



Initiatives on 75th Independence Day

Why in News

Commemorating the **75th Independence Day**, Prime Minister announced a slew of measures/initiatives and called for **making the next 25 years a glorious one for India**.

- A day before Independence day, the Prime minister also declared 14th August would now be observed as **Partition Horrors Remembrance Day**.

Key Points

▪ Gati Shakti Master Plan:

- It is a Rs.100 lakh-crore project for **developing 'holistic infrastructure'**.
- It will help **raise the global profile of local manufacturers** and help them compete with their counterparts worldwide. It also **raises possibilities of new future [economic zones](#)**.
- It will be a **source of employment** opportunities for the youth in future.

▪ National Hydrogen Mission:

- The **[National Hydrogen Mission](#)** and the **[green hydrogen](#)** sector will give India a quantum jump in meeting its climate targets.
 - **Green hydrogen** is produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using an electrolyzer powered by electricity from renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.
- It will also **help India to become energy independent**. Today India spends over Rs 12 lakh crore on importing energy.

▪ Rice Fortification Plan:

- The rice distributed under various government schemes will be **fortified** by 2024. It includes the **[Public Distribution System \(PDS\)](#)**, **[Mid-Day Meals](#)** in schools and **[Integrated Child Development Scheme \(ICDS\)](#)**.
- It is a significant initiative as the country has high levels of malnutrition among women and children.
 - According to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, **every second woman in the country is [anaemic](#)** and **every third child is stunted**.
 - India ranks 94 out of 107 countries and is in the 'serious hunger' category on the **[Global Hunger Index \(GHI\)](#)**.
- Six states, including Maharashtra and Gujarat, **have started distributing [fortified rice](#) as part of the pilot scheme**.
 - Food fortification or enrichment is the process of **adding micronutrients to food**.

▪ Vande Bharat Trains:

- 75 **[Vande Bharat' trains](#)** will connect different parts of the country in 75 weeks to mark the ongoing '**Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**'.
- Vande Bharat, the **indigenous semi-high speed train** set, is being given a boost, with

the Railways gearing to roll out at least 10 of them, linking around 40 cities, by August 2022 to commemorate 75 years of Independence.

▪ **Sainik Schools for Girls:**

- All Sainik Schools in the country will now be open for girls also. At present, 33 **Sainik schools are operating in the country.**
- Sainik schools are **run by the Sainik Schools Society which is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence.**
- The aim of establishing Sainik schools was **to prepare the students from an early age for their entry into the Indian armed forces.**

▪ **E-commerce platform for Self-Help Groups:**

- This digital platform will **connect the products of women [Self-Help Groups](#) with people in far flung areas of the country as well as abroad** and it will have far-reaching consequences.
- The government will create an e-commerce platform to ensure a huge market in the country and abroad for their products.
 - More than eight crore women in the villages are associated with Self-Help Groups and they design top-end products.

▪ **Partition Horrors Remembrance Day:**

- **14th August** would now be observed as **Partition Horrors Remembrance Day.**
- This day will remind Indians of the **need to remove the poison of social divisions, disharmony** and further **strengthen the spirit of oneness, social harmony and human empowerment.**

[Source: IE](#)

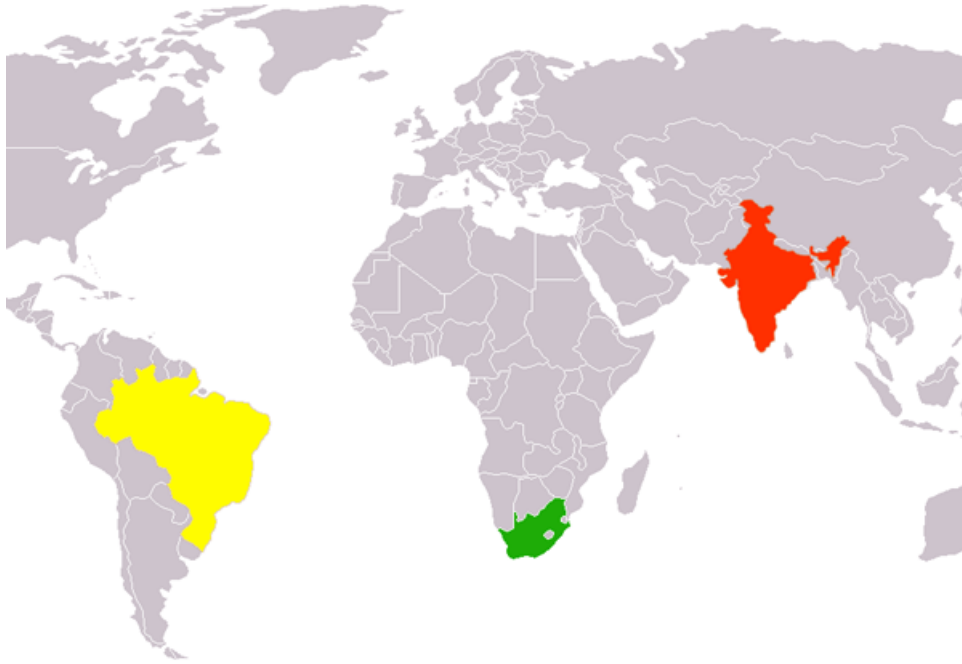
IBSA Forum

Why in News

Recently, India organized the **IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa)** Tourism Ministers' virtual meeting.

- **India is the current IBSA Chair.**

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Key Points

▪ About:

- The IBSA is a **trilateral, developmental initiative** between **India, Brazil and South Africa to promote South-South cooperation and exchange.**
- The idea of South-South Cooperation (SSC) is not new. Its genesis can be traced back to the decades of efforts by countries and groupings working together to ensure South-South solidarity such as **Bandung conference 1955, Non-Aligned Movement 1961, G77 grouping, UNCTAD, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action 1978, and the 2009 Nairobi declaration.**

▪ Formation:

- The grouping was formalized and named the **IBSA Dialogue Forum** when the **Foreign Ministers of the three countries** met in Brasilia (Brazil) **on 6th June 2003** and issued the **Brasilia Declaration.**

▪ Headquarters:

- IBSA **does not** have a **headquarters or a permanent executive secretariat.**
- At the highest level, it counts on the **Summits of Heads of State and Government.**
 - So far Five IBSA Leadership Summits have been held. The 5th IBSA Summit was held in Pretoria (South Africa) in 2011. The 6th IBSA Summit is to be hosted by India.

▪ Joint Naval Exercise:

- **IBSAMAR (IBSA Maritime Exercise)** is an important part of IBSA trilateral defence cooperation.
- Six editions of IBSAMAR have been held so far, the latest one being off the coast of South Africa in October, 2018.

▪ IBSA Fund:

- **Established in 2004, IBSA Fund (India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation)** is a unique Fund through which development projects are executed with IBSA funding in fellow developing countries.
- The fund is **managed by the United Nations (UN) Office for South-South**

Cooperation (UNOSSC). Each IBSA member **country is required to contribute \$1 million per annum** to the fund.

◦ **Objectives:**

- To **alleviate poverty and hunger** in nations of the South;
- To **develop best practices in the fight against poverty and hunger** by facilitating the execution of replicable and scalable projects in interested countries of the global south;
- To pioneer and lead by example the **South-South cooperation agenda**;
- To **build new partnerships** for development.

▪ **IBSA Fellowship Programme:**

- It focuses on **multilateral institutional frameworks** to coordinate, support and **enable sustainable development globally**; joint research for cooperation and exchange of information in the fields of macro-economy, trade and development; and any other area as may be found of interest within the IBSA framework.

▪ **Performance So Far:**

◦ **Relevance in the wake of the emergence of BRICS:**

- The grouping faces a **fundamental challenge** to maintain its relevance in the wake of the emergence of similar groupings such as **BRICS** (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).
- IBSA has been unable, until now, to hold its sixth summit.

◦ **Execution of Human Development Projects:**

- Over the years, the **fund has contributed \$39 million and partnered in 19 countries** from global South to implement 26 projects.
- Projects have been funded in countries such as Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde, Burundi, Cambodia, Haiti, Palestine, Vietnam and others.
- The fund has also been **recognised for its good work in the field** and has received UN South-South Partnership award 2006, UN MDG (Millennium Development Goals) award 2010, and the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Champions award in 2012.

▪ **Opportunities:**

◦ **In the Emergence of BRICS:**

- Working collectively towards ensuring the **MERCOSUR -SACU-India Trilateral PTA (Preferential trade Agreement) first**, and eventually a Free Trade Area (FTA), will go a long way in ensuring the grouping's relevance. (**MERCOSUR for Brazil & SACU for South Africa**).

- The **Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR for its Spanish initials)** is a regional integration process, initially established by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and subsequently joined by Venezuela and Bolivia.

- The **Southern African Customs Union (SACU)** consists of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland. The **SACU Secretariat is located in Namibia**. SACU was established in 1910, making it the **world's oldest Customs Union**.

- The grouping must work together as **a joint lobby in other groupings** of which they are members of, such as **BRICS and G20**.

◦ **Reforming Multilateral Institutions:**

- Reforming institutions such as the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**, **IMF** etc. is a **necessary prerequisite** to forge consensus behind the principle of economic development among developing countries.

- **India, Brazil and South Africa** have **serious aspirations to become**

permanent members of UNSC.

Way Forward

- The forum **continues to be a motor for global institutional reforms** in the future, striving collectively to establish a rules-based and transparent international trading and finance system.
- By offering a **new partnership based model** for development cooperation, the forum has taken a giant step towards accelerating the development agenda of the global South.
- The **'people centric' approach** is what defines and sets South-South cooperation apart from other partnership models. This particular focus on people-centric social policies is what will help in accelerating the restructuring of international financial architecture and reforming institutions of global governance.

[Source: PIB](#)

India's Flag Code Rules

Why in News

On 15th August, 2021, India celebrated its 75th Independence Day, and like every year the Prime Minister of India hoisted the National Flag at the Red Fort to commemorate the day.

Key Points

▪ History of Adopting India's Flag:

◦ 1906:

- The **first national flag**, which consisted of **three horizontal stripes of red, yellow and green**, is said to have been hoisted on **7th August, 1906**, at the Parsee Bagan Square, near Lower Circular Road, in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

◦ 1921:

- Later, in 1921, **freedom fighter Pingali Venkayya** met [Mahatma Gandhi](#) and proposed a basic design of the flag, consisting of two red and green bands.

◦ 1931:

- After undergoing several changes, the **Tricolour was adopted as our national flag at a Congress Committee meeting** in Karachi in 1931.

◦ 1947:

- The **Indian flag was adopted** in its **present form** during a meeting of the Constituent Assembly held on **22nd July, 1947**.

▪ Rules Governing the Tricolour:

◦ **The Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950:**

- It restricts **the use of the national flag**, the coat-of-arms used by a government department, the official seal of the President or Governor, the pictorial representation of Mahatma Gandhi and the Prime Minister, and the Ashoka Chakra.

◦ **The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971:**

- It **prohibits the desecration of or insult to the country's national symbols**,

including the national flag, the Constitution, the national anthem and the Indian map.

- A person who is convicted for the **following offences under the Act is disqualified to contest in the elections to the Parliament and state legislature for 6 years.**

- Offence of insulting the National Flag,
- Offence of insulting the Constitution of India,
- Offence of preventing the singing of the National Anthem.

- **The Flag Code of India, 2002:**

- It **allowed the unrestricted display of the Tricolour** as long as the honour and dignity of the flag were being respected.
- The **flag code did not replace the pre-existing rules** governing the correct display of the flag.

- It was, however, an **effort to bring together all the previous laws, conventions and practices.**

- It is **divided into three parts** — a general description of the tricolour, rules on display of the flag by public and private bodies and educational institutions, and rules for display of the flag by governments and government bodies.
- It mentions that the **tricolour cannot be used for commercial purposes**, and cannot be dipped in salute to any person or thing.
- Moreover, the flag should not be used as a festoon, or for any kind of decoration purposes.
- For official display, **only flags that conform to the specifications** as laid down by the [Bureau of Indian Standards](#) and bearing their mark can be used.

- **Part IV-A of the Constitution:**

- The **Part IV-A of the Constitution (which consists of only one Article 51-A)** specifies the eleven Fundamental Duties.
- According to **Article 51A (a)**, it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.

[Source: IE](#)

SAMVAD Initiative

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has launched the **2nd phase of the SAMVAD programme**. The second phase was **launched on the completion of one year of programme**.

- The programme is **aimed at mental health outreach for children** who are abandoned and orphaned, child survivors of trafficking, or in conflict with law.
- Earlier, the government had announced a special **“PM-CARES for Children” scheme** for all those orphaned due to [Covid-19](#).

Key Points

- **Stands for: Support, Advocacy & Mental health interventions** for children in **Vulnerable**

circumstances and Distress (SAMVAD).

- **Funded By:** The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- **Implementing Body:** It is led by the **National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS)**.
 - The NIMHANS is the apex centre of mental health and neuroscience education. It operates autonomously **under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
 - Recently, on the request of the Ministry of Home Affairs, NIMHANS, issued a set of [guidelines on the management of mental health issues](#) of the **prisoners and prison staff**.
- **Purpose:**
 - It is a **national initiative and integrated resource** that works in child **protection, mental health and psychosocial care of children** in difficult circumstances.
 - It encompasses a **specialized training curriculum** on childhood trauma, interventions for children in conflict with the law, forensics in child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health.
 - **Education and mental health support** to children with special needs, protection and care in the context of adoption.
 - The initiative is providing coping mechanisms for children in distress by **training close to 1 lakh stakeholders** comprising Child Protection Functionaries, tele-counsellors, educators, law professionals among others.
- **Integration with Local Bodies:** The initiative aims to **foster care and integration of child protection and mental health** in the [Panchayati Raj systems](#) in [aspirational districts](#) across the country to facilitate awareness generation and improve service delivery at the grassroot level.

Mental Health

- **About:**
 - According to the WHO, mental health is 'a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.'
 - Like Physical health, Mental health is also important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.
- **Scenario in India:**
 - A report published in The Lancet Psychiatry in February 2020 indicates that in **2017, there were 197.3 million people with mental disorders in India**.
 - The **top mental illnesses** were depressive disorder (45.7 million) and anxiety disorder (44.9 million).
 - The contribution of mental disorders to the total [disability-adjusted life years \(DALYs\)](#) in India increased from 2.5% in 1990 to 4.7% in 2017.
- **Steps Taken by the Government:**
 - **National Mental Health Program (NMHP):** To address the huge burden of mental disorders and shortage of qualified professionals in the field of mental health, the government has been implementing the National Mental Health Program (NMHP) since 1982.
 - The Program was re-strategize in 2003 to include two schemes, viz. **Modernization of State Mental Hospitals and Up-gradation of Psychiatric Wings of Medical Colleges/General Hospitals**.
 - **Mental HealthCare Act 2017:** It guarantees every affected person access to mental healthcare and treatment from services run or funded by the government.
 - It has significantly **reduced the scope for the use of Section 309 IPC** and made the attempt to commit suicide punishable only as an exception.

- The [Mental Health Care Act \(MHCA\) 2017](#) came into force in 2018 to meet the requirements of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) which India ratified in 2007.

- **Other Initiatives:**

- **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: PIB](#)

Van Dhan Producer Companies

Why in News

The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** has planned to **set up 200 'Van Dhan' producer companies** in all the 27 states **in the next five years** with priority to the [Aspirational Districts](#) under the [Van Dhan programme](#).

- Aspirational Districts are those districts in India that are **affected by poor socio-economic indicators**. The **Transformation of Aspirational Districts' Programme (TADP)** is being anchored by the **NITI Aayog** at the central level.

Key Points

- **Van Dhan Programme:**

- **About:** It is a **market-linked tribal entrepreneurship development program** for forming clusters of tribal [Self Help Groups \(SHGs\)](#) and strengthening them into **Tribal Producer Companies**.
 - The initiative targets **livelihood generation** for tribals by harnessing the wealth of forest i.e. **Van Dhan**.
 - **Launch:** The scheme was launched in 2018 as **Pradhan Manti Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY)**.
 - **Implementation:** It is being implemented by the **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED)**.
 - **Aims:**
 - To tap into **traditional knowledge & skill sets of tribals** by adding technology & IT to upgrade it at each stage and to convert the tribal wisdom into a viable economic activity.
 - To promote and leverage the **collective strength of tribals** to achieve a viable scale to take on the predatory market forces in the areas where these are still prevalent.
 - Proposition is to set-up tribal community-owned **Minor Forest Produce (MFP)-centric** multi-purpose **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras** in predominantly tribal districts.
- **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED):**

- TRIFED is a **national-level apex organization** functioning under the administrative control of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- TRIFED aims to **empower tribal people with knowledge, tools and pool of information** so that they can undertake their operations in a more systematic and scientific manner.
- It organises **Tribal Artisan Melas (TAMs)** to identify new artisans and new products at the sourcing level in States/Districts/Villages for expanding the tribal producers base.
- It is also involved in **Minor Forest Produce (MFP) Through Minimum Support Price (MSP)** and **TRIFOOD** Schemes.
- TRIFED is also expanding the **Skills Development** and **Micro entrepreneurship programme**, together with the **Tribal Livelihoods program**.

Tribal Livelihood Programmes

- **Forests Rights Act, 2006**: It has given adequate ownership powers for the tribals. It is a very path breaking Act in a sense that for the very first time it not only recognised the traditional forest dwellers as the legitimate owners of the forest land but also for the very first time made conservation accountable.
- **PESA (Panchayati Raj Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996**: It provides Gram panchayat the ownership and the authority to deal with forest produce and tribal issues.
- **Education of Tribals**: Many girls' hostels and Ashrams have been set up in tribal dominated blocks for the education of tribal children.
 - The **Eklavya model of residential schools** is set up for the education of tribal students.
- **Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana**: It has been launched by the Central Government of India for holistic development and welfare of the tribal population of India.
 - The scheme proposes to bring the tribal population of the country at par with other social groups and include them in the overall progress of the nation.
 - The government aims for holistic development of tribals by plugging in the infrastructural gaps and lags in human development indices.
- **Tribal Handicrafts**: Employment opportunities for the tribals are shrinking on the account of shrinking forest cover.
 - TRIFED has set up TribesIndia, a chain of showrooms where several categories of handicrafts are being marketed like tribal textiles, tribal jewellery.
 - TRIFED is also working on the capacity building of the tribes.

[Source: PIB](#)

Congressional Gold Medal

Why in News

Recently, a **resolution has been reintroduced in the US House of Representatives to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal to Mahatma Gandhi** for his contributions made through **his methods of non-violence**.

- If given the award, Mahatma Gandhi **would become the first Indian to receive the Congressional Gold Medal**, which is the **highest civilian award in the US**.

Key Points

▪ About the Award:

- The **US Congress (legislature) has commissioned gold medals as its highest expression of national appreciation** for distinguished achievements and contributions.
- The **first recipients** of the medal were **participants of the American Revolution (1775-83), the War of 1812 and the Mexican War (1846-48)**.
- The scope was broadened to **include actors, authors, entertainers, musicians, explorers, athletes, humanitarians and foreign recipients** among pioneers in some other fields.
- It has been awarded to the 1980 US summer Olympics team, Robert F. Kennedy, Nelson Mandela and George Washington among many others.
- Most recently, the medal was **awarded to the US Capitol Police** and those who protected the US Capitol on 6th January 2021, the day of the siege.

▪ Non-Violence:

- The principle of non-violence — also known as **non-violent resistance** — **rejects the use of physical violence in order to achieve social or political change**.
 - **From Mahatma Gandhi:** The essence of non-violent technique is that it seeks to **liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists**.
- Nonviolent action is a technique by which people who reject passivity and submission, and who see struggle as essential, can wage their conflict without violence.
 - There are **three main categories of non-violence action:**
 - Protest and persuasion, including marches and vigils,
 - Non-cooperation,
 - Non-violent intervention, such as blockades and occupation.
- **2nd October is the International Day of Non-Violence**, which is observed on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi.

▪ Gandhian Strategy of Non-Violence:

- Gandhi **took the religious principle of ahimsa (doing no harm)** common to Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism and turned it into a non-violent tool for mass action.
- Gandhi called it **"satyagraha"** which means **'truth force.'**
 - In this doctrine, the aim of any non-violent conflict was to convert the opponent; to win over his mind and his heart and persuade him.
- He used it to **fight not only colonial rule but social evils** such as racial discrimination and untouchability as well.
- In **South Africa (1893-1915), he had successfully fought the racist regime** with a novel method of mass agitation, which he called satyagraha.
- Mahatma Gandhi's **first civil disobedience movement in India** was in support of the indigo cultivators **in Champaran, Bihar in 1917**.
- **In 1919**, he decided to launch **a nationwide satyagraha** against the proposed **Rowlatt Act (1919)**.
- During the **Non-cooperation movement (1920-22)**, there was a massive upsurge of enthusiasm for Gandhi and his methods, with Indians from all political spectrum and religions joining the movement.
- Other examples include **Salt Satyagraha (1930)** and **Quit India movement (1942)**.
- Many **people such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandella, Dalai Lama, Aung San Suu Kyi, etc. have followed the path** shown by Bapu and have brought prosperity to themselves and their societies.

Source: IE

Parsi New Year: Navroz

Why in News

Navroz festival is being celebrated in India on **16th August in India**.

- **Across the world**, Navroz is celebrated at the time of the [vernal equinox](#) (marking the start of spring) in the **Northern Hemisphere**.

Key Points

▪ About:

- Navroz is also known as **Parsi New Year**.
- In Persian, **'Nav' stands for new, and 'Roz' stands for the day**, which literally translates to **'new day'**.
- Though **celebrated in March globally**, Navroz arrives **200 days later in India** and is celebrated in the month of August as the **Parsis here follow the Shahenshahi calendar** that doesn't account for leap years.
 - In India, Navroz is also known as **Jamshed-i-Navroz**, after the **Persian King, Jamshed**. The king Jamshed is **credited with having created the Shahenshahi calendar**.
- Interestingly in India, **people celebrate it twice a year** - first according to the Iranian calendar and the second according to the Shahenshahi calendar which is followed by people here and in Pakistan. The festival falls between July and August.
- The tradition is **observed by Iranians and Zoroastrian** around the world.
- Navroj was **inscribed in the list of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of India in 2009**.
 - This **coveted list** is made up of those **intangible heritage elements** that **help demonstrate diversity of cultural heritage and raise awareness** about its importance.

▪ Zoroastrianism:

- Zoroastrianism, one of the **earliest known monotheistic faiths**, is practised by Parsis.
- It was **created over 3,500 years ago** in ancient Iran by **Prophet Zarathustra**.
- It was the **official religion of Persia (now Iran)** from 650 BCE until the emergence of Islam in the **7th century**, and it was **one of the most important faiths** in the **ancient world for over 1000 years**.
- When the **Islamic troops invaded Persia**, numerous Zoroastrians fled to **India (Gujarat) and Pakistan**.
- The **Parsis ('Parsi' is Gujarati for Persian)** are the **largest single group in India**, with an estimated **2.6 million Zoroastrians worldwide**.
- Zoroastrians (Parsis) are **one of the notified [minority communities](#)**.

Traditional New Year Festivals in India	
Name	Features
Chaitra Shukla Pratipada	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It marks the beginning of the new year of the Vikram Samvat also known as the Vedic (Hindu) calendar.▪ Vikram Samvat is based on the day when the emperor Vikramaditya defeated Sakas, invaded Ujjain and called for a new era.
Gudi Padwa and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Celebrated in the month of Chaitra Shukla Pratipada as per the Hindu Lunar Calendar.▪ Deccan region including Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Ugadi	
Navreh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the lunar New Year that is celebrated in Kashmir. It falls on the very first day of the Chaitra Navratras.
Sajibu Chheiraoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is celebrated by Meiteis (an ethnic group in Manipur) which is observed on the first day of Manipur lunar month Shajibu, which falls in the month of April every year.
Cheti Chand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is celebrated by Sindhi community. Chaitra month is called 'Chet' in Sindhi. The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Ishta Deva Uderolal/Jhulelal, the patron saint of Sindhis.
Bihu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is celebrated three times a year. Rongali or Bohag Bihu is observed in April. Kongali or Kati Bihu observed in October and Bhogali or Magh Bihu observed in January. Rongali or Bohag Bihu is the Assamese new year and spring festival. The Rongali Bihu coincides with Sikh New Year- Baisakhi.
Baisakhi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is celebrated as the Indian thanksgiving day by farmers. It also has religious significance for the Sikhs community as the foundation of the Khalsa Panth was laid on this day by Guru Gobind Singh.
Losoong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Losoong also known as Namsong is the Sikkimese New Year. It is usually the time when the farmers rejoice and celebrate their harvest. It is mostly celebrated in the month of December every year with traditional gaiety and colour both by the Lepchas and Bhutias.

[Source: PIB](#)

Al-Mohed Al-Hindi Exercise: India-Saudi Arabia

Why in News

Recently, **India and Saudi Arabia** started their **first-ever Naval joint exercise** called the **Al-Mohed Al-Hindi Exercise**.

- The decision on this Bilateral exercise was taken in the [Riyadh Summit](#) held in 2019.



Key Points

▪ About:

- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kochi is participating in the exercise. The exercise comprises **several coastal and sea-based exercises** between the two navies.
 - INS Kochi is the **second ship of Kolkata-class stealth guided-missile destroyers**, which was built by the Indian Navy under the code name **Project 15A**.
 - This ship is termed as a '**Network of Networks**' since it is equipped with sophisticated digital networks, an array of state-of-art weapons and sensors that can neutralise any maritime threat.

▪ Aim:

- To carry out tactical manoeuvres, search and rescue operations, and an electronic warfare drill **to enhance interoperability**.

▪ Significance:

- It reflects the **growing defense ties between the two countries** in the midst of rapidly changing developments in the Gulf region.
- It will **enhance bilateral cooperation** and security in the [Indian ocean](#) Region.

Major Indian Maritime Exercises

Name of the Exercise	Name of the Country
SLINEX	Sri Lanka
Bongosagar and IN-BN CORPAT	Bangladesh
JIMEX	Japan
Naseem-Al-Bahr	Oman
Indra	Russia
Za'ir-Al-Bahr	Qatar
Samudra Shakti	Indonesia
Indo-Thai CORPAT	Thailand
IMCOR	Malaysia
SIMBEX	Singapore
AUSINDEX	Australia
Malabar Exercise	Japan, and the USA

[Source: TH](#)

Cave Lion

Why in News

Recently, scientists have found two nearly perfectly preserved **cave lion cubs** which **lived 28,000 years ago**, nicknamed Boris and Sparta.

- They were found in **Siberia's permafrost, Russia**. The cubs were found 15 metres apart but are not only from different litters but **were also born thousands of years apart**.

Key Points

▪ About:

- The Cave Lion (*Panthera spelaea*), often nicknamed the **Mega-Lion**, is a



genus of prehistoric lion that originated during the **last Ice Age** (2.6 million years ago to 11,700 years ago) in what is now Europe.

- It is generally placed as a subspecies of the lion.
- It was one of the most common large predators during the last Ice age, with a distribution throughout northern Eurasia and North America. It became **extinct about 14,000 years ago**.

▪ Behaviour & Traits:

- The Cave Lions were **major predators, hunting ice age deer, bison, and other animals**. These lions also were **ambush predators, laying in wait and erupting out of the brush to tackle their prey** with impressive **speed, agility, and strength**.
 - Measuring **3 meters long** and weighing **340 kilos**, this was the largest cat species of all time.
- However, like all cats, the Cave Lion could only **chase prey over a short distance**.
- Despite their size, strength, and relatively long legs, Cave Lions were not **designed for long-distance chases**.

▪ Significance of Finding:

- Similar finds in Russia's vast Siberian region have turned up with increasing regularity. **Climate change is warming the Arctic** at a faster pace than the rest of the world and has **thawed the ground in some areas long locked in permafrost**.

Permafrost

▪ About:

- Permafrost is **any ground that remains completely frozen—32°F (0°C) or colder—for at least two years straight**.
 - It is made of a **combination of soil, rocks and sand that are held together by ice**.
- These permanently frozen grounds are most **common in regions with high mountains and in Earth's higher latitudes**—near the North and South Poles.
- Permafrost covers large regions of the Earth. Almost a quarter of the land area in the Northern Hemisphere has permafrost underneath. Although the ground is frozen, **permafrost regions are not always covered in snow**.

▪ Thawing of Permafrost:

- **Damage Infrastructure:** Many villages are built on permafrost. When permafrost is frozen, it's harder than concrete. However, **thawing permafrost can destroy houses, roads and other infrastructure**.
- **Release Greenhouse Gas:** As permafrost thaws, microbes begin decomposing this material. This process **releases greenhouse gases** like carbon dioxide and methane to the atmosphere.
- **Diseases:** When permafrost thaws, so do ancient bacteria and viruses in the ice and soil. These **newly-unfrozen microbes could make humans and animals very sick**.

Source: TH

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