at a **speed of 1,251 km a day, around 3.6 times the current average speed of 350 km a day.**
 - **Right to Way (RoW) Rules:**
 - [The Indian Telegraph RoW Rules 2016](#) were gazette notified by the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Govt. of India** in 2016.
 - The rules aim to incorporate nominal **one-time compensation and uniform procedure** for establishment of **Overground Telegraph Line (OTL)** anywhere in the country.
 - While all States/UTs are required to implement these rules, **they are not in complete alignment** and still require certain amendments to align.
 - Several districts and local bodies **have not agreed to the RoW policies** as notified in those respective States and are following **their own bylaws** overriding the State RoW policies aligned with the RoW rules, 2016.

What is India's Status in Fiberisation?

- To transition into 5G, India needs at least **16 times more fibre, according to estimates by STL**, a technology company specialised in optical fibers and cables.
- India at present connects **only 30% of India's telecom towers.**
 - India **exported optical fibre worth USD138 million to over 132 countries** between April 2020 and November 2021.
 - Indian optical fibre cable consumption is **predicted to increase to 33 million fibre km by 2026 from 17 million fibre km in 2021.**
 - A little more than 30% of mobile towers have fibre connectivity; **this needs to be scaled up to at least 80%.**
- The **fibre kilometer (fkm)** per capita in India is **lower than other key markets.**
 - Ideally, a country needs **1.3 km of fibre per capita to ensure good fiberisation.**
 - India's fkm is just **0.09 compared to 1.35 in Japan, 1.34 in the U.S. and 1.3 in China.**
- These tower sites which are connected via fibre are called **fibre point of presence (POP).**
 - Currently these fibre POPs at a tower site can handle **data at one to five Gbps speed.**

How can Satellite Communication assist in 5G Deployment?

- As **Processing power needs to be distributed from centralised data centres to edge servers closer to users**, Satellite communication can provide **high-capacity backhaul**

connectivity to large numbers of edge servers over wide areas.

- It can facilitate 5G broadband connectivity to **underserved areas where it is not feasible to deploy terrestrial infrastructure like remote villages, islands or mountainous regions.**
- **Satellite-based networks** are the **only means for delivering 5G broadband to users on board moving vessels**, including cars, ships, airplanes and high-speed trains.
 - Space-based broadcast capabilities support **over-the-air software updates** for connected cars anywhere in the world.

Way Forward

- **Production-Linked Incentive:**
 - In order to **boost domestic manufacturing of optical fibre**, the government should consider introducing a **PLI** scheme that aims to give companies **incentives on incremental sales** from optical fibre manufactured in domestic units.
- **Right to Way (RoW) Rules:**
 - **GatiShakti Sanchar online portal** can enable centralisation of RoW approvals for telecom infrastructure projects, including 5G and help operators to deploy required infrastructure for the upcoming 5G rollout in a timely manner.
 - Recently, DoT revised the RoW rules, making it easier to install aerial optical fibre cable in the country.
 - This can enable infrastructure providers to deploy cables overhead via street light poles and traffic light posts.
- There is also a need to increase data capacity in the fiberised towers.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. The emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of government. Discuss. **(2020)**

[Source: TH](#)

Abortion Law in India

For Prelims: Abortion Law, Medical Termination of Pregnancy MTP (2021)

For Mains: Medical Termination of Pregnancy MTP Act (2021) and its Significance

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court of India allowed an unmarried woman to end her pregnancy** at 24 weeks, after the Delhi High Court refused to allow it, citing the provisions of the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act**.

What was Delhi High Court's Position?

- It taken the view that she was unmarried and since the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act allowed only married women to terminate the pregnancy after 20 weeks, she would not be eligible

to get an abortion,

- It mentioned **Rule 3B of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Rules, 2003**, as it **speaks of change in marital status of woman, as the woman was in a live-in relationship and was not married.**

What was Supreme Court's Ruling?

- It took an expansive view of the issue and interpreted MTP Act 2021, **as the word partner instead of husband**, exhibiting the intention of the **law of the land to not confine it to only marital relationships.**
- It also said that the petitioner **cannot be denied the benefit of the law, on the ground that she was unmarried**, and that doing so would be contrary to the **'object and spirit' of the legislation.**
- Further, the bench directed the **director of the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to set up a medical board** of two doctors to examine the woman (as per the provisions of the MTP Act) to determine if it was safe and not a risk to the life of the mother to terminate the pregnancy.
 - If it is their opinion that it is safe to do so, then AIIMS can conduct the procedure on her.

What is India's Abortion Law?

- **Historical Perspective:**
 - Until the 1960s, **abortion was illegal in India** and a woman could face three years of imprisonment and/or a fine under **Section 312 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).**
 - It was in the mid-1960s that the government set up the **Shantilal Shah Committee** and asked the group, headed by **Dr Shantilal Shah**, to look into the matter of abortions and decide if India needed a law for the same.
 - Based on the report of the Shantilal Shah Committee, a **medical termination bill** was introduced in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and was passed by Parliament in August 1971.
 - The [Medical Termination of Pregnancy \(MTP\) Act, 1971](#) came into force on 1st of April 1972 and applied to all of India except the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - Also, **Section 312** of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, **criminalises voluntarily "causing miscarriage"** even when the miscarriage is with the pregnant woman's consent, except when the miscarriage is caused to save the woman's life.
 - This means that the woman herself, or anyone else including a medical practitioner, could be prosecuted for an abortion.
- **About:**
 - [Medical Termination of Pregnancy \(MTP\) Act, 1971](#) act allowed pregnancy **termination by a medical practitioner in two stages:**
 - A single **doctor's opinion was necessary for abortions up to 12 weeks after conception.**
 - For pregnancies **between 12 to 20 weeks old, the opinion of two doctors** was required to determine if the continuance of the pregnancy would **involve a risk to the life of the pregnant woman or of grave injury to her physical or mental health** or if there is a **substantial risk** that if the child were born, it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously "handicapped" before agreeing to terminate the woman's pregnancy.
- **Recent Amendments:**
 - In **2021, Parliament altered the law** to allow for abortions based on the **advice of one doctor for pregnancies up to 20 weeks.**
 - The modified law needs the **opinion of two doctors for pregnancies between 20 and 24 weeks.**
 - Further, **for pregnancies between 20 and 24 weeks, rules specified seven categories of women who would be eligible for seeking termination under section 3B of rules prescribed under the MTP Act,**
 - Survivors of sexual assault or rape or incest,
 - Minors,
 - Change of marital status during the ongoing pregnancy (widowhood and divorce),

- Women with physical disabilities [major disability as per criteria laid down under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
- Mentally ill women including mental retardation,
- The foetal malformation that has a substantial risk of being incompatible with life or if the child is born it may suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities to be seriously handicapped, and
- Women with pregnancy in humanitarian settings or disasters or emergencies may be declared by the Government.

What are the issues related to the MTP Act?

- While the law recognizes changes in a pregnant woman's marital status with her spouses — such as divorce and widowhood — **it does not address the situation for unmarried women.**
- It is a highly regulated procedure whereby the law transfers the decision-making power from the pregnant woman to the **Recognized Medical Practitioner (RMP)** and provides great discretion to the RMP to determine whether abortion should be provided or not.

Way Forward

- India's legal framework on abortion is largely considered progressive, especially in comparison to many countries including the United States where abortion restrictions are severely restricted — both historically, and at present.
- Further, there is a need for a serious rethink in public policy making, also accommodating all the stakeholders to focus on women and their reproductive rights, rather than drawing red lines those medical practitioners cannot cross while performing abortions.

[Source: TH](#)

NEET & Tamil Nadu's Protest

For Prelims: NEET, Powers of Centre and State

For Mains: Consequences of States breaking Central Law

Why in News?

The legal fight against NEET continues to this day for Tamil Nadu since the [Supreme Court](#) refusal to grant further exemption from NEET in 2017.

What do we need to know about NEET?

- **About:**
 - [The National Eligibility Entrance Test \(NEET\)](#), formerly the **All India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT)**, is the qualifying test for **MBBS** and **BDS** programmes in **Indian medical and dental colleges**.
 - It is conducted by the [National Testing Agency \(NTA\)](#).
- **History:**
 - **The Medical Council of India (MCI)** (since replaced by the [National Medical Commission](#)) had mooted the NEET in 2009.
 - The following year the MCI had issued a notification to regulate **MBBS and BDS**

admissions in the country through a common entrance test.

- In 2013, the Supreme Court had **struck down the NEET** as **unconstitutional** and ruled that the **MCI had no powers** to issue notifications to regulate admissions in medical/dental colleges.
- In April 2016, a **five judge bench** headed by Justice Anil. R. Dave (who delivered the dissenting verdict in 2013), recalled its 2013 judgment and eventually **mandated the conduct of NEET**.
- Following requests from certain stakeholders, the **Union Government promulgated an ordinance** in May 2016 **exempting** State-run medical colleges from the ambit of the Supreme Court mandate for a year.
- NEET was introduced across the country based on a Supreme Court ruling in 2016.
 - The Tamil Nadu government vociferously opposed the entrance test from the beginning and initially got exemption from NEET-based admissions.

Why is Tamil Nadu Against NEET?

- Tamil Nadu constituted a **committee** headed by retired **High Court** judge **Justice A. K. Rajan** to study the effects of the NEET-based admission process.
 - **Justice A. K. Rajan reported that:**
 - Introduction of NEET as sole criterion for admissions into medical colleges has **adversely affected the share of seats** that were historically enjoyed by students who passed the **Tamil Nadu Board of Secondary Examination (TNBSE)**.
 - It worked to the advantage of the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** students.
 - Majority of students, who got admitted in medical colleges post-NEET, had gone for **coaching**.
 - Coaching focuses only on **preparing students to answer questions asked in the particular exam** as opposed to learning a subject.
 - NEET was introduced to ensure that **only meritorious students seeking medical seats get admission** into medical colleges as well as end the practice of collecting capitation fees, which stoked corruption.
 - However, it **assumes** that all aspirants are competing from the same position and with the same constraints.
 - **The Rajan report highlights this as a flawed approach.**
 - **Politicians argue that:**
 - The percentage of students gaining medical college admission from repeat attempts at NEET **rose from 12.47% in 2016-17 to 71.42% in 2020-21**.
 - Taking the **test for a second or third time** to try and get the coveted medical seat calls for financial and social resources.
 - This is way beyond the reach of families from poorer social backgrounds.

What are the possible Challenges in NEET?

- **Coaching Industry:**
 - The NEET **overshadows students' efforts** in their higher secondary education and has been known to **spawn multi-billion dollar coaching centres**.
 - It has **shifted the focus** more on cracking the **'be-all-end-all'** examination instead of mastering the subjects at the higher secondary level.
- **Conduct:**
 - There have been **discrepancies in the conduct** of NEET with cases of impersonation being reported.
 - Even in the NEET examination conducted recently, the **CBI** unearthed an impersonation racket and arrested eight persons.
 - Such racketeering challenges the very concept of merit.
- **Economic Inequality:**
 - While it has ensured **merit-based admissions in state-run institutions** where the fees

are affordable.

- In deemed universities and private colleges, students with poor NEET scores with rich economical backgrounds continue to edge out meritorious aspirants belonging to poor, lower- and middle-class families.

What is the Current Status of the Issue?

- **The President** refused **assent** to two Bills adopted by the **Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly** unanimously in 2017 **seeking exemption from NEET-based admissions** for undergraduate and postgraduate degree medical courses.
- In 2021, a **fresh Bill to admit students for MBBS/BDS courses only on the basis of their class XII board examination** scores was adopted by the Legislative Assembly.
 - In February 2022, after the **Bill was returned by the Governor**, the Bill was **readopted** by the House and sent back to the Governor.
 - The Bill has since been forwarded to the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** for Presidential assent.
 - The **Minister of State for Home Affairs** informed the **Lok Sabha** that clarification has been sought from the Tamil Nadu Government on the Bill seeking to dispense with the NEET.
 - **The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of AYUSH** had furnished comments on the Bill which have been shared with the state government of Tamil Nadu for their comments and clarifications.

[Source: TH](#)

Monkeypox

For Prelims: Viral zoonosis, Monkey Pox, Small Pox

For Mains: Zoonotic Diseases, Health

Why in News?

Recently, the [WHO \(World Health Organisation\)](#) has Declared Global Health Emergency and sounded the highest alarm on the [Monkeypox Virus](#).

- More than 16,000 cases of the virus - that was once largely confined to Africa - have been reported so far this year 2022.

What does Declaring an Emergency for Global Health Mean?

- **About:**
 - Declaring a global emergency means the **monkeypox outbreak is an “extraordinary event”** that could spill over into more countries and requires a coordinated global response.
- **Elements helped consider Health Emergency:**
 - The virus has spread to **“non-endemic countries”**. This virus has spread rapidly to many countries that have not seen it before.
 - Three criteria for **declaring a public health emergency of international concern have been met** as per WHO.

- The three criteria for such a declaration are that it is an **"Extraordinary Event," that it "Constitutes a Public Health Risk" to other States** through the international spread of disease and that it **"potentially requires a coordinated international response."**
 - The number - within a month - has **grown five-fold.**
 - Scientific principles, evidence and other relevant information, are currently insufficient, leaving many unknowns.
 - The risk to **human health, international spread, and the potential for interference with international traffic.**
- **Previously Declared Emergency:**
 - WHO previously declared emergencies for public health crises such as the [Covid-19 pandemic](#), the 2014 [West African Ebola outbreak](#), the [Zika virus in Latin America in 2016](#) and the ongoing effort to eradicate [Polio](#).
 - The emergency declaration mostly **serves as a plea to draw more global resources and attention to an outbreak.**

What is Monkeypox?

- **About:**
 - Monkeypox is a [viral zoonotic disease](#) with symptoms similar to smallpox, although with less clinical severity.
 - The infection was **first discovered in 1958 following two outbreaks of a pox-like disease in colonies of monkeys** kept for research — which led to the name 'monkeypox'.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Infected people break out in a rash that looks a lot like chicken pox. But the fever, malaise, and headache from Monkeypox are usually more severe than in chicken pox infection.
 - In the early stage of the disease, **Monkeypox can be distinguished from smallpox because the lymph gland gets enlarged.**
- **Transmission:**
 - Primary infection is through direct contact with the blood, bodily fluids, or cutaneous or mucosal lesions of an infected animal. Eating inadequately cooked meat of infected animals is also a risk factor.
 - Human-to-human transmission can result from close contact with infected respiratory tract secretions, skin lesions of an infected person or objects recently contaminated by patient fluids or lesion materials.
 - Transmission can also occur by inoculation or via the placenta (congenital monkeypox).
- **Vulnerability:**
 - It spreads rapidly and can cause one out of ten deaths if infected.
- **Treatment and Vaccine:**
 - There is no specific treatment or vaccine available for Monkeypox infection,
 - But the [European Union](#) has recommended a [Small Pox Vaccine, Imvanex](#) to **treat** monkeypox after the WHO declared monkeypox a global health emergency.

Monkeypox: What you need to know



The monkeypox virus is endemic in parts of Central and West Africa. It is similar to smallpox, but less severe

SYMPTOMS

Fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes. It typically appear in six to 13 days, but can take three weeks to show, and can last for

two to four weeks.

HOW INFECTIOUS IS IT

■ The virus spreads mainly through body fluids, skin contact and respiratory droplets.

■ Some experts suggest it could occasionally be airborne

■ Newborn infants, children and people with underlying immune deficiencies may be at risk of more serious symptoms

HOW DOES IT SPREAD

The likelihood of the virus being spread during sexual contact is high

IS IT FATAL

Yes, but in a small percentage of cases.

CASES SO FAR

INDIA

3 cases,
all in Kerala

GLOBALLY

Over 16,000 cases in
75 countries

DEATHS

Five, all in
Africa

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Critically examine the role of WHO in providing global health security during the Covid-19 pandemic. (2020)

Karakoram Anomaly

Why in News?

Recently, a study investigated why glaciers in the [Karakoram Range](#) of **Central-South Asia** have not been as affected by [Climate Change](#) as others.

- They have attributed this phenomenon called [Karakoram Anomaly](#) to the recent revival of **Western Disturbances (WDs)**.

What is Karokoram Anomaly?

- The '**Karakoram Anomaly**' is termed as the **stability or anomalous growth of glaciers in the central Karakoram**, in contrast to the retreat of glaciers in other nearby mountainous ranges of Himalayas and other mountainous ranges of the world.

What are the Key Findings of the study?

- It is for the **first time that a study brought forth the importance that enhanced western Disturbance (WD)**-precipitation input during the accumulation period plays in modulating regional climatic anomalies.
 - Previous studies have **highlighted the role of temperature in establishing** and sustaining the anomaly over the years
- [Western Disturbances \(WDs\)](#) are the primary feeder of snowfall for the region during winters.
- The study suggests they **constitute about around 65% of the total seasonal snowfall volume and about 53% of the total seasonal precipitation**, easily making them the most important source of moisture.
- Further, the **precipitation intensity of WDs** impacting Karakoram has **increased by around 10% in the last two decades**, which only enhances their role in sustaining the regional anomaly.

What is Karakoram Range?

- The Karakoram are part of a complex of mountain ranges at the centre of Asia, including the HinduKush to the west, the Pamirs to the northwest, the Kunlun Mountains to the northeast, and the Himalayas to the southeast.
- The Karakoram cover parts of Afghanistan, China, India, Pakistan, and Tajikistan.



What is the Importance of Himalayan Glaciers?

- **Himalayan glaciers** are of paramount importance in the Indian context, especially for the millions of dwellers living downstream who **rely on these perennial rivers for their day-to-day water needs**.
- They are fast receding under the impacts of **global warming**, and stifling stress on the water resources is inevitable in the coming decades.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q Siachen Glacier is situated to the (2020)

- (a) East of Aksai Chin
- (b) East of Leh
- (c) North of Gilgit
- (d) North of Nubra Valley

Ans: (d)

EXP:

- The Siachen Glacier is located in the **Eastern Karakoram range in the Himalayas**, just northeast of Point NJ9842 where the Line of Control between India and Pakistan ends.
- It has the distinction of being the largest glacier outside the polar and subpolar regions.
- It **lies to the west of Aksai Chin, north of Nubra valley**, and almost east of Gilgit. Therefore, **option (d) is the correct answer**.

Source: PIB

India - Japan Maritime Exercise

Why in News?

Recently, a **Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)** was conducted between **Japan Maritime Self Defense Force** and [Indian Navy](#) in the [Andaman Sea](#).

- **Other Maritime Exercises between India & Japan:**
 - [Japan-India Maritime Exercise \(JIMEX\)](#)
 - [Malabar Exercise](#) (India - US - Japan - Australia)



What do we need to know about the Exercise?

- **About:**
 - The exercises were aimed at enhancing **interoperability and streamlining seamanship and communication procedures**.
 - This exercise is part of the ongoing efforts between the two navies towards ensuring **safe and secure international shipping and trade in the [Indian Ocean Region \(IOR\)](#)**.
 - The two countries have been carrying out regular exercises in IOR towards reinforcing maritime association.
- **Participants:**
 - **INS Sukanya**, an offshore patrol vessel of the Indian Navy.
 - The **Sukanya class patrol vessels are large, offshore patrol craft**.
 - Three lead ships were built by **Korea Tacoma, now part of Hanjin Group**.
 - Vessels of the Sukanya class are **named after notable women from Indian epics**.
 - The Sukanya class have **large hulls**, although they are **lightly armed** since they are utilized primarily for offshore patrol of India's [exclusive economic zone](#).
 - **JS Samidare**, a Murasame class destroyer of Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force.
 - JS Samidare (DD-106) is the **sixth ship of the Murasame-class destroyer of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF)**.
- **Activities:**

- Seamanship activities, aircraft operations and tactical manoeuvres as part of the operational interaction.

What are India's other Maritime Exercises?

- **Thailand:**
 - [India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol](#) (Indo-Thai CORPAT)
- **United Kingdom:**
 - [Konkan - Shakti](#)
- **Indonesia:**
 - [Samudra Shakti](#)
- **Singapore:**
 - [Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise](#) (SIMBEX)
- **Qatar:**
 - [Zair-Al-Bahr](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following in respect of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS): (2017)

1. Inaugural IONS was held in India in 2015 under the chairmanship of the Indian Navy.
2. IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Explanation:

- The 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposium' (IONS) is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral States of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It provides a forum to increase maritime security cooperation, and promote friendly relationships among the member nations.
- The inaugural IONS-2008 was held in New Delhi, India in February, 2008. The Chief of the Naval Staff, Indian Navy was designated as the Chairman of IONS for the period 2008-10. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. The time has come for India and Japan to build a strong contemporary relationship, one involving global and strategic partnership that will have a great significance for Asia and the world as a whole'. Comment. (2019)

[Source: PIB](#)

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/25-07-2022/print>