



Drishti IAS Presents...

PT

SPRINT 2023

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

(March 2022 – March 2023)



Drishti IAS, 641, Mukherjee Nagar,
Opp. Signature View Apartment,
New Delhi

Drishti IAS, 21
Pusa Road, Karol Bagh
New Delhi - 05

Drishti IAS, Tashkent Marg,
Civil Lines, Prayagraj,
Uttar Pradesh

Drishti IAS, Tonk Road,
Vasundhara Colony,
Jaipur, Rajasthan

e-mail: englishsupport@groupdrishti.com, Website: www.drishtias.com

Contact: Inquiry (English): 8010440440, Inquiry (Hindi): 8750187501

Contents

● e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project	1
● No Bar on Contesting Two Seats in One Poll	1
● Custodial Death	2
● Armed Forces and Adultery	3
● Government e-Marketplace	3
● India's Health Infrastructure	4
● Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.....	4
● Digital Payments Utsav	5
● Amrit Sarovar Mission	6
● State-wide Crackdown on Child Marriages	6
● GACs to Address Complaints Against Social Media Platforms.....	7
● Bharat Pravah- India along its Shores.....	8
● All India Survey on Higher Education 2020-2021	8
● PARAKH	9
● Women Get Command Roles in The Indian Army	9
● Chargesheet: Not a Public Document	10
● Remote Voting for Migrants	11
● Centre vs Delhi Govt on Control Over Services	12
● Maharashtra-Karnataka Border Dispute	13
● Report Card of RTI Responsiveness	15
● CAG Audit Report on Assam's NRC.....	15
● Samudrayaan Mission	16
● Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan Scheme	16
● Rashtriya Gokul Mission	17
● District Mineral Foundation Scheme.....	18
● AYURSWASTHYA Yojana	19
● Free Foodgrains Scheme	19
● Court Vacations	20
● Recusal of Judges.....	21
● Amendments to the Co-operative Societies Act.....	21
● Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill.....	22
● Trademark	23
● G20 Digital Innovation Alliance	24
● GLAAS Report 2022	24
● National Policy of Rare Diseases.....	25
● National Overseas Scholarship Scheme.....	26
● Amalgamation of ODOP with DEH Initiative.....	26

● Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana	27
● DigiYatra	27
● National Bamboo Mission	28
● First E-collectorate in Bihar	28
● Digital Shakti 4.0	28
● UIDAI Enrollment of Prisoners	29
● Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan	29
● Old Pension Scheme	29
● Constitution Day	30
● National Centre of Excellence for Green Port & Shipping	30
● 'Eat Right Station' Certification	31
● All Employees can Opt for PF Pensions Scheme	31
● Amendments in Electoral Bond Scheme	32
● Nutrient Based Subsidy Rates Approved	33
● Warehousing Development	33
● Remote Voting Facility	34
● Law Commission of India	35
● World Cities Day	35
● Supreme Court upholds EWS Quota	36
● Eklavya Model Residential Schools	36
● Mission DefSpace	37
● DefExpo-2022	37
● 6 th East Asia Summit Education Minister's Meeting	37
● Election Symbols	38
● Uniform Civil Code	39
● Fresh Hindi Imposition Row	40
● National Curriculum Framework	42
● Broadcasting only through Prasar Bharati	42
● National Credit Framework	43
● Coal Mines in India Under-Utilised: GEM Report	43
● Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0	44
● Amendments to the IT Rules, 2021	45
● Midday Meal Scheme (PM Poshan Scheme)	45
● Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)	46
● Section 66A of the IT Act, 2000	46
● 2 nd World Geospatial Information Congress	47
● Quality Council of India (QCI)	47
● India-made Syrups and Deaths in Gambia	48
● The Places of Worship Act	48
● Revenue Deficit Grants	49
● Indian Nutrition Rating (INR)	50
● Convergence Portal of the MoFPI	50

● ECI Seeks Limit on Cash Donations	51
● Ramakrishna Mission's Awakening Programme	52
● JALDOOT App	52
● Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).....	53
● One Water Approach.....	53
● Deemed University Status	54
● HIV Drugs Shortage	54
● Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985	55
● Registered Unrecognized Political Parties	56
● PM SHRI Schools.....	56
● Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana	56
● Foundational Learning Survey	57
● Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)	58
● NITI Aayog-like Bodies in States	59
● Aadhaar-Voter ID Linkage.....	59
● Arth Ganga Project	59
● PEN-PLUS Strategy Against Non-Communicable Disease.....	60
● Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen	60
● What is Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G)?	61
● Dam Management in India	61
● Grameen Udyami Project	62
● Universal Postal Union	62
● Special Marriage Act, 1954.....	63
● Manipur to Implement the NRC.....	63
● Tobacco Endgame	64
● Electoral Bonds.....	64
● Integration of Health Applications with ABDM	64
● Foreign Visit of the State Government Ministers.....	66
● Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana	66
● PESA Act	67
● SMILE-75 Initiative.....	67
● Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022	68
● National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM).....	68
● Rules regarding Suspension of MPs	69
● Swachh Sagar Surakshit Sagar Campaign	70
● Human-Animal Conflict	70
● FEMA & PMLA	71
● DIGI YATRA	72
● NIRF Rankings 2022	72
● Taranga Hill-Ambaji-Abu Road	73
● National Legal Services Authority.....	74
● Abortion Law in India	74

● Swadesh Darshan Scheme.....	75
● Flag Code of India	76
● GOAL 2.0.....	77
● Agriculture Census.....	78
● India Animal Health Summit 2022.....	79
● Financial Direct Assistance to Apprentices Through DBT	80
● PARIMAN Portal	80
● Kisan Credit Card	80
● Digital India Week 2022.....	81
● Centre's Push for Labour Codes	82
● Ease of Doing Business Ranking: BRAP 2020	83
● Take-Home Ration	84
● Meghalaya tribal council to revisit Instrument of Accession (IoA)	84
● Approved Fuels for NCR: CAQM	85
● Platform of Platforms (POP)	86
● Service Charge	86
● Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)	87
● Decline in Immunisation Coverage	87
● Impact of Internet Shutdowns.....	88
● Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D).....	89
● Amrit Sarovar Mission	90
● Bharat Gaurav Scheme	91
● Bharat NCAP	91
● National Initiative for Promotion of Upskilling of Nirman workers (NIPUN)	92
● Aspirational District Programme	93
● Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP)	93
● World Food Safety Day	94
● GeM For Cooperatives.....	94
● Agnipath Scheme.....	95
● National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment 2021	95
● Jal Jeevan Mission	96
● SHRESHTA Scheme	97
● Caste based Census	97
● Proposal of Appellate Committees for Social Media Grievance.....	98
● Gun Control Legislation	98
● Good Governance.....	99
● Biological Research Regulatory Approval Portal	100
● Guidelines for Safety Assessment of Genome Edited Plants, 2022.....	100
● OBC Quota in Local Body Polls	101
● GatiShakti Sanchar Portal	102
● PWD to Allow 4% Quota for Disabled.....	102
● Digital India BHASHINI	103

● Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana	103
● Reservation in Promotion	103
● National Achievement Survey (NAS)-2021	105
● MPLAD Scheme	106
● National Physical Literacy Mission	107
● World Press Freedom Index 2022	108
● PMFME Scheme.....	109
● BHARAT TAP Initiative	109
● BCC Framework under SBM-U 2.0.....	111
● MSME Sustainable (ZED) Certification Scheme	111
● Cyber Security.....	112
● Indonesia's Palm Oil Export Ban & Its Impact on India.....	112
● India's Labour Force Participation Rate.....	113
● Harnessing India's Tech Strength	114
● Tamil Nadu Bill on Vice Chancellor in Universities	114
● Phone Tapping in India	115
● Global Centre for Traditional Medicine: Gujarat.....	116
● Award for Excellence to UDAN Scheme	117
● 40 th Hunar Haat	118
● e-DAR Portal	119
● National Panchayati Raj Day.....	119
● Rules for Resignation and Reinstatement of an Officer	120
● Gratuity For Anganwadi Workers	120
● GO 111.....	121
● Front of Package Labelling (FOPL) System.....	121
● Olga Tellis Case 1985	122
● Midday Meal Scheme (PM Poshan Scheme)	122
● Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan	123
● SC Upheld FCRA Amendments	123
● Dispute over Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal.....	124
● Supreme Court Strikes Down Vanniyar quota.....	125
● Digital Platform FASTER	125
● Merger of Film Bodies under National Film Development Corporation.....	126
● SVANidhi se Samriddhi	126
● Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022.....	127
● Tour of Duty Scheme	128
● One Health.....	128
● Mission Integrated Bio-refineries	129
● Broadcast Seva Portal.....	129
● Animal Disease Free Zones	130
● Voting Rights for Overseas Citizens	130

● Determination of Minority in India.....	131
● Protection of Children from Sexual Offences	133
● Principle of Reasonable Accommodation.....	133
● Bail Provision Under UAPA	134
● PM-DAKSH Scheme	135
● NPPA's Role in Fixing Drug Prices	135
● Export Preparedness Index 2021: NITI Aayog	136
● Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2022	137
● Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav	138
● Swatantrata Sainik Samman Yojana	138
● Daylight Harvesting	139
● Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)	139
● Demand for Rajya Sabha Seat to Chandigarh.....	140
● E-bill Processing System	141
● Janaushadhi Diwas	142
● Amendment to the Mines and Minerals Act 1957	142
● 37 th Foundation of National Crime Records Bureau	143
● Sagar Parikrama.....	144



e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project

Why in News?

The Government of India has **launched the e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project** in the country for computerization of District and subordinate courts **with the objective of improving access to justice using technology.**

What is e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project?

- **About & Implementation:**
 - As part of the **National e-Governance Plan**, the project is under implementation since 2007 for **Information and Communications Technology (ICT) development** of the **Indian Judiciary**
 - e-Courts project is being implemented in association with **e-Committee Supreme Court of India** and the **Department of Justice**.
- **Phases:**
 - **Phase I:** It was implemented during 2011-2015.
 - **Phase II:** It was started in 2015 under which various District & Subordinate courts have been computerised.

What are the Initiatives Taken Under the Project?

- **Improvisation of Network:** Under the **Wide Area Network (WAN) Project**, connectivity has been provided to 99.4% of total Court Complexes across India with an improved **bandwidth** speed.
- **Open-Source Software:** Case Information Software (CIS) is based on **Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS)** which has been **developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
- **NJDG Database:** **National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)** is a database of orders, judgments, and cases (of district and subordinate courts), created as an online platform under the e-Courts Project.
- **Access to Case Status Information:** **Open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)** have been introduced in 2020 to allow Central and State Governments and institutional litigants including local bodies to access NJDG data to **improve pendency monitoring and compliance.**

- **Virtual Courts:** 21 **Virtual Courts** in 17 States/UTs have been operationalized to handle traffic challan cases.
- **E-filing:** New e-filing system has been rolled out for the electronic filing of legal papers with upgraded features. As of 2022, **a total of 19 High Courts have adopted the model rules of e-Filing.**
- **Regarding Summons:** **National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP)** has been launched for technology enabled process serving and issuing of summons.
 - It has currently been implemented in 28 States/ UTs.
- **User-friendly Portal:** A new **"Judgment Search"** portal has been started with several user-friendly features. This facility is being provided free of cost to everyone.

What's New about Phase III?

- **Phase III of the e-Courts Project:**
 - Draft Vision Document for **e-Courts Project Phase III** has been finalized and approved by eCommittee, Supreme Court of India.
- **Phase III Mentions Various New Features:**
 - Expansion of the scope of Virtual Courts beyond adjudication of Traffic Violations;
 - Use of emerging technologies like **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and its subsets like **Optical Character Recognition (OCR)** etc for analysis of case pendency, forecasting future litigation, etc.

No Bar on Contesting Two Seats in One Poll

Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court has rejected a petition (under **Section 33(7) of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951**) to **bar candidates from contesting from more than one constituency** in the general or assembly elections, calling it creates **extra burden on the public exchequer as by-elections will invariably follow because candidates have to give up one seat** in case, they win on both the seats.

What is the Ruling?

- There is no relevant provision in the Representation of People Act (RPA) that **may warrant an intervention by the court in this matter** and this matter falls **"squarely within the legislative domain"** and **"realm of policy"**.

Note:



drishti

- It is parliament's will that determines whether political democracy is furthered by granting such a choice.
- This issue lies in the domain of **parliamentary sovereignty**.
 - It highlighted that **parliament did amend the law in 1996 to restrict the number of constituencies to two** whereas earlier, **a candidate could contest from any number of seats**.

What are the Provisions Related to Twin Candidature?

- As per **Section 33(7) of the RPA (Representation of the People Act), 1951**, one candidate can contest from a maximum of two constituencies.
 - More constituencies were allowed until 1996 when the RPA was amended to set the cap at two constituencies.
- **Since 1951, many politicians have used this factor to contest from more than one seat** – sometimes to divide the opponent's vote, sometimes to profess their party's power across the country, sometimes to cause a ripple effect in the region surrounding the constituencies **in favor of the candidate's party and all parties have exploited Section 33(7)**.

Custodial Death

Why in News?

According to the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** in the last five years, the highest number of custodial deaths have been reported in Gujarat at 80.

What is Custodial Death?

- **About:**
 - Custodial death is a **death that occurs while a person is in the custody of law enforcement officials or in a correctional facility**.
 - According to the **Law commission of India**, the crime by a public servant against the arrested or the detained person who is in custody amounts to **custodial violence**.
- **Custodial Death in India:**
 - A total of **146 cases of death in police custody were reported** during 2017-2018, and 175 in 2021-2022.

- In the last five years, the highest number of custodial deaths (80) has been reported in Gujarat, followed by Maharashtra (76), Uttar Pradesh (41), Tamil Nadu (40) and Bihar (38).

What are the Provisions Available Regarding Custody?

➤ Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 21:**
 - Article 21 states that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law".
 - Protection from torture is a **fundamental right** under Article 21.
- **Article 22:**
 - Article 22 provides "Protection against arrest and detention in certain cases".
 - The right to counsel is also a fundamental right under Article 22(1).

➤ Role of Central Government:

- The Central Government issues advisories from time to time and also has enacted the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHR), 1993.
- It stipulates establishment of the NHRC and State Human Rights Commissions to look into alleged human rights violations by public servants.

➤ Legal Provisions:

- **Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC):**
 - **Section 41 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)** was amended in 2009 to include safeguards so that arrests and detentions for interrogation have reasonable grounds and documented procedures, arrests are made transparent to family, friends and public, and there is protection through legal representation.
- **Indian Penal Code:**
 - Crime of custodial torture against prisoners can be brought under Sec 302, 304, 304A, and 306 of IPC.
- **Protection under Indian Evidence Act, 1872:**
 - Section 25 of the Act provides that a **confession made to the police cannot be admitted** in Court.
 - Section 26 of the Act provides that a confession made to the police by the person cannot be **proved against such person unless it is made before the Magistrate**.

Note:



drishti

○ Indian Police Act, 1861:

- Sections 7 & 29 of the Police Act, 1861 **provide for dismissal, penalty or suspension of police officers** who are negligent in the discharge of their duties or unfit to perform the same.

Armed Forces and Adultery

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** has ruled that armed forces can take action against their officers for adulterous acts, while stating the decriminalization of **adultery** does not apply to Armed Forces.

- In September **2018 Joseph Shine Judgment**, the SC struck down **Section 497 of the IPC that criminalised adultery**, ruling that it was unconstitutional and **violated women's right to equality** in treating them as inferior to their husbands.

What is the Recent Ruling?

- Defence personnel of the three wings — **the Army, Navy and the Air Force were governed by special legislation**, the Army Act, the Navy Act and the Air Force Act.
- The **three laws are protected by Article 33 of the Constitution**, which allow the government to **modify the fundamental rights** of the armed forces personnel
- The Bench delivered the final Order in the case, clarifying that the Joseph Shine Judgment **did not apply to members of the armed forces who are accused of 'conduct unbecoming' and dismissed the application.**

What is Adultery?

- **About:**
 - The act of adultery is a voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than that person's current spouse or partner.
- **Section 497 of the IPC:**
 - It mandates that whoever has sexual intercourse with the wife of another man, **without the consent or connivance of that man**, such sexual intercourse not amounting the offence of rape is guilty of the offence of adultery and shall be punished.
 - The **law does not punish his wife**, since it presumes that only a man can seduce a woman into a sexual act, and that it is the husband who has suffered

due to the sexual relationship of his wife, carried out without his consent. At the same time, **the wife is not protected from similar behaviour committed by her husband.**

Government e-Marketplace

Why in News?

Government e-Marketplace achieves a **Gross Merchandise Value (GMV)** of Rs. 1.5 Lakh Crores.

- GeM has been effectively contributing to the government's commitment of "**Minimum Government, Maximum Governance**".

What is Gross Merchandise Value (GMV)?

- GMV refers to the **value of goods sold via customer-to-customer or e-commerce platforms.**
- It is calculated prior to the **deduction of any fees or expenses.**
- It is a measure of the growth of the business or use of the site to resell products owned by others through consignment.

What is the Government e-marketplace (GeM)?

➤ About:

- The GeM is an **online platform** launched by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India** in 2016 to **facilitate procurement of goods and services** by various government departments and organisations.
- It is open to all government departments, public sector undertakings, autonomous bodies and other organisations.
- Currently, GeM stands at the **third position** after **Singapore's GeBIZ.**
 - **South Korea's KONEPS** is the largest such platform in the world.

➤ Developments:

- **Country of Origin Mandatory:** Every time a new product is registered on GeM, sellers are required to list the **Country of Origin.**
- **Bamboo Market Window:** The **National Bamboo Mission and the Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** have collaborated to have a dedicated window on the GeM portal for marketing of the **Bamboo Goods** (Bamboo based products & Quality Planting Materials).

Note:



drishti

India's Health Infrastructure

Why in News

Recently, the Indian government has signed loan agreements to borrow up to Rs 13,879 crore to strengthen health infrastructure from international agencies.

- The loan agreements have been signed to augment **PM-ABHIM (Prime Minister-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission)** which was launched in October 2021 (till FY 2025-26).

What are the Key Points of the Agreement?

- Loan agreements have been signed with **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** for USD 300 million and with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for 50 billion Japanese Yen.
- The **World Bank** has approved USD 1 billion IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) for PM-ABHIM.
 - IBRD is the lending arm of the World Bank.

What is PM-ABHIM?

- **About:**
 - It is one of the largest pan-India schemes for strengthening healthcare infrastructure across the country. It is in addition to the **National Health Mission (NHM)**.
 - It aims to **provide support to 17,788 rural Health and Wellness Centres in 10 'high focus' states** and establish 11,024 urban **Health and Wellness Centres** across the country.
- **Objectives:**
 - To ensure a **robust public health infrastructure in both urban and rural areas**. Establishing an **IT-enabled disease surveillance system**.
 - All the public health labs will be connected through the Integrated Health Information Portal, which will be expanded to all states and UTs.
- **Major Initiatives:**
 - It will help establish 602 critical care hospital blocks, critical care hospital blocks in 12 central hospitals to strengthen **National Centre for Disease Control**

(NCDC), five new regional NCDCs, 10 **Biosafety Levels (BSL) - III** and one BSL-IV and 20 Metropolitan **Surveillance Units (MSUs)**.

What are the Recent Government Initiatives Related to Healthcare?

- **National Health Mission**
- **Ayushman Bharat**
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**
- **PM National Dialysis Programme**
- **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)**
- **Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)**

Primary Agricultural Credit Societies

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Budget 2023** has announced Rs 2,516 crore for digitization of 63,000 **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** over the next five years.

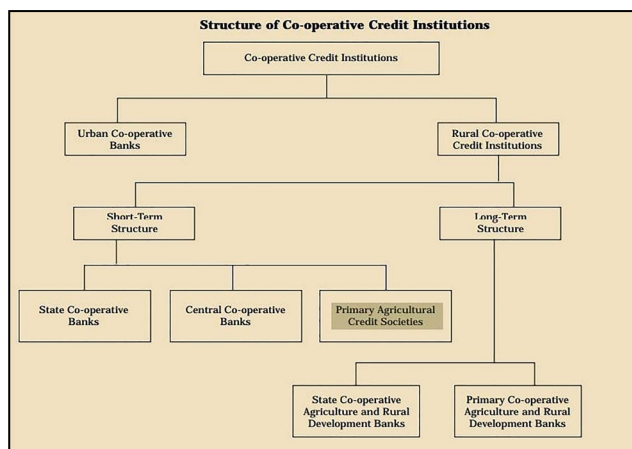
What is the Aim of Digitizing PACS?

- It aims at bringing greater **transparency and accountability in their operations** and enabling them to diversify their business and undertake more activities.
- It aims to help PACS become a **nodal centre for providing various services** such as **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)**, **Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS)**, **Crop Insurance Scheme (PMFBY)**, and inputs like **fertilizers** and seeds.

What is Primary Agricultural Credit Societies?

- **About:**
 - PACS are village level **cooperative credit societies** that serve as the last link in a three-tier cooperative credit structure headed by the **State Cooperative Banks (SCB) at the state level**.
 - Credit from the SCBs is **transferred to the District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs)**, that operate at the district level. The DCCBs work with PACS, which deal directly with farmers.
 - PACS provide **short-term, and medium-term agricultural loans** to the farmers for the various agricultural and farming activities.

Note:



Digital Payments Utsav

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry for Electronics & Information Technology **launched the 'Digital Payments Utsav'**, a comprehensive campaign promoting **digital payments** across India along with the **launch of several significant initiatives**.

- The campaign **will showcase India's journey of digital transformation**, with a series of events and **initiatives to be held from 9th February to 9th October 2023**.

What are the Highlights of the Event?

- **Aim:**
 - The focus of the campaign **will be on promoting digital payments in the country**, especially in the cities of Lucknow, Pune, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru, as part of the **G20 Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG)** event.
- **Recognising the Efforts:**
 - **28 DigiDhan Awards** were presented to top-performing banks, bankers, and fintech companies in **different categories for their performance in the digital payments space**.
 - The awards recognize the efforts of these organizations in **promoting digital payments and contributing to the growth of the digital economy**.

What are the Other Digital Initiatives?

- **Digital India Bhashini:**
 - Digital India BHASHINI is India's **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** led language translation platform.
 - A Bhashini Platform will make AI and **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** resources available to

MSME (Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises), Startups and Individual Innovators in the public domain.

➤ Digital India GENESIS:

- Digital India GENESIS' (Gen-next Support for Innovative Startups) is a **national deep-tech startup platform** to discover, support, grow and make successful startups in **Tier-II and Tier-III cities of India**.

➤ Meri Pehchaan:

- It is National Single Sign On (NSSO) for **One Citizen Login**.
- It is a user authentication service in which a **single set of credentials provide access to multiple online applications or services**.

➤ Chips to Startup (C2S) Programme:

- The C2S Programme **aims to train specialized manpower in the area of design of semiconductor chips** at Bachelors, Masters and Research levels, and act as a catalyst for the growth of Startups involved in semiconductor design in the country.
- It offers to mentor at the organisational level and makes available **State-of-the-art facilities for design to the institutions**.

➤ Digital Locker (DigiLocker):

- It **enables paperless governance** by providing digital space for users for their document verification and storage.
- It will help position India as the leader of building Digital Transformation projects at population scale.

➤ MeghRaj:

- In order to utilise and harness the benefits of **Cloud Computing**, the Government has embarked upon an ambitious initiative – **GI Cloud, which has been named MeghRaj**.
- The focus of this initiative is **to accelerate the delivery of e-services** in the country, while optimising the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) spending of the Government.

What is Digital India Programme?

➤ About:

- It was **launched in 2015**.
- The programme has been enabled for several important Government schemes, such as **BharatNet, Make in India, Startup India** and **Standup India, industrial corridors**, etc.

Note:

Amrit Sarovar Mission

Why in News?

A target of **50,000 Amrit Sarovars** was set to be completed by **August 15, 2023**. So far, **60% of the target** has been achieved with over **30,000 Amrit Sarovars** constructed in the span of 9 months.

What is the Amrit Sarovar Mission?

➤ About:

- On April 24, 2022, **Mission Amrit Sarovar** was launched as part of India's "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" celebrations for the **75th year of independence**.
- The mission aims to construct/rejuvenate **at least 75 Amrit Sarovars in each district across India** to overcome the water crisis in rural areas.

➤ Major Features of Mission Amrit Sarovar:

- **Whole of the Government Approach:**
 - **Six central government Ministries** are working together in conjunction with technical organisations like **Bhaskaracharya National Institute of Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG-N)** and state/union territory governments in a "Whole of Government" approach.
 - **Six ministries** are Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.
- **Jan Bhagidari:**
 - It has been the core of this Mission and involves **people's participation at all levels**.
 - States/UTs are leveraging the participation of **freedom fighters, eldest members of the panchayat, family members of freedom fighters and martyrs, Padma Awardees**, etc.
- **Innovative Measures:**
 - The **Ministries of Railways and Road Transport and Highways** are using the **excavated soil/silt** for infrastructure projects near the Amrit Sarovar sites.
 - Also, **Public and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) bodies** are playing a significant role in the construction and rejuvenation of several Amrit Sarovars across India.

○ Boosting Rural Livelihood:

- The completed Sarovars are **boosting rural livelihoods** by being used for activities such as **irrigation, fisheries, duckery, cultivation of water chestnut** and animal husbandry, among others.

State-wide Crackdown on Child Marriages

Why in News?

Over the last few days, the Assam government has **arrested over 2,000 men in a campaign against child marriages** that have taken place in the state.

- The police **will retrospectively book people who participated in child marriage in the last seven years** and the focus will especially be on "mullahs, kazis, and pujaris" conducting these marriages. The arrests **come in the backdrop of growing debate on the minimum age of marriage of Muslim women**.

Under What Law are the Arrests Being Made?

- The men who married girls below 14 years of age would be booked under the **Protection of Children From Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act** and those marrying girls between the age of 14 and 18 years would be booked under the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006**.
- **POCSO Act:**
 - The POCSO Act, of 2012 **criminalises sex between a minor and an adult**. The law **does not recognize a minor's consent as valid**.
 - Sexual assault under POCSO is a **non-bailable, cognisable offence**. This means that the **police can make an arrest without warrant**.
 - So, a **presumption of sexual assault is being made** in cases of child marriage involving minor girls below the age of 14.
 - **Under Section 19**, the Act imposes a "**mandatory reporting obligation**" which requires every person who suspects or has knowledge of a sexual offence being committed against a child **must report it to the police or the Special Juvenile Police Unit**. Failure to do so will result in imprisonment, a fine, or both.
- **PCMA, 2006:**

Note:

- It says that child marriages are **illegal but not void**. They are voidable at the minor's choice if he/she petitions the court to declare the marriage null and void.
 - The Act stipulates **18 years as the minimum marriageable age for women, while for men it is 21 years**.
- The Act punishes child marriage with **rigorous imprisonment which may extend to two years or with a fine** which may extend to one lakh rupees or both.

What is the Debate on Muslim Age of Marriage?

- Under Muslim personal laws, the marriage of a bride who has attained puberty is considered.
 - Puberty is presumed, in the absence of evidence, on completion of the age of fifteen years.
- This gap between **Muslim personal law** and special legislation prohibiting child marriages or sexual activity of minors puts a shadow on criminality in such marriages.

What are the Personal Laws of Other Religions?

- The **Hindu Succession Act of 1956** lays out guidelines for property inheritance among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.
- The **Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1936** lays out rules to be followed by the Parsis according to their religious traditions.
- The **Hindu Marriage Act of 1955** codified laws related to marriage among Hindus.

GACs to Address Complaints Against Social Media Platforms

Why in News?

- Recently, the Union government notified the formation of three **Grievance Appellate Committees (GACs)** that will address user complaints against **social media** and other internet-based platforms.
- These panels will also be **empowered to oversee and revoke content moderation-related decisions** taken by these platforms.

What are GACs?

➤ Composition:

- Each of the three GACs will have a **chairperson, two whole-time members** from different government entities and **retired senior executives** from the industry for a term of three years from the date of assumption of office.
 - **The First Panel:** It will be chaired by the chief executive officer of the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
 - **The Second Panel:** It will be chaired by the joint secretary in charge of the Policy and Administration Division in the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
 - **The Third Panel:** It will be chaired by a senior scientist at the **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)**.

➤ Solving of Conflicts:

- The GACs will deal with two categories of disputes:
 - Violation of law and rights of users including the right to free speech and privacy
 - Contractual dispute between a platform's community guidelines and a user

➤ Functions:

- The GACs will act also **act as a layer of a tech-sector regulator** that the MeitY is expected to prescribe under the **upcoming Digital India Bill**, which is the successor to the **Information Technology Act, 2000**.
- The GACs **will adopt an online dispute resolution mechanism** where the entire appeal process, from its filing to the final decision, will be done online.
- Any person aggrieved by a decision of the grievance officer of a social media intermediary **will be allowed to file an appeal to the GAC within a period of thirty days**.
 - The GAC will **have to deal with the appeal and resolve it within a month of receipt of the appeal**.

What are Present

Government Initiatives for Cyber Security?

- **Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative**
- **Cyber Swachhta Kendra**
- **Online cybercrime reporting portal**
- **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**
- **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)**

Note:



drishti

Bharat Pravah- India along its Shores

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Shipping, Waterways, and Ports has launched 'Bharat Pravah-India along its Shores', an initiative to highlight the significance and imagery of rivers, ports, and shipping in everyday life through a series of nationwide events.

What is Bharat Pravah?

➤ **About:**

- **Bharat Pravah** will serve as a common platform to bring together stakeholders from different walks for the purpose of creating a larger vision of shipping, rivers, seas & people.
- It will highlight the challenges, policy issues and future goals relating to the maritime sector.

All India Survey on Higher Education 2020-2021

Why in News?

The **Union Ministry of Education** released data from the **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), 2020-2021**, which showed a **7.5% increase in student enrolments** across the country compared to **2019-20**.

- The survey also revealed that in 2020-21, the year when the **Covid-19 pandemic** began, there was a **7% rise in enrolments in distance education programmes**.

What is the AISHE?

- To portray the status of higher education in the country, the **Ministry of Education** has endeavored to conduct an **annual web-based AISHE** since 2010-11.
 - Data is being collected on several parameters such as teachers, student **enrolment, programmes, examination results, education finance, infrastructure**.
- Indicators of educational development such as **Institution Density, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Pupil-teacher ratio, Gender Parity Index, Per Student Expenditure** will also be calculated from the data collected through AISHE.

- These are useful in making informed policy decisions and **research for development of the education sector**.

What are the Major Highlights of the AISHE Data?

➤ **Student Enrolment:**

- **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** for all enrolments (as per 2011 Census) increased by over **2 points to 27.3**.
 - The **highest enrolment was seen at the undergraduate level**, which accounted for **78.9%** of all enrolments.
- The **female enrolment in higher education** programmes had increased to **49% of total enrolments in 2020-21** compared to 45% in 2019-20.
 - But, the overall figures for **Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)** enrolments (at all levels of **higher education**) showed that women lagged behind men, who accounted for over 56% of enrolments in these fields.
- **Gender Parity Index (GPI)**, the ratio of female GER to male GER, has increased from 1 in 2017-18 to 1.05 in 2020-21.
- The number of students in the **Persons with Disabilities** category dropped in **2020-21** to 79,035 from 92,831 in 2019-20.
- The **proportion of Muslim students** enrolling for higher education dropped to **4.6% in 2020-21** from **5.5% in 2019-20**.
- **Uttar Pradesh; Maharashtra; Tamil Nadu; Madhya Pradesh; Karnataka and Rajasthan** are the top 6 States in terms of number of students enrolled.
- **Universities and College:** During **2020-21**, the number of **universities has increased by 70**, and the number of **colleges has increased by 1,453**.
 - The **21.4% government colleges** accounted for **34.5% total enrolments** in 2020-21, whereas the rest 65.5% enrolments were seen at **private aided colleges and private unaided colleges** put together.
 - **Uttar Pradesh; Maharashtra; Karnataka; Rajasthan; Tamil Nadu; Madhya Pradesh; Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat** are the top 8 States in terms of number of colleges.

Note:



drishti

- **Faculty:** The female per 100 male faculty has improved to 75 in 2020-21 from 74 in 2019-20 and 63 in 2014-15.

What are the Current Major Issues Related to India's Higher Education System?

- **Faculty Shortage:** AISHE 2020-21 showed that the **teacher-pupil ratio was at 27:1** for all universities, colleges and standalone institutions and at **24:1 if only regular mode is considered** due to which the quality of education remains a concern.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Poor infrastructure is another challenge to higher education in India.
 - Due to the **budget deficit, corruption and lobbying** by the vested interest group, public as well as private sector universities in India lack the necessary infrastructure.
- **Regulatory Issues:** Management of Indian higher education faces challenges of lack of **accountability, transparency, and professionalism.**
- **Problem of Brain Drain:** Due to cutthroat competition for **getting admission in top institutes like IITs and IIMs**, a challenging academic environment is created for a large number of students in India, so they prefer going abroad, **which makes our country deprived of good talent.**
 - There is definitely a **quantitative expansion of education in India** but the **qualitative front (essential for a student to get a job)** is lagging behind.

PARAKH

Why in News?

Recently, the **National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT)** has notified India's first national assessment regulator, **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)**, which aims to set up assessment guidelines for all boards.

What is PARAKH?

- **About:**
 - PARAKH has been launched as part of the implementation of the **National Education Policy (NEP)-2020** that envisaged a standard-setting body to advise school boards regarding new

assessment patterns and latest research, and promote collaborations between them.

- It will act as a **constituent unit of the NCERT.**
- It will also be tasked with **holding periodic learning outcome tests like the National Achievement Survey (NAS)** and State Achievement Surveys.
- It will work on **three major assessment areas:** large-scale assessments, school-based assessment, and examination reforms.
- **Objective:**
 - **Uniform Norms & Guidelines:** Setting norms, standards and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognized school boards of India.
 - **Reduce Disparity in Evaluation:** It will bring uniformity across the state and central boards which currently follow different standards of evaluation, leading to wide disparities in scores.
 - **Benchmark Assessment:** The benchmark assessment framework will seek to put an end to the emphasis on rote learning, as envisaged by the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.**

Women Get Command Roles in The Indian Army

Why in News?

Recently, in a **significant development the Indian Army** cleared the **108 women officers** eligible to command units and troops in their respective arms and services for the first time.

- This would be a major step forward in terms of **gender equality.**
- This decision will also **encourage more women** to join the **Indian Army** and will help to promote **diversity** and **inclusivity** within the organization.

What did the Supreme Court Order in 2020?

- In **2019**, the Army changed its rules allowing **Short Service Commission (SSC) officers women officers** to opt for **permanent commission** who would have otherwise retired after **14 years of service.**
- However, **this was not retrospective**, and applied only to the batches of women officers starting their career in the Army in **2020.**

Note:



drishti

- With the landmark **Supreme Court** judgment of 2020, **permanent commission was granted to women officers with retrospective effect.**

What are the different Army Domains where Women are not Allowed to Work?

- Women are still not eligible in core combat arms such as **Infantry, Mechanized Infantry and Armored Corps** as Army is not open to **women fighting wars** at the borders as foot soldiers. Much of this resistance stems from past instances of **male soldiers** being taken as **prisoners of war** and tortured by the enemy.
- However, the Army has recently decided to **open the Corps of Artillery**, a combat support arm, to women.

What About the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force (IAF)?

- Women officers have been **inducted into all branches of the Navy**, and they will be eligible for permanent commission in the future.
- Women officers **can command shore-based units** and, as they join the service and become eligible for permanent commission, they would be able to command ships and air squadrons.
- The **IAF has opened all branches for women officers**, including the fighter stream and the new weapon systems branch.
- As they are granted permanent commission based on eligibility and vacancies, **they will be eligible to command units in the future.**

Which Other Armies Allow Women to hold Command Positions?

- All major countries, including the **United States, United Kingdom, Russia, and Israel**, allow women to hold **command positions** within their **national armed forces**. This includes positions such as **officers and non-commissioned officers**, as well as roles in **combat units and special forces**.

Chargesheet: Not a Public Document

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** (SC) ruled that **chargesheets are not 'public documents'** and enabling

their **free public access violates the provisions of the Criminal Code of Procedure (CrPC)** as it compromises the rights of the accused, victim, and the investigation agencies.

What is a Chargesheet?

About:

- A chargesheet, as **defined under Section 173 CrPC**, is the final report prepared by a police officer or investigative agency after completing their investigation of a case.
 - In the **K Veeraswami vs Union of India & Others (1991) case**, the SC ruled that the chargesheet is a **final report of the police officer under section 173(2) of the CrPC**.
- A chargesheet **must be filed against the accused within a prescribed period of 60-90 days**, otherwise, the arrest is illegal, and the accused is entitled to bail.

Chargesheet Should Contain:

- Details of names, the nature of the information, and offences. Whether the accused is under arrest, in custody, or has been released, whether any action was taken against him, these are **all important questions answered in the chargesheet**.

Procedure after Filing the Chargesheet:

- After preparing the chargesheet, the officer-in-charge of the police station **forwards it to a Magistrate**, who is empowered to take notice of the offences mentioned in it **so that the charges can be framed**.

How is a Chargesheet Different from an FIR?

Provision:

- The term, 'chargesheet' is defined under Section 173 of the CrPC but **First Information Report (FIR)**, has **not been defined in either the Indian Penal Code (IPC) or the CrPC**. Instead, it finds a place under the police regulations/ rules under **Section 154 of CrPC**, which deals with 'Information in Cognizable Cases'.

Time of Filing:

- While the **chargesheet is the final report** filed towards the end of an investigation, an **FIR is filed at the 'first' instance** that the police are informed of a cognizable offense (offence for which one **can be arrested without a warrant**; such as rape, murder, kidnapping).

Note:



drishti

- **Determination of Guilt:**
 - An **FIR does not decide a person's guilt** but a chargesheet is complete with evidence and is often used **during the trial to prove the offenses the accused is charged with.**
- **Terms & Conditions:**
 - After filing an FIR, the investigation takes place. Under Section 169 of the CrPC, the **police can only forward the case to the Magistrate if they have sufficient evidence, otherwise, the accused is released from custody.**
 - A chargesheet is filed by the police or law-enforcement/ investigative agency only after they have gathered sufficient evidence against the accused in respect of the offenses mentioned in the FIR, **otherwise, a 'cancellation report' or 'untraced report' can be filed when due to lack of evidence.**

What is a FIR?

- 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.

Why is a Chargesheet not a Public Document?

- According to the Court, a chargesheet cannot be made publicly available as it's not a 'public document' **under Sections 74 and 76 of the Evidence Act, 1872.**
 - **Section 74:** It defines public documents as those which form the acts or records of sovereign authority, official bodies, tribunals, and of public offices either legislative, judicial or executive in any part of India, Commonwealth or a foreign country. It **also includes public records "kept in any State of private documents"**.
 - **Section 76:** Any public officer having custody of such documents must provide a copy upon demand and payment of a legal fee, **along with a certificate of attestation that states the date, seal, name, and designation of the officer.**
- As per Section 75 of the Evidence Act, **all documents other than those listed under Section 74 are private documents.**

- The Supreme Court in the **Youth Bar Association of India vs Union of India case (2016)** directed all police stations in the country to publish copies of FIRs online within 24 hours of registration, except in cases where offenses were of sensitive nature.
 - Only **FIRs were covered by this ruling, and chargesheets were not included.**

Remote Voting for Migrants

Why in News?

Recently, the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** has proposed a new **Remote Electronic Voting Machine (RVM)**, which will allow domestic migrants to vote in national and regional elections.

- The EC proposed using this in a State Assembly election **as a pilot so internal migrants** within a state can cast their ballots.

Why the Need for Remote Voting?

- **Decrease in Voting Turnout:**
 - In 2019 general election, **over 91% of its eligible citizens were registered with 67% of them coming out to vote**, which is the highest voter turnout in the nation's history.
 - It is, however, worrying that a **third of the eligible voters, a whopping 30 crore people, do not vote.**
- **Internal Migration:**
 - One of the reasons for less voter turnout remained the internal migration **that took electors away from their home constituencies.**
 - Electors can have their names **added to the electoral rolls of the constituency they ordinarily reside in, but many chose to retain the Voter ID from their home constituencies** for various reasons.
- **Supreme Court's Direction:**
 - Hearing a petition on the alleged denial of voting opportunities to migrants, the **Supreme Court (SC)** had in **2015 directed the EC to explore options for remote voting.**
- **Increasing Registrations of Unorganised Workers:**
 - There are nearly 10 million migrant workers, which is for the unorganised sector, registered with the

Note:

government's **e-SHRAM portal**. If the remote voting project is implemented, it will have far reaching ramifications.

What is the Current Proposal for Remote Voting?

➤ RVM:

- RVM is a modified version of the existing Electronic Voting Machine (EVM).
- The **special remote polling booths** would be set up in different states when elections are on in the home state of migrants.
- The RVM can handle multiple constituencies from a single remote polling booth.
- For this, instead of a **fixed ballot paper sheet**, the **machine has been modified to have an electronic dynamic ballot display** which will present different candidate lists corresponding to the constituency number of the voter read by a constituency card reader.

➤ Security:

- The system would **have a device similar to the so voters can verify their votes**.
- The units will save the number of votes for each candidate for each of the constituencies, to be tallied on counting day.
- The results would then be shared with the home **RO (Returning Officer)**.
 - A returning officer is responsible for overseeing elections in one or more constituencies.

Centre vs Delhi Govt on Control Over Services

Why in News?

A five-judge **Constitution Bench** of the **Supreme Court (SC)** is hearing a **dispute between the Delhi government** and the Centre over the control of administrative services.

- Almost five years ago, **another Constitution Bench had ruled in favour of the State government in a similar tussle**.

What is the Timeline of the Dispute?

➤ 2017 Judgement:

- The Delhi High Court had, in its judgment 2017 **held that for administration purposes of the National**

Capital Territory (NCT), the **Lieutenant Governor (L-G) is not bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers in every matter**.

- On appeal, the SC in 2017, referred the matter to decide the interpretation of **Article 239AA of the Constitution**.

➤ 2018 Judgement:

- A **five-judge Constitution bench** had **unanimously held that the L-G of Delhi is bound by the aid and advice of the elected government**, and both needed to work harmoniously with each other.

➤ 2019 Judgement:

- A two-judge Bench of the SC **delivered a split verdict on the question of powers of the Government of NCT of Delhi and Union government** over services and referred the matter to a three-judge Bench.
 - While one judge had ruled the Delhi government has no power at all over administrative services.
 - Another judge, **however, had said the transfer or posting of officers in top echelons of the bureaucracy (joint director and above) can only be done by the Central government** and the view of the L-G would prevail in case of a difference of opinion for matters relating to other bureaucrats.

➤ 2022 Case:

- The Centre on **27th April 2022** sought a reference to a **larger Bench**, arguing that it **needed the power to make transfers and postings of officers in Delhi** on account of it being the national capital and the "face of nation".
- The court agreed that the **limited question relating to the scope of the legislative and executive powers of the Centre and NCT of Delhi**, with respect to the term "services", would need an authoritative pronouncement by a Constitution Bench in terms of **Article 145(3) of the Constitution**.

What are the Arguments and Counterarguments in the Issue?

➤ Arguments For:

- The Centre has **consistently maintained that because Delhi is the national capital and the face of the country, it must have control over administrative services**, which include appointments and transfers.

Note:



drishti

➤ **Counter arguments:**

- The Delhi government has **argued that in the interest of federalism, the elected representatives must have power over transfers and postings.**
- The Delhi government had also contended that the recent amendments to the **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021**, violate the doctrine of basic structure of the Constitution.

What is the Governance Model of New Delhi?

- The **status of Delhi being a Union Territory under Schedule 1 of the Constitution** but christened the 'National Capital Territory' under Article 239AA.
- The **69th amendment to the Constitution of India** inserted Article 239AA, which declared the Union Territory of Delhi to be administered by a L-G who works on aid and advice of the elected legislative assembly.
 - However, the 'aid and advice' clause pertains only to matters on which the elected Assembly has powers under the **State and Concurrent Lists** with the exception of public order, police, and land.
- Further, the **Article 239AA also notes that L-G has to either act on the aid and advice** of the Council of Ministers, or he is bound to implement the decision taken by the President on a reference being made by him.
- Also, **Article 239AA, empowers the L-G to refer a difference of opinion on 'any matter'** with the Council of Ministers to the President.
- Thus, this dual control between L-G and the elected government leads to a power tussle.

Maharashtra-Karnataka Border Dispute

Why in News?

The border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka is intensifying, with both states passing a unanimous resolution **to support a legal battle to resolve the dispute.**

What is Maharashtra-Karnataka Border Dispute?

➤ **About:**

- The border dispute over Belagavi, Karwar and Nipani in North Karnataka is long-standing.

- When state boundaries were redrawn on linguistic lines as per the **States Reorganisation Act of 1956**, **Belagavi became part of the erstwhile Mysore state.**

- The Act was based on the findings of the Justice Fazal Ali Commission which was appointed in 1953 and submitted its report two years later.

- Maharashtra claims that parts of Belagavi, where **Marathi is the dominant language, should remain in Maharashtra.**

- In October 1966, the **Centre set up the Mahajan Commission, led by former Chief Justice of India Mehr Chand Mahajan**, to resolve the border dispute in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala.

- The Commission recommended that Belgaum and 247 villages remain with Karnataka. Maharashtra rejected the report, and in 2004, moved the Supreme Court.

➤ **Basis of Maharashtra's Claim:**

- Maharashtra's claim to **seek the readjustment of its border was on the basis of contiguity**, relative linguistic majority and wishes of the people. If the claim over Belagavi and surrounding areas was based on **Marathi-speaking people and linguistic homogeneity, it laid its claim over Karwar** and Supa where Konkani is spoken by citing Konkani as a dialect of Marathi.

- Its argument was based on the **theory of villages being the unit for calculation and enumerated linguistic population** in each village. Maharashtra also points out the historical fact that the revenue records in these Marathi-speaking areas are also kept in Marathi.

➤ **Karnataka's Position:**

- Karnataka has argued that the settlement of **boundaries as per the States Reorganisation Act is final.**
- The boundary of the State was neither tentative nor flexible. **The State argues that the issue would reopen border issues** that have not been contemplated under the Act, and that such a demand should not be permitted.

How is the Issue Being Resolved?

- Attempts are often made to resolve inter-state disputes with the cooperation of both sides, with the Centre working as a facilitator or a neutral mediator.

Note:

- If issues are resolved amicably, **Parliament can bring a law to alter state boundaries**, such as the **Bihar-Uttar Pradesh (Alteration of Boundaries) Act of 1968** and the **Haryana-Uttar Pradesh (Alteration of Boundaries) Act of 1979**.
- In the Belagavi issue, Union Home Minister Amit Shah met Chief Ministers of both states and asked them to **form a six-member team, comprising three ministers from each side**, to address all boundary issues.

What are the other Methods Available?

- **Judicial Redressal:**
 - The **Supreme Court in its original jurisdiction** decides disputes **between states**.
 - **As per Article 131 of the Constitution reads**, the Supreme Court have original jurisdiction in any dispute **between the Government of India and one or more States; or** between the Government of India and any State or **between two or more states**.
- **Inter-state Council:**
 - Article 263 of the Constitution gives **powers to the President to set up an Inter-state Council** for resolution of disputes between states.
 - The Council is envisaged as a forum for discussion between the states and the Centre.
 - In 1988, the **Sarkaria Commission suggested that the Council should exist as a permanent body**, and in 1990 it came into existence through a Presidential Order.

What are Some of the other Inter-State Disputes in India?

Assam-Arunachal Pradesh:	➤ Assam shares an 804.10 km inter-state boundary with Arunachal Pradesh.
	➤ The state of Arunachal Pradesh, created in 1987, claims some land that traditionally belonged to its residents has been given to Assam.
	➤ A tripartite committee had recommended that certain territories be transferred from Assam to Arunachal. The two states have since been battling it out in the court over the issue.

Assam-Mizoram:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mizoram used to be a district of Assam before being carved out as a separate union territory and later, becoming another state. ➤ Mizoram shares a border with the districts Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj of Assam. ➤ Over time, the two states started having different perceptions about where the demarcation should be. ➤ While Mizoram wants it to be along an inner line notified in 1875 to protect tribals from outside influence, which Mizos feel is part of their historical homeland, Assam wants it to be demarcated according to district boundaries drawn up much later.
Assam-Nagaland:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The border dispute between the two states has been going on since the formation of Nagaland in 1963. ➤ The two states lay claim to Merapani, a small village next to the plains of Assam's Golaghat district. ➤ There have been reports of violent clashes in the region since the 1960s.
Assam-Meghalaya:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meghalaya has identified close to a dozen areas on which it has a dispute with Assam about the state's borders.
Haryana-Himachal Pradesh:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The two northern states have a border dispute over the Parwanoo region, which lies next to the Panchkula district of Haryana. ➤ Haryana has laid a claim to a large part of the land in the area and has accused the hill state of encroaching on some of its area.
Ladakh-Himachal Pradesh:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The union territory of Ladakh and Himachal both claim Sarchu, a major halt point for those travelling through Leh-Manali highway. ➤ The region is located between Himachal Pradesh's Lahaul and Spiti district and Ladakh's Leh district.

Note:

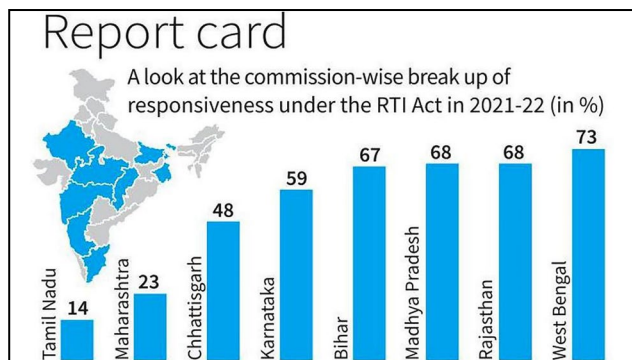
Report Card of RTI Responsiveness

Why in News?

Recently, **Satark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS)** has released a report card of Responsiveness under **RTI (Right to Information) Act 2021-22**, which shows that **Tamil Nadu has been the worst performing RTI responsiveness**, furnishing only 14% of the information sought.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report Card?

- Maharashtra was second-worst, sharing 23% of the information asked for.
- Only 10 ICs provided full information in response to the RTI applications filed as part of this assessment. These included **Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand and northeastern States of Sikkim, Nagaland and Tripura.**
- The SIC of Bihar, which had failed to provide any information under the RTI Act for the assessments published in 2020 and 2021, **significantly improved its performance and furnished 67% of the information sought.**
- A large number of ICs across the country were **returning cases** without passing orders.
- Several ICs have an **extremely low rate of disposal per commissioner.**
- Of all the 29 ICs, only the CIC has adopted a norm regarding the number of appeals or complaints to be disposed of by each commissioner in one year.



What is the Right to Information (RTI) Act?

- **About:**
 - The **Right to Information Act 2005** mandates timely response to citizen requests for government information.

➤ Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019:

- It provided that the **Chief Information Commissioner and an Information Commissioner (of Centre as well as States)** shall hold office for such term as prescribed by the Central Government. Before this amendment, their term was fixed for 5 years.
- It provided that the **salary, allowances and other service conditions of the Chief Information Commissioner and an Information Commissioner (of Centre as well as States)** shall be such as **prescribed by the Central Government.**
 - Before this amendment, the salary, allowances and other service conditions of the Chief Information Commissioner were similar to those of the Chief Election Commissioner and that of an Information Commissioner were similar to those of an Election Commissioner (State Election Commissioners in case of States).
- It removed the **provisions regarding deductions in salary of the Chief Information Commissioner, an Information Commissioner, the State Chief Information Commissioner and a State Information Commissioner** due to pension or any other retirement benefits received by them for their previous government service.

CAG Audit Report on Assam's NRC

Why in News?

Recently, the **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)** has detected large-scale anomalies in the updating of the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** in Assam.

What are the CAG's Concerns?

➤ Irregularities in the Utilisation of Funds:

- At the time, **the process to update the NRC was started in December 2014 with a deadline for completion in February 2015** and the project cost was pegged at Rs. 288.18 crores.
- There was, however, a **five-fold increase in the cost by March 2022** due to additional time to complete it and changes in the update software.
- As for irregularities, the **CAG found that the number of wages paid to the outsourced staff was 45.59%-64.27% less** than what was approved by the NRC coordination committee.

Note:



drishti

➤ Lack of Secure and Reliable Software:

- In the NRC update process, a **highly secure and reliable software was required to be developed**, however, lack of proper planning was observed in this regard to the extent of 215 software utilities were added in a haphazard manner to the core software.

What is the NRC Exercise?

- An NRC was **first created in 1951 in Assam** to identify those born in India and migrants from erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh.
- In 2013, the **Supreme Court issued directions to the Centre and State to initiate an exercise in Assam** to update the 1951 register.
- The order was based on a petition filed by an NGO named Assam Public Works.
- The first draft was released in 2018.
- The final list, published in 2019, included those **who could establish their Indian citizenship by being residents or descendants of people living in Assam before March 25, 1971** (the cut-off date for deportation of foreigners as per the **Assam Accord** of August 1985).
- As many as 19.06 lakh people out of 3.3 crore applicants were excluded due to a lack of adequate documents to prove their citizenship. Several parties dismissed the final list as “faulty”.
- Three years later, the process is on pause as the **Registrar General of India (RGI)** is yet to notify the final list.

Samudrayaan Mission

Why in News?

According to the Ministry of Earth Science, the **Samudrayaan Mission is expected to be realised by year 2026.**

What is Samudrayaan Mission?

- **About:**
 - The mission is aimed at **sending three personnel to 6000-metre depth in a vehicle called ‘MATSYA 6000’** for the exploration of deep-sea resources like minerals.

- ‘MATSYA 6000’ vehicle is being **designed and developed by National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)**, Chennai under **Ministry of Earth Sciences.**
- It has an endurance of 12 hours under normal operation and 96 hours in case of emergency for human safety.
- It is **India’s first unique manned ocean mission** and is a part of the Rs 6000-crores **Deep Ocean Mission.**

What is the Deep Ocean Mission?

- It was approved in June 2021 by the Ministry of Earth Sciences. It aims to **explore the deep ocean for resources, develop deep-sea technologies for sustainable use of ocean resources**, and support the **Blue Economy Initiatives** of the Indian Government.
- The cost of the Mission has been estimated at Rs. 4,077 crores over a **five-year period** and will be implemented in phases.

Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan Scheme

Why in News?

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Ko Kaam Karyakram (PMKKK) has been named as Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS) Scheme by the **Ministry of Minority Affairs.**

What are the Key Points of the Scheme?

- **About:**
 - It is a **Central-Sector Scheme**, which focuses on the skilling, entrepreneurship and leadership training requirements of the minority and artisan communities across the country.
 - This is an integrated scheme that converges **five erstwhile schemes of the Ministry of Minority Affairs** viz,
 - **Seekho aur Kamao:**
 - This is a **placement linked skill development scheme** for minorities aiming to upgrade the skills of minority youth in various modern/traditional skills **depending upon their qualification, present economic trends and market potential**

Note:



drishti

- **USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development):** It aims to promote and preserve the rich heritage of the traditional arts & crafts of the minority communities.
- **Hamari Dharohar:** It has been formulated to preserve rich heritage of minority communities of India.
- **Nai Roshni:** It is a **Leadership Development Programme** for women belonging to minority communities in the age group of 18 to 65 years. It was started in 2012-13.
- **Nai Manzil:** The scheme aims to benefit the youth (both men & women) belonging to **six notified minority communities of 17-35 years of age, who** do not have formal school leaving certificate.

- The scheme has been approved by the Cabinet for the period of **15th Finance Commission**.

➤ **Components:**

- Skill and Training
- Leadership and Entrepreneurship
- Education
- Infrastructure Development

➤ **Objectives:**

- PM VIKAS aims to improve the **livelihoods of the minorities, particularly the artisan communities**, using the components of skill development, education, women leadership & entrepreneurship.
- These components complement each other **in the ultimate objective of the scheme to increase the incomes of the beneficiaries and provide support** by facilitating credit and market linkages.

What are the Other Schemes Related to the Minority?

➤ **Pradhanmantri Jan Vikas Karykram:**

- The programme aims to **develop socio-economic and basic amenities assets like school, college, polytechnic, girls' hostel, ITI, skill development centre** etc for the minority communities.

➤ **Begum Hazrat Mahal Girls Scholarships:**

- Scholarships for **economically backward girls** belonging to the six notified Minority communities.

➤ **Gharib Nawaz Employment Scheme:**

- It was launched so that **short-term job-oriented skill development courses may be provided to minorities' youth** in order to enable them for skill based employment.

➤ **Hunar Haat:**

- Launched to provide market and employment and employment opportunities to **master artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts**.

Rashtriya Gokul Mission

Why in News?

Recently, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying announced that **employment will be given to more than 50 lakh farmers**.

- Under **Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)** there is a scheme to **provide subsidy on cow/buffalo/pig/chicken/goat breeding farms and silage making units** of which 50% subsidy will be given by the Government of India. Also, **3% interest subvention on the loan amount** can also be taken **under the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) scheme**.

What is Rashtriya Gokul Mission?

➤ **About:**

- It is being implemented for **development and conservation of indigenous bovine breeds since December 2014**.
- The scheme is also continued **under umbrella scheme Rashtriya Pashudhan Vikas Yojna from 2021 to 2026** with a budget outlay of Rs.2400 crore.

➤ **Nodal Ministry:**

- Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

➤ **Objectives:**

- To enhance productivity of bovines and increasing milk production in a sustainable manner using advance technologies.
- To propagate use of high genetic merit bulls for breeding purposes.
- To enhance Artificial insemination coverage through strengthening breeding network and delivery of Artificial insemination services at farmers doorstep.
- To promote indigenous cattle & buffalo rearing and conservation in a scientific and holistic manner.

Note:



drashti

➤ **Implementing Agency:**

- Rashtriya Gokul Mission will be implemented through the "State Implementing Agency (SIA viz Livestock Development Boards).

➤ **Significant Initiatives:**○ **Gopal Ratna Awards:**

- For farmers maintaining the best herd of Indigenous Breed and practicing best management practices.

○ **Kamdhenu Awards:**

- For best-managed Indigenous herd by Institutions/ Trusts/ NGOs/ Gaushalas or best-managed Breeders' societies.

○ **Gokul Grams:**

- RGM envisages the establishment of integrated cattle development centers, '**Gokul Grams**' to **develop indigenous breeds including up to 40% nondescript breeds** (belonging or appearing to belong to no particular class or kind) with objectives to:

- Promote indigenous cattle rearing and conservation in a scientific manner.
- Propagate high genetic merit bulls of indigenous breeds.
- Optimize modern Farm Management practices and promote Common Resource Management.
- Utilize animal waste in an economical way i.e., Cow Dung, Cow Urine.

- Recently, **funds have been released for setting up of 16 Gokul Grams.**

○ **National Kamdhenu Breeding Centre (NKBC):**

- It is being established as a Centre of Excellence to develop and conserve Indigenous Breeds in a holistic and scientific manner.

○ **E-Pashu Haat:**

- It is a web portal which provides information on pet cattle, trading of bovine animals that were not offered on any other platform in the country.

○ **Nakul Prajnan Bazaar:**

- An e-market portal connecting breeders and farmers, for quality- disease-free bovine germplasm.

○ **AHIDF Scheme:**

- AHIDF of Rs.15000 crore has been set up **under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan stimulus package** for incentivizing investments by individual entrepreneurs, private companies, MSME, **Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs)** and Section 8 companies to **establish:**

- the **dairy processing and value addition infrastructure,**
- **meat processing** and value addition infrastructure and
- **Animal Feed Plant.**

District Mineral Foundation Scheme

Why in News?

Odisha's Keonjhar district is **India's highest recipient of funds under the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) scheme**, and has spent ₹3,000 crore under the scheme over the past seven years.

- Keonjhar is **hugely rich in mineral reserves**, especially iron ore. The district has **2,555 million tonnes of iron ore** available beneath its soil, of which **approximately 50 million tonnes is extracted each year**, a key driver of Odisha's economy.

What is DMF Scheme?

➤ **About:**

- As per the **Mine and Minerals Development Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2015**, in **every district affected by mining-related operations**, the **state government** shall, by notification, **establish a trust as a non-profit body** to be called the **District Mineral Foundation**.

➤ **DMF Funds:**

- Funds every **mining lease holder of will pay a fraction of royalty, not exceeding one-third of the royalty**, to the DMF as per rates prescribed by Central Government.
- This fund will be **used for welfare of the people affected in the mining affected areas.**
 - In Keonjhar, the total DMF fund collection has touched an astounding **₹8,840 crore**, the **highest for any district in India.**

➤ **Objective:**

Note:



drishti

- The idea behind the contribution is that local mining-affected communities, **mostly tribal and among the poorest** in the country, also **have the right to benefit from natural resources extracted from where they live.**
- **Functioning:**
 - The functioning of the DMF trusts and the fund use governed by states' DMF Rules incorporate the mandates of a **central guideline, Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY).**

What is PMKKKY?

- **About:**
 - It is a scheme by the **Ministry of Mines** for the welfare of people & affected areas by using the funds accrued under District Mineral Foundation (DMF).
- **Objectives:**
 - To **implement various developmental and welfare projects/programs in mining affected areas** that complement the existing ongoing schemes/projects of State and Central Government.
 - To **minimize/mitigate the adverse impacts, during and after mining**, on the environment, health and socio-economics of people in mining districts.
 - To ensure **long-term sustainable livelihoods** for the affected people in mining areas.
- **Implementation:**
 - At least **60% the fund will be utilized for "High Priority Areas"** like Drinking water supply, Environment preservation & pollution control measure, Health care, Education, etc.
 - **Rest of the fund** will be utilized for **"Other Priority Areas"**, such as Physical infrastructure, Irrigation, Energy & watershed development and Measures for enhancing environmental quality.

AYURSWASTHYA Yojana

Why in News?

Ayush Ministry is currently running a **Central Sector Scheme** titled **AYURSWASTHYA Yojana**.

What is AYURSWASTHYA Yojana?

- **About:**
 - It has two components:

- **AYUSH and Public Health:** To promote AYUSH intervention for community health care.
- **Up-gradation of facilities to Centre of Excellence:** To support establishment of advanced/specialized AYUSH medical health units in reputed AYUSH and Allopathic institutions both in Government and Non-Government sector.

- Under the Centre of Excellence component of AYURSWASTHYA Yojana, **financial assistance is provided to eligible individual organizations/institutes** for establishing and upgrading their functions & facilities and/or for research & development activities in AYUSH.
- **Funding:**
 - The maximum admissible financial assistance under the Centre of Excellence component of AYURSWASTHYA Yojana, to an organization/institute is **Rs.10.00 crores for a maximum period of three years.**

What are the other Schemes Related to AYUSH?

- **National Ayush Mission:** The Mission addresses the **gaps in health services through supporting the efforts of State/UT Governments** for providing AYUSH health services/education in the country, particularly in vulnerable and far-flung areas.
- **Ayush Wellness Centers:** AWC are launched to establish a **holistic wellness model based on AYUSH principles** and practices focusing on preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative healthcare by integration with the existing public health care system.

Free Foodgrains Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution **issued a notification to provide free foodgrains (rice, wheat and coarse grains) to all eligible households** under the **National Food Security Act, 2013**, for one year from January 1, 2023.

- The government, **however, discontinued the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.**

What are Coarse Cereals?

- Coarse cereals **are traditionally grown in resource-poor agro-climatic regions of the country.**

Note:



drishti

- Agro-climatic zone is a **land unit in terms of major climates suitable for a certain range of crops** and cultivars.
- Sorghum, pearl millet, maize, barley, finger millet and several small millets such as kodo millet, little millet, foxtail millet, proso millet and barnyard millet **together called coarse cereals**.

What is NFSA, 2013?

- **Objective:**
 - To provide **for food and nutritional security** in the human life cycle approach, **by ensuring access to adequate quantities of quality food at affordable prices to people** to live a life with dignity.
- **Coverage:**
 - 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for **receiving subsidised foodgrains under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**.
 - Overall, **NFSA covers about 81.35 crore citizens**.
- **Eligibility:**
 - Priority Households are to be covered under TPDS, **according to guidelines by the State government**.
 - Households are covered under the **Antyodaya Anna Yojana**.
- **Provisions:**
 - 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.
 - The existing AAY household will continue to **receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month**.
 - **Meal and maternity benefits** of not less than Rs. 6,000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers during pregnancy and six months after child birth.
 - **Meals for children** upto 14 years of age.
 - **Food security allowance** to beneficiaries in case of non-supply of entitled foodgrains or meals.
 - **Setting up grievance redressal mechanisms** at the district and state level.

What are Government Initiatives in this Regard?

- **National Food Security Mission**
- **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)**
- **Integrated Schemes on Oilseeds, Pulses, Palm oil and Maize (ISOPOM)**
- **eNAM Portal**

Court Vacations

Why in News?

Recently, the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** has said that the Supreme Court will not have a vacation bench when it breaks for its annual winter vacation.

- While this judicial schedule has its origins in colonial practices, it has come **under criticism for quite some time now**.

What are Court Vacations?

- **About:**
 - The **Supreme Court** has **193 working days a year for its judicial functioning**, while the **High Court's function for approximately 210 days**, and **trial courts for 245 days**.
 - High Courts have the **power to structure their calendars according to the service rules**.
 - The Supreme Court takes two long vacations each year, the summer and winter breaks, but is **technically not fully closed during these periods**.
- **Vacation Bench:**
 - A Vacation Bench of the Supreme Court is a **special bench constituted by the CJI**.
 - Litigants can still approach the Supreme Court and, if the court decides that the plea is an **"urgent matter"**, the **Vacation Bench hears the case on its merits**.
 - Cases such as bail, eviction, etc. **often find precedence in listing before vacation benches**.
 - It is **not uncommon for courts to hear important cases** during vacation.
 - In **2015**, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court heard the challenge to the constitutional amendment setting up the **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)** during the summer vacation.
 - In **2017**, a Constitution Bench held a six-day hearing in the case challenging the practice of triple talaq during summer vacation.
- **Legal Provisions:**
 - Under **Rule 6 of Order II of The Supreme Court rules, 2013**, the CJI has nominated the **Division Benches for hearing of urgent miscellaneous matters** and regular hearing matters during the summer vacation for the period.

Note:



drishti

- The rule reads that **CJI may appoint one or more Judges to hear during summer vacation or winter holidays all matters** of an urgent nature which under these rules may be heard by a Judge sitting singly.
- And, whenever necessary, he **may likewise appoint a Division Court for the hearing of urgent cases** during the vacation which require to be heard by a Bench of Judges.

Recusal of Judges

Why in News?

Recently, a **Supreme Court (SC)** judge recused herself from hearing a **writ petition** filed by Bilkis Bano against a Gujarat government decision to prematurely release 11 men sentenced to life imprisonment for gang-raping her during the 2002 riots.

What is Recusal?

- **About:**
 - It is the **act of abstaining from participation in an official action** such as a legal proceeding due to a conflict of interest of the presiding court official or administrative officer.
- **Rule for Recusal:**
 - There are **no formal rules governing recusals**, although several SC judgments have dealt with the issue.
 - In **Ranjit Thakur v Union of India (1987)**, the SC held that the test of the likelihood of bias is the reasonableness of the apprehension in the mind of the party.
 - The judge needs to look at the mind of the party before him, and decide that he is biased or not.
- **Reason for Recusal:**
 - When there is a **conflict of interest**, a judge can **withdraw from hearing a case** to prevent creating a perception that he carried a bias while deciding the case.
 - The practice stems from the cardinal principle of **due process of law** that nobody can be a judge in her own case.

What is the Process of Recusal?

- The decision to recuse **generally comes from the judge himself** as it rests on the conscience and discretion of

the judge to disclose any potential conflict of interest.

- Some judges orally convey to the lawyers involved in the case their reasons for recusal, many do not. Some explain the reasons in their order.
- In some circumstances, **lawyers or parties in the case bring it up before the judge**. If a judge recuses, the case is listed before the **Chief Justice** for allotment to a fresh Bench.

Amendments to the Co-operative Societies Act

Why in News?

Recently, responding to the demands by the Opposition, the Lok Sabha has referred the **Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill 2022** to a joint **committee of Parliament**.

- The Bill is aimed at **overhauling the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002**, which was enacted 20 years ago.

What is a Cooperative Society?

- **About:**
 - Cooperatives are organizations **formed at the grassroots level by people to harness the power of collective bargaining** in the marketplace.
 - This can mean **different kinds of arrangements, such as using a common resource or sharing capital, to derive a common gain** that would otherwise be difficult for an individual producer to get.
 - In agriculture, cooperative dairies, sugar mills, spinning mills etc. are formed with the **pooled resources of farmers who wish to process** their produce.
 - Amul is perhaps the **best-known cooperative society in India**.
- **Jurisdiction:**
 - Cooperatives are a **state subject under the Constitution**, meaning they come under the state governments' jurisdiction, but there are **many societies whose members and areas of operation are spread across** more than one state.
 - For example, most sugar mills along the districts on the **Karnataka-Maharashtra border procure cane from both states**.

Note:

- Cooperatives of more than one state are registered under the **Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act (MSCS) of 2002** Act.
 - Their board of directors has **representation from all states** they operate in.
 - Administrative and financial control of these societies **is with the central registrar, with the law making it clear that no state government official can wield any control over them.**

What are the Proposed Amendments?

- **Merger of Cooperatives:**
 - The Bill provides for the **merger of “any co-operative society”** into an existing MSCS by a resolution passed by **majority (at least 2/3rd) of the members present and voting** at a general meeting of such society.
 - **At present, only MSCS can amalgamate** themselves and form a new MSCS.
- **Co-operative Election Authority:**
 - The Bill seeks to establish a **“Co-operative Election Authority”**, with a view to bring **“electoral reforms” in the co-operative sector.**
 - The Authority shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and a maximum of 3 more members to be appointed by the Centre.
 - All the members **will hold office for 3 years or until they attain the age of 65 years** (whichever is earlier) and **shall be eligible for re-appointment.**
- **Stricter Punishments:**
 - **The Bill seeks to increase the amount of penalty** for certain offences.
 - If the board of directors or officers receive any unlawful gains while transacting matters related to such society, they will be punishable with imprisonment for a **term which shall not be less than one month but which may extend to one year or with fine.**
- **Cooperative Ombudsman:**
 - The government has proposed to appoint **one or more “Co-operative Ombudsman”** with a territorial jurisdiction for inquiring into the complaints made by the members.
 - The **Co-operative Ombudsman will have the powers of civil court** in summoning and examination.
- **Rehabilitation and Development Fund:**

- The Bill also seeks the **“establishment of the Co-operative Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Fund”** for revival of “sick MSCS”.
- It also proposes to insert a new section **70A relating to “concurrent audit” for MSCSs** having an annual turnover or deposit of more than the amount as determined by the Central Government.

Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill

Why in News?

Recently, **Rajya Sabha** passed the **Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill** which the government said would provide an effective legal instrument to combat **Maritime Piracy**.

- The **security of sea lanes of communication** is critical as more than 90% of India's trade takes place by sea routes and more than 80% of the country's **hydrocarbon requirements** was sea-borne.
- In 2023, the **President has given assent** to Maritime Anti-Piracy Act, 2022.

What are the Key Features of the Bill?

- **About:**
 - The Bill provides for **prevention of maritime piracy** and **prosecution of persons** for such piracy-related crimes.
 - It will apply to all parts of the sea adjacent to and beyond the limits of the **Exclusive Economic Zone** of India, i.e., beyond 200 nautical miles from the coastline.
 - The Bill brings into law the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).**
- **Definition of Piracy:**
 - **It defines piracy as** any illegal act of violence, detention, or destruction committed against a ship, aircraft, person or property, for private purposes, by the crew or passengers of a private ship or aircraft. Such acts may be carried out in the **high seas** (beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone of India) or **any place outside the jurisdiction of India.**
 - **Inciting or intentionally facilitating** such acts would also qualify as piracy.
 - It includes any other act that is considered as **piratical under international law.**
 - Piracy also includes **voluntary participation** in the operations of a pirate ship or aircraft used for piracy.

Note:



drishti

➤ **Penalties:**

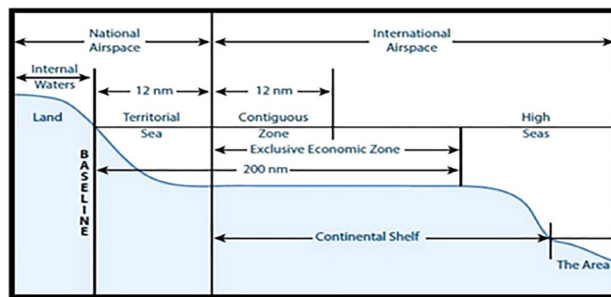
- An act of piracy will be punishable with:
 - **Imprisonment for life**; or
 - **Death**, if the act of piracy causes or attempts to cause death.
- An attempt to commit, aid, support, or counsel an act of piracy will be **punishable with up to 14 years of imprisonment**, and a fine.
- Participating, organising, or directing others to participate in an act of piracy will also be **punishable with up to 14 years of imprisonment**, and a fine.
- Offences will be considered **extraditable**. This means that the accused can be **transferred to any country for prosecution** with which India has signed an **extradition treaty**.
 - In the absence of such treaties, offences will be extraditable on the basis of reciprocity between the countries.

➤ **Jurisdiction of the Courts:**

- The central government, in consultation with the Chief Justice of the concerned **High Court**, may notify **Sessions Courts** as the Designated Courts under this Bill.
- The Designated Court will try offences committed by:
 - A person in the **custody of the Indian Navy or Coast Guard**, regardless of his nationality.
 - A citizen of India, a resident foreign national in India, or a stateless person.
- The Court will **not have jurisdiction over offences committed on a foreign ship** unless an intervention is requested by:
 - The country of origin of the ship.
 - The ship-owner.
 - Any other person on the ship.
- Warships and government-owned ships employed for non-commercial purposes will **not be under the jurisdiction of the Court**.

What is the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea?

- **The UNCLOS**, 1982 is an international agreement that establishes the **legal framework for marine and maritime activities**.
- It is also known as **Law of the Sea**. It divides **marine areas into five main zones** namely- Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.



- It is the only international convention which stipulates a **framework for state jurisdiction in maritime spaces**. It provides a **different legal status** to different maritime zones.
- It provides the **backbone for offshore governance** by coastal states and those navigating the oceans.
- It not only zones coastal states' offshore areas but also provides **specific guidance for states' rights and responsibilities** in the five concentric zones.
- In 1995, **India ratified the UNCLOS**.

Trademark

Why in News?

The Delhi High Court granted an **interim injunction in favour of Hamdard Laboratories** in its plea against Sadar Laboratories Private Limited for **infringing its registered trademark**.

What is the Court's Verdict?

- The court said Rooh Afza served as the **source identifier for Hamdard for over a century and has acquired immense goodwill** and it was essential to ensure that the competitors keep a safe distance from the mark.

What is a Trademark?

- A trademark is a **sign capable of distinguishing the goods or services** of one enterprise from those of other enterprises. Trademarks are protected by **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)**.
- In **India**, trademarks are governed by the Trade Marks Act 1999, which was amended in 2010.
- It legally **differentiates a product or service from all others of its kind** and recognizes the source company's ownership of the brand.
- It serves as a **badge of origin exclusively identifying a particular business** as a source of goods or services.

Note:



drishti

- Trademark infringement is the unauthorised usage of a sign that is identical or deceptively similar to a registered trademark.
- A mark is said to be **strong when it is well-known and has acquired a high degree of goodwill.**

G20 Digital Innovation Alliance

Why in News?

As part of India's **G20 presidency**, the Ministry for Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has launched the **the "G20 Digital Innovation Alliance" (G20-DIA).**

What is G20 Digital Innovation Alliance (G20-DIA)?

- It aims to identify, recognize, and enable the adoption of innovative and impactful digital technologies developed by **start-ups**, from **G20 nations as well as the invited non-member nations.**
- It envisages to address the **needs of humanity in the six critically important sectors i.e., Agri-tech, Health-tech, Ed-tech, Fin-tech, Secured Digital Infrastructure, and Circular Economy.**
 - Startup products in these six sectors enabled through Digital Public Goods Infrastructure **can create a global population-scale impact and reduce the digital divide and enable sustainable, and inclusive techno-socio-economic development.**
- The engagement of innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, corporations, investors, mentors, and other ecosystem stakeholders will **lead to the speedy acceptance of the platform that India plans to offer through the G20 Digital Innovation Alliance (G20-DIA).**

GLAAS Report 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) report was released by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and UN-Water.

What is UN-Water?

- UN-Water coordinates the United Nations' work on water and sanitation. UN-Water is a 'coordination mechanism'.
- It is composed of United Nations entities (Members) and international organizations (Partners) working on water and sanitation issues.
- UN-Water's role is to **ensure that Members and Partners' deliver as one'** in response to water-related challenges.

What is the GLAAS Report?

- The UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) 2022 report **compiles new data on drinking-Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** from 121 countries and territories and 23 External Support Agencies (ESAs).

What are the Highlights of the Report?

- **Human Resource:**
 - **Less than one-third of countries reported maintaining enough human resources** to manage essential Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) tasks.
- **National Coverage Targets:**
 - 45% of countries are on track to meet their drinking-water coverage targets, but only 25% are meeting their sanitation targets.
 - More acceleration is needed to achieve national targets.
- **Finance:**
 - While WASH budgets in some countries have increased, **a significant portion — more than 75% of them — reported having inadequate resources** to carry out their WASH plans and objectives.
- **Climate Resilience of WASH Systems:**
 - Most WASH policies and plans **do not consider climate change threats to WASH services**, nor do they take the climate resilience of WASH technology and management systems into account
 - **The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events caused by climate change continue to hamper the delivery of safe WASH services**, thus affecting the health of users.

Note:



drishti

➤ **External Support:**

- **Aid for water and sanitation decreased by 5.6% between 2017 and 2020**, and the geographical targeting of the aid shifted.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, the **proportion of WASH aid dropped from 32% to 23%**, while in Central and Southern Asia, it increased from 12% to 20%, and in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, it increased from 11% to 20%.

National Policy of Rare Diseases

Why in News?

Recently, a Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament (MP) raised **concerns over National Policy of Rare Diseases (NPRD)** as it did not reach any patient with rare diseases even after several months since its introduction.

What is NPRD?

➤ **About:**

- **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** formulated launched NPRD in 2021 for the **treatment of rare disease patients**.

➤ **Aim:**

- To increase **focus on indigenous research and local production of medicines**.
- To **lower the cost of treatment** of rare diseases.
- To **screen and detect rare diseases early at early stages**, which will in turn help in their prevention.

➤ **Key Provisions of the Policy:**○ **Categorization:**

- **Group 1:** Disorders amenable to **one-time curative treatment**.
- **Group 2:** Those requiring **long term or lifelong treatment**.
- **Group 3:** Diseases for which **definitive treatment is available** but challenges are to make optimal patient selection for benefit, very high cost and lifelong therapy.

○ **Financial Support:**

- Those who are suffering from rare diseases listed under Group 1 will have the financial support of up to Rs. 20 lakh under the umbrella scheme of **Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi**.

- **Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi** provides for **financial assistance to patients, living Below Poverty Line (BPL)** and who are suffering from major life-threatening diseases, **to receive medical treatment at any of the super specialty Government hospitals / institutes**.

- ◆ Beneficiaries for such financial assistance would not be limited to BPL families, but extended to about 40% of the population, who are eligible as per norms of **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana**, for their treatment in Government tertiary hospitals only.

○ **Alternate Funding:**

- This includes **voluntary crowdfunding treatment** by setting up a **digital platform** for voluntary individual contribution and corporate donors to voluntarily contribute to the treatment cost of patients of rare diseases.

○ **Centres of Excellence:**

- The policy aims to strengthen tertiary health care facilities for prevention and treatment of rare diseases through designating eight health facilities as '**Centres of Excellence**' and these will also be **provided one-time financial support of up to Rs. 5 crore** for upgradation of diagnostics facilities.

○ **National Registry:**

- A national **hospital-based registry of rare diseases will be created** to ensure adequate data and comprehensive definitions of such diseases are **available for those interested in research and development**.

What are Rare Diseases?

- There are **6,000-8,000 classified rare diseases**, but less than 5% have therapies available to treat them.
- Example: **Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSD)**, **Pompe disease**, **cystic fibrosis**, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, **haemophilia** etc.
- **About 95% rare diseases have no approved treatment** and less than 1 in 10 patients receive disease-specific treatment.
- 80% of these diseases have **genetic origins**.
- These diseases have differing definitions in various countries and range from those that are **prevalent in 1 in 10,000 of the population to 6 per 10,000**.

Note:



drishti

- However broadly, a 'rare disease' is defined as a health condition of low prevalence that affects a small number of people when compared with other prevalent diseases in the general population. Many cases of rare diseases may be serious, chronic and life-threatening.
- India has close to 50-100 million people affected by rare diseases or disorders, the policy report said almost 80% of these rare condition patients are children and a leading cause for most of them not reaching adulthood is due to the high morbidity and mortality rates of these life-threatening diseases.

National Overseas Scholarship Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, Indians who have been sent abroad to study through the **National Overseas Scholarship Scheme** have sent their gratitude towards the Indian Government for the scholarship programme.

What is the National Overseas Scholarship Scheme?

- **About:**
 - **National Overseas Scholarship Scheme** is a **Central Sector Scheme** to facilitate the **low income students** belonging to the **Scheduled Castes, Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, Landless Agricultural Labourers and Traditional Artisans** category to obtain higher education by studying abroad.
 - The Scheme provides **financial assistance to the selected candidates** for pursuing **Masters level courses** and Ph.D. courses abroad in the Institutions/ Universities accredited by the Government/ an authorized body of that country in any fields of study.
- **Implementing Agency:**
 - **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities**, under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- **Reservation:**
 - 30% of the awards for each year are **earmarked for women candidates**.

Amalgamation of ODOF with DEH Initiative

Why in News?

Recently, **One District One Product (ODOF)** approach has been operationally merged with 'Districts as Export Hub (DEH)' initiative.

What is the ODOF Approach?

- **About:**
 - ODOF is an approach adopted under the **Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme**.
 - It will provide for the framework for value chain development and alignment of support infrastructure of the PMFME scheme. There may be more than one cluster of ODOF products in one district.
 - There may be a cluster of ODOF products consisting of more than one adjacent district in a State.
 - For example, honey, **minor forest products** in tribal areas, traditional Indian herbal edible items like turmeric, amla, haldi, etc.

What are the Achievements of ODOF?

- The **ODOF Government e-Marketplace (GeM) Bazaar** was launched in August 2022 with over **200 product categories** to promote sales and procurement of ODOF products across the country.
- ODOF products were showcased in various International forums such as **World Economic Forum's Davos Summit, International Yoga day (IYD)**, etc.
- The ODOF initiative was identified for the **prestigious Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration in Holistic Development**.
- **Related to DEH:**

What is 'Districts as Export Hub' Initiative?

- DEH aims to **convert each district into an export hub** for which Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry through DGFT is engaging with State / UT Governments.
- As part of this initiative, **an institutional mechanism is being set up in each District in the form of DEPCs** that may be headed by the District Magistrate/Collector/

Note:



drishti

Deputy Collector/District Development Officer of the District and various other stakeholders as its members.

- The primary function of the DEPC will be **to prepare and act on DEAP in collaboration with all the relevant stakeholders** from the center, State and the District level.
- DEAP will include **clear identification of products (goods and services) with export potential in the District**. It may include:
 - **Institutional/other responsibilities**
 - **Specifics of policy**, regulatory and operational reform, and infrastructure/utilities/logistics interventions
 - **Import export formalities**
 - **Identification of bottlenecks/Issues in Geographical Identification (GI) production**, registration, marketing and its exports.

Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana

Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs is now working to **develop 36,428 villages with at least 50% tribal population and 500 Scheduled Tribes** across the country into 'model tribal' villages.

- These efforts were part of the **existing Special Central Assistance to Tribal SubScheme (SCA to TSS)**, which has now been renamed to the **Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojna (PMAAGY)**, for implementation from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

What is Pradhan

Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana?

- **About:**
 - It supplements the **efforts of State Governments for development and welfare of tribal people** by extending **Special Central Assistance** as an additive to the State Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP).
 - It aims at **mitigating gaps and providing basic infrastructure in villages** with significant tribal population in convergence with funds available under different schemes in Central Scheduled Tribe Component.

- The Scheme is a **centrally sponsored scheme** with 100% grant from government of India.

➤ Objectives:

- Preparing Village Development Plan based on the needs, potential, and aspirations.
- Maximizing the coverage of individual/family benefit schemes of the Central / State Governments.
- Improving the infrastructure in vital sectors like health, education, **connectivity** and livelihood.
- The scheme envisions to mitigate gaps in prominent 8 sectors of development:
 - **Road connectivity** (Internal and Inter village /block)
 - **Telecom connectivity** (Mobile /internet)
 - **School**
 - **Anganwadi Centres**
 - **Health Sub-Centre**
 - **Drinking water facility**
 - **Drainage**
 - **Solid waste management**

DigiYatra

Why in News?

Recently, the government has **introduced paperless entry at select airports to make air travel hassle-free**.

- In the first phase, the **initiative will be launched at seven airports**, starting with three — Delhi, Bengaluru, and Varanasi, followed by four airports namely Hyderabad, Kolkata, Pune, and Vijayawada by March 2023.
- Subsequently, the technology will be implemented across the country.

What is DigiYatra?

➤ About:

- DigiYatra envisages that **travellers pass through various checkpoints at the airport through paperless and contactless processing**, using facial features to establish their identity, which would be linked to the boarding pass.
- With this technology, the **entry of passengers would be automatically processed based on the facial recognition system** at all checkpoints – including entry into the airport, security check areas, aircraft boarding, etc.

Note:



drishti

➤ Implementation:

- The project is being implemented by the **DigiYatra Foundation** under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
 - DigiYatra Foundation is a **joint-venture company whose shareholders are the Airports Authority of India** and Bengaluru Airport, Delhi Airport, Hyderabad Airport, Mumbai Airport and Cochin International Airport.

National Bamboo Mission

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture has formed an Advisory Group for **streamlining the development of the Bamboo sector** under the restructured **National Bamboo Mission (NBM)**.

What is the National Bamboo Mission?

➤ About:

- The restructured National Bamboo Mission (NBM) was launched during 2018-19 as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)**.
- NBM mainly focuses **on the development of the complete value chain of Bamboo sector** to link growers with consumers starting from planting material, plantation, creation of facilities for collection, aggregation, processing, marketing, micro, small & medium enterprises, skilled manpower and brand building initiative in a cluster approach mode.

➤ Objective:

- To **increase the area under bamboo plantation** in non-forest Government and private lands to supplement farm income and contribute towards resilience to climate change.
- Connecting farmers to markets **so as to enable farmer producers to get a ready market for the bamboo grown** and to increase the supply of appropriate raw material to the domestic industry.
- It also endeavours **to upgrade skills of traditional bamboo craftsmen** as per the requirement of contemporary markets with a tie-up with enterprises and premier institutes.

➤ Nodal Ministry:

- The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

First E-collectorate in Bihar

Why in News?

Saharsa became the first district in Bihar to be declared paperless (e-office) with an aim to end the Great Indian Red Tape.

What is an e-Office Initiative?

- E-Office is a Mission-Mode project as part of e-Governance Initiatives.
- The **e-office initiative goes back to 2009**, but the towering piles of paperwork were—and still are—a hurdle too high to cross.
 - Idukki in Kerala became paperless in 2012 and Hyderabad in 2016.
- It aims to significantly improve the operational efficiency of **Government Ministries and Departments** through improvement in the workflow mechanism and office procedure manuals.

Digital Shakti 4.0

Why in News?

The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** has recently launched the fourth phase of the Digital Shakti Campaign.

- NCW launched it in collaboration with CyberPeace Foundation and Meta.

What is Digital Shakti?

➤ About:

- Digital Shakti started in June 2018 to help **women across the nation to raise the awareness level on the digital front**.
- It is helping women in reporting & redressal mechanisms, data privacy and usage of technology for their benefits.
- The third phase of the program was started in March 2021 with the launch at Leh.

➤ Digital Shakti 4.0:

- Digital Shakti 4.0 is focused on **making women digitally skilled and aware to stand up against any illegal/inappropriate activity online**.
- It aims to ensure safe cyber spaces for women.

Note:



drishti

➤ Achievements:

- Through the Digital Shakti project, over **3 Lakh women across India have been made aware of cyber safety** tips and tricks, reporting & redressal mechanisms, data privacy and usage of technology for their benefits.

What is National Commission for Women?

- It was set up as a **statutory body in January 1992** under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990.

UIDAI Enrollment of Prisoners

Why in News?

Recently, as a special measure to enroll prison inmates across the country, the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** has agreed to accept the **Prisoner Induction Document (PID)** as a **valid document** for enrolment or update of Aadhaar.

- Though the campaign to extend Aadhaar facility to prisoners was launched in 2017, **the process did not take off on expected lines** since enrolment to the scheme required valid supporting documents prescribed by the UIDAI.

What is the Unique Identification Authority of India?

- **Statutory Authority:** The UIDAI is a statutory authority established on 12th July 2016 by the Government of India under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, following the provisions of the **Aadhaar Act 2016**.
 - The UIDAI was initially set up by the Government of India in January 2009, as an attached office under the aegis of the **Planning Commission**.

Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan

Why in News?

The **Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign)** is going to complete 7 years in December 2022.

- The aim of the Campaign is to make a **barrier-free and conducive environment** for Divyangjans (**Persons with Disabilities - PwDs**) all over the country.

What is the Accessible India Campaign?



➤ About:

- It was launched by the Prime Minister of India on **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** on 3rd December 2015.

➤ Implementing Agency:

- AIC is the nationwide flagship campaign of the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)**, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

➤ Background:

- **Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995** categorically provided for non-discrimination in transport and in the built environment.
 - It needs to be noted that the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016** replaced the PwD Act, 1995 to comply with **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD)**.

Old Pension Scheme

Why in News?

A few political parties are promising to restore to the **Old Pension Scheme** in some states.

What is the Old Pension Scheme?

➤ About:

- The scheme assures **life-long income, post-retirement**.
- Under the old scheme, **employees get a pension under a pre-determined formula which is equivalent to 50% of the last drawn salary**. They also get the benefit of the revision of Dearness Relief (DR), twice a year. The payout is fixed and

Note:

there was no deduction from the salary. Moreover, under the OPS, **there was the provision of the General Provident Fund (GPF).**

- GPF is available only for all the government employees in India. Basically, it allows all the government employees to contribute a certain percentage of their salary to the GPF. And the total amount that is accumulated throughout the employment term is paid to the employee at the time of retirement.
- The Government bears the **expenditure incurred on the pension.** The scheme was **discontinued in 2004.**

Constitution Day

Why in News?

Prime Minister of India launched **various new initiatives under the e-court project** including Virtual Justice Clock, JustIS mobile App 2.0, Digital court and S3WaaS Websites on **Constitution Day, 26th November 2022.**

What are the Initiatives under the E-Court Project?

- **Virtual Justice Clock** is an initiative to exhibit vital statistics of the justice delivery system at the Court level.
- **JustIS Mobile App 2.0** is a tool available to judicial officers for effective court and case management by monitoring pendency and disposal of cases.
- **Digital court** is an initiative to make the court records available to the judge in digitised form to enable the transition to Paperless Courts.
- **S3WaaS Websites** is a framework to generate, configure, deploy and manage websites for publishing specified information and services related to district judiciary.

What is Constitution Day?

- It is celebrated on **26th November** every year.
- It is also known as **National Law Day.**
- On this day in 1949, the **Constituent Assembly of India formally adopted the Constitution of India** that came into force on 26th January 1950.

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 19th November 2015, notified the decision of the Government of India **to celebrate 26 November as 'Constitution Day'.**

National Centre of Excellence for Green Port & Shipping

Why in News?

Recently, **India's first National Centre of Excellence for Green Port & Shipping (NCoEGPS)** was launched at **"INMARCO 2022"** held in Mumbai.

- The INMARCO is a quadrennial International Maritime Conference and Exhibition, hosted by the Institute of Marine Engineers (India).

What is NCoEGPS?

- **About:**
 - It is a major **initiative by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MOPSW)** towards providing greener solutions.
 - The NCoEGPS will be working under the framework of the **Sagarmala programme of the MoPSW.**
 - **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** is the **knowledge and implementation partner** for this project.
- **Aim:**
 - The centre aims to develop a **regulatory framework and alternate technology adoption road map for Green Shipping** to foster **carbon neutrality and circular economy (CE)** in shipping sector in India.
 - Green Shipping refers to the use of resources and energy to transport people and goods by ship and specifically concerns the reduction in such resources and energy in order to **preserve the global environment from Green House Gases (GHGs) and environmental pollutants generated by ships.**
 - India intends to **increase the share of renewable energy to 60% of the total power demand** of each of its major ports from a present share of less than 10%.
 - This will be through **solar and wind-generated power.**

Note:

What is Green Voyage 2050 Project?

- The **Green Voyage 2050 Project** is a **partnership project between the Government of Norway and International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** launched in **May 2019** aiming to transform the shipping industry **towards a lower carbon future**.
- The global partnership is **supporting developing countries, including Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**, in meeting their commitment towards relevant climate change and energy efficiency goals, for international shipping, **through supporting the Initial IMO Green House Gas (GHG) Strategy**.
- One of the important aims of GreenVoyage2050 is to **spur global efforts to demonstrate and test technology solutions**.

'Eat Right Station' Certification

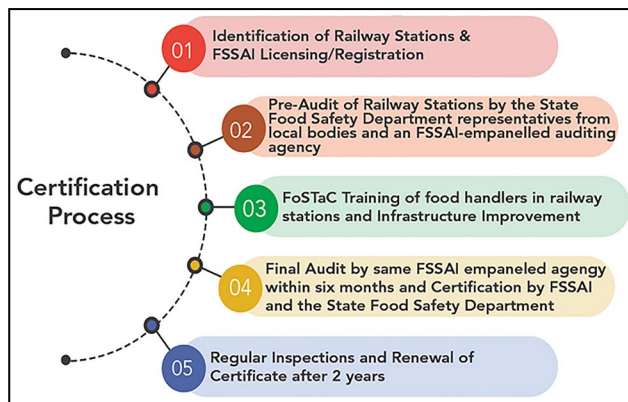
Why in News?

Recently, Bhopal Railway Station has been **awarded a 4- star 'Eat Right Station' certification** for providing high-quality, nutritious food to passengers.

- The 4-star rating indicates **full compliance by the station to ensure safe and hygienic food is available to passengers**.

What is 'Eat Right Station' Certification?

- **About:**
 - The 'Eat Right Station' certification is awarded by **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** to railway stations that set benchmarks in providing safe and wholesome food to passengers.
 - The station is **awarded a certificate upon a conclusion of an FSSAI-empanelled third-party audit agency with ratings from 1 to 5**.
 - The certification is part of the **'Eat Right India' movement**.
- **Other Railway Stations with this Certification:**
 - Anand Vihar Terminal Railway Station; (Delhi), Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus; (Mumbai), Mumbai Central Railway Station; (Mumbai), Vadodara Railway Station, Chandigarh Railway Station.



What is the Eat Right Movement?

- It is an **initiative of FSSAI to transform the country's food system** in order to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for all Indians. Its tagline is **'Sahi Bhojan, Behtar Jeevan'**.
- It is aligned to the **National Health Policy 2017** with its focus on preventive and promotive healthcare and flagship programmes like **Ayushman Bharat, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anaemia Mukt Bharat and Swachh Bharat Mission**.

All Employees can Opt for PF Pensions Scheme

Why in News?

In a significant ruling, the **Supreme Court** has upheld the **Employees' Pension (Amendment) Scheme, 2014** but **quashed the threshold limit of Rs 15,000 monthly salary for joining the pension fund**.

What is the Employees' Pension Scheme?

- **About:**
 - EPF Pension, which is technically known as Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), is a social security scheme provided by the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**.
 - The scheme was first launched in 1995.
 - The scheme, provided by EPFO, makes provisions for pensions for the employees in the organized sector after the retirement at the age of 58 years.

Note:

- Employees who are **members of EPF automatically become members of EPS.**
 - Both employer and employee contribute 12% of employee's monthly salary (basic wages plus dearness allowance) to the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) scheme.
 - EPF scheme is mandatory for employees who draw a basic wage of Rs. 15,000 per month.
 - Of the employer's share of 12 %, 8.33 % is diverted towards the EPS.
 - Central Govt. also contributes 1.16% of employees' monthly salary.

➤ **EPS (Amendment) Scheme, 2014:**

- The EPS amendment of 2014, had raised the **pensionable salary cap to Rs 15,000 a month from Rs 6,500 a month**, and allowed only existing members (as on September 1, 2014) along with their employers exercise the option to contribute **8.33% on their actual salaries (if it exceeded the cap)** towards the pension fund. This was extendable by another six months at the discretion of the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner.
- It, however, excluded **new members who earned above 15,000** and joined after September 2014 from the scheme completely.
- The amendment, however, **required such members** to contribute an additional 1.16% of their salary exceeding ₹ 15,000 a month towards the pension fund.

What is the SC's Judgement?

- Under Article 142, the Supreme Court ruling gives EPFO members, who have availed of the EPS, another opportunity over the next four months to opt and contribute up to **8.33% of their actual salaries as against 8.33% of the pensionable salary** capped at Rs 15,000 a month towards pension.
 - Under the pre-amendment scheme, the pensionable salary was computed as the **average of the salary drawn during the 12 months** prior to exit from membership of the Pension Fund. The amendments raised this to **an average of 60 months prior to exit** from the membership of the Pension Fund.
- The court held the amendment requiring members to contribute an additional **1.16 % of their salary exceeding Rs 15,000 a month** as ultra vires the provisions of the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.

Amendments in Electoral Bond Scheme

Why in News?

Weeks ahead of elections in certain states, the Central Government has amended the **Electoral Bond Scheme**.

What is the Electoral Bond Scheme?

➤ Electoral Bonds:

- **Electoral bonds** are money instruments like **promissory notes**, which can be bought by companies and individuals in India from the State Bank of India (SBI) and donated to a political party, which can then encash these bonds.
- The bonds are only redeemable in the designated account of a **registered political party**.
- A person being an individual can buy bonds, **either singly or jointly with other individuals**.

➤ Electoral Bond Scheme:

- Electoral Bonds Scheme was launched in 2018 to to cleanse the political funding in India.
- The central idea behind the electoral bonds scheme is to **bring about transparency in electoral funding in India**.
 - The government had described the scheme as an "electoral reform" in a country moving towards a "cashless-digital economy".

What are the Amendments Made to the Scheme?

➤ Additional Period of 15 Days:

- Introduced a new para, stating that an additional period of **fifteen days** shall be specified by the Central Government in the year of general elections to the Legislative Assembly of States and Union territories with Legislature.
- In 2018, when the Electoral Bond Scheme was introduced, these bonds were made available for a period of 10 days each in January, April, July and October, as may be specified by the central government.
 - An additional period of 30 days was to be specified by the Central Government in the year of the General election to the House of People.

Note:

➤ **Validity:**

- The Electoral Bonds **shall be valid for fifteen calendar days from the date of issue** and no payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period.
- The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account shall be credited on the same day.

➤ **Eligibility:**

- Only the political parties registered under **Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951** which secured at least **1% of votes polled in the last General Election** to the Lok Sabha or the State Legislative Assembly are **eligible to receive Electoral Bonds**.

Nutrient Based Subsidy Rates Approved

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Cabinet **approved Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates** for **Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilisers** for Rabi season 2022-23 from 1st October, 2022 to 31st March, 2023.

- All Non-Urea based fertilisers are regulated under **NBS Scheme**.

What is NBS Regime?

- Under the NBS regime – **fertilizers are provided to the farmers at the subsidized rates based on the nutrients (N, P, K & S) contained in these fertilizers**.
- Also, the fertilizers which are **fortified with secondary and micronutrients** such as molybdenum (Mo) and zinc are **given additional subsidy**.
- The **subsidy on P&K fertilizers is announced by the Government on an annual basis** for each nutrient on a per kg basis – which are determined **taking into account** the international and domestic prices of P&K fertilizers, **exchange rate**, inventory level in the country etc.
- NBS policy intends to increase the consumption of P&K fertilizers so that **optimum balance (N:P:K= 4:2:1) of NPK fertilization** is achieved.
 - This would improve soil health and as a result the yield from the crops would increase, resulting in enhanced income to the farmers.

- Also, as the government expects rational use of fertilizers, this would also ease off the burden of fertilizer subsidy.

- It is **being implemented** from April 2010 by the Department of Fertilizers, **Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers**.

What are the Issues Related with NBS?

➤ **Imbalance in Price of Fertilisers:**

- Urea is left-out in the scheme and hence it remains under price control as NBS has been implemented only in other fertilizers. The MRP of urea is today officially fixed at Rs 5,628 per tonne. There is technically no price control in other fertilisers. The prices of the other fertilizers which were decontrolled have gone up that has led the farmers to use more urea than before. This has further worsened fertilizer imbalance.

➤ **Costs on Economy and Environment:**

- Fertilizer subsidy is the second-biggest subsidy after food subsidy, the NBS policy is not only damaging the fiscal health of the economy but also proving detrimental to the soil health of the country.

➤ **Black Marketing:**

- Subsidised urea is getting diverted to bulk buyers/ traders or even non-agricultural users such as plywood and animal feed makers.
 - It is being **smuggled to** neighbouring countries like **Bangladesh and Nepal**.

Warehousing Development

Why in News?

Recently, a seminar on “**e-NWR – An Effective Tool for Promoting Pledge Financing**” was organised by the **Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA)** under the **Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD)** on the foundation day of WDRA.

What is Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority?

➤ **About:**

- It was **constituted in 2010** under the **Warehousing (Development and Regulation) Act, 2007**.

Note:

- It was an **initiative of public policy** where the benefits of technology had been transferred into benefits for farmer with the objective to make **e-NWR** a prime tool of trade, increase rural liquidity, increase farmers' income, reduce post-harvest losses, etc.

➤ **Objective:**

- The main objective of WDRA is to implement **Negotiable Warehouse Receipt (NWR) System** in the country.
- The main functions of the Authority are to **make provisions** for the development and regulation of warehouses which inter alia includes negotiability of warehouse receipts, **registration of warehouses, promotion of scientific warehousing** of goods, improving fiduciary trust of depositors and banks, **enhancing liquidity in rural areas** and promoting efficient supply chain.

What is Negotiable Warehouse Receipt?

➤ **About:**

- It was launched in **2011 by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.**

➤ **Benefits:**

- Farmers can **seek loans** from banks against the warehouse receipts issued to them against their storage.
- These receipts issued by the warehouses registered with the WDRA would become **a fully negotiable instrument backed by a Central legislation.**

➤ **The NWR in electronic form could be issued either as:**

- **Electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt (e-NWR):**
 - It has negotiability and can be used for deposit and withdrawal of commodities as well as trade transactions such as **transfer and Pledge.**
 - It was launched in 2017.
 - It has been integrated with the **electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)** platform by providing an interface between e-NAM and repositories.
- **Electronic Non-Negotiable Warehouse Receipt (e-NNWR)**, which can be used **only for deposit and withdrawal of commodities** (generally issued

for goods received in the warehouse with pending final assaying reports or if assaying is not desired by the applicant) **without the facility of trade / transfer.**

What is e-NWR Pledge Finance?

- Pledging is a process in which the holder of the eNWR will **get a loan from the financial institution** using the underlying commodity of eNWR as collateral.
- When a pledge is marked, the **eNWR balances will remain in the client's account** (borrower) only but the control on the balance will be with the financial institution.
- The client will **not be able to use** the eNWR balances until the pledge in favour of the **financial institution is active.**

Remote Voting Facility

Why in News?

Recently, the Union government in the Supreme Court said it is considering **Remote Voting Facility** for **Non-Resident Indians (NRI)**, especially migrant laborers, to **cast their votes remotely** while ensuring the **integrity of the electoral process.**

What is the Background?

- In 2020, the **Election Commission officials proposed the idea of using blockchain technology** to enable remote voting. The aim is to overcome the geographical hurdles in voting.
 - The Commission has been considering the possibility of remote voting which will allow people to cast the ballot from their place of work.
- The **Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill of 2017** had proposed the removal of an **"unreasonable restriction"** posed by **Section 20A** of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951** requiring overseas electors to be physically present in their electoral constituencies to cast their votes.
 - The Bill was later passed in 2018, but lapsed with the dissolution of the **16th Lok Sabha.**
- Currently, only the following voters are allowed to cast their votes through **postal ballot**:
 - Service voters (armed forces, the armed police force of a state and government servants posted abroad),

Note:



drishti

- Voters on election duty,
- Voters above 80 years of age or Persons with Disabilities (PwD),
- Voters under **preventive detention**.

What is Remote Voting?

- Remote voting may take place **in person somewhere other than an assigned polling station** or at another time, or votes may be sent by post or cast by an appointed proxy.
- There have been demands from various political parties that the EC should ensure that migrant workers, **NRIs (Non-Resident Indians)** who miss out on voting, as they cannot afford to go home during elections to exercise their franchise, **should be allowed to vote for their constituency from the city they are working in**.

What is the Current Voting Process for NRIs?

- It was through the **Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 2010**, eligible NRIs who had stayed abroad beyond six months were allowed to vote, but only in person at the polling station where they have been enrolled as an overseas elector.
- Prior to 2010, an Indian citizen who is an eligible voter and was residing abroad for more than six months, would not have been able to vote in elections. This was because the NRI's name was deleted from electoral rolls if he or she stayed outside the country for more than six months at a stretch.
- An **NRI can vote in the constituency in which his/her place of residence**, as mentioned in the passport, is located.
- He/She can only vote in person and will have to **produce her passport in original** at the polling station for establishing identity.

Law Commission of India

Why in News?

Retired High Court Chief Justice Rituraj Awasthi has been appointed as the chairperson of the 22nd law commission of India which was constituted in 2020.

What is the Law Commission of India?

- **About:**

- The **Law Commission of India is a non-statutory body** constituted by the Government of India from time to time.
- The **first Law Commission of independent India was established in 1955** for a three-year term.
- The **first Law Commission** was established during the British Raj era in 1834 **by the Charter Act of 1833** and was **chaired by Lord Macaulay**.

Objectives:

- It works as an **advisory body to the Ministry of Law and Justice**.
- The Law Commission undertakes research in law and review of existing laws in India for making reforms therein and enacting new legislations on a reference made to it by the Central Government or suo-motu.

Composition:

- Apart from having a full-time chairperson, **the commission will have four full-time members, including a member-secretary**.
- Law and Legislative Secretaries in the Law Ministry will be the ex-officio members of the commission.
- It will also have not more than five part-time members.
- A retired Supreme Court judge or Chief Justice of a High Court will head the Commission.

World Cities Day

Why in News?

World Cities Day is celebrated on 31st October every year to highlight the need for international cooperation to promote global urbanisation and address its challenges.

- According to the United Nations, seven of every 10 people in the world will live in cities by 2050.

What is the History of World Cities Day?

Theme for 2022:

- Act Local to Go Global.

History:

- On 27th December 2013, the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** established World Cities Day through a resolution.
- The first celebration took place in 2014.

Note:



drishti

- The UN-Habitat programme promotes the development of sustainable cities in line with **SDG 11 goals**.
- The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development.
- It conducts the annual **Urban October programme** for this purpose which begins on the first Monday of the month and ends on 31st October with World Cities Day.

➤ **Significance:**

Supreme Court upholds EWS Quota

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** has upheld the validity of the **103rd Constitutional Amendment** which provides 10% reservation for the **Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)** among forward castes in government jobs and colleges across India.

What is the Verdict?

➤ **Majority View:**

- The 103rd constitutional amendment **cannot be said to breach the basic structure of the Constitution**.
- The EWS quota **does not violate equality and the basic structure** of the constitution. Reservation in addition to existing reservation does not violate provisions of the Constitution.
- The reservation is an **instrument of affirmative action by the state for the inclusion of backward classes**.
- Basic structure can't be breached by enabling the state to **make provisions for education**.
- Reservation is instrumental not just for inclusion of socially and economically backward classes into the society **but also to class so disadvantaged**.
- Reservations for EWS does not violate basic structure on **account of 50% ceiling limit fixed by Mandal Commission** because **ceiling limit is not inflexible**.
 - 50% rule formed by the Supreme Court in the **Indira Sawhney judgment in 1992** was "not inflexible". Further, it had **applied only to SC/ST/SEBC/OBC communities** and not the general category.

- The Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the backward class for whom the special provisions have already been provided in **Article 15(4), 15(5) and 16(4) form a separate category as distinguished from the general or unreserved category**.

➤ **Minority View:**

- Reservations were designed as a powerful tool to enable equal access. Introduction of economic criteria and excluding **SC (Scheduled Castes), ST (Scheduled Tribe)**, OBC (Other Backward Classes), saying they had these pre-existing benefits is injustice.
- The EWS quota may have a reparative mechanism to have a level playing field and the exclusion of SC, ST, OBC discriminates against equality code and violates basic structure.
- Permitting the breach of **50% ceiling limit would become** "a gateway for further infractions and result in compartmentalization (division into sections).

What is the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) Quota?

➤ **About:**

- The 10% EWS quota was introduced under the 103rd Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2019 by amending **Articles 15 and 16**.
 - It inserted Article 15 (6) and Article 16 (6).
- It is for economic reservation in jobs and admissions in educational institutes for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).
- It was enacted to promote the welfare of the poor not covered by the 50% reservation policy for **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC)**.
- It enables both the Centre and the States to provide reservations to the EWS of society.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools

Why in News?

The government is pushing to set up **740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) for Scheduled Tribe (ST) students**.

Note:



drishti

What are EMRS?

- EMRS is a scheme for making **model residential schools for STs across India**.
 - It **started in the year 1997-98**.
 - Its nodal ministry is **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.
 - The aim of the scheme to **build schools at par with the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas** with focus on special state-of-the-art facilities for preserving local art and culture besides providing training in sports and skill development.
 - The EMR School follows the **CBSE curriculum**.
- In **2018-19, revamping of the EMRS scheme** was approved by the Cabinet.
 - Since the new guidelines have been put into place, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs **sanctioned 332 of the targeted 452 schools till 2021-22**.
 - As of November 2022, **a total of 688 schools have been sanctioned**, of which 392 are functional.
 - Of the 688, **230 have completed construction** and **234 are under construction**, with **32 schools still stuck due to land acquisition issues**.

Mission DefSpace

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister has launched 'Mission DefSpace' at the ongoing **DefExpo**.

- He also released the **fourth Defence Indigenisation List which bars import of 101 items** after certain timelines.
- He also unveiled the **HTT-40** (Hindustan Turbo Trainer-40) **indigenous trainer aircraft** designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) at the India Pavilion during the Expo.

What is Mission DefSpace?

- **About:**
 - It is an ambitious effort to **develop innovative solutions for the three Services (Indian airforce, Navy and Army)** in the space domain through the Indian industry and start-ups.
 - 75 challenges are being opened to get **innovative solutions**, based on the defence requirements in the space domain.

- Startups, innovators and the private sector will be invited to **find solutions for the problems that will include both offensive and defensive capabilities**.
- It aims to develop a range of military applications for space warfare and to enable the private industries to **offer solutions to the armed forces for future offensive and defensive requirements**.
- Defence applications in space will not only help the Indian armed forces **but can also be extended to friendly foreign nations**.

DefExpo-2022

Why in News?

The 12th Edition of DefExpo 2022 is being held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

- The **11th edition of DefExpo** was held at **Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)** in 2020.

What is DefExpo 2022?

- **About:**
 - DefExpo is a **flagship biennial event of the Ministry of Defence**, showcasing the land, naval, air as well as homeland security systems.
- **DefExpo 2022:**
 - It is being held in a first ever four-venue format which promises to engage the public and inspire them to join the Aerospace and Defence manufacturing sector; for **'Aatmanirbharta' in Defence**.
 - The aim is to showcase the might of the **domestic defence industry which is now powering 'Make in India, Make for the World'** resolve of the Government and the nation at large.
 - It is the first-ever edition exclusively for Indian companies.
- **Theme:** Path to Pride.

6th East Asia Summit Education Minister's Meeting

Why in News?

Recently, India participated in the 6th East Asia Summit Education Minister's Meeting held in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Note:



drishti

What is the East Asia Summit?

➤ About:

- Established in 2005, it is a **forum of 18 regional leaders for strategic dialogue** and cooperation on the key political, security, and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region.
- The concept of an East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad.
- There are **six priority areas of regional cooperation** within the framework of the EAS.
 - These are – Environment and Energy, Education, Finance, Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases, Natural Disaster Management, and ASEAN Connectivity.

➤ Membership:

- It comprises the ten member states of the **ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)** which are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, along with 8 other countries namely Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA.
 - It is an ASEAN-centred forum so it can only be chaired by an ASEAN member.
 - Brunei Darussalam is the chair for 2021.

➤ EAS Meetings and Processes:

- The EAS calendar culminates in the annual Leaders' Summit, which is usually held alongside ASEAN Leaders' meetings in the fourth quarter of every year.
- Meetings of EAS Foreign Ministers and Economic Ministers are also held annually.

➤ India and EAS:

- India is one of the founding members of the East Asia Summit.
- At the East Asia Summit in Bangkok in November 2019, India had unveiled India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**, which is aimed at forging partnerships to create a secure and stable maritime domain.

Election Symbols

Why in News?

The Election Commission allotted the “two swords and shield” symbol to the Maharashtra Chief Minister

Ek Nath Shinde-led faction of the Shiv Sena for the upcoming byelection.

- The **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968** empowers the Election Commission to recognise political parties and allot symbols.

What are the Key Points Related to Election Symbols?

➤ About:

- An electoral or election symbol is a standardized symbol allocated to a political party.
- They are used by the parties during their campaigning and are shown on **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)**, where the voter chooses the symbol and votes for the associated party.
- They were **introduced to facilitate voting by illiterate people**, who can't read the name of the party while casting their votes.
- In the 1960s, it was proposed that the regulation, reservation, and allotment of electoral symbols should be done through a law of Parliament, i.e., Symbol Order.
- In a response to this proposal, the ECI stated that the recognition of political parties is supervised by the provisions of **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968** and so will the allotment of symbols.
 - The Election Commission registers political parties for the purpose of elections and grants them recognition as national or state parties on the basis of their poll performance. The other parties are simply declared as registered-unrecognised parties.
 - The **recognition determines their right to certain privileges** like allocation of the party symbols, provision of time for political broadcasts on television and radio stations and access to electoral rolls.
 - **Every national party and every state party is allotted a symbol exclusively** reserved for its use throughout the country and the states respectively.

➤ Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968:

- Under Paragraph 15 of the Order, EC can decide disputes among rival groups or sections of a **recognised political party** staking claim to its name and symbol.

Note:



drishti

- The EC is the only authority to decide issues on a dispute or a merger under the order. The **Supreme Court (SC)** upheld its validity in **Sadiq Ali and another vs. ECI in 1971**.
- It applies to disputes in recognised national and state parties.
- For splits in **registered but unrecognised parties**, the EC usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court.
- In almost all disputes decided by the EC so far, a clear majority of party delegates/office bearers, MPs and MLAs have supported one of the factions.
- Before 1968, the EC issued notifications and executive orders under the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.
- The splinter group of the party - other than the group that got the party symbol - had to register itself as a separate party.
 - They could lay claim to national or state party status only on the basis of its performance in state or central elections after registration.

Uniform Civil Code

Why in News?

The Ministry of Law and Justice has told the **Supreme Court** that the court cannot direct Parliament to frame any law and it sought dismissal of **PILs (Public Interest Litigation)** seeking a **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** in the country.

What are the PILs about?

- Petitioners sought uniformity in the **personal laws regulating marriage divorce, maintenance and alimony** (money that has to be paid by law to former wife or husband).
- The petitions sought steps to **remove anomalies regarding laws for divorce and make them uniform for all citizens** and uniform guidelines for adoption and guardianship of children.

What is the Government's Stand?

- This is a matter of policy for the **elected representatives of the people to decide and no direction in this regard can be issued** by the court. It is for the legislature to enact or not enact a piece of legislation.

- The Law Ministry had requested the **Law Commission** to examine various issues relating to the UCC and make recommendations considering the sensitivity and in-depth study involved of various personal laws governing different communities.
- The 21st Law Commission had uploaded a consultation paper titled 'Reform of Family Law' subsequently in August 2018. But the term of the 21st Law Commission came to an end in August 2018.

What is a Uniform Civil Code?

About:

- UCC is envisaged to **provide for one law for the entire country, applicable to all religious communities** in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.
- **Article 44** of the Constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC for the citizens **throughout the territory of India**.
 - Article 44 is one of the **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)**.
 - The purpose behind Article 44 is to strengthen the object of "**secular democratic republic**" as enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution.

Background:

- The origin of the UCC dates back to **colonial India when the British government submitted its report in 1835** stressing the need for **uniformity in the codification of Indian law** relating to crimes, evidence, and contracts, specifically recommending that personal laws of Hindus and Muslims be kept outside such codification.
- Increase in legislation dealing with personal issues in the far end of British rule forced the government to form the **B N Rau Committee to codify Hindu law in 1941**.
- Based on these recommendations, a bill was then adopted in 1956 as the **Hindu Succession Act** to amend and codify the law relating to intestate or unwilled succession, among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs.
 - However, there were separate personal laws for Muslims, Christians and Parsis.
- In order to bring uniformity, the courts have often said in their judgements that the government should move towards a UCC.

Note:

- The judgement in the **Shah Bano case (1985)** is well known.
- Another case was the **Sarla Mudgal Case (1995)**, which dealt with the issue of bigamy and conflict between the personal laws existing on matters of marriage.
- By arguing that practices such as **triple talaq and polygamy impact adversely the right of a woman to a life of dignity**, the Centre has raised the question whether constitutional protection given to religious practices should extend even to those that are not in compliance with fundamental rights.
- **Status of Uniform Codes in India:**
 - Indian laws do follow a uniform code in most civil matters such as **Indian Contract Act 1872, Civil Procedure Code**, Transfer of Property Act 1882, Partnership Act 1932, **Evidence Act, 1872** etc.
 - States, however, have made hundreds of amendments and, therefore, in certain matters, there is diversity even under these secular civil laws.
 - Recently, several states refused to be governed by the **uniform Motor Vehicles Act, 2019**.
 - As of now, Goa is the only state in India with a UCC.

Fresh Hindi Imposition Row

Why in News?

The 11th volume of the Report of the Official Language Committee submitted to the President of India, has triggered angry reactions from some of the Southern states (they view the report as an attempt to impose Hindi on them).

What are the Recommendations of the Panel?

- Hindi should be **the medium of instruction in IITs, IIMs, and central universities** in the Hindi-speaking states.
- The language used for communication in the administration should be Hindi, and efforts should be made to teach the curriculum in Hindi.
- High Courts in other states, where proceedings are recorded in English or a regional language can make available translations in Hindi, because verdicts of High Court of other states are often cited in judgments.
 - Lower courts in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, and Rajasthan already use Hindi.
- The use of Hindi, by the officers and other employees in the central government, in Hindi-speaking states would **reflect in their Annual Performance Assessment Report (APAR)**.
- It is the Committee's responsibility and role to see that the Hindi language is promoted in official communication.
- There are specific proposals to make the language in official letters and invitations simpler.
 - "There should be a deliberate attempt to reduce the usage of the English language in official communication and to increase the usage of Hindi".
 - "Knowledge of Hindi would be compulsory in a number of government jobs,".

Are these Recommendations Intended for Every State Government, its Institutions, and Departments?

- **States like Tamil Nadu and Kerala are exempt as per The Official Languages Act, 1963** and the Rules and Regulations (of the Act), 1976.
- **The law is implemented only in 'A' category states, in which the official language is Hindi."**
 - According to the Rules, **region 'A' includes** the states of Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, and the Union Territories of Delhi and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
 - **Region 'B'** includes Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Punjab, and the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.
 - Other states, where the **use of Hindi is less than 65%, are listed under region 'C'.**
- The **Committee** has suggested that efforts should be made to use **Hindi "100%" in the 'A' states.**
 - The medium of instruction in IITs, central universities, and Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) in the 'A' states should be Hindi, while the regional language should be used in other states.
- **As per Committee, Use of Hindi in Government Departments:**
 - The use of Hindi in Ministries like Defence and Home are 100% but the Education Ministry has not yet come to that level.
 - The **Committee had certain parameters to assess the usage of language.**

Note:

- Many central universities including Delhi University, Jamia Millia Islamia, BHU, and AMU, the usage is just 25-35% when it should have been 100%.

What is Committee of Parliament on Official Language?

- The Committee of Parliament on Official Language was **set up in 1976 under Section 4 of The Official Languages Act, 1963**.
- With the active promotion of Hindi being mandated by Article 351 of the Constitution, the Official Language Committee was set up to review and promote the use of Hindi in official communications.
- The **first Report** of the Committee was submitted in **1987**.
- The Committee is constituted & chaired by the union home minister, and has, in accordance with the provisions of the 1963 Act, 30 members (20 MPs from Lok Sabha and 10 MPs from Rajya Sabha).
- Unlike the **other Parliamentary panels submit its report to Parliament**, this panel **submits its report to the President**, who "shall [then] cause the report to be laid before each House of Parliament, and sent to all the State Governments".

What are the Government's Effort to Promote Hindi and Other Regional Language?

- **Three-Language Formula (Kothari Commission 1968)**
 - **First language:** It will be the **mother tongue** or regional language.
 - **Second language:** In **Hindi** speaking states, it will be other modern Indian languages or English. In non-Hindi speaking states, it will be Hindi or English.
 - **Third Language:** In Hindi speaking states, it will be **English or a modern Indian language**. In the non-Hindi speaking state, it will be **English or a modern Indian language**.
- The new **National Education Policy (NEP) in 2020** too had attempts to "promote Hindi, Sanskrit" and regional languages. The **NEP says that mother tongue or the regional language would be the "preferred" mode of instruction until Class 5, and possibly Class 8**.
 - **NEP 2020 it was decided to push for the three-language formula, to promote multilingualism and national unity.**

What is Position of Hindi in India with respect to other Regional Languages?

- **As per, 2011 Linguistic census:** there are 121 mother tongues in India.
 - 52.8 crores individuals or 43.6% population declared Hindi as its mother tongue and 11% of the population reported Hindi as their second language.
 - So, 55% of the population knows Hindi as either as mother tongue or as their second language.
 - Bengali 9.72 crore individual and 8% population, as 2nd most spoken language in India.
 - The share of the languages like Bengali, Malayalam and Urdu has declined but Hindi and Punjabi speakers have increased.
 - Between 1971 to 2011 the speakers of Hindi multiplied by the 2.6 times from 20.2 Crore to 52.8 crores.

What is the Constitutional Status of Hindi?

- **Schedule 8** of the Indian Constitution has 22 Official Languages, **including Hindi as well**.
- **Article 351** states that, it is the duty of the Union to **encourage the spread of the Hindi language** to make it lingua franca (a shared language of communication used by people who are speakers of different languages) in India without interfering with its genius, style and expressions.
- **Article 348 (2)** provides that the Governor of the State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of the **Hindi language** or any other language used **for any official purpose of the State, in the proceedings of the High Court** having its principal seat in that State provided that **decrees, judgments or orders passed by such High Courts** shall be in English.
- As per **Article 343(1)** of the Constitution of India, **Hindi in Devanagari script shall be the official language of the Union**.
- **The Official Language Act, 1963** provides under **Section 7** that the use of Hindi or official language of a State in addition to the English language may be authorized, with the consent of the President of India, by the Governor of the State for the purpose of judgments, decrees etc. made by the High Court for that State.

Note:

National Curriculum Framework

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Education ministry launched the **National Curriculum Framework** for foundational stage education of children in the **three to eight years age group**.

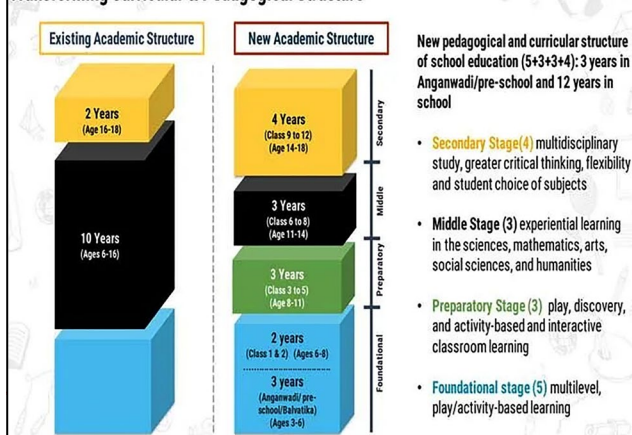
What is the National Curriculum Framework?

- The NCF has four sections:
 - the National Curriculum Framework for School Education
 - the National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education
 - the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education
 - National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education
- The framework focuses on the '**panchakosha**' concept - the ancient Indian emphasis on the body-mind connection.
- The NCF says its **five parts are physical development** (sharirik vikas), development of life energy (pranik vikas), emotional and mental development (manasik vikas), intellectual development (bauddhik vikas) and spiritual development (chaitsik vikas).
- It is an important step taken to implement the **New Education Policy-2020**.

What is NEP, 2020?

- The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is transforming education in India.
- It has set the **education system on a path to delivering the highest quality education** for all, with equity and inclusion.
- Amongst the most transformative aspects of NEP 2020 is the **new 5+3+3+4 curricular structure** which integrates Early Childhood Care and Education for all children of ages 3 to 8.
- **Early childhood lays the foundation for life-long learning** and development - it is a key determinant of the quality of overall life.

Transforming Curricular & Pedagogical Structure



Broadcasting only through Prasar Bharati

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) has issued an advisory stating that any kind of broadcasting be done only through **Prasar Bharti**.

What is Prasar Bharti?

- Prasar Bharati is a statutory autonomous body. It is the Public Service Broadcaster of the country.
- It was established under the Prasar Bharati Act in 1997.
- The Prasar Bharati Corporation's main objective is to provide autonomy to Doordarshan and Akashvani in order to "educate and entertain the public."

What is the Advisory?

- It states that ministries, departments of the central government, state governments, and union territory (UT) administrations or entities related to them would not be allowed to enter into broadcasting or distribution of broadcasting activities.
- In case central ministries, states, UTs and **entities related to them are already broadcasting their content**, it would now be done through the public broadcaster Prasar Bharati.
- It is in line with the recommendations of the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)**, the **Supreme Court** judgment and the legal opinion given by the Ministry of Law and Justice.
 - As per the Supreme Court, **Public service broadcasting should be in the hands of a statutory**

Note:

corporation or corporation set up under a statute to ensure their impartiality in political, economic, and social matters.

- As per the existing policy guidelines for setting up of community radio in India, government universities, colleges, schools, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, central / state universities, including autonomous bodies and agricultural universities are eligible for setting up of community radios.

National Credit Framework

Why in News?

The Ministry of Education recently unveiled a draft 'National Credit Framework' (NCrF) which aims to bring the entire education system, from school to university, into the academic 'credit' regime and has sought public view.

What is the National Credit Framework (NCrF)?

- **About:** The new framework is a part of the **National Education Policy**.
 - According to the framework, an academic year will be defined by the number of hours a student puts in. Credits will be provided to them accordingly at the end of each academic year.
 - The framework has been formulated under the University Grants Commission (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) Regulations, notified in July 2021.
- **Credit System:** The report of the high-level committee on the NCrF, put out in public domain, proposes credit levels from class 5 onward itself - which will be credit level 1, going up to credit level 7 and 8 with post-graduation and a doctorate, respectively.
 - Credit levels will increase by 0.5 for every year of learning.
- **Earning Credit:** The total 'Notional Learning hours in a year' for assignment of Credits will be 1200 hours. A minimum of 40 credits may be earned for 1200 hours of learning every year with 20 credits per semester of six months. Each Credit will come with 30 hours of learning- 30 hours per credit.
 - Notion learning hours in the context of NCrF means time spent not just in classroom teaching, but also in a range of co-curricular and extracurricular

activities. The list of such activities includes sports, yoga, performing arts, music, social work, NCC, vocational education, as well as on-the-job training, internships or apprenticeships.

- **Easy Entry and Exit:** The credit transfer mechanism will also **enable a student/ learner to enter and exit the educational ecosystem, both general and vocational**, at any point of time. In such cases due weightage is given to work experience gained or any other training undertaken by the learner.
- **Due Attention to Co-Curricular Activities:** The new credit framework will **not have any hard separation between Curricular and Co-Curricular**, or various discipline and will count in performance on -classroom teaching/learning/laboratory work/class projects; Sports and games, etc.
- **Aadhaar-enabled student registration:** An Aadhaar-enabled student registration will take place. After student registration, an **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)** account will be opened. The deposit of degree and credits will take place in those accounts. There will be a knowledge locker along the lines of DigiLocker.
- **Academic Bank of Credit:** The recently introduced **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)** for higher education will be expanded to allow for end-to-end management of credits earned from school education onwards and will also include vocational education and trainings, it is envisaged.
- **Significance:**
 - It would work as 'an **umbrella framework for skilling, re-skilling, up-skilling**, accreditation & evaluation' encompassing educational & skilling institutions and workforce.
 - The credits for knowledge acquisition, hands-on training, and positive social outcomes will be a key step for achieving 100% literacy in the next 2-3 years and go towards making India a \$5 trillion economy.

Coal Mines in India Under-Utilised: GEM Report

Why in News?

According to Global Energy Monitor (GEM) Report, India's **Coal Mines** are severely under-utilized amid push for new ones

Note:

- GEM is a firm that tracks fuel-source utilization globally. It studies the evolving international energy landscape, creating databases, reports, and interactive tools that enhance understanding.

What is the Background?

- In 2021, India experienced **severe coal crises** with more than **100 of 285 thermal power plants seeing coal stocks fall below the critical mark** of 25% of the required stock, leading to power shortages in several States, including **Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh**.
- The recently released Global Energy Monitor (GEM) report analyzed annual reports from Coal India, the world's largest coal producer, and its subsidiaries.

What are the Findings?

- **New Coal Mines Increasing Risk of Displacement:**
 - This coal shortage prompted the government to start **developing new coal projects, where 99 new coal mines projects are under the pipeline**. These projects have the capacity to **produce 427 million tonnes of coal annually (mtpa)**.
 - This is despite India's pledge to achieve **net zero emissions by 2070**.
 - These projects will put 165 villages and 87,630 families at risk of displacement. And 41,508 of these families belong to **Scheduled Tribes**.
- **Coal Mines Under-utilized thus Unnecessary:**
 - Since India's coal mines use is severely underutilized so developing new projects to merely fulfill temporary coal shortage is unnecessary.
 - India's coal mines use **only two-thirds of their capacity on average**, with some large ones using only 1%.
- **Delay in Clean Energy Future:**
 - These new mines will increase India's likelihood of **stranded assets, delay a clean energy future—and in the process pose irreversible impacts** on India's rural communities and environments for the sake of economically precarious mining ventures.
- **Exacerbate Water Shortage:**
 - Water shortages would be **exacerbated by the new coal projects**, increasing demand by 1,68,041 kilolitres per day.

- Of 427 MTPA in new capacity, 159 MTPA will be located in high-risk water zones, while 230 MTPA is planned for zones with extreme water risk.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0

Why in News?

Recently, as part of the **first phase of the 'Swadesh Darshan 2'** (beginning from January 2023), the government has identified 15 States across the country to be promoted as part of **India's new domestic tourism policy**.

- This policy moves away from **theme-based tourist circuits and focuses on reviving up destination tourism**.
- Some of the prominent places identified are Jhansi and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, Gwalior, Chitrakoot and Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh and Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra.

What is Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0?

- **About:**
 - With the mantra of '**vocal for local**', the **revamped scheme namely Swadesh Darshan 2.0 seeks to attain "Aatmanirbhar Bharat"** by realizing India's full potential as a tourism destination.
 - Swadesh Darshan 2.0 is **not an incremental change but a generational shift to evolve the Swadesh Darshan Scheme** as a holistic mission to develop sustainable and responsible tourism destinations.
 - It will help develop sustainable and responsible destinations with a tourist and destination centric approach.
 - It will **encourage the development of benchmarks** and standards for generic and theme-specific development of tourism destinations and the States will follow the benchmarks and standards while planning and developing the projects.
 - The following major themes have been identified for tourism under the Scheme:
 - Culture and Heritage
 - Adventure Tourism
 - Eco-Tourism
 - Wellness Tourism
 - **MICE Tourism**
 - **Rural Tourism**
 - Beach Tourism
 - Cruises – Ocean & Inland

Note:



drishti

Amendments to the IT Rules, 2021

Why in News?

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

- These are **aimed at making internet-open, safe & trusted and accountable**, for the digital nagriks of the country.

What are the Key Amendments to IT Rules, 2021?

- **New Guidelines for Social Media Intermediaries:**
 - Currently, intermediaries are only required to inform users about not uploading certain categories of harmful/unlawful content. These amendments impose a **legal obligation on intermediaries to take reasonable efforts to prevent users from uploading such content**. The new provision will ensure that the **intermediary's obligation is not a mere formality**.
 - The amendment requires intermediaries to **respect the rights guaranteed to users under the Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Indian Constitution**, therefore, including a reasonable expectation of due diligence, privacy and transparency.
 - For effective communication of the rules and regulations of the intermediary, it is important that the **communication is done in regional Indian languages as well**.
- **Amendments to the Rule 3:**
 - The grounds in **subclause 1 of rule 3 (rule 3(1)(b) (ii))** have been rationalized by **removing the words 'defamatory' and 'libellous'**.
 - Whether any content is defamatory or libellous will be determined through judicial review.
 - Some of the content categories in **subclause 1 of rule 3 (rule 3(1)(b))** have been **rephrased to deal particularly with misinformation**, and content that could **incite violence between different religious/caste groups**.
- **Establishment of Grievance Appellate Committee(s):**
 - Grievance Appellate Committee(s) will be established to allow **users to appeal against the**

inaction of, or decisions taken by intermediaries on user complaints.

- However, users will always have the **right to approach courts for any remedy**.

What are the Key IT Rules, 2021?

- **Mandates Social Media to Exercise Greater Diligence:**
 - Broadly, the IT Rules (2021) mandate social media platforms to **exercise greater diligence with respect to the content on their platforms**.
- **Establish a Grievance Officer:**
 - They are required to establish a grievance redressal mechanism and **remove unlawful and unfitting content within stipulated time frames**.
 - The grievance officer of the platform's redressal mechanism is **responsible for receiving and resolving complaints of the users**.
- **Ensuring Online Safety and Dignity of Users:**
 - Intermediaries **shall remove or disable access within 24 hours** of receipt of complaints of contents that exposes the private areas of individuals, show such individuals in full or partial nudity or in sexual act or is in the nature of impersonation including morphed images etc.
- **Educating Users about the Privacy Policies:**
 - The **privacy policies of the social media platforms must ensure** that users are educated about not circulating copyrighted material and anything that can be construed as defamatory, racially or ethnically objectionable, paedophilic, threatening the unity, integrity, defence, security or sovereignty of India or friendly relations with foreign states, or violative of any contemporary law.

Midday Meal Scheme (PM Poshan Scheme)

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Finance has approved a hike of 9.6 % cooking cost per child under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

- Since the last hike in early 2020, the cooking cost per child has been Rs 4.97 per child per day in primary classes (class I-V), and Rs 7.45 (class VI-VIII) in upper primary classes. After the hikes come into effect, the allocation at the primary level and upper primary levels will be Rs 5.45 and Rs 8.17, respectively.

Note:

What is the Midday Meal Scheme?

➤ About:

- The Midday meal scheme (under the Ministry of Education) is a **centrally sponsored scheme** which was launched in 1995.
- It is the world's largest school meal programme aimed to attain the goal of universalization of primary education.
- Provides cooked meals to every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII who enrolls and attends the school.
- In 2021, it was renamed as '**Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman**' scheme (PM Poshan Scheme) and it also covers students of balvatikas (children in the 3–5-year age group) from pre-primary classes.

➤ Objective:

- Address hunger and **malnutrition**, increase enrolment and attendance in school, improve socialisation among castes, provide employment at grassroot level especially to women.

➤ Quality Check:

- **AGMARK** quality items are procured, tasting of meals by two or three adult members of the school management committee.

➤ Food Security:

- If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month.

➤ Regulation:

- The State Steering-cum Monitoring Committee (SSMC) oversees the implementation of the scheme including establishment of a mechanism for maintenance of nutritional standards and quality of meals.

➤ Nutritional Standards:

- Cooked meals having nutritional standards of 450 calories and 20 gms of pulses for primary (I-V class) and 700 calories and 30 gms of pulses for upper primary (VI-VIII class)

➤ Coverage:

- All government and government aided schools, Madarsa and Maqtabas supported under the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**.

- The scheme covers **11.80 crore children across Classes 1 to 8** (age group 6 to 14) in 11.20 lakh government and government-aided schools and those run by local bodies such as the municipal corporations in Delhi under the provisions of the **National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)**.
- In the **Budget for 2022-23**, the Centre has earmarked **Rs 10,233 crore for the scheme**, while the states are expected to spend Rs 6,277 crore.

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has **extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland** for another six months.

What are the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)?

➤ About:

- The AFSPA gives **unfettered powers to the armed forces and the Central armed police forces** deployed in "disturbed areas" to kill anyone acting in contravention of law and arrest and search any premises without a warrant and with protection from prosecution and legal suits.
- The law first came into **effect in 1958 to deal with the uprising in the Naga**
- The Act was amended in 1972 and the powers to declare an area as "disturbed" were conferred concurrently upon the Central government along with the States.
- Tripura revoked the Act in 2015 and Meghalaya was under AFSPA for 27 years, until it was revoked by the MHA from 1st April 2018.
- Currently AFSPA is in some parts of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

Section 66A of the IT Act, 2000

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** ordered States and their police forces to **stop prosecuting free speech on social media** under **Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000**.

Note:



drishti

- However, the court clarified that this direction would apply only to a charge under Section 66A and not extend to other offences in a case.

What is Section 66A of the IT Act?

- **About:**
 - Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, of 2000 made it a **punishable offence for any person to send offensive information** using a computer or any other electronic device.
 - The provision also made it **punishable for a person to send information that they believed to be false**.
 - Section 66A had prescribed **three years' imprisonment** if a social media message caused **"annoyance" or was found "grossly offensive"**.
 - Even sending emails for causing annoyance, inconvenience, or to deceive or mislead the recipient about the origin of the message was punishable under this section.
 - The court struck down the provision as **unconstitutional and a violation of free speech in 2015 in the Shreya Singhal Case**.
 - The section relating to restrictions on online speech was **declared unconstitutional on grounds of violating the freedom of speech** guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India.
 - It held that **online intermediaries would only be obligated to take down content** on receiving an order from a court or government authority.

2nd World Geospatial Information Congress

Why in News?

Recently, 2nd United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress was inaugurated in Hyderabad under the theme **'Geo-Enabling the Global Village: No one should be left behind'**.

- India's geospatial economy is expected to cross Rs. 63,100 crores by 2025 at a growth rate of 12.8%.

What is the UN World Geospatial Information Congress?

- The first United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress was held in Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China in 2018.

- The United Nation Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) **organizes the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) every four years**.
- The objectives are **enhancing international collaboration** among the Member States and relevant stakeholders in Geospatial information management and capacities.

What is Geospatial Technology?

- **About:**
 - Geospatial technology is a term used to **describe the range of modern tools contributing** to the geographic mapping and analysis of the Earth and human societies.
 - The term 'geospatial' refers to a collection of technologies that help to collect, analyse, store, manage, distribute, integrate, and present geographic information.
 - Broadly, it consists of the following technologies:
 - **Remote Sensing**
 - **GIS (Geographic Information System)**
 - **GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System)**
 - **Survey**
 - **3D modelling**

Quality Council of India (QCI)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Quality Council of India (QCI)** has completed the 25 years of its existence.

- The QCI has also launched a campaign, **'Gunvatta Se Atmanirbharta: India's Quality Movement'** to celebrate India's quality hubs, create awareness about India's landmark achievements and inform people about initiatives to enhance the quality of life of all citizens.

What is the Quality Council of India (QCI)?

- **History:**
 - Quality Council of India (QCI) was established as a National body for Accreditation in 1996.
 - Accordingly, QCI was set up through a **PPP model** as an independent autonomous organization with the support of Government of India and the Indian Industry represented by the three premier industry associations,

Note:

- **Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)**
- **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**
- **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)**

➤ **About:**

- QCI is a **non-profit organization** registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.
- Nodal Ministry is the **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion** under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

➤ **Composition:**

- It is governed by a Council of 38 members with equal representations of government, industry and consumers.
- Chairman of QCI is appointed by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the industry to the government.

➤ **Objective:**

- **To create a mechanism for independent third-party assessment** of products, services, and processes.
- It plays a **pivotal role at the national level in propagating, adoption and adherence to quality standards** in all important spheres of activities including education, healthcare, environment protection, governance, social sectors, infrastructure sector and such other areas of organized activities that have significant bearing in improving the quality of life and wellbeing of the citizens of India.

India-made Syrups and Deaths in Gambia

Why in News?

Recently, the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** issued an alert about four **Indian-manufactured cough syrups, which are** said to be linked to acute kidney injury in children and 66 deaths in the small West African nation of The Gambia.

- The WHO analysis of samples of each of these products had confirmed the presence of **“unacceptable amounts of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol as contaminants”**. These ingredients are not allowed in food or drugs, as they **can cause abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, headache, severe renal injury and neurological toxicity**.

What are the Related Regulations in India?

➤ **The Drugs and Cosmetics Act:**

- **The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940** and Rules 1945 have entrusted various responsibilities to central and state regulators for regulation of drugs and cosmetics.
- It provides the regulatory **guidelines for issuing licenses to manufacture Ayurvedic, Siddha, Unani medicines**.
- It is mandatory for the manufacturers to adhere to the prescribed requirements for licensing of manufacturing units & medicines including proof of safety & effectiveness, compliance with the **Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)**.

➤ **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO):**

- Prescribes standards and **measures for ensuring the safety, efficacy and quality of drugs**, cosmetics, diagnostics and devices in the country.
- Regulates the **market authorization of new drugs and clinical trials standards**.
- Supervises **drug imports and approves licences** to manufacture the above-mentioned products.
- **CDSCO regulates export** of drugs in India, any **manufacturer with the certification from CDSCO** can export drugs outside India.

➤ **Drugs Controller General of India:**

- DCGI is the head of department of the CDSCO of the Government of India responsible for **approval of licences of specified categories of drugs** such as blood and blood products, IV fluids, vaccines and sera in India.
- DCGI also sets **standards for manufacturing, sales, import, and distribution of drugs in India**.

The Places of Worship Act

Why in news?

Solicitor General told the Supreme Court that the validity of the Places of Worship Act, 1991, “may not be covered” by the opinion of its five-judge Constitution bench in the Ayodhya case.

What is the Places of Worship Act?

- **About:** It is described as “An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance

Note:



drishti

of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”

➤ **Exemption:**

- The disputed site at Ayodhya was exempted from the Act. Due to this exemption, the trial in the Ayodhya case proceeded even after the enforcement of this law.
- Besides the Ayodhya dispute, the Act also exempted:
 - Any place of worship which is an ancient and historical monument, or an archaeological site covered by the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**.
 - A suit that has been finally settled or disposed of.
 - Any dispute that has been settled by the parties or conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence before the Act commenced.

➤ **Penalty:**

- Section 6 of the Act prescribes a punishment of a maximum of three years imprisonment along with a fine for contravening the provisions of the Act.

What are the Provisions of the Places of Worship Act?

- **Section 3:** This bars the conversion, in full or part, of a place of worship of any religious denomination into a place of worship of a different religious denomination or even a different segment of the same religious denomination.
- **Section 4(1):** It declares that the **religious character of a place of worship “shall continue to be the same as it existed”** on 15th August 1947.
- **Section 4(2):** It says any suit or legal proceeding with respect to the conversion of the religious character of any place of worship existing on 15th August, 1947, pending before any court, shall abate and no fresh suit or legal proceedings shall be instituted.
 - The proviso to this subsection saves suits, appeals, and legal proceedings that are pending on the date of commencement of the Act if they pertain to the conversion of the religious character of a place of worship after the cut-off date.
- **Section 5:** It stipulates that the Act shall not apply to the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, and to any suit, appeal, or proceeding relating to it.

Revenue Deficit Grants

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Finance released the monthly installment of revenue deficit grant of Rs.7,183 crore to 14 States.

What is the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit (PDRD)?

➤ **About:**

- The Centre provides the **Post Devolution Revenue Deficit (PDRD) Grant** to the States under **Article 275 of the Indian Constitution**.
 - Article 275 provides for the payment of the sums as Parliament may by law provide as grants-in aid to the States in need of assistance.
- The grants are paid out of the **Consolidated Fund of India in each year**, and different sums may be fixed for different States.
 - These grants are to be of the nature of capital and recurring sums as may be necessary.

➤ **Objective:**

- These grants aim to enable the states to meet the cost of state level welfare schemes or to improve the level of administration of scheduled areas.
- Grants are **primarily intended to correct Inter-State disparities in financial resources** and to coordinate the maintenance and expansion of the welfare schemes of the State Governments on a uniform national level.

➤ **Recommendation for Grants:**

- The grants are released as per the **recommendations of the Finance Commission** in monthly installments **to meet the gap in Revenue Accounts of the States post-devolution** (of the divisible tax pool of the Centre).
- The **15th Finance Commission (FC)** has recommended **post devolution revenue deficit grants** amounting to about Rs. 3 trillion over the five-year period ending FY26.
 - The eligibility of States to receive this grant and the quantum of grant was **decided by the Commission** based on the gap between assessment of revenue and expenditure of the State.

Note:



drishti

- The States who have been recommended for PDRD Grant by the 15th FC during 2022-23 are: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

Indian Nutrition Rating (INR)

Why in News?

Recently, The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**, the country's apex food regulator, released a **draft notification for front-of-pack labelling** which would be known as the **Indian Nutrition Rating (INR)**.

What do we know about Indian Nutrition Ratings (INR)?

- **About:**
 - It mandates **pre-packaged foods to carry a star rating** similar to the energy-efficiency ratings on electronic goods, **to discourage the consumption of foods high in sugar, salt and fats.**
- **Types:**
 - **Daily Intake Guide:** The proportion of the daily recommendations of nutrients is present in one serving of the pre-packaged food.
 - **Nutritional information Panel:** It provides the quality of each of the main nutrients present in the food.
 - **Traffic Light Labelling:** It shows the amount of fats, salt, sugar, etc, present in the serving and classifies it with colours like red, orange or green based on how healthy it is.
 - **Warning Label:** It shows whether the quality of salt, sugar and fats is high, without providing details of the quantities in the food.
 - **Star Rating:** It provides 1 to 5 stars based on how healthy the product is, with 5 being healthiest and 1 for least healthy.
- **Logo:** The logo shall be displayed close in proximity to the name or brand name of the product on the front of pack.
- **Implementation:** The food businesses may **add interpretive information next to the star-rating logo**, giving details of energy, sugar, saturated fat, and salt content.

- To generate the star-rating logo for the product, food businesses have to submit nutritional profiles of the products concerned on FSSAI's FoSCoS (Food Safety Compliance System) portal.

➤ Exempted Products:

- Food such as milk and milk products, whey, butter oil, ghee, vegetable oil and fat, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, fresh and frozen meat, egg, fish, flour, and sweeteners will not have to display the star rating.
- Carbonated beverages without any energy or sugar will also not be eligible for declaring the rating.

Convergence Portal of the MoFPI

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)** has launched the **Convergence Portal** between the **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)** scheme, **Pradhan Mantri Micro Food Enterprises Upgradation Scheme (PMFME)** and **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)**.

- A **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** was also issued with the objective of providing maximum benefits to the beneficiaries under AIF, PMFME and PMKSY.

What is the Convergence Module?

- The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) along with Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, jointly launched a Convergence Portal to **better reap the benefits of the Agriculture and Food Processing Sector.**
- It is launched on the idea that all Ministries and Departments of the Government should work **together in cohesion** to serve the people of the country to the best of their abilities.
- The portal will prove to be very important for the **Food Processing Enterprises of the country**, benefiting different sections of the country, including farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs of the processing industry.
- It is a stepping stone to achieve the Prime Minister's dream of an **Aatma Nirbhar Bharat** and will also boost the concept of '**Vocal For Local**'.

Note:

What is Pradhan Mantri Micro Food Industry Upgradation Scheme?

➤ About:

- It was launched by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries in June, 2020 under the **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Campaign** to enhance the **competitiveness of individual micro enterprises**.
- It provides financial, technical and commercial assistance for **the upgradation of micro food processing enterprises** in the country.
- The scheme adopts the **One District One Product (ODOP)** approach to reap the benefit of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.
- It will be implemented over a period of five years **from 2020-21 to 2024-25**.

➤ Funding:

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore.
- The expenditure under the scheme would be shared in **60:40 ratio between Central and State Governments**, in 90:10 ratio with North Eastern and Himalayan States, 60:40 ratio with UTs with legislature and 100% by Centre for other UTs.

➤ Need:

- The unorganized food processing sector comprising nearly 25 lakh units contributes to 74% of employment in the **food processing sector**.
- Nearly 66% of these units are located in rural areas and about **80% of them are family-based enterprises supporting livelihood of rural households** and minimising their migration to urban areas.
 - These units largely fall within the category of micro enterprises.
- The unorganised food processing sector **faces a number of challenges** such as lack of access to modern technology & equipment, training, access institutional credit, lack of branding & marketing skills etc. which limit their performance and their growth.

➤ Achievements:

- So far about 62,000 beneficiaries engaged in food processing activities **have benefitted from this scheme**. Around 7,300 loans **have been sanctioned** under the scheme for setting up new micro food enterprises or for upgrading existing units.

- The pace of loan approvals is expected to increase by 50% in the third quarter of 2022-23.

What is AIF?

- Agriculture Infra Fund (AIF) is a financing facility launched in July 2020 for creation of **post-harvest management infrastructure** and community farm assets, with benefits including **3% interest subvention and credit guarantee support**.
- Under this, Rs 1 lakh crore from 2020-21 to 2025-26 provision of funds has been made and interest subvention and credit guarantee assistance will be given till the year 2032-33.
- AIF scheme has the **facility of convergence with any other scheme of State or Central Government**, therefore in order to optimize the benefits of multiple government schemes for a particular project, these are being integrated with multiple external systems/portals.

ECI Seeks Limit on Cash Donations

Why in News?

Recently, the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** has suggested a slew of amendments to **RP (Representation of People Act) Act, 1951** to increase **transparency and accountability on the part of candidates**.

What are the Concerns?

- It was found that while donations reported by some political parties were nil, **their audited accounts statement showed receipt of huge amounts**, proving large-scale transactions in cash, **below the threshold limit of Rs 20,000**.
- Another area of concern that has been identified by the EC is the **violation of foreign exchange regulations**.

What are the Key Recommendations of ECI?

- **Report Donations above Rs 2000.**
 - All donations above Rs 2,000 should be reported, thereby enhancing transparency in funding.
 - As per rules, political parties have to disclose all donations **above Rs 20,000** through their contribution report that is submitted to the EC.

Note:



drishti

- **Digital or Cheque Transactions:**
 - Make **digital transactions or account payee cheque transfers mandatory** for all expenses above **Rs 2,000 to a single entity/person**.
- **Limit Cash Donations:**
 - Restrict **cash donations at 20% or at maximum Rs 20 crore out of the total funds** received by a party, whichever is less.
- **Separate Bank Account:**
 - **Every fielding candidate should open a separate bank account for election purposes** and route all expenses and receipts through this account, and **furnish these details in their account** of election expenditure.
- **Segregate Foreign Donations:**
 - The EC has also sought **“electoral reforms” to ensure that no foreign donations creep into the funds of the parties** as stipulated under the RP Act and the **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010**.
 - At present, there is **no mechanism to segregate foreign donations** at the initial stages specifically, and the present format of contribution report.

Ramakrishna Mission's Awakening Programme

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister for Education launched **Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' Programme** for school students.

What do we know about the Awakening Programme?

- **About:**
 - It is an initiative towards ensuring overall personality development of a child in line with the philosophy of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.
 - It is for the students of classes **I to V**.
- **Background:**
 - Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi branch, from 2014 onwards, has been successfully conducting the **Awakened Citizen Program (ACP)** for **middle school students** to enable them to build **“ATMASHRADDHA”**

(Self-esteem) and make responsible choices. It helps them to find solutions for all problems of life.

- There has been a **demand** from educationists for a similar program for Primary school students.
 - In response to this, **‘Awakening’** has been designed and piloted across 126 schools.
- **Need:**
 - **Social transformation** is one of the key goals of education.
 - **Values and wisdom** are **more important than material wealth**.
 - Value-based education is important for building a future-ready and socially conscious generation.

What do we Know about Ramakrishna Mission?

- **About:**
 - **Ramakrishna Mission** carries out extensive educational and philanthropic work and expounds a modern version of **Advaita Vedanta**—a school of Indian philosophy.
 - The society was founded near Kolkata by Vivekananda in 1897 with a twofold purpose: to spread the teachings of Vedanta as embodied in the life of the saint Ramakrishna (1836–86) and to improve the social conditions of the Indian people.
 - The organizations were brought into existence by **Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886)**, the great 19th-century saint from Bengal who is regarded as the Prophet of the Modern Age, and Sri Ramakrishna's chief disciple, **Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)**.
- **Motto: “ATMANO MOKSHARTHAM JAGAD HITAYA CHA”** (“For one's own salvation and for the welfare of the world”).

JALDOOT App

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Rural Development has launched the **“JALDOOT App and JALDOOT App e-brochure”** to capture the **Ground water level in a better way**.

What is a JALDOOT App?

- **About:**
 - JALDOOT app has been jointly developed by the Ministry of Rural Development and **Panchayati Raj**.

Note:

- This app will be used across the country to capture the water level of **selected 2-3 wells in a village**.
- The app will work in **both online and offline mode**. So, water level can be captured even **without internet connectivity and captured data will be stored in mobile** and when mobile comes in the connectivity area, data will synchronize with the central server.
- The regular data to be input by the Jaldots would be integrated with the database of **National Water Informatics Centre (NWIC)**, which can be utilized for analysis and display of various useful reports for the benefit of various stakeholders.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)

Why in News?

Recently, The Central government announced an extension of the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY)** for another three months until December 2022.

What is PM-GKAY?

➤ About:

- PMGKAY is a part of the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP)** to help the poor fight the battle against **Covid-19**.
- The scheme aimed at providing each person who is covered under the **National Food Security Act 2013** with an additional 5 kg grains (wheat or rice) for free, in addition to the 5 kg of subsidised foodgrain already provided through the **Public Distribution System (PDS)**.
- It was initially announced for a three-month period (April, May and June 2020), covering 80 crore ration cardholders. Later it was extended till September 2022.
- Its nodal Ministry is the **Ministry of Finance**.
- The benefit of the free ration can be availed through portability by any migrant labour or beneficiary under the **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)** plan from nearly 5 lakh ration shops across the country.

- **Cost:** The overall expenditure of PMGKAY will be about Rs. 3.91 lakh crore for all the phases.
- **Challenges:** The beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act are based on the last census (2011). The number of food-insecure people has increased since then and they remain uncovered.

One Water Approach

Why in News?

The **United Nations** has estimated that by the year 2050, four billion people will be seriously affected by water shortages, pushing the **One Water approach** towards all sources of water.

What is the One Water approach?

➤ About:

- One Water Approach, also referred to as **Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)**, is the recognition that **all water has value, regardless of its source**.
- It includes **managing that source in an integrated, inclusive and sustainable manner** by including the community, business leaders, industries, farmers, conservationists, policymakers, academics and others for ecological and economic benefits.
- It is an **"integrated planning and implementation approach** to managing **finite water resources** for long-term resilience and reliability meeting both community and ecosystem needs.
- One Water is the future of the water industry when the barriers conventionally separating wastewater, stormwater, drinking water, groundwater and the reuse and re-utilisation are broken down, many benefits realised.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **All Water has Value:** The mindset that all water has value — from the water resources in our ecosystems to our drinking water, wastewater and stormwater.
 - **A Multi-faceted Approach:** Our water-related investments should provide economic, environmental, and societal returns.
 - **Utilising Watershed-Scale Thinking and Action:** It should respect and respond to the natural ecosystem, geology, and hydrology of an area.

Note:

- **Partnerships and Inclusion:** Real progress and achievements will only be made when all stakeholders come forward and together will take a decision.

Deemed University Status

Why in News?

Recently, the **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** has applied to the **University Grants Commission (UGC)** for the **deemed university** status.

Why did NCERT apply for Deemed University Tag?

- **Lack of Government Decision:** The government's proposal to make the NCERT an institute of national importance is on hold.
- **Benefits:** The status would allow NCERT to **offer its own graduate, postgraduate and doctoral degrees and have autonomy** in terms of introduction of programmes, course structure, conducting examinations and management, among others.
- **Present Status:** The graduate and post-graduate programmes offered by NCERT's **Regional Institute of Education (RIE)** are affiliated with local universities like Barkatullah University, Bhopal, M D S University, Ajmer, University of Mysuru, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar and North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.
- **Need:** Despite offering innovative teacher education courses through RIEs for decades, the NCERT is still **dependent on the approval of local universities to introduce programmes.**

What is the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)?

- **About:**
 - The NCERT is an **autonomous organization** set up in 1961 by the Government of India to **assist and advise the Central and State Governments** on policies and programmes for qualitative improvement in school education.
 - The **Executive Committee (EC)** is the highest decision-making body of NCERT and is chaired by the **Education Minister**.
- **Objectives:**

- To **undertake, promote and coordinate research** in areas related to school education; prepare and publish model textbooks, supplementary material, newsletters, journals and develop educational kits, multimedia digital materials, etc.

What is a Deemed University?

➤ About:

- Deemed University is a type of higher education institute, it has been **recognized by the status of "deemed to be university"** under **Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956.**
 - In broad terms, it means that the institution has been **granted permission to offer its own degree programs, which are equivalent to those provided by regular universities.**

➤ Benefits:

- There are many benefits of being a Deemed University, such as **increased funding opportunities and attracting better faculty.** Additionally, these institutions often have **more flexible admissions policies.**
 - The authority to revise the curriculum.
 - The right to conduct examinations and evaluations.

HIV Drugs Shortage

Why in News?

Recently, India is witnessing the shortage of **HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)** Drugs, certain **Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs** in **Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART)** centres.

- The **National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO)** under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the **nodal agency responsible for overlooking and coordinating activities of the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP)** along with the Central Medical Services Society, which is responsible for centralised tendering and pooled procurement of different HIV products.

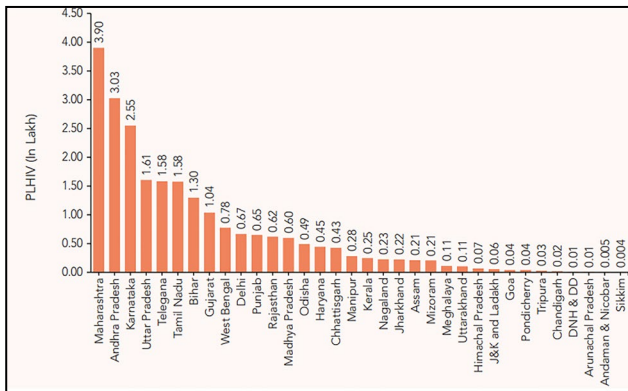
What is Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)?

- HIV attacks CD4, a type of **White Blood Cell** (T cells) in the body's immune system.

Note:

- T cells are **those cells that move around the body detecting anomalies** and infections in cells.
- After entering the body, **HIV multiplies itself and destroys CD4 cells**, thus severely damaging the human immune system.
- Once this virus enters the body, it can never be removed.

What is the Prevalence of HIV/AIDS in India?



- As per the government's HIV Estimation 2021 report, the number of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in India is 24.01 lakh.
 - Annual new HIV infections have declined by 46% in India since 2010
 - **Maharashtra** had the **maximum numbers** followed by Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
 - The Adult Prevalence (15-49 Yrs.) rate of HIV is **highest in Mizoram (2.37%)** followed by Nagaland and Manipur.
 - HIV/AIDS in Mizoram is **10 times higher** than the national average (0.22%).

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985

Why in News?

Recently, Karnataka High Court said that **Bhang** is nowhere referred to as a prohibited drink or prohibited drug as per **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**.

- The court relied on two earlier judgments, **Madhukar vs the State of Maharashtra, 2002** and **Arjun Singh vs State of Haryana, 2004**, where the courts had ruled that **bhang is not ganja**, and is therefore not covered under the NDPS Act.

What is Bhang?

- **About:**
 - Bhang is the **edible preparation made from the leaves of the cannabis plant**, often incorporated into drinks such as thandai and lassi, along with various foods.
 - Bhang has been consumed in the **Indian subcontinent for centuries**, and is frequently consumed during the **festivals of Holi and Mahashivratri**.
- **Law:**
 - The **NDPS Act** is the main legislation, enacted in 1985, that deals with **drugs and their trafficking**.

What are the Provisions of the NDPS Act?

- **Defines Cannabis as a Narcotic Drug:**
 - The NDPS Act defines cannabis (hemp) as a narcotic drug **based on the parts of the plant that come under its purview**. The Act lists these parts as:
 - **Charas:** The separated resin, in whatever form, whether crude or purified, obtained from the cannabis plant and also includes concentrated preparation and resin known as **hashish oil or liquid hashish**.
 - **Ganja:** The flowering or fruiting tops of the cannabis plant (excluding the seeds and leaves when not accompanied by the tops), by whatever name they are known or designated.
 - **Any mixture**, with or without any neutral material, of any of the above forms of cannabis or any drink prepared therefrom.
 - The Act, in its definition, **excludes seeds and leaves "when not accompanied by the tops"**.
 - **Bhang is not mentioned** in the NDPS Act.

What is the State of Crime under NDPS Act?

- **Punjab topped** the list of crime rate as per the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** recent data for 2021.
 - Punjab recorded 32.8 % crime rate in 2021, which was the **highest in the country**.

Note:



drishti

- Himachal Pradesh ended second, notching a crime rate of 20.8 % followed by Arunachal Pradesh that reported NDPS Act crime rate of 17.2 %, followed by Kerala (16 %).
- The lowest crime rate under NDPS Act in 2021 was reported from UT Dadar and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (0.5 %), followed by the states of Gujarat (0.7 %) and Bihar (1.2 %).

Registered Unrecognized Political Parties

Why in News?

The Election Commission of India has delisted 86 non-existent Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPP) and declared additional 253 as 'Inactive RUPPs'.

What do we need to know about the Delisting by ECI?

- **Declared Inactive:**
 - 253 RUPPs have not responded to the letter/notice delivered to them and have not contested a single election either to the General Assembly of a State or the Parliament Election of 2014 & 2019.
 - As per Section 29A of the Representation of People Act 1951, every political party has to communicate any change in its name, head office, office bearers, address, PAN to the Commission without delay.
- **Delisted:**
 - 86 RUPPs have been found to be non-existent either after a physical verification carried out by the Chief Electoral Officers of concerned States/UTs or based on a report of undelivered letters/notices from Postal Authority sent to the registered address of concerned RUPP.
 - Additionally, they would not be entitled to have benefits under the Symbols Order, 1968.

PM SHRI Schools

Why in News?

On the occasion of Teacher's Day 2022, the Prime Minister of India announced a new initiative - PM SHRI Schools (PM ScHools for Rising India).

- It will be a laboratory for the new National Education Policy (NEP) and under the first phase, 14,500 schools will be upgraded.

What do we know about The Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) Yojana?

- **About:**
 - It is a centrally sponsored scheme for upgradation and development of more than 14500 Schools across the country.
 - It aims at strengthening the selected existing schools from amongst schools managed by Central Government/ State/ UT Government/ local bodies.
- **Significance:**
 - It will showcase all components of the National Education Policy 2020 and act as exemplar schools and also offer mentorship to other schools in their vicinity.
 - The aim of these schools will not only be qualitative teaching, learning and cognitive development, but also creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with key 21st century skills.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Education informed Lok Sabha that, during 2021-22, more than 3 Lakh women were trained under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) scheme.

What is PMKVY?

- **Background:**
 - Skill India Mission was launched by the government in 2015 under which the flagship scheme Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is run.
 - It aims to train over 40 crore people in India in different skills by 2022. It aims at vocational training and certification of Indian youth for a better livelihood and respect in the society.
 - PMKVY is implemented by the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) under the guidance of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

Note:



drishti

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE SCHEME

➤ **PMKVY 1.0:**

- **Launch:** India's largest Skill Certification Scheme - **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** - was launched on 15th July, 2015 (**World Youth Skills Day**).
- **Aim:** To encourage and promote **skill development in the country by providing free short duration skill training** and incentivizing this by providing monetary rewards to youth for skill certification.
- **Key Components:** Short Term Training, Special Projects, **Recognition of Prior Learning**, Kaushal & Rozgar Mela, etc.
- **Outcome:** In 2015-16, 19.85 lakh candidates were trained.

➤ **PMKVY 2.0:**

- **Coverage:** PMKVY 2016-20 (PMKVY 2.0) was launched by scaling up both in terms of Sector and Geography and by greater alignment with other missions of the Government of India like **Make in India**, **Digital India**, **Swachh Bharat**, etc.
- **Budget:** Rs. 12,000 Crore.
- **Implementation Through Two Components:**
 - **Centrally Sponsored Centrally Managed (CSCM):** This component was implemented by National Skill Development Corporation. 75% of the PMKVY 2016-20 funds and corresponding physical targets have been allocated under CSCM.
 - **Centrally Sponsored State Managed (CSSM):** This component was implemented by State Governments through State Skill Development Missions (SSDMs). 25% of the PMKVY 2016-20 funds and corresponding physical targets have been allocated under CSSM.
- **Outcome:** More than 1.2 Crore youth have been trained/oriented through an improved standardized skilling ecosystem in the country under PMKVY 1.0 and PMKVY 2.0.

➤ **PMKVY 3.0:**

- **Coverage:** Launched in 717 districts, 28 States/eight UTs, PMKVY 3.0 is a step towards '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**'.
- **Implementation:** It will be implemented in a more decentralized structure with greater responsibilities and support from States/UTs and Districts.

- District Skill Committees (DSCs), under the guidance of State Skill Development Missions (SSDM), shall play a key role in addressing the skill gap and assessing demand at the district level.

○ **Features:**

- It envisages training of eight lakh candidates over a scheme period of 2020-2021 with an outlay of Rs. 948.90 crore.
- It will be **more trainee- and learner-centric**. The focus is on bridging the demand-supply gap by promoting skill development in areas of new-age and **Industry 4.0 job roles**.
- It will be a propagator of vocational education at an early level for youth to capitalize on industry-linked opportunities.

- The **National Educational Policy 2020** also puts focus on vocational training for holistic growth and increased employability.

- By taking the bottom-up approach to training, it will identify job roles that have demand at the local level and skill the youth, linking them to these opportunities (**Vocal for Local**).
- It will encourage healthy competition between states by making available increased allocation to those states that perform better.

Foundational Learning Survey

Why in News?

Recently, the nationwide **Foundational Learning Survey (FLS)** was carried out jointly by the **Union Ministry of Education** and the **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**.

- **More than 50% of the assessed class III children from Delhi** have either "**limited**" foundational numeracy skills or "**lacking the most basic knowledge and skills**".
- In the **National Achievement Survey (NAS)** also Delhi featured in the **five states with the lowest average scores** in both **Math and Language** at the class III level.

What do we need to know about the Foundational Learning Survey?

- **About: Foundational Learning Survey (FLS)** aims to set-up benchmarks for reading with comprehension in 22 Indian languages.

Note:

- **Background:** FLS was undertaken in 2022 as a crucial step towards strengthening efforts for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) under the **NIPUN Bharat Mission**.
- **Samples Size:** FLS was carried out among **86,000 class III children in 10,000 schools** in the country.
 - In Delhi, the sample size was 2,945 students from across 515 schools.
- **Categorization:**
 - **Based on children's performances, they were placed in four categories:**
 - Those who lacked the **most basic knowledge and skills**
 - Those who have **limited knowledge and skills**
 - Those who have **developed sufficient knowledge and skill**
 - Those who have **developed superior knowledge**
- **Findings:**
 - **National:**
 - **Overall Figures:**
 - 11% of students lack **the most basic knowledge and skills**.
 - 37% of the students have **limited knowledge and skills**.
 - **States:** In numeracy, **Tamil Nadu (29%) had the maximum number of students** who could not complete the most basic grade-level tasks, followed by Jammu and Kashmir (28%), Assam, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat (18%).
 - **Basis of Findings:**
 - Findings of the FLS are **based on interviews with each individual participant**.
 - While the National Achievement Survey evaluated learning outcomes based on Multiple Choice Questions.

What are the Government's Initiatives for the Education Sector?

- **NIPUN Bharat Mission**
- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**
- **Mid Day Meal Scheme**

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

Why in News?

Recently, the **second Anniversary of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** was celebrated.

- PMMSY envisages **generation of 68 lakh Employment by the end of 2024-25**.

What is PMMSY?

About:

- PMMSY was introduced by the Government of India, as part of the **'Atma Nirbhar Bharat'** package with the investment of **Rs. 20,050 crores**, the **highest ever investment in the Fishery sector**.
- Fishermen are provided with **insurance cover, financial assistance and a facility of Kisan Credit Card** as well.

Aim and Objectives:

- PMMSY aims towards the purpose of **rural development by utilizing rural resources and boosting rural economy in a rapid way**.
- The main motto of PMMSY is **'Reform, Perform and Transform'** in the fisheries sector.
- The **reforms and initiatives in PMMSY scheme** have been inculcated in:
 - **Core & trunk infrastructure development**
 - **Modernization** of Indian fisheries by undertaking the efforts such as:
 - Push for **new fishing harbours/landing centres**
 - Modernisation and **mechanization of traditional fishermen crafts-trawlers-deep sea going vessels**
 - Provision of **post-harvest facilities to reduce post-harvest loss**
 - **Cold chains facilities**
 - **Clean and hygienic fish markets**
 - **Two wheelers** with ice boxes

Achievements:

- **Fisheries sector** showed **impressive growth of 14.3% from 2019-20 to 2021-22**.
 - Fish production reached an all-time high of 141.64 lakh tons during 2019-20 to 161.87 lakh tons during 2021-22.

Note:



drishti

- Fisheries sector saws all-time high exports of 13.64 lakh tonnes valuing Rs 57,587 crore dominated by exports of shrimps.
- Currently, exports to 123 countries are taking place including China, Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, Tunisia, the United States, Hong Kong, Kuwait, etc.
- PMMSY has **supported 31.47 lakh farmers under insurance coverage from 22 states and 7 UTs.**
- **Implementation:**
 - It is implemented as an **umbrella scheme with two separate components namely:**
 - **Central Sector Scheme:** The project cost will be borne by the Central government.
 - **Centrally Sponsored Scheme:** All the sub-components/activities will be implemented by the States/UTs and the cost will be shared between the Centre and State.
- **Forthcoming Plan:**
 - **Aquaculture promotion** will be undertaken especially in the **saline and alkaline areas of Northern India.**
 - Also, focus will be laid on **Aquatic health management** involving the address of diseases, antibiotic and residue issues which will be **supported by an integrated laboratory network.**

NITI Aayog-like Bodies in States

Why in News?

The **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog** will assist each state to set up similar bodies, replacing their planning boards **for faster and inclusive economic growth** along with the **vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047.**

What is the Need for Setting up NITI Aayog-like Bodies in States?

- States are the Indian economy's growth drivers. The **national gross domestic product (GDP) growth is an aggregation of states' rates of growth** except for sectors like defence, railways and highways.
 - **Health, education and skilling are primarily with the state government.**
- State governments' role is **critical to improving ease of doing business, land reforms, infrastructure**

development, credit flows and urbanisation, all of which are vital for sustained economic growth.

- Most states so far have **done little to rejuvenate their planning departments/boards**, which earlier dealt with the Planning Commission and prepared parallel state five year-plans with the Centre.
 - Most states' **planning departments, with huge manpower, are almost defunct and have no clarity what work they will do.**

Aadhaar-Voter ID Linkage

Why in News?

Recently, the **Election Commission (EC)** started a campaign to promote the linkage of Voter ID and Aadhaar,

- Further, Government officials have asked individuals to **link them Aadhaar with their Voter IDs and failure to link voter ID with Aadhar could lead to the cancellation of their Voter ID card.**

Why is the Government Pushing to Link Voter ID with Aadhar?

- **Update Database:**
 - The linking project would help the Election Commission, which **conducts regular exercises to maintain an updated and accurate record of the voter base.**
- **Remove Duplication:**
 - To **weed out duplication of voters, such as migrant workers who may have been registered more than once on the electoral rolls** in different constituencies or for persons registered multiple times within the same constituency.
- **Pan India voter ID:**
 - As per the government, linkage of Aadhaar with voter IDs will **assist in ensuring that only one Voter ID is issued per citizen of India.**

Arth Ganga Project

Why in News?

Recently, Director General of the National Mission for Clean Ganga spoke about the **Arth Ganga model during World Water Week 2022.**

Note:



drishti

What are the Key Features of the Arth Ganga Project?

- **About:**
 - 'Arth Ganga' implies a sustainable development model with a focus on economic activities related to Ganga.
 - PM Modi first introduced the concept during the first National Ganga Council meeting in Kanpur in 2019, where he urged for a shift from **Namami Gange** to the model of **Arth Ganga**.

What is World Water Week?

- **World Water Week** is an annual conference on global water issues which is held in the last week of August every year.
- It was started in 1991 and initially part of a public water festival in the Swedish capital, Stockholm.
- **Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)** is the organizer of World Water Week.
- World Water Week is an opportunity to explore **water aspects of challenges like the climate crisis, food security, energy, and many other topics.**
- The week is also taken as an opportunity to discuss and accelerate progress toward the **Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6)**; which is about clean water and sanitation for all.
- **The theme** for World Water Week 2022 is "Seeing the Unseen: The Value of Water."
 - The **theme will look at three main areas:** the value of water among people and for development; the value of water with **respect to nature and climate change**; and the **economic and financial value of water.**

PEN-PLUS Strategy Against Non-Communicable Disease

Why in News?

Recently, Africa has adopted a new strategy called **PEN-PLUS Strategy** to boost access to the diagnosis, treatment and care of severe **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD)**.

What is Pen Plus Strategy?

- It's a **regional strategy to address severe Non-Communicable Diseases at First-Level Referral Health Facilities.**

- The strategy is aimed at **bridging the access gap in treatment and care of patients with chronic and severe NCDs.**
- It urges countries to put in place standardised programmes to tackle chronic and serious non-communicable diseases by ensuring that essential medicines, technologies and diagnostics are available and accessible in district hospitals

What are Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD)?

- **About:**
 - **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)** are medical conditions or diseases that are not caused by infectious agents.
 - These are **chronic diseases of long duration, and generally slow progression and are the result of a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behaviours factors.**
 - These diseases are those chronic conditions that **lead to high levels of disability and death among children, adolescents and young adults if left undiagnosed or untreated.**
 - NCDs include heart diseases, cancers, diabetes, asthma among others.
 - Globally, NCDs are the main cause of morbidity and mortality.
 - They **account for 71% of global mortality**, according to **World Health organisation (WHO).**
 - In the African Region, the proportion of mortality due to NCDs ranges from 27-88%.

Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen

Why in News?

Over 1 lakh villages declared themselves as **ODF (Open Defecation Free) Plus** under Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G).

- These villages are sustaining their **ODF status** and have systems in place for managing solid and/or liquid waste and they would continue on their sanitation journey as they work towards making their villages cleaner, greener and healthier.

Note:



drishti

What is Open Defecation Free Status?

- **ODF:** An area can be notified or declared as ODF if at any point of the day, not even a single person is found defecating in the open.
- **ODF+:** This status is given if at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating and/or urinating in the open, and all community and public toilets are functional and well maintained.
- **ODF++:** This status is given if the area is already ODF+ and the faecal sludge/septage and sewage are safely managed and treated, with no discharging or dumping of untreated faecal sludge and sewage into the open drains, water bodies or areas.

What is Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G)?

- **About:**
 - It was launched in 2014 by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation.
 - The mission was implemented as **nation-wide campaign/Janandolan which aimed at eliminating open defecation in rural areas.**
- **Swachh Bharat Mission (G) Phase-I:**
 - The rural sanitation coverage in the country at the time of launch of **SBM (G) on 2nd October, 2014** was reported as 38.7%.
 - More than 10 crore individual toilets **have been constructed since the launch of the mission;** as a result, rural areas in all the States have declared themselves ODF as on 2nd October, 2019.
- **SBM(G) Phase-II:**
 - It emphasizes the sustainability of achievements under phase I and to provide adequate facilities for **Solid/Liquid & plastic Waste Management (SLWM) in rural India.**
 - It will be implemented from 2020-21 to 2024-25 in a mission **mode with a total outlay of Rs. 1,40,881 crores.**
 - The SLWM component of **ODF Plus will be monitored on the basis of output-outcome indicators for 4 key areas:**
 - Plastic waste management,
 - Biodegradable solid waste management (including animal waste management),

- Greywater (Household Wastewater) management
- Fecal sludge management.

- **Top Performing States:**

- The top five performing states are Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh where maximum number of villages have been declared as ODF Plus.

Dam Management in India

Why in News?

Recently, the outer part of the “**Karam Dam**”, which is being built on the **Karam river**, a tributary of the **Narmada**, collapsed.

- The Dam Safety Act 2021 covers those dams having a height of over 15m and between 10m and 15m with certain stipulations.

What is the Dam Safety Act 2021?

- **About:**
 - **Dam Safety Act 2021** aims at **surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance** of all specified dams across the country.
 - The Act applies **to all specified dams in the country** i.e., those dams having a **height of over 15m and between 10m and 15m** with certain design and structural conditions.
- **Provisions:**
 - **It constitutes two National Bodies:**
 - **National Committee on Dam Safety:**
 - Its functions include evolving policies and recommending regulations regarding dam safety.
 - **National Dam Safety Authority:**
 - Its functions include implementing policies of the National Committee, and resolving matters between State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs), or between a SDSO and any dam owner in that state.
 - **It also constitutes two state bodies:**
 - **State Dam Safety Organizations (SDSOs):**
 - Its functions include keeping perpetual surveillance, inspecting, and monitoring dams.
 - **State Committee on Dam Safety:**

Note:



drishti

- It will supervise state dam rehabilitation programs, review the work of the SDO, and review the progress on measures recommended in relation to dam safety, among others.

Grameen Udyami Project

Why in News?

Recently, **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** in partnership with **Seva Bharti and Yuva Vikas Society**, launched the second phase of the **Grameen Udyami Project**.

- Under the initiative, the endeavor is to **multiskill India's youth and impart functional skills to them for enabling livelihoods**.

What is the National Skill Development Corporation?

- The **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** is a **non-profit public limited company** established on July 31, 2008, under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956.
 - The Ministry of Finance established NSDC as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.
 - The Government of India, through the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**, owns 49% of NSDC, while the **private sector owns the remaining 51%**.
 - The organisation **provides funding to develop scalable and successful initiatives for vocational training**.

What is Grameen Udyami Project?

- **About:**
 - It is a unique **multiskilling project**, funded by NSDC that aims **to train 450 tribal students in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand**.
 - The project is being **implemented in six states**—Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Gujarat.

How will Grameen Udyami Project Work?

- **Phase -1:**
 - Candidates **were mobilized from rural and tribal areas of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat**.

- The transportation, boarding & lodging were provided to candidates so that they do not miss out on the learning opportunity due to lack of resources.

➤ Phase-2:

- The phase-II of the pilot project launched in Ranchi, which is being implemented by Yuva Vikas Society, through Seva Bharti Kendra in Ranchi.
- NSDC under the aegis of the **Ministry of Skill Development and Enterprises (MSDE)** has supported setting up of labs and classrooms through **Sector Skill Councils (SSCs)** in Seva Bharti Kendra Skill Development Center.

Universal Postal Union

Why in News?

Recently, The Union Cabinet approved the ratification of amendments to the Constitution of the **Universal Postal Union (UPU)** as contained in the Eleventh Additional Protocol to the Constitution signed during the 27th Congress of the Universal Postal Union held at Abidjan 2021.

What is the Significance of the Approval?

- It would enable the **Department of Posts, Government of India to have the "Instrument of Ratification"** signed by the Hon'ble President of India and have the same deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union.
 - Further, it would **fulfill the obligations arising from Articles 25 and 30 of the UPU Constitution which provides for ratification of the amendments** to the Constitution adopted by a Congress as soon as possible by the member countries.
 - It would resolve many long-standing discrepancies in the text and accommodate provisions for 'acceptance or approval of the Acts in consistency with the **Vienna Conventions on Law of Treaties, 1969**.
 - Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, an international agreement **governing treaties between states** that was drafted by the **International Law Commission of the United Nations** and adopted on May 23, 1969, and that entered into force on January 27, 1980.

Note:



drishti

What is Universal Postal Union?

- The UPU was established by the **Treaty of Bern of 1874**.
- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) that coordinates postal policies among member nations, in addition to the worldwide postal system.
- It is the **second oldest international organization worldwide**.
- UPU's headquarters are located in **Bern, Switzerland**.
- **India joined the UPU in 1876**.

Special Marriage Act, 1954

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court (SC)** dismissed a writ petition challenging **provisions of the Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954** requiring couples to give a notice declaring their intent to marry 30 days before their marriage.

- The SC Rejected the petition on the grounds that the petitioner was **no longer an aggrieved party** as she had **already solemnised her marriage under SMA**.

What is the Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954?

- **About:**
 - Marriages in India can be registered under the respective personal laws **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, Muslim Marriage Act, 1954**, or under the **Special Marriage Act, 1954**.
 - **It is the duty of the Judiciary to ensure that the rights** of both the husband and wife are protected.
 - The **Special Marriage Act, 1954** is an Act of the Parliament of India with **provision for civil marriage for people of India** and all Indian nationals in foreign countries, **irrespective of religion or faith followed by either party**.
 - When a person solemnises marriage under this law, then the marriage is **not governed by personal laws but by the Special Marriage Act**.
- **Features:**
 - Allows people from two different religious backgrounds **to come together in the bond of marriage**.
 - Lays down the **procedure for both solemnization and registration of marriage**, where either of the

husband or wife or both are not Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, or Sikhs.

- Being a secular Act, it plays a key role in **liberating individuals from traditional requirements of marriage**.
- **Provisions:**
 - **Prior notice:**
 - As per **Section 5 of the Act** Couples have to serve a **notice with the relevant documents to the Marriage Officer 30 days** before the intended date of marriage.
 - **Registration:**
 - Both parties are required to be present **after the submission of documents for issuance of public notice** inviting objections.
 - Registration is done 30 days after the date of notice after deciding any objection that may have been received during that period by the SDM.
 - Both parties along with **three witnesses are required** to be present on the date of registration.

Manipur to Implement the NRC

Why in News?

Recently, the **Manipur Assembly** has resolved to **implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC)** and establish a **State Population Commission (SPC)**.

- The decision has come after at least 19 **apex tribal organisations** wrote to the Prime Minister demanding **NRC** and other mechanism to **insulate the indigenous people** from the "ever-increasing number of non-local residents".

What is the National Register of Citizens?

- NRC is a register **prepared in respect of each village, showing the houses or holdings in a serial order** and indicating against each house or holding the number and names of persons staying therein.
- The register was **first prepared after the 1951 Census of India** and since then it has not been updated until recently.
 - It has been **updated in Assam only for now and the government plans to update it nationally as well**.

Note:

- **Purpose:** To separate “illegal” immigrants from “legitimate” residents.
- **Nodal Agency:** Registrar General and Census Commissioner India.

Tobacco Endgame

Why in News?

To fulfil its plan to be **smokefree by 2025**, the New Zealand Parliament recently tabled the **Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill**.

- Emulating New Zealand, **Malaysia is also considering a ban on smoking** and the sale of all tobacco products, including **e-cigarettes**, to people born after 2007.

What is the New Zealand's Bill on Tobacco Endgame?

- **About:**
 - The Tobacco Endgame **refers to a policy approach that focuses on ending the Tobacco Epidemic**, aiming at a ‘**tobacco-free future**’.
 - The Bill seeks three Strategies to reduce Smoking significantly or ending it.
 - If implemented, it will be the world-first legislation that will **stop the next generation from ever being able to legally buy cigarettes**.
- **Strategies Proposed:**
 - Drastically reducing nicotine content in tobacco so it is no longer addictive (known as “**denicotinisation**” or “**very low nicotine cigarettes**” (VLNC)).
 - A 90% to 95% reduction in the number of shops that can sell tobacco.
 - Making it **illegal to sell tobacco to people born on or after 1 January 2009**. (thus, creating a “**smoke free generation**”).

Electoral Bonds

Why in News?

Recently, the **State Bank of India (SBI)** shared data reporting that **Donations to political parties through electoral bonds (EBs)** have crossed the Rs 10,000-crore mark.

- In the 21st sale of EBs conducted in July 2022, **parties received another Rs 389.5 crore from EB purchases**.
- The total amount collected by parties has gone up to **Rs 10,246 crore since 2018 when the EB scheme was introduced**.

What are Electoral Bonds?

- **About:**
 - **State Bank of India is authorised** to issue and encash these bonds.
 - Electoral bonds are **purchased anonymously by donors** and are **valid for 15 days from the date of issue**.
 - As debt instruments, these can be **bought by donors from a bank**, and the **political party can then encash them**.
 - These can be redeemed **only by an eligible party by depositing the same in its designated account** maintained with a bank.
 - The bonds are issued by SBI in denominations of **Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore**.
 - The bonds are available for purchase by any citizen of India for a **period of ten days each** in the months of **January, April, July and October** as may be specified by the **Central Government**.
- **Eligibility:**
 - Only the political parties registered under Section 29A of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951** and have **secured not less than 1% of the votes polled** in the last general election to the **House of the People** or the **Legislative Assembly**, are eligible to receive electoral bonds.

Integration of Health Applications with ABDM

Why in News?

Recently, with successful integrations of 52 digital health applications, the **National Health Authority (NHA)** announced the expansion of the digital health ecosystem being established under its flagship scheme **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**.

- These integrations are achieved through **ABDM Sandbox**.

Note:



drishti

- In the last two months, additional 12 health service applications completed their integration across various milestones in the ABDM sandbox environment.
 - The tally now includes 20 government applications and 32 private sector applications.

Which New Apps have been Integrated?

- The 12 new applications added to the ABDM Partners ecosystem are—
 - **HMIS (Hospital Management Information System)** for Central Government Hospital Scheme (CGHS)
 - **Hospital Management System** by NICE-HMS
 - **Anmol Application** of the National Health Mission by **National Informatics Center (NIC)**,
 - **eSanjeevani**
 - UKTelemedicine Service for Uttarakhand Government by Dhanush Infotech Pvt Ltd.
 - **Health Tech solutions** like Equal app by Infinity Identity Technologies Pvt Ltd
 - **IHX Claim Management Platform** by IHX
 - **Karkinos Application Suite** by Karkinos Healthcare Private Limited,
 - **Meraadhikar app** by Fingoole Technologies Pvt Ltd,
 - **nPe Bills & Services app** by NICT
 - **Paperplane WhatsApp Clinic** by Paperplane Communications Pvt Ltd
 - **HISP-EMR** by the Society for Health Information System Program (HISP India)

ABDM and Integration of Apps - What is the Significance?

- **About ABDM:**
 - ABDM is a national digital health eco-system that supports **Universal Health Coverage** in an efficient, accessible, inclusive, and affordable manner, through the provision of a wide range of information and infrastructure services.
 - It aims to develop the backbone necessary to **support the integrated digital health infrastructure** of the country.
 - It will **bridge the existing gap amongst different stakeholders of the Healthcare ecosystem** through digital highways.

Significance of the Integration:

- As more existing health applications join the ecosystem, the **scope for innovation increases, and the system evolves much faster.**
- This integration signifies how the **public and private sectors can come together and collaborate to strengthen a digital health ecosystem** for the country.
- This **collaborative approach toward digitization** of healthcare delivery will **help India achieve its goal of healthcare for all** in the most effective, efficient, and affordable manner.

What are the Key Points about ABDM?

➤ Objectives:

- To establish **state-of-the-art digital health systems**, to manage the core digital health data, and the infrastructure required for its seamless exchange.
- To establish **registries at an appropriate level to create a single source** of truth in respect of clinical establishments, healthcare professionals, health workers, drugs, and pharmacies.
- To enforce the adoption of open standards by all national digital health stakeholders.
- To create a system of **personal health records, based on international standards, easily accessible to individuals and healthcare professionals and services providers, based on individual's informed consent;**
- To promote the development of **enterprise-class health application systems with a special focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for health.**

➤ **Building Blocks of ABDM:** The **Ayushman Bharat Mission** is based on 4 main building blocks:

➤ **Health ID**

- Each individual user of the ABDM system will have to generate a **unique health ID** that will be verified and linked to their identification.
- The user's medical information will be stored on this unique health ID.

➤ **Healthcare Professionals Registry**

Note:

- It is a complete **database of healthcare professionals who are associated with the deployment of healthcare services across the country.**

- By registering themselves on the registry, healthcare professionals can have easy and quick access to patient data and other benefits.

➤ **Health Facility Registry**

- It is an extensive database of all healthcare facilities across the nation. These include both private and public health care facilities like hospitals, diagnostic labs, small clinics, nursing homes, etc.

➤ **ABHA Mobile App**

- The **ABHA mobile app** is to be used by the patients to control and access their medical information, as well as share it with healthcare professionals.
- The app is supported by the **secure PHR (Personal Health Record)** system.

What is ABDM Sandbox?

- It's a **digital space for experimentation** created for **testing integration processes before the digital health product** is made live for actual use.
- Any digital health service provider/ developer can register on the ABDM Sandbox by following a pre-defined process of integrating and validating their software systems with the ABDM **Application Program Interface (APIs)**.
- Currently, 919 public and private sector integrators have enrolled under ABDM Sandbox for integrating and validating their software solutions under the scheme.

Foreign Visit of the State Government Ministers

Why in News?

Recently, Delhi's Chief Minister was **denied permission to attend the World Cities Summit** in Singapore.

What's the Issue?

- The Chief Minister of Delhi was invited by the Singapore government to participate in the **world**

cities conference but his clearance to visit was denied by the central government.

- Further, the central government said the trip to Singapore was "not advisable," noting that it was **mostly attended by mayors and that, in any case, urban governance in Delhi was not solely the responsibility of the state government.**
- Also, in 2019 the Delhi Chief Minister's proposed visit to Copenhagen for attending the 7th **C-40 World Mayors Summit** was rejected by the MEA without providing any reason.

Under which Provisions are approvals Required?

- In 1982 the **cabinet secretariat** issued guidelines regarding foreign travel of Ministers of State government and Union Territories and State government officials.
 - Foreign visits by members of the State governments in their official capacity would require **clearances from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Ministry of Home Affairs, Finance Ministry, and the Central Administrative Ministry.**
- Further, another order circulated in 2004, modifying the provisions to the extent that the final orders were to be issued by the Finance Ministry.
 - It stated that Chief Ministers required **further approval from the Prime Minister's Office** before an official visit.
- Again in 2010, another directive was issued that made political clearances mandatory before private visits of Ministers in State governments.

Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana

Why in News?

Recently, Government has modified the earlier scheme of '**Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS)**' with nomenclature '**Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY)**' for implementation during 2021-22 to 2025-26.

What is Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana?

- **About:**
 - It supplements the efforts of State Governments for **development and welfare of tribal people** by

Note:



drishti

extending **Special Central Assistance** as an additive to the **State Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)**.

- It aims at **mitigating gaps** and providing **basic infrastructure** in villages with significant **tribal population** in convergence with funds available under different schemes in **Central Scheduled Tribe Component**.

➤ **Revision of Scheme Guidelines:**

- To ensure all round development of the selected villages, so that they can indeed become '**Adarsh Grams**', the **SCA to TSS Scheme** was also revised to capture the **Gaps in critical socio-economic** 'Monitorable Indicators' as part of various sectors/ domains.
 - These domains include **water and sanitation, education, health and nutrition, agricultural best practices** etc. amongst others.

➤ **New Approach for Implementation:**

- The identification of needs or Gaps with regard to the '**Monitorable Indicators**' are based on a **Need Assessment exercise**.
- The '**Village Development Plan**' (VDP) is based on the data collected as part of the Need Assessment exercise.
- PMAGY provides the platform for convergent implementation of other Schemes with the aim to achieve saturation in the various domains.

PESA Act

Why in News?

Electoral Parties are trying to woo tribals in Gujarat by making promises to strictly implement the **Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996**.

What is the PESA Act?

➤ **About:**

- The PESA Act was enacted in 1996 "to provide for the extension of the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution relating to the Panchayats to the Scheduled Areas".
 - **Part IX, comprising Articles 243-243ZT** of the Constitution, contains provisions **relating to municipalities and cooperative societies**.

➤ **Provisions:**

- Under the Act, **Scheduled Areas** are those referred to in **Article 244(1)**, which says that the provisions of the **Fifth Schedule shall apply to the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in states other than Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram**.

- The Fifth Schedule **provides for a range of special provisions for these areas**.

- Ten states — Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Telangana — have notified Fifth Schedule areas that cover (partially or fully) several districts in each of these states.

➤ **Objectives:**

- To ensure **self-governance through Gram Sabhas (village assemblies)** for people living in the **Scheduled Areas**.
- It recognises the **right of tribal communities, who are residents of the Scheduled Areas**, to govern themselves through their own systems of self-government, and also acknowledges their traditional rights over natural resources.
- Empowers Gram Sabhas to play a key role in approving development plans and controlling all social sectors.

SMILE-75 Initiative

Why in News?

The Government of India has formulated a comprehensive scheme of **SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)** to address the persisting problem of **destitution and beggary**.

- Under the "SMILE-75" Initiative, 75 **Municipal Corporations** will undertake **comprehensive rehabilitation** of persons engaged in the act of begging in the spirit of **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**.

What do we need to know about the SMILE 75-Initiative?

➤ **Aim:**

- Municipal Corporations, in collaboration with **NGOs** and other stakeholders will cover several comprehensive welfare measures for **persons who are engaged in the act of begging**, with focus extensively on **rehabilitation**, provision of **medical**

Note:

facilities, counselling, awareness, education, skill development, economic linkages and convergence with other Government welfare programmes etc.

- The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has also **allocated a total budget of Rs.100 crore** for the SMILE project for coming years till 2025-26.
- It seeks to develop a **support mechanism** for holistic rehabilitation of those engaged in the act of begging.
- **Implementing Ministry:**
 - **The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.**
- **Components:**
 - **It includes the sub-scheme of:**
 - Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging
- **Objectives:**
 - To make cities/town and municipal areas **begging-free**.
 - To make a **strategy for comprehensive rehabilitation** of the persons engaged in the act of begging through the coordinated action of various stakeholders.

Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the **Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022** has come into force after being passed by the Parliament in April 2022.

- It replaces the **Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920**, a colonial era law, and authorises **police officers to take measurements of people convicted, arrested or facing trial in criminal cases.**

What is the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022?

- It provides **Legal sanction to the police to take physical and biological samples of convicts** as well as those accused of crimes.
- The police as per section 53 or section 53A of the **Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973**, can **collect Data**.
 - **Data that can be collected:** Finger-impressions, Palm-Print impressions, Footprint impressions,

Photographs, Iris and Retina scan, Physical, Biological samples and their analysis, Behavioural Attributes including signatures, Handwriting or any other examination

- CrPC is the **primary legislation regarding the procedural aspects of criminal law.**
- Any person convicted, arrested or detained under any preventive detention law will be required to provide "measurements" to a police officer or a prison official.
- **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** will **store, preserve, share** with any law enforcement agency and destroy the record of measurements at national level. The records can **be stored up to a period of 75 years.**
- It aims to **ensure the unique identification of those involved with crime and to help investigating agencies solve cases.**

National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM)

Why in News?

National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM), launched in 2021, has achieved the target of imparting **Intellectual Property (IP)** awareness and basic training to 1 million students.

- The target has been achieved **ahead of the deadline which was 15 August 2022.**

What is the National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM)?

- **About:**
 - The pan-India mission aims to provide **awareness on intellectual property and its rights** to 1 million students.
 - It aims to **inculcate the spirit of creativity and innovation** to students of higher education (classes 8 to 12) and ignite and inspire the students of college/Universities to innovate and protect their creations.
- **Implementing Agency:**
 - The program is being implemented by the **Intellectual Property Office**, the Office of Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDTM), **Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
- **Target Achieved:**

Note:



drishti

- During the period 08 December 2021 to 31st July 2022, the following milestones were achieved:
 - No. of participants (students/faculty) trained on IP: 10,05,272
 - Educational institutes covered: 3,662
 - Geographical coverage: 28 states and 7 Union Territories

What are Intellectual Property Rights?

➤ About:

- **Intellectual property rights (IPR)** are the rights given to persons over the **creation of their minds**:
 - Inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names and images used in commerce.
 - They usually give the creator an **exclusive right over the use of his/her creation for a certain period of time**.
- These rights are outlined in **Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which provides for the **right to benefit from the protection** of moral and material interests resulting from authorship of scientific, literary or artistic productions.
- The importance of intellectual property was first recognized in the **Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883)** and the **Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1886)**.
 - Both treaties are administered by the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**.

➤ Types of IPR:

- **Copyrights:**
 - The rights of authors of **literary and artistic works** (such as books and other writings, musical compositions, paintings, sculpture, computer programs and films) **are protected by copyright**, for a minimum period of **50 years after the death of the author**.
- **Industrial property:**
 - **Protection of distinctive signs, in particular trademarks and geographical indications:**
 - Trademarks
 - Geographical Indications (GIs)
 - **Industrial designs and trade secrets:**
 - Other types of industrial property are protected primarily to stimulate innovation, design and the creation of technology.

Rules regarding Suspension of MPs

Why in News?

Recently, **Lok Sabha** has suspended four (Member of Parliament) MPs and **Rajya Sabha** also suspended 23 MPs as they were disrupting the proceedings of the house.

Why is the Disruption Done by the MPs?

- As per the analysis done by political leaders, and presiding officers there is **four main causes that lead to disruption**:
 - MPs do not have enough time to raise crucial issues.
 - The government's unresponsiveness and the Treasury benches their retaliatory posture.
 - Parties intentionally cause disturbance for political or publicity reasons.
 - The failure to take immediate action against MPs who interrupt parliamentary proceedings.

Who can suspend MPs?

➤ General Principle:

- The general principle is that it is the role and duty of the **Presiding Officer — Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairman of Rajya Sabha — to maintain order so that the House can function smoothly**.
- In order to ensure that proceedings are conducted in the proper manner, **the Speaker/ Chairman is empowered** to force a member to withdraw from the House.

➤ Rules of Procedure and Conduct:

- **Rule 373:** The Speaker can direct a member **to withdraw immediately from the House** if he finds the member's conduct disorderly.
 - Members so ordered to withdraw shall do so forthwith and shall remain absent during the remainder of the day's sitting.
- **Rule 374:** The Speaker can name a member **who disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the House** by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business thereof.
 - And the member so named will be suspended from the House for a period not exceeding the remainder of the session.

Note:



drishti

- A member suspended under this rule shall forthwith withdraw from the precincts of the House.”
- **Rule 374A:** Rule 374A was incorporated in the Rule Book in December 2001.
 - In case of gross violation or severe charges, on being named by the Speaker, the member stands automatically suspended from the service of the House for five consecutive sittings or the remainder of the session, whichever is less.
- **Rule 255 (Rajya Sabha):** Under Rule 255 of the General Rules of Procedure of the Rajya Sabha, the presiding **officer of the House can invoke suspension of the Member of Parliament.**
 - The Chairman as per this rule can direct any member whose conduct in his opinion was not right or was disorderly.
- **Rule 256 (Rajya Sabha):** It provides for suspension of members.
 - The Chairman can suspend a member from the service of the Council for a period not exceeding the remainder of the Session.

What are the terms of Suspension?

- The maximum period of suspension is for the remainder of the session.
- Suspended members cannot enter the chamber or attend the meetings of the committees.
- He will not be eligible to give notice for discussion or submission.
- He loses the right to get a reply to his questions.

What are Interventions by the Court?

- **Article 122 of the Constitution** says parliamentary proceedings cannot be questioned before a court.
- Although courts have intervened in the procedural functioning of the legislature like,
 - Maharashtra Legislative Assembly passed a **resolution in its 2021 Monsoon Session suspending 12 BJP MLAs for a year.**
 - The matter came before the **Supreme Court**, which held that the resolution was **ineffective in law beyond the remainder of the Monsoon Session.**

Swachh Sagar Surakshit Sagar Campaign

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Earth Sciences has launched a Coastal Clean Up Drive under Swachh Sagar Surakshit Sagar Campaign to clean 75 beaches across the country in 75 days.

What is the Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar Campaign?

➤ About:

- It is the first-of-its-kind and **longest running coastal cleanup campaign** in the world with the highest number of people participating in it.
- The Campaign will culminate on **“International Coastal Clean-up Day” (17th September 2022).**
 - The day aims to **increase public awareness about the accumulation and negative impacts of litter in oceans**, on coastlines and on beaches.
- Globally, **“International Coastal Clean Up Day”** is celebrated on the third Saturday of September, every year.
- Through this campaign, **a mass behavioural change among the masses is intended by raising awareness about how plastic usage is destroying the marine life.**
- A mobile app **“Eco Mitram”** has been launched to spread awareness about the campaign and also for the common people for voluntary registration for the beach cleaning activity.

➤ Objectives:

- Running a **cleanliness campaign** along India’s entire coastline.
- To **reduce** marine litter.
- Minimising the **use of plastics.**
- Encouraging **segregation of waste at source and waste management.**

Human-Animal Conflict

Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of State for Forest, Environment and Climate Change, informed in the **Lok Sabha** that there is a rise in the number of **Human-Animal conflicts.**

Note:



drishti

What is Human-Animal Conflict?

➤ About:

- It refers to struggles that arise when the presence or behavior of **wildlife poses actual or perceived direct**, recurring **threats to human interests or needs**, often leading to disagreements between groups of people and negative impacts on people and/or wildlife.

➤ Related Data:

- There were 222 elephants were killed by electrocution across the country between 2018-19 and 2020-21.
- Further, 29 tigers were killed by poaching between 2019 and 2021, while 197 tiger deaths are under scrutiny.
- Among human casualties of conflict with animals, **elephants killed 1,579 humans in three years** — 585 in 2019-20, 461 in 2020-21, and 533 in 2021-22.
 - Odisha topped the number of deaths with 332, followed by Jharkhand with 291, and West Bengal with 240.
- Whereas, **Tigers killed 125 humans in reserves between 2019 and 2021**.
 - Maharashtra accounted for nearly half these deaths, at 61.

What are the Initiatives Taken to Tackle the Conflict?

- **Advisory for Management of Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC):** This has been issued by the Standing Committee of the **National Board of Wildlife** (SC-NBWL).
- **Empower Gram Panchayats:** The advisory envisages empowering gram panchayats in dealing with problematic wild animals as per the **WildLife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- **Provide Insurance:** Utilising add-on coverage under the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna** for crop compensation against crop damage due to HWC.
- **Augmenting Fodder:** Envisages augmenting fodder and water sources within the forest areas.
- **Take Proactive Measures:** Prescribes **inter-departmental committees** at the local/state level, adoption of **early warning systems**, **creation of barriers**, **dedicated circle-wise Control Rooms** with toll-free hotline numbers, Identification of hotspots, etc.

- **Provide Instant Relief:** Payment of a portion of ex-gratia as interim relief within 24 hours of the incident to the victim/family.

FEMA & PMLA

Why in News?

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has registered **14,143 cases under FEMA and PMLA between 2019-20 and 2021-22** as compared to 4,913 cases in 2014-15 to 2016-17.

- **Year 2021-22 saw the highest number of money laundering and foreign exchange violation cases.**

What is Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999?

- The legal framework for the **administration of foreign exchange transactions** in India is provided by the **Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999**.
- Under the FEMA, which came into force with effect from 1st June 2000, **all transactions involving foreign exchange have been classified either as capital or current account transactions**.
 - **Current Account Transactions:**
 - All transactions undertaken by a **resident** that do not alter his / her assets or liabilities, including contingent liabilities, outside India **are current account transactions**.
 - Example: payment in connection with **foreign trade**, **expenses in connection with foreign travel**, **education** etc.
 - **Capital Account Transactions:**
 - It includes those transactions which are undertaken by a **resident** of India such that his/ her assets or liabilities outside India are **altered** (either increased or decreased).
 - Example: **investment in foreign securities**, **acquisition of immovable property outside India** etc.
- **Resident Indians:**
 - A '**person resident in India**' is defined in **Section 2(v) of FEMA, 1999** as:
 - Barring few exceptions, a person **residing in India for more than 182 days** during the course of the preceding financial year.

Note:



drishti

- Any person or body corporate **registered or incorporated in India.**
- An office, branch or agency in India **owned or controlled by a person resident outside India.**
- An office, branch or agency outside India **owned or controlled by a person resident in India.**

What is the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002?

- It forms the **core of the legal framework** put in place by India to combat **Money Laundering.**
- The provisions of this act are applicable to all financial institutions, banks (Including RBI), mutual funds, insurance companies, and their financial intermediaries.
- **PMLA (Amendment) Act, 2012:**
 - Adds the concept of '**reporting entity**' which would include a **banking company, financial institution, intermediary etc.**
 - PMLA, 2002 levied a **fine up to Rs 5 lakh**, but the **amendment act has removed this upper limit.**
 - It has provided for **provisional attachment and confiscation of property** of any person involved in such activities.

DIGI YATRA

Why in News?

Recently, the **Consultative Committee meeting of the Ministry of Civil Aviation** was held in New Delhi to discuss '**DIGI YATRA**'.

What do we need to know about DIGI YATRA?

- **About:**
 - It is a project conceived to achieve **contactless, seamless processing** of passengers at Airports, based on **Facial Recognition Technology (FRT).**
 - The project envisages that any traveller may pass through various checkpoints at the airport through a **paperless and contactless processing**, using facial features to establish the identity which would be linked to the boarding pass.
 - It provides a **decentralized mobile wallet-based identity management platform** which is cost effective and addresses **privacy/data protection** issues in implementation of Digi Yatra.

Digi Yatra Foundation:

- It has been set up as a **joint venture (JV)** company in 2019 under Section 8 of the **Companies Act, 2013.**
- The Foundation was formed, with the objective of **creating the Digi Yatra Central Ecosystem (DYCE).**
- Digi Yatra Foundation will be a **pan-India entity and the custodian** of the Passenger ID validation process.
- It will also develop **consensus** amongst the Aviation Stakeholders in India.
- It would also define the criteria for compliance and guidelines for the local airport systems.

Implementation:

- In the first phase, Digi Yatra is proposed to be rolled out at two Airports namely **Varanasi and Bengaluru in August 2022** and at five Airports namely **Pune, Vijayawada, Kolkata, Delhi and Hyderabad by March next year.**
- **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** will identify their airports where Digi Yatra would be implemented in a phased manner.

What are the Objectives of DIGI YATRA?

- **Enhance passenger experience and provide a simple and easy experience to all air travellers.**
- **Achieve better throughput through existing infrastructure using "Digital Framework".**
- **Result in lower cost operations.**
- **Digitize current manual processes and to bring better efficiencies**
- **Enhance security standards and improve current system performance.**
- Rollout of "Digi Yatra" system with a digital "ID" backed by a strong verifiable government issued identity like AADHAAR.

NIRF Rankings 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Education has released **7th Edition of National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) Rankings 2022.**

Note:

What is the National Institutional Ranking Framework?

- **Launch:** The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was approved by the Ministry of Education (Erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development) in September 2015.
 - It is the first-ever effort by the government to rank **Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** in the country.
 - Participation in NIRF was made compulsory for all government-run educational institutions in 2018.
- **Assessment on Five Parameters:**
 - Teaching, Learning and Resources (TLR)
 - Research and Professional Practice (RP)
 - Graduation Outcomes (GO)
 - Outreach and Inclusivity (OI)
 - Peer Perception.
- **11 Categories:** Best institutions across **11 categories are listed out** - overall national ranking, universities, engineering, college, medical, management, pharmacy, law, architecture, dental and research.
- **Reason for Launch:** The subjectivity in the ranking methodology developed by **QS World University Rankings and the Times Higher Education World University Ranking** led India to start its own ranking system for Indian HEIs on the line of Shanghai Rankings.
 - The long-term plan of NIRF is to make it an international league table.
- **No. of Participating Institutions in 2022:** More than **7,000 institutes participated** in NIRF Rankings.

What are the Highlights of the Ranking 2022?

- **Overall:** IIT-Madras, IISc-Bangalore, and IIT-Bombay the country's top three higher education institutions
- **University:** IISc, Bengaluru tops the category.
- **Colleges:** Miranda College retains 1st position amongst colleges for the 6th consecutive year, followed by Hindu College, Delhi and Presidency College Chennai.
- **Research Institution:** IISc, Bengaluru is ranked the best research institution followed by IIT Madras.
- **Engineering:** Among engineering institutions, IIT-Madras remained number one.
- **Management:** Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad was ranked one followed by IIM Bengaluru.
- **Medical:** All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi occupies the top slot in Medical for the fifth consecutive year.

- **Pharmacy:** Jamia Hamdard tops the list in Pharmacy subject for the fourth consecutive.
- **Architecture:** IIT Roorkee takes the top slot **for the second time** in Architecture subject.
- **Law:** National Law School of India University, Bengaluru retains its first position in Law for the fifth consecutive year.
- **Dental:** Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Chennai got the 1st Rank.

Taranga Hill-Ambaji-Abu Road

Why in News?

Recently, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the construction of Taranga Hill-Ambaji- Abu Road new rail line.

What are the Key Highlights of this Project?

- **About:**
 - The total length of the new rail line will be 116.65 kms.
 - The project will be completed by 2026-27, it will generate direct employment during construction for about 40 lakh man days.
 - The route will go via Rajasthan's **Sirohi district**, as well as Gujarat's **Banaskantha and Mahesana districts**.
- **Significance:**
 - It would **enhance connectivity and improve mobility** leading to overall socio-economic development of the region.
 - As it **connects the important pilgrimage sites** and hence, it **will facilitate easy travel to millions of devotees**.
 - It would also **facilitate faster movement of agricultural and local goods**, further enhance connectivity between Gujarat and Rajasthan.
 - It would provide **alternative route** for existing Ahmedabad-Abu Road railway line.

What are the Pilgrimage sites?

- **Ambaji** is a famous pilgrimage temple site located in Gujarat, which is included in 51 Shaktipeeths.
 - It attracts millions of devotees from Gujarat as well as other parts of the country and abroad every

Note:

year. Hence, this rail line will facilitate easy travel for these millions of devotees.

- Further, the devotees would visit the Ajitnath Jain temple (one of the 24 holy Jain Tirthankaras) at Taranga Hill would also be greatly benefitted by this connectivity.
- This railway new line between Taranga Hill-Ambaji-Abu Road will connect these two important religious sports with railway's main network.

National Legal Services Authority

Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of Law and Justice informed the details of funds allocated by **NALSA (National Legal Services Authority)** to Legal Services Authorities to organise Legal Aid Programmes in India.

What is NALSA?

- **About:**
 - The NALSA was **founded in 1995 under the Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987** to monitor and review the effectiveness of legal aid programs and to develop rules and principles for providing legal services under the Act.
 - It also **distributes funding and grants to state legal services authorities** and non-profit organisations to help them execute legal aid systems and initiatives.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 39A** of the Constitution of India provides that **State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on a basis of equal opportunity**, and shall in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disability.
 - **Articles 14 and 22(1)** also make it obligatory for the **State to ensure equality before law and a legal system** which promotes justice on a basis of equal opportunity to all.
- **Objectives of Legal Services Authorities:**
 - Provide **free legal aid and advice**.
 - Spread **legal awareness**.
 - Organise **lok adalats**.

- Promote settlements of disputes through **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)** Mechanisms. Various kinds of ADR mechanisms are Arbitration, Conciliation, Judicial settlement including settlement through Lok Adalat, or Mediation.
- Provide **compensation to victims** of crime.

What are Legal Services

Institutions at Various Levels?

- **National Level:** **NALSA** was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The **Chief Justice of India is the Patron-in-Chief**.
- **State Level:** **State Legal Services Authority**. It is headed by the **Chief Justice of the State High Court** who is its Patron-in-Chief.
- **District Level:** District Legal Services Authority. The District Judge of the District is its ex-officio Chairman.
- **Taluka/Sub-Division Level:** Taluka/ Sub-Divisional Legal Services Committee. It is headed by a senior Civil Judge.
- **High Court:** High Court Legal Services Committee
- **Supreme Court:** Supreme Court Legal Services Committee

Who is Eligible for Getting Free Legal Services?

- Women and children
- Members of SC/ST
- Industrial workmen
- Victims of mass disaster, violence, flood, drought, earthquake, industrial disaster.
- Disabled persons
- Persons in custody
- Those persons who have annual income of less than the amount prescribed by the respective State Government, if the case is before any court other than the Supreme Court, and less than Rs. 5 Lakhs, if the case is before the Supreme Court.
- Victims of Trafficking in Human beings or beggar.

Abortion Law in India

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**.

Note:



drishti

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.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Tourism has revamped its **Swadesh Darshan scheme** as **Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0)** with an aim to develop sustainable and responsible infrastructure at destinations.

What is Swadesh Darshan Scheme?

➤ About:

- It was launched in 2014-15 for integrated development of **theme-based tourist circuits** — Buddhist Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Northeast Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Sufi Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit, Wildlife Circuit and Tribal Circuit.
- It is **100% centrally funded** and efforts are made to achieve convergence with other schemes of Central and State Governments and also to **leverage the**

Note:

voluntary funding available for **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and Corporate Sector.

➤ **Significance:**

- Under the schemes of Swadesh Darshan and **PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive)**, the Ministry of Tourism provides **financial assistance to states and Union Territories for the development of tourism infrastructure**.
- The projects under this scheme are sanctioned subject to availability of funds, submission of detailed project reports, adherence to scheme guidelines and utilisation of funds released previously.

What is Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0?

- With the **mantra of 'vocal for local'**, the revamped scheme namely **Swadesh Darshan 2.0** seeks to attain "**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**" by realizing India's full potential as a tourism destination.
- Swadesh Darshan 2.0 is not an incremental change but a generational shift to evolve Swadesh Darshan Scheme as a holistic mission to develop sustainable and responsible tourism destinations.
- It will encourage the development of benchmarks and standards for **generic and theme-specific development of tourism destinations** and the States will follow the benchmarks and standards while planning and developing the projects.
- Following **major themes** have been identified for tourism under the Scheme.
 - Culture and Heritage
 - Adventure Tourism
 - Eco-Tourism
 - Wellness Tourism
 - **MICE Tourism**
 - **Rural Tourism**
 - Beach Tourism
 - Cruises – Ocean & Inland.

Flag Code of India

Why in News?

Recently, the Government of India has announced that the **national flag can now remain hoisted through**

the night, if it is in the open and hoisted by a member of the public.

- Earlier, the tricolour could be hoisted **only between sunrise and sunset**.
- The government had earlier amended the flag code to allow for machine-made and polyester flags to be used.
- As government launched a **Har Ghar Tiranga** campaign, the Ministry of Home Affairs amended the **Flag Code of India 2002** to allow for the **national flag to be flown even at night**.

What do we know about the Flag Code of India?

- 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 -
 - **General description** of the tricolour.
 - Rules on display of the flag by **public and private bodies and educational institutions**.
 - 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.

What is the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign?

- '**Har Ghar Tiranga**' is a campaign under the aegis of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** to encourage people to **bring the Tiranga home and to hoist it to mark the 75th year of India's independence**.
- Our relationship with the flag has always been more formal and institutional than personal.

Note:



drishti

- Bringing the flag home collectively as a nation in the 75th year of independence thus becomes **symbolic of not only an act of personal connection to the Tiranga but also an embodiment of our commitment to nation-building.**
- The idea behind the initiative is to **invoke the feeling of patriotism** in the hearts of the people and to promote awareness about the Indian National Flag.

GOAL 2.0

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Meta (formerly Facebook)** have launched the second phase of the **GOAL Programme (GOAL 2.0)**.

What do we know about the GOAL Programme?

- **GOAL (Going Online as Leaders)** was launched as a pilot project in **May 2020** and it was completed by **December 2021**.
- It aimed at **digital empowerment of tribal youth and women** through the concept of **mentor and mentee**.
- The programme is **fully funded** by Meta (Facebook India).
- Trainings were provided for **three pillars**:
 - Communication & Life Skills
 - Enabling Digital Presence
 - Leadership & Entrepreneurship

What do we need to know about GOAL 2.0?

- **About:**
 - Goal 2 program will be **open to all people from tribal communities**.
 - In Phase-I, the digital mentorship was provided online by attaching one mentor to 2 mentees.
- **Objective:**
 - The program aims to upskill and digitally enable tribal youth via Facebook live sessions and **Meta Business Coach**, a digital learning tool.
 - There will be special focus on more than 10 lakh members of 50000 **Vandhan Self Help Groups**.
 - They will be **digitally trained** with regard to **market demand, packaging, branding and marketing of their products**.

- GOAL 2 will enable **maximum participation and percolation of benefits** of the training within the tribal youth with provision of **Chatbot**, need based **on line sessions** from Industry experts in different fields as per requirements from the mentees.
- **Agencies Involved:**
 - The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs in coordination with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**, will be providing 6 digital classes in each of the 175 **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** selected under the program.
 - The project is being implemented by **The Education and Research Network**, which is an autonomous organization under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY)**.

What are some other Initiatives for Skill Development?

- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):**
 - Under the **Skill India Mission**, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is implementing the scheme.
 - Under **PMKVY 3.0**, focus has also been given for **skilling on digital technology** and **Industry 4.0**.
 - **Sector Skill Councils (SSCs)** have also created job roles on new and emerging digital technologies and industry 4.0 skills like **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Internet of Things (IoT)**.
- **eSkill India Portal:**
 - **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** under the aegis of the MSDE has initiated **online skilling** through eSkill India portal.
 - The platform offers learning opportunities on emerging technologies like **cybersecurity, blockchain, artificial intelligence and machine learning, predictive modelling, statistical business analytics, cloud** and **Internet of Things** along with professional skills like **design thinking, project management and digital marketing**.
- **Samagra Shiksha:**
 - Under the **Vocational Education** component of '**Samagra Shiksha**', **National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF)** compliant vocational courses are offered to the school students including **tribal Students from class 9th to 12th** in the schools covered under the scheme.

Note:

- It consists of **Communication Skills, Self-Management Skills, Information and Communication Technology Skills, Entrepreneurship Skills and Green Skills.**

Agriculture Census

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare** launched "**The Eleventh Agricultural Census (2021-22).**"

- This computation will bring **huge benefits in a vast and agricultural country like India.**

What do we need to know about the Agriculture Census?

➤ About:

- **Agriculture** Census is conducted **every 5 years**, which is being undertaken now after delay due to the **Covid - 19 Pandemic.**
- Entire Census operation is conducted in **three phases** and **operational holding** is taken as a statistical unit at micro level for data collection.
 - Based on the agriculture census data collected in three phases, the Department **brings out three detailed reports** analyzing trends on various parameters at **All India and States/UTs level.**
 - District/Tehsil level reports are prepared by the respective States/UTs.
- Agricultural Census is the **main source of information** on a variety of agricultural parameters at a relatively minute level, such as the **number and area of operational holdings, their size, class-wise distribution, land use, tenancy and cropping pattern, etc.**

➤ Eleventh Census:

- The field work of the agricultural census **will start in August 2022.**
- This is the **first time that data collection** for agricultural census will be conducted on **smartphones and tablets**, so that data is available in time.
- It includes:
 - Use of **digital land records** like land title records and survey reports
 - Collection of data through **app/software using smartphone/tablet.**

- Complete **enumeration of all villages** in states with non-land records during Phase-I as done in states having land records.
- **Real time monitoring** of progress and processing.
- Most of the States have **digitized their land records and surveys**, which will further accelerate the collection of agricultural census data.
- The use of **digitized land records** and the **use of mobile apps for data collection** will enable the **creation of a database of operational holdings in the country.**

What do we mean by Digital Agriculture?

➤ About:

- **Digital Agriculture** is **ICT (Information and Communication Technologies)** and **data ecosystems** to support the development and delivery of timely, targeted information and services to make farming profitable and sustainable while delivering safe, nutritious and affordable food for all.
- **Examples:**
 - **Agricultural biotechnology** is a range of tools, including traditional breeding techniques, that alter living organisms, or parts of organisms, to make or modify products; improve plants or animals; or develop microorganisms for specific agricultural uses.
 - **Precision agriculture (PA)** is an approach where inputs are utilised in precise amounts to get increased average yields, compared to traditional cultivation techniques such as agroforestry, intercropping, crop rotation, etc. It is based on using ICTs.
 - **Digital and wireless technologies** for data measurement, Weather monitoring, Robotics/ drone technology, etc.

➤ Benefits:

- **Farm Machinery Automation:**
 - It allows **fine-tuning of inputs** and reduces demand for manual labour.
- **Remote Satellite Data:**
 - **Remote satellite data and in-situ sensors** improve the accuracy and reduce the cost of monitoring crop growth and quality of land or water.
 - Freely available and high-quality satellite imagery **dramatically reduces the cost of monitoring**

Note:



drishti

many agricultural activities. This could allow governments to move towards **more targeted policies** which pay (or penalise) farmers based on observed environmental outcomes.

- **Traceability Technologies and Digital Logistics:**
 - These services offer the **potential to streamline agri-food supply chains**, while also providing **trusted information for consumers**.
- **Administrative Purpose:**
 - In addition to monitoring compliance with environmental policies, digital technologies enable **automation of administrative processes for agriculture and the development of expanded government services**, such as in relation to extension or advisory services.
- **Maintenance of Land Records:**
 - Using the technology, the data related to a **large number of landholdings can be appropriately tagged and digitised**.
 - It will not only help better targeting but also **reduce the quantum of land disputes in courts**.

India Animal Health Summit 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying inaugurated the First India Animal Health Summit 2022 in New Delhi.

- Its India's **first-ever Animal health Summit** organized by the Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) and the Agriculture Today Group.
- Animal health is a critical component of **One Health**. One Health is an approach that recognizes that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment.
- The **World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH, formerly known as the OIE)** has listed 117 illnesses. More than 50 wildlife illnesses may have major consequences for livestock and public health, as well as wildlife.
 - **WOAH is an intergovernmental organization**, that focuses on transparently disseminating information on animal diseases, improving animal health and welfare globally, and thus building a safer, healthier,

and more sustainable world. India is a member.

What are the Diseases Related to Animals?

➤ Monkeypox:

- It's a viral zoonotic disease among monkeys caused by infection with monkeypox virus that occurs primarily in tropical rainforest areas of central and west Africa and is occasionally exported to other regions.
- Monkeypox virus belongs to the Orthopox virus genus in the family Poxviridae.

➤ Lumpy skin disease (LSD):

- It is a notifiable disease caused by the lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV).
- It affects cattle and water buffalo, damaging animal health and causing significant production and trade losses.

➤ African swine fever:

- It is a highly contagious and deadly viral disease affecting both domestic and feral swine of all ages. ASF is not a threat to human health and cannot be transmitted from pigs to humans.

➤ The foot-and-mouth disease:

- it's a highly communicable disease affecting cloven-footed animals. It is characterized by fever, formation of vesicles, and blisters in the mouth, udder, teats, and on the skin between the toes and above the hoofs.
- The disease spreads by direct contact or indirectly through infected water, manure, hay and pastures. It is also conveyed by cattle attendants. It is known to spread through recovered animals, field rats, porcupines and birds.

➤ Rabies:

- it is a disease of dogs, foxes, wolves, hyaenas and in some places, it is a disease of bats which feed on blood.
- The disease is passed to other animals or to people if they are bitten by an animal with rabies. The germs which cause rabies live in the saliva of the sick (rabid) animal. This is a killer disease but not every dog which bites is infected with rabies.

➤ Avian Influenza (bird flu):

- Avian Influenza, or bird flu as it's commonly known, is a disease of birds. Further Some types of bird flu can pass to people, but this is very rare.

Note:



drishti

Financial Direct Assistance to Apprentices Through DBT

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** announced that the **National Apprenticeship Promotion Plan (NAPS)** would be a component of the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** scheme, providing all apprentices with direct government benefits.

What is National Apprenticeship Promotion Plan (NAPS)?

- NAPS was **introduced in 2016**, to promote apprenticeship training nationwide and provide financial support to organisations that offer apprenticeships.
- This helps apprenticeship programmes and brings **Skill India's promise closer to realisation**.
- The programme **aims to** encourage employers to take on apprentices and assist them in finding the proper work responsibilities while maximising their potential through in-depth skill development.
- With the introduction of the **DBT programme**, the government would immediately deposit its contribution—**25 percent of the stipend payable up to Rs. 1500 per month**—to apprentices' bank accounts through the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**.

PARIMAN Portal

Why in News?

Geo-Portal for NCR known as 'PARIMAN', launched in August 2021 by the **National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB)** and Union Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs, has been made open to the public of NCR.

What do we know about PARIMAN?

- **About:**
 - Portal for Analytical Regional Information and Mapping of NCR.
 - Developed through **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, initially for use by NCR Participating states and the Office of **NCRPB**.

- It's a robust system to **facilitate better sub-regional and local planning**. This contains various layers collected from authentic sources.
- The portal has many Base Maps, Satellite Image services and Night Light Data of different time spans.
 - Terrain map provides the Elevation Profile of a route.
 - Administrative units like State Boundaries to Village Boundaries, various Headquarters to Habitations, Parliamentary and Assembly Constituency Boundaries are integrated in this portal.
 - Layers like Road, Rail and Metro Networks, Points of Interest like Education, Health, Banking, Post Office, Power and Telecom, Industries, Tourism, River and Canal Networks and many more.
 - Area of Interest function facilitates a comprehensive view for any information of a particular State or District or Tehsil.

➤ Significance:

- This Geo-Portal will help to **improve decentralized planning and management** in the NCR region.
- This Geo-portal is an important platform to **know where and what exists in the National Capital Region (NCR)** that enables better planning.
- It will help in effective utilization of Remote Sensing and GIS technology.

Kisan Credit Card

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying reviewed the progress in issuance of **Kisan Credit Cards** to poor farmers from the Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries Sector with Banks & **Regional Rural Banks**.

What do we Need to Know about Kisan Credit Cards?

- **About:**
 - The scheme was **introduced in 1998** for providing **adequate and timely credit support from the banking system**, under a single window with flexible and simplified procedure to the farmers for

Note:



drishti

their cultivation and other needs like purchase of agriculture inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. and draw cash for their production needs.

- The scheme was further extended for the investment credit requirement of farmers viz. allied and non-farm activities in the year 2004.
- In the Budget-2018-19, government **announced the extension of the facility of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) to fisheries and animal husbandry farmers** to help them to meet their working capital needs.
- **Implementing Agencies:**
 - Commercial Banks
 - Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)
 - **Small Finance Banks**
 - **Cooperatives**

➤ **Features:**

- The scheme comes with an **ATM-enabled RuPay debit card** with facilities for one-time documentation, built-in cost escalation in the limit, and any number of drawals within the limit.
- Besides ensuring saturation, banks will also be taking steps to link Aadhaar immediately as **no interest subvention will be given** if the Aadhaar numbers are not seeded to KCC accounts.
- Also, the government has taken several initiatives for KCC saturation which include adding farmers engaged in **animal husbandry** and **fisheries**, no processing fee of loan under KCC and raising the limit of collateral free **agriculture loan** from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs.1.6 lakh.
- The KCC facility will **help fisheries and animal husbandry farmers to meet their short-term credit requirements** of rearing of animals, poultry birds, fish, shrimp, other aquatic organisms and capture of fish.

➤ **Financial Provisions:**

- To ensure availability of agricultural credit at a reasonable cost of 7% per annum to farmers:
 - Government of India implements an **interest subvention** scheme of 2% for short term crop loans up to Rs. 3 lakh.
 - In addition, the GOI provides interest subvention of 2% and prompt repayment incentive of 3% to the farmers.

Digital India Week 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister has inaugurated the **Digital India Week 2022** under the **Digital India Programme**, with the aim to strengthen **Ease of Doing Business** and Ease of Living.

- **Theme:** 'Catalyzing New India's Techade'.
 - To transform the nation **into a digitally empowered society** and knowledge economy.
- During the programme, PM launched multiple digital initiatives aimed at enhancing the accessibility of technology, streamlining service delivery to ensure ease of living and giving a boost to startups.

What are the Digital Initiatives?

➤ **Digital India Bhashini:**

- Digital India BHASHINI is India's **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** led language translation platform.
- A Bhashini Platform will make **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** resources available to **MSME (Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises)**, Startups and Individual Innovators in the public domain.

➤ **Digital India GENESIS:**

- Digital India GENESIS' (Gen-next Support for Innovative Startups) is a national deep-tech startup platform to **discover, support, grow and make successful startups in Tier-II and Tier-III cities of India.**

➤ **MyScheme:**

- It is a service discovery platform facilitating access to Government Schemes.
- It aims to offer a **one-stop search and discovery portal where users can find schemes that they are eligible for.**

➤ **Meri Pehchaan:**

- It is National Single Sign On (NSSO) for One Citizen Login.
- It is a **user authentication service in which a single set of credentials provide access to multiple online applications** or services.

➤ **Chips to Startup (C2S) Programme:**

- The C2S Programme aims to **train specialized manpower in the area of design of semiconductor**

Note:

chips at Bachelors, Masters and Research levels, and act as a catalyst for the growth of Startups involved in semiconductor design in the country.

- It offers to mentor at the **organisational level and makes available State-of-the-art facilities for design to the institutions.**

➤ **Indiastack.global:**

- It is a global repository of key projects implemented under India Stack like **Aadhaar**, **UPI (Unified Payment Interface)**, **Digilocker**, Cowin Vaccination Platform, **Government e Marketplace**, **DIKSHA Platform** and **Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission**.
- It will help **position India as the leader of building Digital Transformation projects** at population scale.

What is Digital India Programme?

➤ **About:**

- It was launched in 2015.
- The programme has been **enabled for several important Government schemes**, such as **BharatNet**, **Make in India**, **Startup India** and **Standup India**, **industrial corridors**, etc.

Centre's Push for Labour Codes

Why in News?

Central government is pushing for the implementation of **four labour codes introduced in 2020** (Code of Wage Act in 2019), replacing 29 sets of labour laws.

- **Labour Codes includes 4 versions:** Code of Wages Act 2019, Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2020, Social Security Code Bill, 2020, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code Bill, 2020

What do we need to know about Labour Codes?

➤ **Code of Wages Act 2019:**

- **About:**
 - The bill aims to **transform the old and obsolete labour laws into more accountable and transparent ones** and seeks to pave the way for the introduction of minimum wages and **labour reforms in the country.**

- It regulates the **wages and bonus payments** in all employment areas where any industry, trade, business, or manufacturing is being carried out.
- The bill subsumes the following four labour laws:
 - The Payment of Wages Act, 1936
 - The Minimum Wages Act, 1948
 - The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965
 - The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- It universalizes the provisions of **minimum wages** and timely payment of wages to all employees irrespective of the sector and wage ceiling and seeks to ensure **"Right to Sustenance"** for every worker and intends to increase the legislative protection of minimum wage.
- It has been ensured in the bill that **employees getting monthly salary shall get the salary by 7th of next month**, those working on a **weekly basis shall get the salary on the last day of the week and daily wagers should get it on the same day.**
- **The Central Government is empowered** to fix the floor wages by taking into account the living standards of workers. It may set different floor wages for different geographical areas.
 - The minimum wages decided by the central or state governments must be higher than the floor wage.

➤ **Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2020:**

- **Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946** makes it obligatory for employers of an industrial establishment where **100 or more workers** are employed to **clearly define the conditions of employment and rules of conduct** for workmen, by way of standing orders/services rules and to make them known to the workmen employed.
- The **new provision** for standing order will be applicable for every industrial establishment wherein **300 or more than 300 workers are employed** or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months.
- It was earlier suggested by the **Standing Committee on Labour** which also suggested that the threshold be increased accordingly in the Code itself and the words **'as may be notified by the Appropriate Government'** be removed because reform of labour laws through

Note:



drishti

the executive route is undesirable and should be avoided to the extent possible.

- After becoming a law, **orders will not be dependent on whims and fancies of executives of state governments.**

➤ It also introduces new conditions for carrying out a **legal strike**. The time period for arbitration proceedings has been included in the conditions for workers before going on a legal strike as against only the time for conciliation at present.

- No person employed in any industrial establishment shall go on strike **without a 60-day notice** and **during the pendency** of proceedings before a **Tribunal** or a National Industrial Tribunal and **sixty days after the conclusion of such proceedings.**

- At present, a person employed in a **public utility service cannot go on strike** unless they give notice for a strike **within six weeks** before going on strike or **within fourteen days of giving such notice, which the IR Code now proposes to apply for all the industrial establishments.**

➤ It has also proposed to set up a **re-skilling fund** for training of retrenched workers with contribution from the employer, of an amount equal to 15 days last drawn by the worker.

➤ **Social Security Code Bill, 2020:**

- It proposes a **National Social Security Board** which shall recommend to the central government for formulating suitable schemes for different sections of **unorganized workers, gig workers** and **platform workers.**
- Also, aggregators employing **gig workers will have to contribute 1-2% of their annual turnover for social security**, with the total contribution not exceeding 5% of the amount payable by the aggregator to gig and platform workers.

➤ **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code Bill, 2020:**

- It has defined **inter-state migrant workers** as the worker who has come on their own from one state and obtained employment in another state, earning up to Rs. 18,000 a month.
- The proposed definition makes a **distinction from the present definition of only contractual employment.**

- It has dropped the earlier provision for temporary accommodation for workers near the worksites and has proposed a **journey allowance, a lump sum amount of fare to be paid by the employer for to and fro journey of the worker to their native place from the place of their employment.**

Ease of Doing Business Ranking: BRAP 2020

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has released a **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Ranking**, which is based on **Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP)** report 2020.

What is the Ranking all About?

➤ **Aim:**

- **To boost investor confidence, foster a business-friendly climate and augment the ease of doing business across the country** by introducing an element of healthy competition through a system of assessing states based on **their performance in the BRAP.**

➤ **Parameters:**

- The parameters **include various areas**, such as construction permit, labour regulation, environmental registration, access to information, land availability and single window system.

What are the Findings of the EoDB?

➤ **Top Achievers:**

- Seven states - Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana and Tamil Nadu - were **categorised as 'top achievers' in the Ease of Doing Business ranking** of states and union territories.

➤ **Achievers:**

- Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Madhya Pradesh are the other states categorised as achievers in the ranking.

➤ **Emerging Business Ecosystems:**

- Six states - Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir - were **'emerging business ecosystems'.**

➤ **Aspirers:**

Note:

- Seven states - Goa, Assam, Kerala, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bengal - were categorised as 'Aspirers'.

What is BRAP?

- **About:**
 - It was launched in 2015.
 - The Ease of Doing Business Index is based on BRAP.
 - It was introduced to **encourage a healthy competition between states**.
 - This would help in attracting investments and increasing Ease of Doing Business in each State.
 - The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, since 2014, has been assessing states/UTs based on their performance in the implementation of prescribed reforms in the BRAP exercise.
 - So far, assessments of states/UTs have been released for the years 2015, 2016, 2017-18, 2019 and 2022.

Take-Home Ration

Why in News?

Recently, a report titled-Take Home Ration-Good Practices throughout the State/Union Territories was released by **NITI Aayog** and the **World Food Program**.

What is World Food Program?

- It is the largest humanitarian organisation in the world, saving lives in times of need and utilising food aid to help people recover from war, **natural disasters**, and the effects of **climate change** create a road to peace, stability, and prosperity.
- The WFP was given the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 2020.
- It was founded in 1961 by the **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** and **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** with its **headquarters in Rome, Italy**.
- It is also a **member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)**, a coalition of UN agencies and organisations aimed at fulfilling the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- The report presents a set of **good and innovative practices** adopted in the implementation of the **Take Home Ration value chain** by the States and UTs.

- The government adopted innovative models to reach remote areas.
- It appreciated the **production, formulation, delivery, labelling, packaging, supervision, quality control, and changes in social and behavioural norms** adopted by the Government by JAN BHAGIDARI, and sourcing local networks of Anganwadi's, etc.

What is Take Home Ration?

- The government of India provides Take Home Ration under the **Supplementary Nutrition component of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** to fill the gap in nutrition among children as well as Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW).
- It offers **fortified rations** for use at home, provided in **two ways**:
 - **Take-Home Rations** and **Hot-Cooked Meals at Anganwadi Centers**.
 - It's given as **raw ingredients** or in **packets that have already been cooked**.

Meghalaya tribal council to revisit Instrument of Accession (IoA)

Why in News?

A tribal council in Meghalaya has **called for a meeting of traditional heads to revisit the Instrument of Accession** that made the Khasi domain a part of the Indian Union more than seven decades ago.

Why does Meghalaya tribal council want to revisit IoA?

- The need to **revisit the Instrument of Accession and Annexed Agreement** was stressed by leaders in the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC). According to them, it is important to understand the paragraphs of the agreement, since many provisions are missing from the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
- The Federation of **Khasi States** had **sought special status, like Nagaland** has under **Article 371A**, which **protects socio-religious and customary practice of nagas with right to administration of civil & criminal justice as per Naga Customary laws**.
 - Under Article 371A, Nagas also enjoys **ownership and transfer of land and its resources**.

Note:

- Recently, introduced the '**Khasi Inheritance of Property Bill, 2021**' might have infuriated few leaders of KHADC, as an interference to social and customary practices of Khasi people. The bill called for "equitable distribution" of parental property among siblings in the Khasi community.
- The **KHADC** said the **provisions can be added to the Sixth Schedule**, which "can be amended by **Parliament**".

What is IoA?

- **About:**
 - The **Instrument of Accession** was a legal document first introduced by the Government of India Act 1935 and used in 1947 to enable each of the rulers of the princely states under British paramountcy to join one of the new dominions of India or Pakistan created by the Partition of British India.
 - The **instruments of accession executed by the rulers**, provided for the accession of states to the Dominion of India (or Pakistan) on three subjects, namely, defence, external affairs and communications.
- **IoA and Meghalaya:**
 - IoA with the **Khasi hills state** was signed with the **Dominion** of India between 15th December, 1947, and 19th March, 1948.
 - Meghalaya is **divided into three regions dominated** by as many matrilineal communities – the Khasis, Garos and Jaintias.
 - The **Khasi hills straddle 25 Himas or States** that formed the Federation of Khasi States.
 - The **conditional treaty with these States** was signed by Governor General of India, Chakravarty Rajagopalachari on 17th August, 1948.

Approved Fuels for NCR: CAQM

Why in News?

Recently, the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** has directed **NCR (National Capital Region)** states to adopt a **standard list of approved fuels** to reduce **air pollution**.

- The standard list of fuels approved by the CAQM includes **petrol, diesel, hydrogen/methane, natural gas, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)** and electricity.

- Many industries shifted to cleaner fuels such as **PNG (Piped Natural gas)** and biomass and many other industrial sectors such as **food processing, distilleries and chemicals** are already in the process of shifting to cleaner fuels.
- Shifting to cleaner fuels such as biomass and PNG in the industries of NCR region greatly contributes to reducing the load of pollution (e.g. industries of Alwar and Bhiwadi in Rajasthan).

What is CAQM?

- **About:**
 - CAQM is a **statutory body formed under the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, Act 2021**.
 - Earlier, the commission was formed through the promulgation of the **Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance, 2021**.
 - The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, Act 2021 also dissolved the Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority (EPCA) established in the NCR in 1998.
- **Objectives:**
 - To ensure **better coordination, research, identification and resolution of problems surrounding the air quality index** and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- **Scope:**
 - Adjoining areas have been defined as areas in the states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh adjoining the NCR where any source of pollution may cause an adverse impact on air quality in the NCR.
- **Composition:**
 - The Commission will be headed by a full-time chairperson who has been a Secretary to the Government of India, or a **Chief Secretary to a State government**.
 - The chairperson will hold the post for three years or until s/he attains the age of 70 years.
 - It will have members from several Ministries as well as representatives from the stakeholder States.

Note:



drishti

- It will have experts from the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)**, **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **Civil Society**.

➤ **Functions:**

- Coordinating actions taken by concerned state governments (Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh).
- Planning and executing plans to prevent and control air pollution in the NCR.
- Providing a framework for identification of air pollutants.
- Conducting research and development through networking with technical institutions.
- Training and creating a special workforce to deal with issues related to air pollution.
- Preparing various action plans such as increasing plantation and addressing **stubble burning**.

Platform of Platforms (POP)

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare launched the Platform of Platforms (PoP) under the **National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)** on the side-lines of the State Agriculture and Horticulture Ministers' Conference in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

What do we need to know about Platform of Platforms (PoP)?

➤ **About:**

- e-NAM integrates the platform of Service Providers as "Platform of Platforms" which includes:
 - **Composite Service Providers (Service Providers who provide holistic services for trading of agricultural produce including quality analysis, trading, payment systems and logistics)**
 - **Logistics Service Provider, Quality Assurance Service Provider, Cleaning, Grading, Sorting & Packaging Service Provider, Warehousing Facility Service Provider, Agricultural Input Service Provider, Technology Enabled Finance & Insurance Service Provider**
 - **Information Dissemination Portal (Advisory Services, crop forecasting, weather updates, capacity building for farmers etc.)**

- Other platforms (**e-commerce**, international agri-business platforms, barter, private market platforms etc.).

What is e-NAM Portal?

- **National Agriculture Market (eNAM)** is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities.
- **Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)** is the lead agency for implementing eNAM under the aegis of **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India**.

What are the other Initiatives for Agriculture?

- **AgriStack**
- **Digital Agriculture Mission**
- **Unified Farmer Service Platform (UFSP)**
- **National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGP-A)**
- **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)**
- **Kisan Suvidha App**
- **Soil Health Card (SHC) Portal**

Service Charge

Why in News?

Recently, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) issued rules to avoid unfair trade practices and protect consumer interests in hotels and restaurants that assess service charges.

What are the New Guidelines?

➤ **About:**

- According to it, hotels and restaurants **prohibited from collecting extra charge in the name of service charge automatically or by default in the bill**.
- They need to mention to the customers that service charges are **voluntary and optional**.
- Any **Tip, Token, Donation, etc** would be considered as a separate transaction between hotel staff and consumer its **totally voluntary for the consumer**.

➤ **Redressal Mechanisms:**

- If any hotel or restaurant is levying service charge, then the customer can ask the concerned hotel or restaurant to remove the service charge from

Note:



drishti

the bill or further lodge a complaint on the NCH by calling 1915 or through the NCH mobile app.

- National consumer Helpline works as an **alternative dispute redressal mechanism** at the pre litigation level.
- A complaint may also be filed against **unfair trade practice with the Consumer Commission electronically** through edaakhil.nic.in. for its speedy and effective redressal.

What is a Service Charge?

- It is a **Tip or a direct transaction between customer and restaurant personnel**, specifically wait staff.
- It is a **cost charged for services related to the purchase** of a core product or service.
- It is collected as a fee for serving consumers by the hospitality and food and beverage industries.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet approves categorizing the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** as an “International Organization”.

- It also approved the signing of the **Headquarters Agreement** further granting it the exemptions, immunities, and privileges contemplated by the United Nations (Privileges and Immunities) Act, 1947, which means that member’s property and assets wherever located and by whomsoever held, shall **enjoy immunity from every form of legal process** except in any particular case it has expressly waived its immunity.

What is Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)?

- **About:**
 - CDRI is a global partnership of national governments, **United Nations** agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and academic and research institutions.
 - It aims to **increase the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks**, thereby ensuring **sustainable development**.

- It was launched in 2019, at the **United Nations Climate Action Summit** in New York.
- It is the Government of India’s **second major global initiative** after the **International Solar Alliance**, and it demonstrates India’s leadership in climate change and disaster resilience issues.

Members:

- Since its inception, **31 countries, 6 international organisations and 2 private sector organisations** have joined CDRI as members.
- **6 International Organisations:** **Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank Group, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), European Union, European Investment Bank.**
- **2 Private Sector Organisations:** **The Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies and Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment.**
- CDRI has steadily increased its membership by attracting a diverse range of economically advanced, developing, and vulnerable countries to climate change and disasters.

Decline in Immunisation Coverage

Why in News?

Recently, a report by **World Health Organisation (WHO)** and **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)** highlighted the impact of **covid-19 pandemic** on immunisation programs globally and in India as well.

- DPT vaccine is considered a marker for immunization coverage across countries.

What is Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DPT)?

Diphtheria:

- **Caused by:**
 - Diphtheria is primarily caused by the **bacterium Corynebacterium diphtheriae**.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Common cold, fever, chills, swollen gland in neck, sore throat, bluish skin etc.
- **Spread:**
 - It is mainly spread by coughs and sneezes, or through close contact with someone infected.

Note:

- **Target Population:**
 - Diphtheria particularly affects children **aged 1 to 5 years**.
 - Occurrence of diphtheria cases in under-five children reflects **low coverage** of primary diphtheria vaccination.
- **Tetanus:**
 - **Caused by:**
 - Tetanus is acquired through infection of a cut or wound with the spores of the bacterium *Clostridium tetani*, and most cases occur within 14 days of infection. Tetanus cannot be transmitted from person to person.
 - **Prevention:**
 - Tetanus can be prevented through immunization with Tetanus-Toxoid-Containing Vaccines (TTCV). However, people who recover from tetanus do not have natural immunity and can be infected again.
 - **Symptoms:**
 - Jaw cramping or the inability to open the mouth.
 - muscle spasms often in the back, abdomen and extremities.
 - sudden painful muscle spasms often triggered by sudden noises.
 - Seizures.
- **Pertussis:**
 - **Caused by:**
 - Pertussis, also known as **whooping cough**, is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by the **bacterium *Bordetella pertussis***. In 2018, there were more than 151 000 cases of pertussis globally.
 - The disease is most dangerous in infants, and is a significant cause of disease and death in this age group.
 - **Spread:**
 - Pertussis spreads **easily from person to person mainly through droplets** produced by coughing or sneezing.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- Three million children have not received the first dose of the Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DPT) vaccine in 2020.

- The percentage of children worldwide who have received three doses of the DTP vaccine **declined by five percentage points between 2019 and 2021**.
 - With just 8% coverage worldwide it's the **largest sustained decline in childhood vaccination**.
- Around **25 million children globally missed out on or more doses of the DTP vaccine in 2021 alone**, which is two million more than those who left out in 2020 and six million more than in 2019.
- Over **24 million children missed out on their first measles vaccine dose in 2021**, over five million more than in 2019.
- Compared with 2019, 6.7 million more children missed out on the third dose of the polio vaccine and 3.5 million missed the first dose of the **Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine**, which protects girls against cervical cancer later in life.
- The **coverage of vaccines dropped in every region whereas East Asia and the Pacific region** recorded the steepest reversal:
 - **Around 18 million of the 25 million children who did not receive a single DTP dose in 2021** belong to low- and middle-income countries, with India, Nigeria, Indonesia, Ethiopia, and the Philippines recording the highest numbers,
 - **Myanmar and Mozambique record the largest increase in the number of children who didn't receive a single vaccine between 2019 and 2021.**

Impact of Internet Shutdowns

Why in News?

Recently, a report published by the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** named **Internet shutdowns: Trends, causes, legal implications and impacts on a range of human rights**, stated that shutting down the internet affects people's safety & well-being, hampers information flow and harms the economy.

What is an Internet Shutdown?

- **About:**
 - Internet shutdowns are **measures taken by a government or by any entity on behalf of a**

Note:

government, to intentionally disrupt access to and the use of information and communications systems online.

- Shutdowns often include complete blocks of Internet connectivity or accessibility of the affected services. However, **governments increasingly resort to throttling bandwidth or limiting mobile service to 2G**, which, while nominally maintaining access, renders it extremely difficult to make meaningful use of the Internet.
- Governments across the world have resorted to shutting down the internet citing a range of reasons.
- Further makes it difficult to share and watch videos, live broadcasts, and other journalistic work, often ordered during civil society movements, security measures as well as electoral proceedings, and severely restricts human rights monitoring and reporting.
- **Related International Frameworks:**
 - Internet shutdowns deeply affect many human rights, they most immediately affect freedom of expression and access to information – one of the foundations of free and democratic societies and an indispensable condition for the full development of the person.
 - It is a touchstone for all other rights guaranteed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other **human rights** instruments (i.e. **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**).
 - The **Sustainable Development Goals** reinforce States' human rights obligations to work towards universally available and accessible Internet, free from unjustified restrictions.
 - Founded to facilitate international connectivity in communications networks, the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** works on the adoption of standards that ensure that networks and technologies interconnect, and strives to improve access to the Internet

Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D)

Why in News?

Recently, the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Education (MoE) released

the Centre's first-ever Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D) for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

- In June, 2021, the Union Education Minister has approved the release of **Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20 for States and Union Territories**.

What is the Index All About?

- **About:**
 - PGI-D assesses the performance of the school education system at the **district level by creating an index for comprehensive analysis**.
 - The PGI-D assessed district-level performance in school education based on the data collected from various sources, including **Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE +)**, **National Achievement Survey (NAS)**, 2017 and data provided by respective districts.
- **Methodology:**
 - **Structure:** The PGI-D structure **comprises a total weightage of 600 points across 83 indicators**, which are grouped under **six categories**:
 - Outcomes, Effective Classroom Transaction, Infrastructure Facilities & Student's Entitlements, School Safety & Child Protection, Digital Learning and Governance Process.
 - Two categories — digital learning and effective classroom transaction have been **added in the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic**. However, these categories were not part of the state-level PGI.
 - These **categories are further divided into 12 domains**.
 - **Assessment Grades:** The PGI-D grades the districts into 10 grades. **The highest achievable grade is 'Daksh'**, which is for districts scoring more than 90% of the total points in that category or overall.
 - It is followed by **'Utkarsh'** (81% to 90%), **'Ati Uttam'** (71% to 80%), **'Uttam'** (61% to 70%), **'Prachesta-1'** (51% to 60%) and **'Prachesta-2'** (41% to 50%).
 - The lowest grade in PGI-D is **'Akanshi-3'** which is for scores upto 10% of the total points.
 - None of the districts figured in the highest 'Daksh' grade in both these years.

Note:

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?➤ **Best Performers:**

- Three districts from Rajasthan performed the best in the assessment.
 - According to the report, the three districts — Sikar, Jhunjhunu, and Jaipur figured in 'Utkarsh' grade in 2019-20 in contrast to a year before when no district featured in that category.
- Rajasthan has the highest 24 districts in this grade, followed by Punjab (14), Gujarat (13), and Kerala (13).

➤ **Lowest Performers:**

- The districts with the lowest scores (1 out of 50) in this category were:
 - South Salmara-Mankachar (Assam), Alirajpur (Madhya Pradesh), North Garo Hills and South Garo Hills in Meghalaya, and Khowai (Tripura) in 2019-20.
- The 12 states/ UTs which don't have a single district in the Ati-Uttam and Uttam are:
 - Bihar, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand.

➤ **Progress:**

- As per the report, the number of districts in all categories has increased.
 - In the 'Ati Uttam' grade, the number of districts increased from 49 to 86 during 2018-19 to 2019-20 showing "remarkable improvements".
 - 33 districts improved their score in outcomes, but there is no grade-level improvement.
 - The outcomes category includes learning outcomes of students, teachers' availability and professional outcomes.
 - **Digital Learning Category:** As compared to 2018-19, 20 districts have shown over 20% improvement while 43 districts bettered their score by over 10% during 2019-20.
 - **Infrastructural Facilities:** 478 districts improved their score in 2019-20 as compared to 2018-19.
 - Out of these 478, 37 districts made an improvement of over 20% improvement in score and 115 districts made an improvement of over 10% implying grade-level improvement.

What are the Other Government Initiatives in this Direction?

- **National Education Policy, 2020:** It aims at making "India a global knowledge superpower" by introducing several changes from the school to college level in the Indian education system.
- **Samagra Shiksha:** It is an integrated scheme for school education extending from pre-school to class XII to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education.
- **Mid Day Meal Scheme:** It provides that every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII who enrolls and attends the school, shall be provided hot cooked nutritional meals, free of charge every day except on school holidays.
- **Eklavya Model School and Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme (RGNF):** These aim to encourage the students belonging to Scheduled Tribes (ST) community to pursue higher education.

Amrit Sarovar Mission**Why in News?**

The Union government has asked the Ministry of Railways and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to use the soil/silt excavated from ponds/tanks in all districts across the country under the Amrit Sarovar Mission for their infrastructure projects.

What is Amrit Sarovar Mission?➤ **About:**

- Amrit Sarovar Mission was launched on 24th April 2022 with a view to conserve water for the future.

➤ **Aim:**

- The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as a part of celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- In total, it would lead to the creation of 50,000 water bodies of a size of about an Acre or more.
- The Mission encourages mobilisation of citizen and non-govt resources for supplementing these efforts.

➤ **Ministries Involved:**

- This Mission has been launched with a whole Government Approach with 6 Ministries/ Department namely:

Note:



drishti

- Department of Rural Development
- Department of land resources
- Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation
- Department of Water resources
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Changes.

➤ **Technical Partner:**

- **Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N)** has been engaged as technical partner for the Mission.

➤ **Refocusing with Various Schemes:**

- The Mission works through the States and Districts, through refocusing of various schemes such as **Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, XV Finance Commission Grants, PMKSY** sub schemes such as **Watershed Development Component, Har Khet Ko Pani** besides States' own schemes.

➤ **Target:**

- Mission Amrit Sarovar is to be completed by 15th August 2023.
- Around **50,000 Amrit Sarovar** may be constructed in the country.
 - Each of these Amrit Sarovar will have **approx. area of 1 acre** with a water holding capacity of **10,000 cubic meters**.
- People's participation in the Mission is the focal point.
- On every **15th August**, **National Flag hoisting will be organized on every Amrit Sarovar site**.

What is Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav?

- Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is an **initiative of the Government of India** to celebrate and commemorate **75 years of independence and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements**.
- This Mahotsav is dedicated to the people of India who have not only been instrumental in bringing India thus far in its evolutionary journey but also hold within them the power and potential to enable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of activating **India 2.0**, fuelled by the spirit of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**.
- The official journey of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav commenced on **12th March 2021** which started a **75-week countdown to our 75th anniversary of independence and will end** post a year on **15th August 2023**.

Bharat Gaurav Scheme

Why in News?

India's first private train, under the **Bharat Gaurav scheme** has been flagged off from Coimbatore.

- The train will cover **several historical destinations on the route while giving the passengers an insight into the cultural heritage** of the country.

What is Bharat Gaurav Scheme?

➤ **About:**

- **Launched in November 2021**, under the scheme, trains now **have a third segment for tourism**. Till now, the Railways had passenger segments and goods segments.
 - These trains are **not regular trains that will run as per a timetable but will be more on the lines of the Ramayana Express** being run by the **IRCTC**.
- It was announced under **the theme-based tourist circuit trains**. These trains will be run **by both private players and IRCTC**, in theme-based circuits.
 - By theme-based tourism (circuits), the railways mean trains like **Guru Kripa** that go to **all places related to Guru Nanak** or a **Ramayan-themed train** to touch upon places related to **Lord Ram**.
- Anyone, from **societies, trusts, consortia and even state governments** can apply to take these trains and run them on special tourism circuits based on a theme.
 - Service Provider will offer all-inclusive packages to tourists including rail travel, hotel accommodation, sightseeing arrangement, visit to historical/heritage sites, tour guides etc.

Bharat NCAP

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has approved the **draft GSR (General Statutory Rules) notification** to introduce **Bharat NCAP (New Car Assessment Programme)**.

- NCAP will be rolled out from **1st April 2023** and will mean auto manufacturers in India as well as importers will have the option of getting cars star rated within country.

Note:



drishti

- The **USA was the first country to introduce a programme** for testing the safety standards of a car through crash tests.

What is Bharat NCAP?

- **About:**
 - It is a **new car safety assessment program** which proposes a mechanism of awarding 'Star Ratings' to automobiles based upon their performance in crash tests.
 - Bharat NCAP standard is aligned with global benchmarks and it is beyond minimum regulatory requirements.
- **Bharat NCAP Rating:**
 - The proposed Bharat NCAP assessment **will allocate Star Ratings from 1 to 5 stars**.
 - The testing of vehicles for this programme will be carried out at testing agencies, with the necessary infrastructure.
- **Applicability:**
 - It will be applicable on **type approved motor vehicles of category M1 with gross vehicle weight less than 3.5 tonnes**, manufactured or imported in the country.
 - M1 category **motor vehicles are used for the carriage of passengers**, comprising eight seats, in addition to driver's seat.

National Initiative for Promotion of Upskilling of Nirman workers (NIPUN)

Why in News?

Recently, an innovative project for skill training of construction workers called 'NIPUN' i.e. **National Initiative for Promoting Upskilling of Nirman Workers** was launched.

- **NIPUN** is creating a **future labour force** for the construction industry which will propel **innovation and large-scale development** in the country.
- The construction sector is on track to become the **largest employer by 2022**, and it will require **45 million more qualified workers** over the next ten years.

What is Project NIPUN?

- **About:**

- The basic motive of the project is to **train over 1 lakh construction workers**, through fresh skilling and upskilling programmes.
- The project NIPUN is an initiative of the **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.
- This project is running under the flagship programme of the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)**
 - The transformational impact of the **National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM)** has reduced the **vulnerability of urban poor households** by providing **upskilling and employment opportunities** to urban dwellers, especially the youth.
- **Implementing Agency:**
 - **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**.
 - NSDC is the nodal agency and workers under the **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**.
 - NSDC will be responsible for the overall execution of **training, monitoring and candidate tracking**.

How will the NIPUN Project be Implemented?

- The project implementation is divided into three parts:
 - **Training through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** at construction sites.
 - Onsite skill training will be provided to approximately **80,000 construction workers through industry associations** under the **RPL certification**, co-branded with **MoHUA**.
 - **Training through Fresh Skilling by Plumbing and Infrastructure Sector Skill Council (SSC)**.
 - About **14,000 candidates** will receive fresh skilling through **plumbing and infrastructure Sector Skill Council (SSC)** in trades having promising placement potentials.
 - **International Placement through industries/builders/contractors**.

➤ **NIPUN Bharat Mission**

- The Ministry of Education has launched a **National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)**, for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.
- It was launched in 2021 as part of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

Note:



drishti

Aspirational District Programme

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister has expressed his desire to extend the **Aspirational District Programme to block and city levels.**

What is Aspirational Districts Programme?

➤ About:

- It was launched in 2018 which aims to **transform districts** that have shown relatively **lesser progress in key social areas.**
- Aspirational Districts are those districts in India, that **are affected by poor socio-economic indicators.**

➤ Broad Contours of the Programme:

- **Convergence** (of Central & State Schemes)
- **Collaboration** (of Central, State level 'Prabhari' Officers & District Collectors),
- **Competition** among districts through monthly **delta ranking.**
 - The delta ranking of the Aspirational Districts combines the innovative use of data with pragmatic administration, keeping the district at the locus of inclusive development.

➤ Parameters for Ranking:

- The ranking is based on the incremental progress made across 49 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under **5 broad socio-economic themes -**
 - **Health & Nutrition (30%)**
 - **Education (30%)**
 - **Agriculture & Water Resources (20%)**
 - **Financial Inclusion & Skill Development (10%)**
 - **Infrastructure (10%)**

➤ Various Programmes:

- Various programmes such as – **Saksham Bitiyan Abhiyan, Anemia Mukh Bharat and Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum,** are some of the flagship initiatives that have been taken up by **NITI Aayog** in this regard.

Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP)

Why in News?

- The **Election Commission** ordered the **deletion of 111 registered unrecognised political parties** that it found to be “non-existent” and referred three of the parties to the Department of Revenue for legal action for “**serious financial impropriety.**” This was the second such action in the recent past against registered parties that have been found violating the **Representation of the People Act, 1951.**
 - Earlier, the EC had deleted 87 non-existent registered unrecognised political parties.
 - The EC said the 111 parties in question had violated sections of the Act that required them to submit their address of communication and any change in address to the EC.

What are the Key Points related to the Political Parties?

➤ Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP):

- Either **newly registered parties** or those **which have not secured enough percentage of votes in the assembly or general elections** to become a state party, or those **which have never contested elections** since being registered are considered **unrecognised parties.**
- Such parties **don't enjoy all the benefits extended to the recognised parties.**

➤ Recognised Political Party:

- A **recognised political party** shall **either be a National party or a State party** if it meets certain laid down conditions.
- **To become a recognised political party** either at the state or national level, a party **has to secure a certain minimum percentage of polled valid votes or certain number of seats** in the state legislative assembly or the Lok Sabha during the last election.
- The **recognition granted by the Commission to the parties determines their right to certain privileges** like allocation of the party symbols, provision of time for political broadcasts on the state-owned television and radio stations and access to electoral rolls.

Note:

What are the Conditions for Recognition of Political Parties?

➤ Conditions For Recognition of National Parties:

- A party is recognised as a national party if any of the following conditions is fulfilled:
 - If it **secures 6% of valid votes polled** in any **four or more states** at a general election to the Lok Sabha or to the legislative assembly and in addition, it wins four seats in the Lok Sabha from any state or states, or
 - If it **wins 2% of seats in the Lok Sabha** at a general election and these candidates are elected from three states, or
 - If it is recognised as a **state party in four states**.

Conditions for Recognition as a State Party:

- A party is recognised as a state party in a state if any of the following conditions is fulfilled:
 - If it **secures 6% of the valid votes polled** in the state at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned and in **addition, it wins 2 seats** in the assembly of the state concerned or
 - If it secures **6% of the valid votes polled in the state** at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned and in addition, it wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha from the state concerned or
 - If it wins **3% of seats in the legislative assembly** at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned or 3 seats in the assembly, whichever is more or
 - If it **wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats** or any fraction thereof allotted to the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned or
 - If it **secures 8% of the total valid votes polled in the state at a General Election** to the Lok Sabha from the state or to the legislative assembly of the state. This condition was added in 2011.

World Food Safety Day

Why in News?

Every Year, 7th June is observed as **World Food Safety Day**.

What are the Key Highlights of World Food Safety Day?

➤ About:

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** jointly facilitate the observance of World Food Safety Day, in collaboration with Member States and other relevant organizations.
- It was **first celebrated in 2019**, to strengthen the commitment to scale up food safety made by the Addis Ababa Conference and the Geneva Forum in 2019 under the umbrella of “**The Future of Food Safety**”.

➤ Aim:

- To **draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks**, contributing to **food security**, human health, economic prosperity, agriculture, market access, **tourism** and **sustainable development**.

➤ 2022 Theme:

- Safer Food, Better Health

GeM For Cooperatives

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has cleared up a proposal allowing cooperatives to sell products on the **Government-e-Marketplace (GeM) platform**.

- The cooperatives may however be charged a transaction fee to cover the incremental costs.
- The validated list of cooperatives to be onboarded on the GeM - for pilot as well as subsequent scale up - will be decided by the **Ministry of Cooperation** in consultation with the GeM SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle).

What is the Gem Portal?

- **GeM is a one-stop National Public Procurement Portal** to facilitate online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Central and State Government Departments/Organisations/Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).
- The procurement of goods and services by Ministries and the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) is **mandatory for goods and services available on GeM**.

Note:



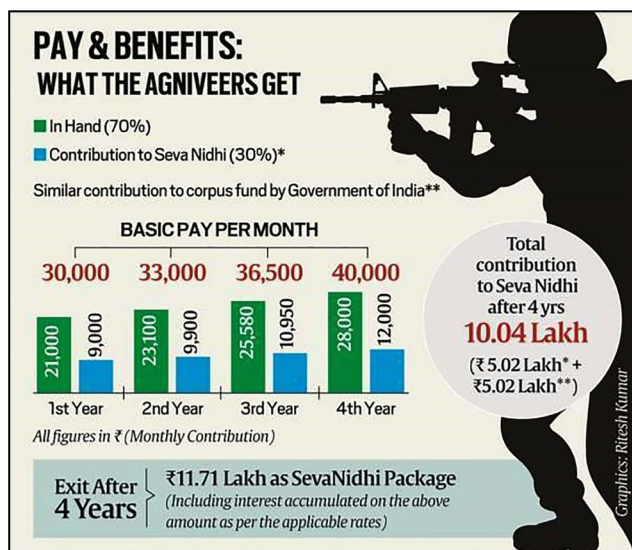
drishti

- It also **provides the tools of e-bidding and reverse e-auction** to facilitate the government users achieve the best value for their money.
- At present, GeM has more than 30 lakh products, over Rs. 10 lakh crores worth of transactions have happened so far at the portal.
- **Launch:**
 - It was launched in 2016 to bring transparency and efficiency in the government buying process.
- **Nodal Ministry:**
 - Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Recent Updates:**
 - **Country of Origin Mandatory:** GeM has made it mandatory for sellers to enter the Country of Origin while registering all new products on GeM.
 - This has been enabled on the portal so that the buyers can choose to buy only those products that meet the minimum 50% local content criteria.

Agnipath Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the government has unveiled **Agnipath scheme for recruiting soldiers** across the **Three services (Army, Navy and Airforce)**.



What is the Agnipath Scheme?

- **About:**

- It allows **patriotic and motivated youth to serve in the Armed Forces for a period of four years**.
- Under this scheme, the **youth joining the army will be called Agniveer**. Youth will be able to be recruited into the army for a short duration.
- Under the new scheme, around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually, and most will leave the service in just four years.
- However, after **four years, only 25 % of the batch will be recruited back** into their respective services, for a period of 15 years.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - It is **only for personnel below officer ranks** (those who do not join the forces as commissioned officers).
 - Commissioned officers **are the army's highest ranked officers**.
 - Commissioned officers **hold an exclusive rank** in the Indian armed forces. They often hold a **commission under the president's sovereign power** and are officially instructed to protect the country.
 - Aspirants between the ages of 17.5 years and 21 years will be eligible to apply.
- **Objectives:**
 - It aims at **providing an opportunity to the patriotic and motivated youth** with the 'Josh' and 'Jazba' to join the Armed Forces.
 - It is expected to bring down the average age profile of the Indian Armed Forces **by about 4 to 5 years**.
 - The scheme envisions that, the average age in the forces is 32 years today, which will go down to 26 in six to seven years.

National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment 2021

Why in News?

Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions releases the second edition of the **National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment 2021, NeSDA 2021**.

- **J&K tops among UTs in e-Governance services delivery**, saves around Rs **200 crore** annually that was incurred in carriage of physical files during the **Annual Durbar** move between the two capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar.

Note:

What is NeSDA 2021?**About:**

- For Digital Government excellence, the **National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) initiative** has been undertaken by the **Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG)**.
- **NeSDA was launched in August 2018**, based on the Online Service Index (OSI) of UNDESA eGovernment Survey (UN E-Government Survey 2020 by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, since 2001).
- **This is the second edition of NeSDA, the first edition was launched in 2019.**

NeSDA Framework:

- The framework covers **six sectors**, viz. Finance, Labour & Employment, Education, Local Government & Utilities, Social Welfare (including Agriculture & Health) and Environment (including Fire) sectors.
 - The framework covers services under G2B (Government to Businesses) and G2C (Government to Citizens) segments, in these six sectors.
- During NeSDA 2021, additional 6 mandatory services at State / UT level and 4 services at Central Ministry level would be evaluated.
- The NeSDA framework primarily assessed all the service portals (State/UT and Central Ministry service portals) on 7 key parameters. In NeSDA 2021, the framework has been enhanced to include additional 6 parameters.
 - The portals assessed were classified into one of two categories.
 - State/UT/Central Ministry Portal, the designated portal of the respective government that provides a single window access to information and service links, is the first category.
 - The second category comprises of the State/UT/ Central Ministry Services Portals which focus on the digital delivery of services and provide service-related information.

NeSDA 2021 Assessment:

- Among the Central Ministry Services Portals, scores have improved for 6 portals while among States and UTs, scores have improved for 28 of the State / UT Portals and for 22 of the State / UT Services Portals.

- In the category of State/UT portal, among group A states- Kerala became a front runner and the progress was made by Tamil Nadu followed by Punjab.
- Among group B states- Odisha being at top followed by Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- Among North-Eastern states Nagaland, Meghalaya and Assam are at top.
- Among UTs, J&K topped followed by A&N, Puducherry, Delhi and Chandigarh.

Jal Jeevan Mission**Why in News?**

Recently, the Centre announced that over **50% of rural households have access to tap water supply.**

What is Jal Jeevan Mission?**About:**

- **Launched in 2019**, it envisages **supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.**
- JJM looks to create a jan andolan for water, thereby making it everyone's priority.
- It **comes under Jal Shakti Ministry.**

Aims:

- The mission ensures **functionality of existing water supply systems and water connections**, water quality monitoring and testing as well as sustainable agriculture.
- It also ensures conjunctive use of conserved water; drinking water source augmentation, drinking water supply system, **grey water treatment and its reuse.**

Implementation:

- Paani Samitis plan, implement, manage, operate and maintain village water supply systems.
 - These consist of 10-15 members, with at least 50% women members and other members from **Self-Help Groups, Accredited Social and Health Workers, Anganwadi** teachers, etc.
- The committees prepare a one-time village action plan, merging all available village resources. The plan is approved in a **Gram Sabha** before implementation.

Note:



drishti

➤ **Funding Pattern:**

- The fund sharing pattern between the Centre and states is 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 50:50 for other states, and 100% for Union Territories.

What is Jal**Jeevan Mission(Urban)?**

- In the **Budget 2021-22**, **Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)** has been announced under the **Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households** through functional taps in all statutory towns in accordance with **Sustainable Development Goal- 6**.
- It complements the **Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural)** which envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through **Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024**.
- **Objectives of Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban):**
 - Securing tap and sewer connections
 - Rejuvenation of water bodies
 - creating circular water economy

SHRESHTA Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has launched the scheme '**SHRESHTA**.' This scheme is known as **Scheme for residential education for students in High school in Targeted Areas**.

- The scheme '**SHRESHTA**' was created with the goal of providing **quality education** and **opportunity** to students of **SC Category**.

What is the scheme 'SHRESHTA'?

➤ **About:**

- Its basic motive is **to uplift the socio-economic status of the Scheduled Castes peoples** by providing **high quality education** to their children in **best private residential schools** in the country.
- Admission will be provided in **Class 9 and Class 11** of **CBSE affiliated private schools**.

➤ **Objective:**

- To make **easy delivery** of the **Governmental initiatives and schemes**.

- To create a **conductive atmosphere** for the '**Scheduled Castes**' socioeconomic advancement and overall growth.
- Collaborating with volunteer groups **to bridge the gap in service-deprived Scheduled Castes (SCs) dominating regions in the education sector**.
- To enable **bright Scheduled Caste (SC) students** with **high-quality education** so that they can pursue future opportunities.

➤ **Eligibility:**

- The students, belonging to **Scheduled Castes**, studying in class **8th and 10th** in the current academic year (2021-22) are eligible for availing the benefits of the scheme.
- Students from the SC community who come from a **marginalized income group** with an **annual income** of up to **Rs.2.5 lakh** are eligible.
- The selection will be done through a transparent mechanism which is known as **National Entrance Test for SHRESHTA (NETS)**.
 - It will be conducted by the **National Testing Agency (NTA)** for admission in **class 9th and 11th**.

➤ **Beneficiaries:**

- Government has targeted that every year around **3000 students** belonging to **SC category** will be admitted to **Class 9 and Class 11** under this system.
- The Ministry will **cover the whole cost of their school fees and accommodation fees** till they have completed their academics in **class 12th**.

Caste based Census

Why in News?

Recently, **Bihar government** has announced that it will **undertake a socio-economic survey of all castes and communities (SECC)**.

What is the Difference between Census and SECC?

➤ **Census:**

- The origin of the Census in India **goes back to the colonial exercise of 1881**.
- Census has evolved and been used by the government, policymakers, academics, and others to capture the Indian population, access resources, map social change, **delimitation exercise**, etc.

Note:



drishti

- However, as early as the 1940s, W.W.M. Yeatts, Census Commissioner for India for the 1941 Census, had pointed out that “the census is a large, immensely powerful, but blunt instrument unsuited for specialized inquiry.”

➤ **SECC:**

- The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) **was conducted in 2011** for the first time since 1931.
- SECC is meant to **canvass every Indian family, both in rural and urban India**, and ask about their:
 - **Economic status**, so as to allow Central and State authorities to come up with a range of indicators of deprivation, permutations, and combinations of which could be used by each authority to define a poor or deprived person.
 - It is also **meant to ask every person their specific caste name** to allow the government to re-evaluate which caste groups were economically worse off and which were better off.
- SECC has the **potential to allow for a mapping of inequalities at a broader level.**

➤ **Difference Between Census & SECC:**

- The Census provides a **portrait of the Indian population**, while the SECC is a tool to identify beneficiaries of state support.
- Since the **Census falls under the Census Act of 1948**, all data are considered confidential, whereas according to the SECC website, “all the personal information given in the SECC is open for use by Government departments to grant and/or restrict benefits to households.”

Proposal of Appellate Committees for Social Media Grievance

Why in News?

Recently, a proposal for setting up ‘**Grievance Appellate Committees**’ for hearing appeals regarding social media posts has been put forward by the government of India.

What are the Grievance Appellate Committees?

➤ **About:**

- One or more ‘**Grievance Appellate Committees**’ will be constituted by the Central Government as per the draft of the proposed amendments to the **IT Rules, 2021.**

- The appellate committees will be **dealing with appeals by users against the decision of the Grievance Officer** appointed by the social media intermediary.

- The committee will comprise **a chairperson and other members appointed by the Central government.**

➤ **Working:**

- Any person aggrieved by an order of the Grievance Officer appointed by a social media network may appeal to the Grievance Appellate Committee **within 30 days of receipt of communication from the Grievance Officer.**
- The Grievance Appellate Committee shall deal with such appeal expeditiously and shall make an endeavour to **dispose of the appeal finally within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of the appeal.**
- Every **order** passed by the Grievance Appellate Committee shall be **complied with by the intermediary concerned.**

What is the Need for Grievance Appellate Committees?

- In 2021, multiple stand-offs over content moderation and takedown happened between the government and the **social media platforms.**
 - **Twitter accounts** of news websites, actors, political workers and bloggers, posting messages in support of the farmers’ agitation were **blocked following government orders.**
- As Internet access continues to rapidly expand in India, new issues related to the government policies also keep emerging. Therefore, it becomes necessary to **address the gaps** to deal with such issues.

Gun Control Legislation

Why in News?

The United States recently witnessed two episodes of mass shootings in a span of 11 days that killed more than 30 people including elementary school children.

Note:



drishti

- US recorded a total of 24,576 homicides in 2020, of which approximately 79%, or 19,384 incidents, involved the use of a firearm.
- Regulation of firearms in the US is convened through the shared authority between the federal, State and local governments.
- The US Supreme Court previously held that the second amendment of the US Constitution protects the right to “keep and bear arms” for self-defence, whilst federal courts argue about a potential infringement if federal, state and local firearm regulations circumvent this right.

What is the Gun Control Legislation of India?

- **The Arms Act, 1959:**
 - **About:** It aims to be as extensive as possible to cover all aspects relating to the acquisition, possession, manufacture, sale, import, export, and transport of arms and ammunition in India.
 - **Requirements for Acquiring Gun License:**
 - The **minimum age requirement** for acquiring a gun license in India is **21 years**.
 - The applicant **must not have been convicted of any offence involving violence or moral turpitude five years prior** to commencing the application, not of an ‘unsound mind’ and not a threat to public safety and peace.
 - **Property qualification is not a criterion** for acquiring gun license.
 - Upon receiving an application, the **licensing authority (i.e., the Home Ministry)**, asks the officer in-charge of the nearest police station to submit a report about the applicant after thorough vetting within a prescribed time.
 - **Other Features of the Act:**
 - It defines ‘**prohibited arms**’ as those that **either discharge any noxious liquid or gas, or weapons** that seek pressure to be applied on a trigger for discharge.
 - It allow the use of smooth bore gun with a barrel of not less than 20 inches for crop protection or sport.
 - No entity is permitted to sell or transfer any firearm which does not bear the name of the maker, manufacturer’s number or any other visible or stamped identification mark.

➤ Amendment to the Arms Act:

- The Arms Act amended in 2019 reduces the number of firearms that an individual can procure from 3 to 2.
- The **validity of the license has been increased from the present 3 years to 5 years**.
- It also **enlists specific provisions** on curtailing the use of licensed weapons to ensure social harmony.
- **Punishment:** The **punishment of imprisonment is increased between 7 and 14 years**, along with a fine for the offense of acquisition, possession or carrying of prohibited ammunition without a license.
 - It prohibits the conversion of one category of firearms to another without a license.
 - Unlawful manufacture, sale and transfer are liable **for an imprisonment term not less than seven years** which could be extended to life, with a fine.

Good Governance

Why in News?

While launching an **Integrated Credit Portal ‘Jan Samarth’**, Prime Minister said that India is moving ahead with the approach of **Citizen-Centric Governance**, which is the fundamental aspect of **Good Governance**, leaving behind the government-centric approach.

What is Jan Samarth Portal?

- The portal, an **initiative of the Ministry of Finance**, is a **one-stop gateway for over a dozen of the government’s credit-linked schemes** directly connecting beneficiaries to lenders.
- The portal will act as a **single platform for loan application and processing** under Credit-Linked Government Schemes.
- The portal will **improve the lives of students, farmers, businessmen, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises entrepreneurs** and will also **help the start-up ecosystem**.
 - The idea behind launching this portal is **to encourage inclusive growth and development of several sectors**.

Note:

What is Good Governance?

➤ About:

- Governance is the **process of decision-making** and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).
 - Governance can be used in several contexts such as **corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance**.
- Good Governance is defined as **“the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”**

Biological Research Regulatory Approval Portal

Why in News?

In keeping with the spirit of **“One Nation, One Portal”**, the Union Minister recently launched a Single National Portal for Biotech researchers and Start-ups, i.e., **Biological Research Regulatory Approval Portal (BioRRAP)**.

- **Biotechnology** has fast emerged as an academic and livelihood avenue **for youngsters in India**.

What is the Startup Growth Scenario in India?

- India is a **hotspot for startups**. In 2021 alone, Indian startups have raised **more than \$23 billion**, spread over 1,000+ deals, with 33 startups entering the coveted unicorn club. So far, the year 2022 has added 13 more startups to the **unicorn club**.
 - After the United States (US) and China, India has emerged as the **world’s third-largest startup ecosystem**.
 - Currently, India is witnessing rapid growth in the number of startups. According to the **India Venture Capital Report 2021** published by Bain and Company, the number of cumulative start-ups has grown at a **CAGR** of 17% since 2012 and crossed 1,12,000.
 - As of 2021, India’s biotech industry clocks in about US\$ 12 billion in annual revenue.

Guidelines for Safety Assessment of Genome Edited Plants, 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** has issued **guidelines** easing norms for research into **Genetically Modified (GM)** crops and circumventing challenges of using foreign genes to change crops profile.

- Earlier, the Government has allowed **genome-edited plants without the cumbersome GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms) regulation** at the **Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)**.

What are the Highlights of the Guidelines?

➤ Exempts Researchers from Seeking Approvals:

- It exempts researchers **who use gene-editing technology** to modify the genome of the plant from seeking approvals from the **Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)**.
 - The **GEAC evaluates research into GM plants and recommends**, or disapproves, their release into farmer fields.
 - The final call, however, is taken by the **Environment Minister as well as States** where such plants could be cultivated. The Environment Ministry too has sanctioned this exemption.
- The guidelines **provide a road map for the sustainable use of genome editing technologies** and applicable to public and private sector research institutions engaged in research and development and handling of genome edited plants.

➤ Issues Guidelines Address:

- Most often, **GM plants that have drawn such scrutiny are those that use transgenic technology** or introduce a gene from another species into a plant, such as **BT-cotton**, which uses a soil bacterium gene to protect against pest attack.
- The worry around this method is that **these genes may spread to neighbouring plants**, where such effects are not intended and so their applications have been controversial.

Note:

What is Genome Editing?

- **About:**
 - Genome editing **enables modification of plants' owned genes**, without insertion of external genes, as with GM crops.
 - Genome-edited varieties possess **no foreign DNA** and are indistinguishable from crops developed through conventional plant-breeding methods, or using naturally occurring mutations.

OBC Quota in Local Body Polls

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court (SC)** permitted Madhya Pradesh to **provide reservation to Other Backward Classes (OBC) in Local Body Elections**, modifying an **earlier order that suspended the quotas** due to a lack of data.

- Currently, local bodies in Madhya Pradesh have quotas only for **Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes** and women.
- This is the **first time that a state government has managed to clear the triple test** formula mandated by the **apex court** in the context of providing reservation for OBCs in local body polls.
- Earlier, the SC while hearing a plea by the Maharashtra government **decided to recall its December 2021 order**, which stayed 27% reservation for **Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** in local body elections.

What is the Background?

- In 2021, the SC **scrapped OBC quotas in local body polls in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh**, and the Odisha high court cancelled a similar move in the state because the exercise didn't pass the triple test.
- The **Triple-Test Formula, laid down by the Supreme Court in 2010** and later reiterated in March 2021, required the **states to appoint a commission, collect quantifiable data of the community, and allocate reservation to them in local bodies** in such a manner that the total reservation in each seat does not exceed 50%.

What is the Ruling?

- The SC directed the **state to notify the OBC seats, accepting a report of the three-member OBC commission formed by Madhya Pradesh in 2021.**

- This commission **quantified the population of OBCs in the state at 48% and permitted reservation** of varying quantum across each municipal seat, extending to a maximum of 35%.
- SC permitted the Madhya Pradesh State Election Commission **to notify the election programme for the respective local bodies** keeping in mind the **delimitation notifications** already issued by the state government.
- The order was passed on a petition filed by an individual who challenged in April 2022 the amendments to the Madhya Pradesh Municipal Act, 1956; Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Raj Avam Gram Swaraj Adhiniyam, 1993; and Madhya Pradesh Municipalities Act, 1961.
- By these amendments, **the state government authorized itself to determine the number and extent of wards in the local bodies concerned.**

What is the 2010 Supreme Court Judgement?

- The five-judge Constitution Bench decision in *K. Krishnamurthy (Dr.) v. Union of India* (2010) wherein the Supreme Court had **interpreted Article 243D(6) and Article 243T(6)**, which permit reservation by enactment of law for backward classes in panchayat and municipal bodies respectively, to hold that barriers to political participation are not the same as that of the barriers that limit access to education and employment.
- However, for creating a level playing field, reservation may be desirable as mandated by the aforementioned Articles which provide a separate constitutional basis for reservation, as distinct from what are conceived under **Article 15 (4) and Article 16 (4) which form the basis for reservation in education and employment.**

What is a Local Government?

- **Local Self Government** is the management of local affairs by such local bodies who have been elected by the local people.
- The local self-Government includes **both rural and urban government.**
- It is the **third level of the government.**
- There are **2 types of local government in operation** – **Panchayats** in rural areas and **Municipalities** in urban areas.

Note:



drishti

GatiShakti Sanchar Portal

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Communications has launched the “GatiShakti Sanchar” portal for **Centralised Right of Way (RoW) approvals**.

What is “GatiShakti Sanchar” Portal?

- **About:** The portal has been developed keeping in view the vision areas of the **National Broadband Mission** at the core, which are providing broadband infrastructure as a core utility to every citizen, Governance and services on demand, and in particular, digital empowerment of the citizens of the country.
- **Objective:** The portal shall act as an enabler to the objective of **“Ease of doing Business”** for telecommunications infrastructure works.

PWD to Allow 4% Quota for Disabled.

Why in News?

Recently, the **Central Public Works Department (CPWD)** has started the process to identify 4% of posts of junior engineer (civil and electrical) to be reserved for **persons with disabilities (PwD)** as mandated by the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act)**.

What are the Key points?

- The Central construction agency wrote to its regional offices to identify 4% of the posts and places where persons with benchmark disabilities can be posted.
- The CPWD asked the regional centers to also make **“appropriate reasonable accommodation”** for PwD, as the RPwD Act says.
- Earlier, the expert Committee (under CPWD) was of the view that the PwD need to have requisite technical qualification or the post in the first place and subsequently he or she has to compete in the selection process to be considered for the post,
- Later, the committee advised CPWD to follow the DEPWD’s notification for recruitment to JE (civil and electrical).

What are Constitutional Provisions related to Disability?

- **Article 41 of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)** states that State shall make effective provision for securing right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, within the limits of its economic capacity and development.
- The subject of ‘relief of the disabled and unemployable’ is specified in the **state list of the Seventh schedule of the constitution**.

What are the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016?

- **Definition:**
 - Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
 - **Benchmark disability** refers to having at least **40% disability** of any type recognized under the Act.
- **Types:**
 - The types of disabilities have been **increased from 7 to 21**.
 - The Act added mental illness, autism, spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, chronic neurological conditions, speech and language disability, **thalassemia, hemophilia, sickle cell disease**, multiple disabilities including deaf blindness, acid attack victims and **Parkinson’s disease**.
 - In addition, the Government has been authorized to notify any other category of specified disability.
- **Reservation:**
 - It **increased the reservation** for people suffering from disabilities **from 3% to 4% in government jobs** and **from 3% to 5% in higher education institutes**.
- **Other Important Schemes:**
 - **Accessible India Campaign: Creation of Accessible Environment for PwDs**
 - **Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP)**
 - **DeenDayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme**
 - **National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities**
 - **Unique Disability Identification Project**
 - **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**
 - **National Mental Health Programme.**

Note:



drishti

Digital India BHASHINI

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Electronics and IT conducted a brainstorming session with Researchers and Start-ups aimed to shape strategy for **Digital India BHASHINI [BHASHa Interface for India]**.

- The government **intends to integrate start-ups' innovation**, development and consumption of technology.

What is Digital India BHASHINI?

➤ About:

- Digital India BHASHINI is India's **Artificial Intelligence (AI) led language translation platform**.
- A Bhashini Platform will make **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP)** resources available to **MSME (Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises)**, Startups and Individual Innovators in the public domain.
- Bhashini Platform is a part of the **National Language Translation Mission**.
 - The mission aims to ensure that as more Indians connect to the internet, they are able to access global content in their own languages.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

Why in News?

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) approved the implementation of the Centre's flagship **Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)** for the residents in its area.

- Ayushman Bharat, a flagship scheme of Government of India, was launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). It has two inter-related components - Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

What is Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY?

➤ About:

- PM-JAY is the **world's largest health insurance/assurance scheme** fully financed by the government.
- **Launched in February 2018**, it offers a sum insured of **Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care** (which doesn't involve a super specialist) as well as tertiary care (which involves a super specialist).
- Under PMJAY, cashless and paperless access to services are provided to the beneficiaries at the point of service, that is, hospital.
- Health Benefit Packages **cover** surgery, medical and day care treatments, cost of medicines and diagnostics.
 - Packaged rates (Rates that include everything so that each product or service is not charged for separately).
 - These are flexible but the hospitals can't charge the beneficiary more once fixed.

➤ Beneficiaries:

- It is an entitlement-based scheme that targets the beneficiaries as identified by latest **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data**.
 - Once identified by the database, the beneficiary is considered insured and can walk into any empaneled hospital.

➤ Funding:

- The funding for the scheme is shared – 60:40 for all states and UTs with their own legislature, 90:10 in Northeast states and Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand and 100% Central funding for UTs without legislature.

➤ Nodal Agency:

- The **National Health Authority (NHA)** has been constituted as an autonomous entity under the Society Registration Act, 1860 for effective implementation of PM-JAY in alliance with state governments.
- The State Health Agency (SHA) is the apex body of the State Government responsible for the implementation of AB PM-JAY in the State.

Reservation in Promotion

Why in News?

Recently, the Centre has informed the Supreme Court, that quashing of reservation in promotion to **Scheduled**

Note:



drishti

Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) employees in government jobs may cause employee unrest and lead to multiple litigations.

- Earlier, the **Supreme Court (SC)** refused to lay down the “yardstick” for determining the inadequacy of representation for granting **reservation in promotions** for **Scheduled Caste (SC)/Scheduled Tribe (ST)** candidates in government jobs.

What are the Pros and Cons of Reservation?

➤ Pros of Reservation:

- It **ensures diversity in advanced education**, equality in the workplace and offers protection from hatred.
- It **helps in the emancipation of disadvantaged individuals** and thereby promotes equality for all.
- It **breaks stereotypes** regarding caste, religion, and ethnicity.
- It increases social mobility.
- It is **needed to compensate for centuries of oppression and discrimination** and provides level-playing fields.
- It seeks to bring equity in society by addressing ‘graded inequalities’.

➤ Cons of Reservation:

- There are concerns that lead to **erosion of meritocracy**.
- It can **still reinforce stereotypes** as it demeans the achievements of marginalized sections.
 - People **coming under the ambit of reservation**, their success is labelled as a result of Reservation, instead of their capabilities and hard work.
- There are concerns that **reservation can serve as a medium for reverse discrimination**.
 - Reverse discrimination is discrimination against members of a dominant or majority group, in favour of members of a minority or historically disadvantaged group.
- Due to vote bank politics, even after discrimination issues have been diminishing, it is difficult to withdraw the reservation.

What are the Important Related Judgements?

- **Mukesh Kumar and Another vs State of Uttarakhand & Ors. 2020:**
 - In this Case, the Supreme Court held that **there is no fundamental right to reservation or promotion**

under **Article 16(4)** or **Article 16(4 A)** of the Constitution rather they are enabling provisions for providing reservation, if the circumstances warrant.

- However, these pronouncements in no way **understate the constitutional directive under Article 46** that mandates that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- In fact, **sensitivity of the welfare state towards the weaker sections over decades resulted in the gradual expansion of canopy of reservation** in the form of increasing classifications under Article 16, a set of actions that created a wave of litigation by which resulted in the ever-evolving jurisprudence of affirmative action in public employment.

➤ **Indra Sawhney Judgment (1992):**

- In the judgment, a **nine-judge bench presided by Chief Justice M.H. Kania upheld the constitutionality of the 27% reservation** but put a ceiling of 50% unless exceptional circumstances warranting the breach, so that the constitutionally guaranteed **right to equality under Article 14 would remain secured**.
- The **Court dwelled on the interrelationship between Articles 16(1) and 16(4)** and declared that **Article 16(4) is not an exception to article 16(1)**, rather an illustration of **classification implicit in article 16(1)**.
 - While **Article 16(1) is a fundamental right**, Article 16(4) is an enabling provision.
 - Further, the **Court directed the exclusion of creamy layer by way of horizontal division** of every other backward class into creamy layer and non-creamy layer.
- **77th Constitutional Amendment Act:**
 - The Parliament responded by enacting the **77th Constitutional Amendment Act** which introduced **Article 16(4A)**.
 - Later, two **more amendments were brought**, one to ensure consequential seniority and another to secure carry forward of unfilled vacancies of a year, the former by way of addition to **Article 16(4 A)** and the latter by way of adding **Article 16(4 B)**.
- **M Nagaraj Case 2006:**

Note:

- In this case applying the creamy layer concept in SC/ST reservation in promotions, the **SC reversed its earlier stance in the Indra Sawhney case (1992)**, in which it had excluded the **creamy layer** concept on SCs/STs (that was applicable on OBCs).
- The SC had upheld the **Constitutional amendments by which Articles 16 (4A) and 16 (4B) were inserted**, saying they flow from Article 16 (4) and do not alter its structure.
- It also laid down **three conditions for promotion of SCs and STs in public employment**.
 - The **SC and ST community should be socially and educationally backward**.
 - The **SC and ST communities are not adequately represented** in Public employment.
 - Such a reservation policy **shall not affect the overall efficiency in the administration**.
- The court held that the **government cannot introduce a quota in promotion for its SC/ST employees unless** it proves that the particular community was backward, inadequately represented and providing reservation in promotion would not affect the overall efficiency of public administration.
 - The opinion of the government should be based on quantifiable data.
- **Jarnail Singh Case 2018:**
 - Later in 2018, in the Jarnail Singh case, SC modified the Nagaraj judgement to the extent that **State need not produce quantifiable data** to prove the “backwardness” of a Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe community in order to provide quota in promotion in public employment.
- **The Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019:**
 - The **10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)**, other Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes for government jobs and admission in educational institutions is currently under challenge before the Supreme Court which has referred the same to a constitution bench.
 - The adjudication awaited in this regard may also **turn to be a critical milestone in the jurisprudence of reservation as traditional understanding of backwardness is broadened** to specifically include economic backwardness without social backwardness as is traditionally seen.
- **Dr. Jaishri Laxmanrao Patil vs Chief Minister (2021):**

- Despite the Indra Sawhney ruling, there have **been attempts on the part of many States to breach the rule** by way of expanding the reservation coverage.
- The **Maharashtra Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Act 2018**, (Maratha reservation law) came under challenge before the Supreme Court which referred the same to a bench of five judges and one question was whether the 1992 judgment needs a relook.
 - Interestingly, the Supreme Court not only affirmed the Indra Sawhney decision, but also **struck down Section 4(1)(a) and Section 4(1)(b) of the Act which provided 12% reservation for Marathas** in educational institutions and 13% reservation in public employment respectively, citing the breach of ceiling.

National Achievement Survey (NAS)-2021

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Education** released the **National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021 report**.

What is the National Achievement Survey (NAS)-2021?

- **About:**
 - It is a **nationwide survey to assess the learning outcomes** and health of the education system.
 - It is the **largest, nationwide, sample-based education survey** conducted across India.
 - It is undertaken by the **Ministry of Education**.
 - The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) conducted NAS 2021.
 - The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) designed an assessment framework and tools for NAS-2021.
 - It provides a **system-level reflection on the effectiveness of school education**.
 - It **collects information on relevant background variables** such as school environment, teaching processes, and student home and background factors.

Note:

- It covers the whole spectrum of schools including Government schools (both State and Central government), Government-aided schools, and Private schools across India.
- **Medium and Grades:**
 - The **NAS 2021 was conducted in 22 mediums of instruction** that covered English, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Manipuri, Mizo, Punjabi, Odia, Telugu, Tamil, Bodo, Urdu, Garo, Konkani, Khasi, Bhutia, Nepali, and Lepcha.
 - It was conducted in different subjects for different grades. The subject and grades wise break up are below:
 - **Grade 3 and 5:** Language, EVS, and Mathematics
 - **Grade 8:** Language, Science, Mathematics, and Social Science
 - **Grade 10:** Language, Science, Mathematics, Social Science, and English
- **Objective:**
 - To **evaluate children's progress and learning competencies** as an indicator of the efficiency of the education system, so as to take appropriate steps for remedial actions at different levels.

What are the Key Highlights of the NAS 2021?

- **National Average:**
 - The national average **percentage of students for class third was 59%**, which declined by 10% to 49% in class fifth.
 - It further **declined to 41.9% in class eight and then 37.8% in class 10.**
 - The **performance recorded a decline in almost all subjects.**
 - For instance, the **mathematics score nationally was 57% in class third**, dropping by almost 10% to 44% in fifth, and to 36% in class eighth, and 32% in class 10th.
 - The **language score nationally was 62% in class third**, and dropped to 52% in class fifth, and to 53% in class eighth.
 - For science, the national score declined from 39% in class eighth to 35% in class 10.
- **Rural and Urban Areas:**
 - The **average performance of schools in rural areas remained "significantly below"** those urban areas in same states and union territories (UTs).

- **Social-Group Wise Performance:**
 - The performance of students from the **schedule caste (SC)/ schedule tribe (ST)/ Other Backward Classes (OBC)** categories **remained lower than that of students from the general category.**
- **Gender-wise Performance:**
 - The **average performance of girls remained better than the boys in almost all subjects** across the classes, both nationally and at state level.
- **Perception of Students about Learning:**
 - The perception of students about learning at home during the **pandemic** when the schools remained closed, and 78% of students termed it as burdensome with a lot of assignments.
 - **At least 38% of students faced difficulties** in learning at home, while 24% said they did not have digital devices at home.

MPLAD Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Finance has revised the **Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)** rules, where the interest that the fund accrues **will be deposited in the Consolidated Fund of India.**

- So far, the interest accrued on the **fund used to be added to the MPLADS account and could be used for the development projects.**

What is Consolidated Fund of India?

- All revenues received by the Government by way of taxes like Income Tax, Central Excise, Customs and other receipts flowing to the Government in connection with the conduct of Government business i.e. Non-Tax Revenues are credited into the Consolidated Fund constituted under **Article 266 (1) of the Constitution of India.**
- Similarly, all loans raised by the Government by issue of Public notifications, treasury bills (internal debt) and loans obtained from foreign governments and international institutions (external debt) are credited into this fund.
- All expenditure of the government is incurred from this fund and no amount can be withdrawn from the Fund without authorization from the Parliament.

Note:



drishti

What is MPLAD Scheme?

➤ About:

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** which was announced in December 1993.

➤ Objective:

- To enable **MPs to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets** in the areas of drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc. primarily in their Constituencies.
 - Since June 2016, the MPLAD funds can also be used for implementation of the schemes such as **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)**, conservation of water through rain water harvesting and **Sansad Aadarsh Gram Yojana**, etc.

➤ Implementation:

- The process under MPLADS starts with the Members of Parliament recommending works to the Nodal District Authority.
- The Nodal District concerned is responsible for implementing the eligible works recommended by the Members of Parliament and maintaining the details of individual works executed and amount spent under the Scheme.

➤ Functioning:

- Each year, **MPs receive Rs. 5 crore in two instalments of Rs. 2.5 crore each**. Funds under MPLADS are non-lapsable.
- Lok Sabha MPs have to recommend the district authorities projects in their Lok Sabha constituencies, while Rajya Sabha MPs have to spend it in the state that has elected them to the House.
- Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.

National Physical Literacy Mission

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** has asked the **Centre and States** to respond to a report **recommending sports**

to be expressly made a fundamental right under **Article 21 of the Constitution**.

- Further, the report submitted by the **court's amicus curiae** (friend of the court) suggested that the **"narrow" phrase 'sport' be replaced by 'physical literacy'**, which is a term "firmly established as a right in the leading sporting nations of the world".

What did the Report Suggest?

- **Responsibility Matrix:** Central Government should launch **'National Physical Literacy Mission'**.
 - The mission should implement a responsibilities' matrix that includes curriculum design, compliance monitoring, and review, grievance redressal and self-correction mechanisms which starts at the school level to groom children for various sports.
- **Dedicated Time for Sports:** All school boards including CBSE, ICSE, State Boards, IB, IGCSE should be directed to ensure that from the academic year commencing 2022-2023, at least 90 minutes of every school day will be dedicated to free play and games.
- **Sports Facilities for Free:** State governments ought to ensure that from the current academic year, all educational institutions in their non-working hours, should allow neighborhood children to use their playgrounds and sports facilities for free.
- **Draft 'Physical Literacy Policy':** A 180 days' time should be given to educational institutions to draft **'Physical Literacy Policy'**.
 - The policy will include the institution's commitment to a **'no-child-left-behind' approach**.
 - It should ensure that the institution's physical literacy activities are designed and delivered in a manner that is inclusive of students.
- **Internal Committee:** There is a need to create an internal committee to address specific cases where there is a failure in responsibilities to deliver the right to physical literacy of students.
- **Dashboard:** There is a need to create a dashboard with real time data on mapping of available playgrounds and open spaces and their utilization rates, availability and qualifications of physical education teachers, curricula, timetables, and equipment in educational institutions across the country.

Note:



drishti

World Press Freedom Index 2022

Why in News?

On the **World Press Freedom Day (WFPD)** (3rd May), the 20th edition of the **World Press Freedom Index** was published by **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**.

- **India ranked 150th** among the 180 countries.

What are the Highlights of the World Press Freedom Day?

- **About:**
 - The day was proclaimed by the **UN General Assembly in 1993**, following the recommendation of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991.
 - The day also marks the **1991 Windhoek Declaration (adopted by UNESCO)**.
 - It aimed **towards the 'development of a free, independent and pluralistic press'**.
- **Theme for 2022:**
 - Journalism under digital siege

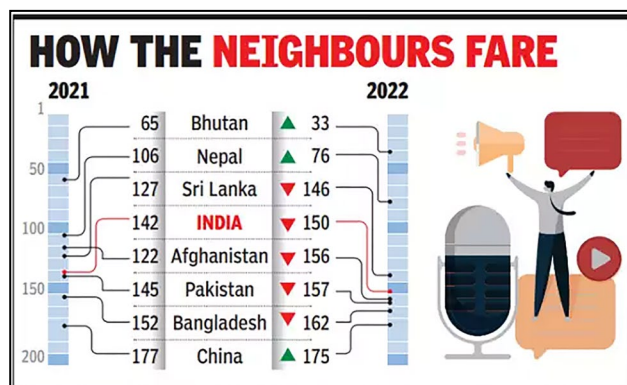
What is the World Press Freedom Index?

- **About:**
 - It has been **published every year since 2002** by Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) or Reporters Without Borders.
 - Based in Paris, **RSF is an independent NGO** with consultative status with the **United Nations, UNESCO**, the Council of Europe and the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF).
 - OIF is a 54 french speaking nations collective.
 - The Index ranks **countries and regions according to the level of freedom available to journalists**. However, it is **not an indicator on the quality of journalism**.
- **Scoring Criteria:**
 - The Index's rankings are **based on a score ranging from 0 to 100** that is assigned to each country or territory, with 100 being the best possible score (the highest possible level of press freedom) and 0 the worst.
- **Evaluation Criteria:**

- Each country or territory's score is **evaluated using five contextual indicators** : political context, legal framework, economic context, sociocultural context and safety.

What are the Highlights of the Performance of the World?

- **About:**
 - The report **reveals a two-fold increase in "polarisation"** amplified by information chaos, that is, media polarisation fuelling divisions within countries, as well as polarisation between countries at the international level.
- **Ranking of Countries:**
 - **Top and Worst Performers:**
 - **Norway (1st) Denmark (2nd), Sweden (3rd) Estonia (4th) and Finland (5th)** grabbed the top positions.
 - **North Korea remained at the bottom** of the list of the 180 countries.
 - **Russia was placed at 155th position.**
 - **India's Neighbours:**
 - Nepal has **climbed up by 30 points** in the global ranking at **76th position**.
 - The index placed **Pakistan at 157th position**, Sri Lanka 146th, Bangladesh 162nd and Myanmar at 176th position.
 - **China was ranked at 175th position.**



What about the Performance of India?

- **About:**
 - India has **fallen eight places from 142nd to 150th in the 2022** among the 180 countries.
 - India's position **has been consistently falling in the index since 2016** when it was ranked 133.

Note:

- The reasons behind fall in ranking is the **increased “violence against journalists”** and a **“politically partisan media”**.

PMFME Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and **NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited)** launched **Three One District One Product (ODOP) brands** under the **Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme**.

- The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has signed an agreement with NAFED for developing 10 brands of selected 20 ODOPs under the branding and marketing component of the PMFME scheme.

What is PMFME Scheme?

- **About:**
 - Launched under **Atmanirbhar Abhiyan** (in 2020), it aims **to enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro-enterprises** in the unorganised segment of the **food processing industry** and to promote formalisation of the sector and provide support to **Farmer Producer Organisations, Self Help Groups**, and Producers Cooperatives along their entire value chain.
 - The scheme **adopts the One District One Product (ODOP) approach** to reap the benefit of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.
 - It will be implemented over a period of **five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25**.
- **Features:**
 - **One District One Product (ODOP) Approach:**
 - The States would identify food products for districts keeping in view the existing clusters and availability of raw material.
 - The ODOP could be a perishable produce based or cereal based or a food item widely produced in an area. E.g. mango, potato, pickle, millet based products, fisheries, poultry, etc.
 - **Other Focus Areas:**
 - Waste to wealth products, minor forest products and **Aspirational Districts**.

- **Capacity building and research:** Academic and research institutions under MoFPI along with State Level Technical Institutions would be provided support for training of units, product development, appropriate packaging and machinery for micro units.

- **Financial Support:**

- Existing individual micro food processing units desirous of upgrading their units can avail **credit-linked capital subsidy at 35%** of the eligible project cost with a maximum ceiling of Rs.10 lakh per unit.
- Support would be provided through **credit linked grants at 35% for development of common infrastructure** including common processing facility, lab, warehouse, etc. through FPOs/SHGs/cooperatives or state owned agencies or private enterprise.
- A **seed capital (initial funding) of Rs. 40,000-per Self Help Group (SHG)** member would be provided for working capital and purchase of small tools.

- **Funding:**

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore.
- The expenditure under the scheme would be shared in 60:40 ratio between Central and State Governments, in 90:10 ratio with North Eastern and Himalayan States, 60:40 ratio with UTs with legislature and 100% by Centre for other UTs.

What is NAFED?

- **About:**

- It is an **apex organisation of marketing cooperatives** for agricultural produce in India.
- It was founded on **2nd October 1958** and is registered under the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002.
- NAFED is one of the largest procurement as well as marketing agencies for agricultural products in India.

BHARAT TAP Initiative

Why in News?

Recently, the Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs launched the **BHARAT TAP initiative** at the **‘Plumbex**

Note:

India' exhibition. This exhibition is aimed at products and services **related to the plumbing, water, and sanitation industry**.

- At the exhibition, NAREDCO (National Real Estate Development Council) MAHI's 'Nirmal Jal Prayas' initiative was also launched.

What is BHARAT TAP Initiative?

- It is a concept to use low flow tap and fixtures.
 - It will provide low-flow, sanitary-ware at scale, and thereby **reduce water consumption** at the source considerably.
- It is estimated to save approximately 40% of water. This will in turn result in water saving and energy saving due to less water and energy will be required for pumping, transporting, and purification.
- This initiative will also be accepted quickly in the country and will lead to a **renewed focus on water conservation efforts**.

What is NAREDCO MAHI?

- It seeks to help solve the global water crisis, removing the financial barriers that stand between people in need and **access to safe water and sanitation at home**.
 - Nirmal Jal Prayas' initiative will look into **mapping ground water** as it is very important to save underground water and will work to save 500 crore litres of water per year.
- The women wing of NAREDCO, was set up in 2021 with an aim to empower women entrepreneurs and encourage the **participation of women in the real estate sector** and allied fields.
 - It strives to create an environment where women in the real estate sector can come together to share experiences, harnesses their skills, draw on their resources, influence, grow and bring about lasting change.
 - Such an initiative in water conservation will be of immense importance to save water.

What are the other Initiatives for Water Conservation?

- **Swachh Bharat Mission:**
 - In contrast to the construction or supply led programs of the past (Central Rural Sanitation Programme), SBM is a demand-centric model. It

focuses on behaviour change to generate demand for sanitation services by the rural population which is then followed by supply.

➤ **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Transformation (AMRUT):**

- The purpose of this mission is to ensure that every household has access to a tap with an assured supply of water and a sewerage connection.
 - To ensure that every household has access to a tap with an assured supply of water and a sewerage connection.

➤ **AMRUT 2.0:**

- AMRUT 2.0 aims to provide 100% coverage of water supply to all households in around 4,700 ULBs (Urban Local Bodies).
- It also seeks to promote **Atmanirbhar Bharat** through encouraging Startups and Entrepreneurs (**Public Private Partnership**).

➤ **The National Aquifer Mapping and Management Program (NAQUIM):**

- It envisages mapping of aquifers (water-bearing formations), their characterization, and the development of Aquifer Management Plans to facilitate **sustainable management of groundwater** resources.

➤ **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act:**

- Aims to improve groundwater harvesting, build water conservation and storage mechanisms, and has enabled the government to introduce water conservation as a project under the Act.

➤ **Jal Kranti Abhiyan:**

- Active efforts to revolutionise villages and cities through block-level water conservation schemes.
- For example, the **Jal Gram Scheme** under it aimed at developing two model villages in water-starved areas for water conservation and preservation.

➤ **National Water Mission:**

- Aims to conserve water, minimise wastage and ensure more equitable distribution both across and within states through integrated water resources development and management.

➤ **NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index:**

- Aims to achieve effective utilization of water.

➤ **Jal Shakti Ministry and Jal Jeevan Mission:**

Note:

- Jal Shakti Ministry was formed to tackle water issues holistically.
- Jal Jeevan mission aims to provide piped water to all rural households by 2024.
- **Atal Bhujal Yojana:**
 - Central sector scheme for sustainable management of groundwater with community participation through the formation of Water User Associations, water budgeting, preparation and implementation of Gram-panchayat-wise water security plans, etc.
- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan:**
 - Launched in July 2019 as a campaign for water conservation and water security in the country.
- **National Water Awards:**
 - Organised by the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
 - Focus on the good work and efforts made by individuals and organisations across the country, and the government's vision for the path to **Jal Samridh Bharat**.

BCC Framework under SBM-U 2.0

Why in News?

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), has launched the '**National Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Framework for Garbage Free Cities**' to strengthen the ongoing jan andolan for 'Garbage Free Cities'.

What is the National Behaviour Change Communication Framework?

- The BCC Framework for Garbage Free Cities shall serve as a guiding document and blueprint for States and Cities to undertake large scale multimedia campaigns along with intensive and focused inter-personal communication campaigns.
- The framework focuses on intensifying messaging around the key focus areas of source segregation, collection, transportation, and processing of waste, plastic waste management, and remediation of legacy dumpsites to transform the urban landscape of India.

What is SBM-U 2.0?

➤ **About:**

- SBM-U 2.0, announced in **Budget 2021-22**, is the continuation of SBM-U first phase.
- It was **launched on 1st October 2021** to achieve the **vision of 'Garbage Free Cities'** over the next five years.
 - The government is also trying to tap safe containment, transportation, disposal of faecal sludge, and septage from toilets.
 - SBM-U first phase was launched on 2nd October 2014 aiming at making urban India **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** and achieving 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste. It lasted till October 2019.

➤ **Aim:**

- It focuses on source segregation of garbage, reduction in **single-use plastic** and air pollution, by effectively managing waste from construction and demolition activities and **bioremediation of all legacy dump sites**.

➤ **Mission Outcomes:**

- All statutory towns will become ODF+ certified (focuses on toilets with water, maintenance and hygiene).
- All statutory towns with less than 1 lakh population will become ODF++ certified (focuses on toilets with sludge and septage management).
- 50% of all statutory towns with less than 1 lakh population will become Water+ certified (aims to sustain toilets by treating and reuse of water).
- All statutory towns will be at least 3-star Garbage Free rated as per MoHUA's Star Rating Protocol for Garbage Free cities.
- Bioremediation of all legacy dumpsites.

MSME Sustainable (ZED) Certification Scheme

Why in News?

Ministry for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has launched the **MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) Sustainable (ZED-Zero Defect Zero Effect) Certification Scheme**.

Note:



drashti

What is the Scheme?

➤ About:

- This Scheme is an **extensive drive to enable and facilitate MSMEs adopt ZED practices** and motivate and incentivize them for ZED Certification while also encouraging them to become **MSME Champions**.
- MSME Sustainable (ZED) Certification can be attained in Three Levels after registering and taking the ZED Pledge:
 - Certification Level 1: **BRONZE**
 - Certification Level 2: **SILVER**
 - Certification Level 3: **GOLD**
- After taking the ZED Pledge, **the MSME can apply for any Certification Level** if it feels that it can fulfil the requirements mentioned in each level.
- The intent of taking a **ZED Pledge is to take a “pre-commitment” or a solemn promise by MSMEs to uphold the values of Zero Defect Zero Effect** in their practices and to urge them to move ahead on the journey of ZED.

➤ Subsidy:

- Under the Scheme, **MSMEs get subsidy as per the following structure, on the cost of ZED certification:**
 - **Micro Enterprises:** 80%
 - **Small Enterprises:** 60%
 - **Medium Enterprises:** 50%
- A provision of up to **Rs. 5 lakhs (per MSME)** will be **made available for handholding and consultancy support for MSMEs** under ZED Certification for assisting them to move towards Zero Defect Zero Effect solutions.
- The MSMEs can also avail themselves of several **other incentives offered for ZED Certification by States & UTs, Financial Institutions etc.** and can also apply for free Certification under the **MSME KAWACH (COVID-19 Support) initiative**.

What is Zero Defect Zero Effect Scheme?

➤ About:

- **Launched in 2016** by the Ministry of MSME, the scheme is an integrated and comprehensive certification system.
- The scheme **accounts for productivity, quality, pollution mitigation, energy efficiency, financial status, human resource** and technological depth including design and **IPR (Intellectual Property Rights)** in both products and processes.

➤ Zero Defect:

- The Zero-defect concept is focusing on the customer.
- Zero non-conformance or non-compliance
- Zero waste

➤ Zero Effect:

- Zero **air pollution**, liquid discharge, solid waste
- Zero wastage of natural resources.

Cyber Security

Why in News?

Recently, CERT-In has **asked all government and private agencies to mandatorily report cyber security breach incidents to it within six hours of noticing them.**

- CERT-In is empowered under **Section 70B of the Information Technology Act** to collect, analyse and disseminate information on cyber security incidents.

What is CERT-IN?

- **Computer Emergency Response Team** - India is an organisation of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology with the objective of securing Indian cyberspace.
- It is the nodal agency which deals with cybersecurity threats like hacking and phishing.
- It collects, analyses and disseminates information on cyber incidents, and also issues alert on cybersecurity incidents.

Indonesia's Palm Oil Export Ban & Its Impact on India

Why in News?

Recently, **Indonesia, the world's biggest producer, exporter, and consumer** of palm oil, has announced that it would be **banning all exports of the commodity** and its raw materials to reduce domestic shortages of cooking oil and bring down its rising prices.

- India meets half of its annual need for **8.3 million tons of palm oil** from Indonesia. Thus, an export ban will affect India's interests.

Note:

What is Palm Oil & Its Use?

- Palm oil is an edible vegetable oil derived from the **mesocarp (reddish pulp) of the fruit of the oil palms**.
- It is used as cooking oil, and in everything from **cosmetics, processed foods, cakes, chocolates, spreads, soaps, shampoo**, and cleaning products to biofuel.
 - The use of crude palm oil in making **biodiesel** is being branded as **'green diesel'**.
- Indonesia and Malaysia together account for almost **90% of the global palm oil production**, with Indonesia producing the largest quantity at over **45 million tonnes in 2021**.
- The oil palm industry has come under criticism for what are reportedly unsustainable production practices leading to **deforestation**, and **exploitative labor practices** carried forward from the colonial era.
 - However, **palm oil** is preferred by many as it is **inexpensive**, oil palms produce more oil per hectare than some other vegetable oil plants like **soybean**.

How Important is Palm Oil for Global Supply Chains?

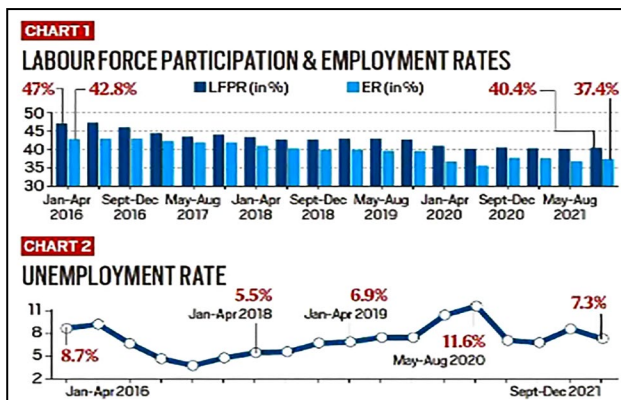
- Palm oil is the world's most widely used vegetable oil with its global production in the year 2020 being over **73 Million Tones (MT)**, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- According to Reuters, palm oil makes up **40% of the global supply of the four most widely used edible oils**: palm, soybean, rapeseed (canola), and sunflower oil.
- Indonesia is responsible for **60% of the global supply of palm oil**.

India's Labour Force Participation Rate

Why in News?

Recently, data from the **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)** shows that India's **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** has fallen to just **40%** from an already low **47%** in 2016.

- This suggests not only that more than **half of India's population in the working-age group (15 years and older)** is deciding to sit out of the job market, but also that this **proportion of people is increasing**.



What is LFPR?

- According to the CMIE, the labor force consists of people **who are 15 years or older**, and belong to either of the following two categories:
 - Are Employed
 - Are unemployed and are willing to work and are actively looking for a job.
- These two categories have people **"demanding" jobs**. This demand is what LFPR refers to.
- Thus, the LFPR essentially is the percentage of the **working-age (15 years or older) population that is asking for a job**.
 - It represents the "demand" for jobs in an economy.
 - It includes those who are employed and those who are unemployed.
- The **Unemployment Rate (UER)**, which is routinely quoted in the news, is **nothing but the number of unemployed (category 2) as a proportion of the labor force**.
- In India, the LFPR is not only lower than in the rest of the world but also falling.
 - In India, it has been sliding over the **last 10 years** and has **shrunk from 47% in 2016 to just 40% as of December 2021**.

What are Different Types of Unemployment in India:

- **Disguised Unemployment:** It is a phenomenon wherein **more people are employed than actually needed**.
 - It is primarily traced in the agricultural and the unorganized sectors of India.
- **Seasonal Unemployment:** It is unemployment that occurs **during certain seasons of the year**.

Note:

- Agricultural laborers in India rarely have work throughout the year.
- **Structural Unemployment:** It is a category of unemployment arising from the **mismatch between the jobs available in the market and the skills of the available workers** in the market.
 - Many people in India do not get jobs due to lack of requisite skills and due to poor education level, it becomes difficult to train them.
- **Cyclical Unemployment:** It is a result of the **business cycle, where unemployment rises during recessions and declines** with economic growth.
 - Cyclical unemployment figures in India are negligible. It is a phenomenon that is mostly found in capitalist economies.
- **Technological Unemployment:** It is the **loss of jobs due to changes in technology**.
 - In 2016, World Bank data predicted that the proportion of jobs threatened by automation in India is 69% year-on-year.
- **Frictional Unemployment:** Frictional Unemployment, also called Search Unemployment, refers to the **time lag between the jobs when an individual is searching for a new job** or is switching between jobs.
- **Vulnerable Employment:** This means people working informally, **without proper job contracts and thus lacking any legal protection**.
 - These **people are deemed 'unemployed'** since **records of their work are never maintained**.
 - It is one of the main types of unemployment in India.

Harnessing India's Tech Strength

Why in News?

Recently, an agreement has been signed between **CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research)** and **iCreate** to harness the **country's technological strength**.

What is iCreate?

- iCreate is **an autonomous centre of excellence of the Gujarat government** and is India's largest institution for transforming start-ups based on tech innovation into businesses.

What is CSIR?

- CSIR is known for its **cutting-edge Research & Development and Industrial knowledge base** in diverse S&T areas.
- CSIR has a **dynamic network of 37 national laboratories**, 39 outreach centres, one Innovation Complex, and three units with a pan-India presence.
 - CSIR has a patent portfolio of 8366 Indian patents and 7806 foreign patents.
- CSIR **covers a wide spectrum of science and technology** – from oceanography, geophysics, chemicals, drugs, genomics, biotechnology and nanotechnology to mining, aeronautics, instrumentation, environmental engineering and information technology.

What are the Highlights of MoU?

- Under the MoU, **CSIR and iCreate intend to establish a collaborative support system for promising tech start-ups** by making combined resources available for entrepreneurs and innovators in the country.
- The partnership **will also catalyse scientific innovation** and the marketability of high-tech start-ups.
 - **Fintech, neobanks, and e-commerce players make the most of the digital environment** and their enterprise can leverage it to the fullest as well and ride the digital boom.
- Further, iCreate will **help set up new incubators at identified CSIR labs**.
 - Such start-ups will access CSIR's equipment, facilities, and scientific manpower.
- CSIR will **provide intellectual property support** and explore methods of financially supporting innovative start-ups from India to boost emerging entrepreneurs.

Tamil Nadu Bill on Vice Chancellor in Universities

Why in News?

Recently, the **Tamil Nadu Assembly** passed two Bills that seek to **transfer the Governor's power in appointing Vice-Chancellors (VC)** of 13 state universities to the state government.

- Earlier, the Maharashtra and West Bengal Governments have made similar provisions vis-a-vis **the governor appointing Vice-Chancellor of the Universities**.

Note:

- In Karnataka, Jharkhand and Rajasthan, state laws underline the need for concurrence between the state and the Governor.
- The terms “**concurrence**” or “**consultation**” are absent from state legislation in most cases.

What are the Highlights of the two Bills?

- The Bills passed in Tamil Nadu stress that “**every appointment of the Vice-Chancellor shall be made by the Government from out of a panel of three names**” recommended by a **search-cum-selection committee**.
- Currently, the Governor, in his **capacity as the Chancellor of state universities**, has the power to pick a VC from the shortlisted names.
- The Bills also seek to empower the **state government to have the final word on the removal of VCs, if needed**.

What is the Role of Governors in State Universities?

- In most cases, the Governor of the state is the **ex-officio chancellor of the universities in that state**.
- While as **Governor he functions with the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**, as **Chancellor he acts independently** of the Council of Ministers and takes his own decisions on all University matters.
- **Case of Central Universities:**
 - Under the **Central Universities Act, 2009**, and other statutes, the **President** of India shall be the Visitor of a central university.
 - With their role limited to **presiding over convocations**, Chancellors in central universities are **titular heads**, who are appointed by the President in his capacity as Visitor.
 - The Vice Chancellor too is appointed by the **Visitor from panels of names picked by search and selection committees** formed by the Union government.

Phone Tapping in India

Why in News?

Recently, a political leader claimed that the Centre is protecting an **Indian Police Service** officer who is facing

a **First Information Report (FIR)** in Mumbai and is being probed for allegedly tapping the phones.

What is Phone Tapping and how are Phones Tapped in India?

- Phone tapping or cell phone tracking/tracing is an **activity where a user's phone calls, and other activities are tracked** using different software.
 - This procedure is majorly carried out without the targeted person being notified of any such activity.
- It can be done by authorities making a **request to the service provider**, which is bound by law, to record the conversations on the given number and provide these in real time through a connected computer.
- However, **Article 21** of the Indian Constitution says that “**No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.**”
 - The expression ‘**personal liberty**’ includes ‘**right to privacy**’. A citizen has a right to safeguard his personal privacy and his family, education, marriage, motherhood, childbearing, and procreation, among other matters.

Who can Tap Phones?

- **State Level:**
 - In the states, police have the power to tap phones.
- **Central Level:**
 - Intelligence Bureau, **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**, **Enforcement Directorate**, **Narcotics Control Bureau**, **Central Board of Direct Taxes**, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, **National Investigation Agency**, Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), Directorate of Signal Intelligence, **Delhi Police Commissioner**.

What are the Laws that govern Phone Tapping in India?

- **The Indian Telegraph Act, 1885:**
 - According to **Section 5(2) of the Act** on the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of public safety, phone tapping can be done by the Centre or states.

Note:



drishti

- The order can be issued if they are satisfied it is necessary in the interest of public safety, "sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence".

➤ **Exception for Press:**

- Press messages intended to be published in India of correspondents accredited to the Central Government or a State Government shall not be intercepted or detained, unless their transmission has been prohibited under this sub-section.
- The competent authority must record reasons for tapping in writing.

Who Authorizes Phone Tapping?

- Phone tapping is authorized by **Rule 419A of the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Rules, 2007.**
 - In the case of the Central Government: The order can be issued by an order made by the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 - In the case of a State Government: By the Secretary to the State Government in-charge of the Home Department.
- In Emergency Situation:
 - In such a situation, an order may be issued by an officer, not below the rank of a Joint Secretary of India, who has been authorized by the Union Home Secretary, or the State Home Secretary.
 - In remote areas or for operational reasons, if it is not feasible to get prior directions, a call can be intercepted with the prior approval of the head or the second senior-most officer of the authorized law enforcement agency at the central level, and by authorized officers, not below the rank of Inspector General of Police, at the state level.
 - The order must be communicated within three days to the competent authority, who must approve or disapprove it within seven working days.
 - If the confirmation from the competent authority is not received within the stipulated seven days, such interception shall cease.
- It can be noted here that in 2021, the Central Government notified the **Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2021.**

What are the Checks against Misuse?

- **Last Resort:**
 - The law is clear that interception must be ordered only if there is no other way of getting the information.
- **Renewal of Interception:**
 - The directions for interception remain in force, unless revoked earlier, for a period not exceeding 60 days.
 - They may be renewed, but not beyond a total of 180 days.
- **Destruction of Records:**
 - Under the rules, records pertaining to such directions shall be destroyed every six months unless these are, or are likely to be, required for functional requirements.

Global Centre for Traditional Medicine: Gujarat

Why in News?

Recently, the groundbreaking ceremony was performed for the first-of-its-kind **World Health Organization (WHO) Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM)** in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

- Additionally, the **Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit** will be held later this month in Gandhinagar which is aimed at increasing investments and showcase innovations in the field of traditional medicine.

What is the Purpose for establishing GCTM?

- **Integrating with Technological Advancements:**
 - The Centre aims to channel the potential of traditional medicine, by integrating it with technological advancements and evidence-based research.
- **Set Policies and Standards:**
 - It will seek to set policies and standards on traditional medicine products and help countries create a comprehensive, safe, and high-quality health system.
- **Support Efforts to Implement WHO Strategy:**

Note:



drishti

- It will **support efforts to implement the WHO's Traditional Medicine Strategy (2014-23)**.
 - It **aims to support nations in developing policies & action plans** to strengthen the role of traditional medicine in pursuing the goal of universal health coverage.
- According to WHO estimates, **80% of the world's population** uses traditional medicine.
- India has **committed an estimated USD 250 million to support the GCTM's** establishment, infrastructure and operations.

What is Traditional Medicine?

➤ About:

- According to the WHO, **traditional medicine is the total sum of the "knowledge, skills and practises indigenous** and different cultures have used over time to maintain health and prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental illness".
- Its **reach encompasses ancient practices** such as acupuncture, ayurvedic medicine and herbal mixtures as well as modern medicines.

➤ Traditional Medicine in India:

- In India, it is often **defined as including practices and therapies** — such as **yoga, Ayurveda, Siddha**.
 - These therapies and practices **have been part of Indian tradition historically as well as others** — such as homoeopathy — that became part of Indian tradition over the years.
- Ayurveda and yoga are practised widely across the country.
 - The Siddha system is followed predominantly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala
 - The Sowa-Rigpa system is practised mainly in Leh-Ladakh and Himalayan regions such as Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling, Lahaul & Spiti.

What are the Similar Collaborative Efforts taken by India Earlier?

➤ Project Collaboration Agreement (PCA) :

- In 2016, the Ministry of AYUSH signed a **Project Collaboration Agreement (PCA)** with the WHO in the area of traditional medicine.
 - The aim **was to create benchmarks for training** in yoga, Ayurveda, Unani and Panchakarma, for traditional medicine practitioners.

- The collaboration also aimed at **promoting the quality and safety of traditional medicine** and consumer protection by supporting WHO in the development and implementation of the WHO Traditional and Complementary Medicine Strategy.

Award for Excellence to UDAN Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the **UDAN (UdeDeshkaAamNagrik)** Scheme has been selected for **Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2020** under the category "Innovation (General) – Central".

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation will receive the award on **21st April, i.e. Civil Service Day**. The government of India celebrates Civil Services Day, every year as an **occasion for the civil servants to rededicate themselves** to the cause of serving citizens and renew their commitments to public service and excellence in work.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation plans and commits to **construct 100 new airports by 2024 in India with 1,000 new routes under UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) scheme by the year 2026**.

What is the PMs Award for Excellence in Public Administration?

➤ About:

- It was constituted in 2006 by the Government of India **to acknowledge, recognize and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done** by districts and organisations of the Central and State Governments.
- The award consists of a **trophy, scroll and an incentive of Rs. 10 lakh to the awarded district or organisation** to be utilised for implementation of project/ programme or bridging resource gaps in any area of public welfare.

➤ Restructuring:

- The Scheme was restructured in **2014** for recognizing the **performance of District Collectors in Priority Programs, Innovations and Aspirational Districts**.

Note:



drishti

- The Scheme was restructured again in **2020**, to **recognize the performance of District Collectors towards economic development of the District.**
- The Scheme has been **revamped** with a new approach in **2021** with the **objective to encourage Constructive Competition, Innovation, Replication and Institutionalisation of Best Practices.**
 - Under this approach emphasis would be on **good governance, qualitative achievement and last mile connectivity**, rather than only on achievement of quantitative targets.

What is the UDAN Scheme?

- **Launch:**
 - It was launched as a RCS under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in **2016**.
- **Objectives:**
 - To develop the **regional aviation market.**
 - To provide affordable, economically viable and profitable air travel on **regional routes to the common man even in small towns.**
- **Features:**
 - The scheme **envisages providing connectivity to un-served and underserved airports of the country through the revival of existing air-strips and airports.** The scheme is operational for a period of 10 years.
 - Under-served airports are those which do not have more than one flight a day, while unserved airports are those where there are no operations.

What are the Phases of UDAN?

- **UDAN 1.0:**
 - Under this phase, **5 airlines companies were awarded 128 flight routes to 70 airports** (including 36 newly made operational airports).
- **UDAN 2.0:**
 - In 2018, the Ministry of Civil Aviation announced **73 underserved and unserved airports.**
 - For the first time, helipads were also connected **under phase 2 of the UDAN scheme.**
- **UDAN 3.0:**
 - Inclusion of Tourism Routes under UDAN 3 in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism.

- Inclusion of **Seaplanes for connecting Water Aerodromes.**
- Bringing in a number of routes in the North-East Region under the ambit of UDAN.

➤ UDAN 4.0:

- In 2020, **78 new routes were approved under the 4th round of RCS-UDAN** to further enhance the connectivity to remote & regional areas of the country.
- Kavaratti, Agatti, and Minicoy islands of Lakshadweep will be connected by the new routes of UDAN 4.0.

➤ UDAN 4.1:

- The **UDAN 4.1 focuses on connecting smaller airports**, along with special helicopter and seaplane routes.
- Some new routes have been proposed under the **Sagarmala Seaplane services.**
 - Sagarmala Seaplane Services is an ambitious project under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways with potential airline operators.

40th Hunar Haat

Why in News

Recently, the 40th edition of the '**Hunar Haat**' was inaugurated in **Mumbai**. In this edition, more than a thousand craftsmen and artisans coming from **31 states and Union Territories** participated.

What are Key Points Associated with Hunar Haat?

- **About:**
 - Hunar Haat has been conceptualized **to protect and promote the country's ancestral legacy of arts and crafts** in the current global competition and to support the traditional artisans and craftsmen.
 - The artisans selected in the Hunar Haat exhibition are those whose **forefathers were involved in such traditional handmade work** and are still continuing the profession.
- **Theme:**
 - **Vocal for Local** and "Best from Waste".
- **Aim:**
 - To provide market **exposure and employment opportunities** to artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts.

Note:

- **Boosting the skills** of craftsmen, weavers and artisans who are already engaged in the traditional ancestral work.
- **Organizer:**
 - These are organized by the Ministry of Minority Affairs under **USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development) scheme**.
 - The USTTAD scheme aims to promote and preserve the rich heritage of the traditional arts & crafts of the minority communities.

e-DAR Portal

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Roads, Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** developed the portal named '**e-DAR' (e-Detailed Accident Report)**.

- The portal provides **instant information on road accidents** and helps accelerate accident compensation claims, bringing relief to victims' families.

What is the Status of Road Accidents in India?

- It kills more than **1.35 million globally as reported in the Global Status report on Road Safety 2018** with 90% of these casualties taking place in the developing countries and 11% alone being accounted for by India.
- As per the **Report on Road accidents in India 2019**, the accident related deaths in India in 2019 were **1,51,113 in number**.

What are Other Initiatives Related to Road Safety?

- **Global Level:**
 - **Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety (2015):**
 - The **declaration** was signed at the second Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety held in Brazil. India is a signatory to the Declaration.
 - The countries plan to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goal 3.6** i.e. half the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030.
 - **UN Global Road Safety Week:**
 - It is celebrated every two years, the sixth edition (held from 17th to 23rd May 2021) highlighted the need for strong leadership for road safety.

- The International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP):
 - It is a registered charity dedicated to saving lives through safer roads.

India:

- **Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019:**
 - The **Act** hikes the penalties for traffic violations, defective vehicles, juvenile driving, etc.
 - It provides for a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, which would provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India for certain types of accidents.
 - It also provides for a National Road Safety Board, to be created by the Central Government through a notification.
 - It also provides for the protection of good samaritans.
- **The Carriage by Road Act, 2007:**
 - The Act provides for the regulation of common carriers, limiting their liability and declaration of the value of goods delivered to them to determine their liability for loss of, or damage to, such goods occasioned by the negligence or criminal acts of themselves, their servants or agents and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

National Panchayati Raj Day

Why in News?

India commemorates the 12th National Panchayati Raj day on 24th April 2022.

- The Prime Minister has launched the distribution of **e-property cards under the SWAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) scheme** on the Day.

What is National Panchayati Raj Day?

- **Background:**
 - The first National Panchayati Raj Day was celebrated in 2010. Since then, the National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated on 24th April every year in India.
 - The day **marks the enactment of the 73rd amendment of the constitution in 1992**.
- **Awards Presented on the Day:**
 - The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been awarding the best performing Panchayats/States/UTs across the country in recognition of their good work.

Note:



drishti

What is Panchayati Raj?

- **Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI)** was constitutionalized through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 to build democracy at the grass roots level and was entrusted with the task of rural development in the country.
- PRI is a system of rural local self-government in India.
- To strengthen e-Governance in PRIs across the country, **the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)** has launched eGramSwaraj, a user-friendly web-based portal.
 - Its combination with the Area Profiler application, Local Government Directory (LGD) and the **Public Financial Management System (PFMS)** renders easier reporting and tracking of Gram Panchayat's activities.

Rules for Resignation and Reinstatement of an Officer

Why in News?

Recently, an **Indian Administrative Service (IAS)** officer who resigned from the service in protest against the “unabated” killings in Kashmir in 2019, has been reinstated.

What are the Rules regarding the Resignation of IAS officers?

- The resignation of an officer of any of the three **All-India Services** is governed by **Rules 5(1) and 5(1)(A)** of the All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958.

What is the Meaning of Resignation by an Officer?

- **About:**
 - A resignation is a **formal intimation in writing** by an officer of his/her intention or a proposal to leave the IAS, either immediately or at a specified date in the future.
 - A resignation **has to be clear and unconditional**.

What is the Process after the Resignation is Submitted?

- **At State Level:**
 - The state checks to see if **any dues are outstanding against the officer**, as well as the vigilance status

of the officer or whether any cases of corruption etc. are pending against him/her.

➤ At Central Level:

- The resignation of the officer is **considered by the competent authority**, i.e., the central government, only after the recommendation of the concerned cadre has been received.
- As Minister in Charge of the DoPT, the **Prime Minister** makes decisions regarding the IAS.

What about the Withdrawal of a Resignation after Submission?

- According to **Rule 5(1A)(i) of the amended DCRB Rules**, the central government may permit an officer to withdraw his/her resignation “**in the public interest**”.
- The **period of absence from duty** between the date on which the resignation became effective and the date on which the member is allowed to resume duty as a result of permission to withdraw the resignation is **not more than ninety days**.

Gratuity For Anganwadi Workers

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** held that **anganwadi workers** were entitled to gratuity, a basic social security measure.

What was the Supreme Court's Judgement?

- The Court recognized their right to be paid gratuity under the **Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972**.
- The court **underscored that it was time for the Centre and the States to “collectively consider”** bettering the service conditions of anganwadi workers and helpers.
- It also said that the **Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)** deserved far greater attention in public policy.

Who are Anganwadi Workers?

- Anganwadi is a **centrally sponsored scheme** implemented by the States / UTs which serves as a rural child and maternal care centre in India.
- It was **started by the Government of India in 1975** as part of the **ICDS** program to combat child hunger and malnutrition.

Note:



drishti

- Anganwadi centers provide a package of six services: **supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, immunization, health check-up, nutrition and health education, and referral services.**

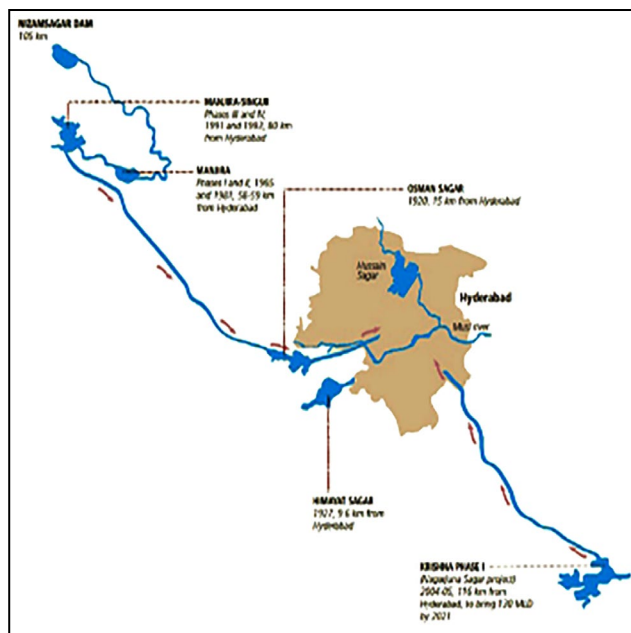
What is Gratuity?

- Gratuity is a benefit that is payable under the **Payment of Gratuity Act 1972.**
- Gratuity is a **financial component** offered by an employer to an employee in recognition of his/her service rendered to an organization.
 - It is a part of the **salary an employee** receives and can be viewed as a benefit plan designed to aid an individual in his/her retirement.
- Gratuity is paid by an employer when an employee leaves the job after serving the same organization for a **minimum period of 5 years.**
 - One can consider it to be a **financial "Thank you"** to an employee for rendering continuous service to an employer.

GO 111

Why in News?

Environmentalists and activists are criticizing the Telangana government for withdrawing an over 25-year-old government order (GO) 111 protecting the historic Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar reservoirs in Hyderabad, which they say will destroy the fragile surrounding ecosystem.



What was the government order that protected the two lakes?

- On 8th March, 1996, the government of erstwhile (undivided) Andhra Pradesh had issued **GO 111 prohibiting development or construction works in the catchment area of the Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar lakes** up to a radius of 10 km.
- The GO prohibited the setting up of industries, residential colonies, hotels, etc. which cause pollution.

When and why were these reservoirs constructed?

- The reservoirs were created by **building dams on the Musi** (also known as Moosa or Muchkunda) river, a **major tributary of the Krishna**, to protect Hyderabad from floods.
- The proposal to build the dams came after a major flood during the reign of the sixth nizam Mahbub Ali Khan (1869-1911) in 1908, in which more than 15,000 people were killed.

Why has the government withdrawn GO 111?

- The city **no longer depends on these two reservoirs** for water supply, and there was no need to continue with the restrictions on development in the catchment radius.
- Hyderabad's drinking water **requirement has increased to more than 600 Million Gallons per Day (MGD), which is being drawn from other sources** including the Krishna river.

Krishna River

- **Source:** It originates near Mahabaleshwar (Satara) in Maharashtra. It is the second biggest river in peninsular India after the Godavari River.
- **Drainage:** It runs from four states Maharashtra (303 km), North Karnataka (480 km) and the rest of its 1300 km journey in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh before it empties into the Bay of Bengal.
- **Tributaries:** Tungabhadra, Mallaprabha, Koyna, Bhima, Ghataprabha, Yerla, Warna, Dindi, Musi and Dudhganga.

Front of Package Labelling (FOPL) System

Why in News?

Recently, **40 global health experts claimed** that the "health star rating" system that the **Food Safety Standards**

Note:

Authority of India (FSSAI) plans to adopt to help consumers reduce their intake of unhealthy foods is “**not evidence-based**” and has failed to alter buyer behavior.

- FSSAI is an autonomous statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSS Act).

What is Health

Star Rating (HSR) System?

- Health-star rating system gives a product 1/2 a star to 5 stars.
- The HSR format ranks a packaged food item based on salt, sugar, and fat content and the rating will be printed on the front of the package.
- The rating will be the **first such in India**, a country burdened with lifestyle diseases, and is aimed at guiding consumers to opt for healthy food.

What is a

Front-of-Pack (FoP) Labelling System?

- FoP labelling system has **long been listed as one of the global best practices** to nudge consumers into healthy food choices.
 - It works **just the way cigarette packets are labelled** with images to discourage consumption.
- As India is experiencing a dietary shift, with people increasingly consuming more processed and ultra-processed foods and a burgeoning market, these factors prompt the need for FoP labelling for India.
 - It will play a handy **role in fighting increasing obesity and many non-communicable diseases**.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** defines FoP labels as nutrition labelling systems that are presented on the front of food packages in the principal field of vision, and present simple, often graphic information on the nutrient content or nutritional quality of products.
 - To complement the more detailed nutrient declarations provided on the back of food packages.
- The **Codex Alimentarius Commission** mentions that “FoP labelling is designed to assist in interpreting nutrient declarations”.

Olga Tellis Case 1985

Why in News?

Recently, the Constitution Bench judgment of the **Supreme Court** in **Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal**

Corporation, in 1985 case, held that pavement dwellers are different from trespassers may become a game-changer in the **Jahangirpuri (Delhi) case**.

What was the Supreme Court's

Judgement in Olga Tellis vs

Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1985 Case?

- The **Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation judgment in 1985** ruled that eviction of pavement dwellers using unreasonable force, without giving them a chance to explain is unconstitutional.
 - It is a violation of their **right to livelihood**.
- The court had emphatically **objected to authorities treating pavement dwellers as mere trespassers**.
 - “They (pavement dwellers) manage to find a habitat in places which are mostly filthy or marshy, out of sheer helplessness.”

Midday Meal

Scheme (PM Poshan Scheme)

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Finance has approved a hike of 9.6 % cooking cost per child under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

What is the Midday Meal Scheme?

- **About:**
 - The Midday meal scheme (under the Ministry of Education) is a **centrally sponsored scheme** which was launched in 1995.
 - Provides cooked meals to every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII who enrolls and attends the school.
 - In 2021, it was renamed as ‘**Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman**’ scheme (**PM Poshan Scheme**) and it also covers students of balvatikas (children in the 3–5-year age group) from pre-primary classes.
- **Objective:**
 - Address hunger and **malnutrition**, increase enrolment and attendance in school, improve socialisation among castes, provide employment at grassroot level especially to women.
- **Quality Check:**

Note:



drishti

- **AGMARK** quality items are procured, tasting of meals by two or three adult members of the school management committee.
- **Food Security:**
 - If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month.
- **Coverage:**
 - All government and government aided schools, Madarsa and Maqtabas supported under the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**.
 - The scheme covers **11.80 crore children across Classes 1 to 8** (age group 6 to 14) in 11.20 lakh government and government-aided schools and those run by local bodies such as the municipal corporations in Delhi under the provisions of the **National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)**.

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

Why in News?

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has approved continuation of the revamped **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) for implementation during the period from **1st April 2022 to 31st March 2026**.

- The scheme is aimed to **develop governance capabilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)**.

What is Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)?

- **Background:** The scheme was first approved by the **Cabinet in 2018** for implementation from 2018-19 to 2021-22.
- **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- **Components:** The main Central Components were **Incentivisation of Panchayats** and Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat including other activities at Central level.
- **Objectives:** It envisaged developing governance capabilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to deliver on the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

- The key principles of SDGs, i.e. leaving no one behind, reaching the farthest first and universal coverage, along with gender equality will be embedded in the design of all capacity building interventions including training, training modules and materials.
- **Funding Pattern:** The revamped **RGSA will comprise Central and State components**. The Central Components of the scheme will be fully funded by the Government of India.
 - The funding pattern for State Components will be in the ratio of 60:40 among Centre and States respectively, except NE, **Hilly States and Union Territory (UT) of J&K where Central and State share will be 90:10**.
 - However, for other UTs, **Central share will be 100%**.
- **Vision:** It is an effort in the direction of achieving "**Sabka Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas**".

SC Upheld FCRA Amendments

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court (SC)** upheld the constitutional validity of the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act (FCRA), 2020**.

- It held that receiving foreign donations **cannot be an absolute right** and can be **regulated by the Parliament**.
- In 2020, the Indian government had proposed amendments to the FCRA, which **imposed new restrictions on how Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)**, individuals, and other organisations could receive or use funds contributed from abroad.

What are the Highlights of the Judgements?

- **Medicine vs Intoxicant Metaphor:** Foreign Contributions serves as a **medicine** so long as it is consumed (utilised) moderately and discreetly.
 - However, **free and uncontrolled flow of foreign contribution can act as an intoxicant** that has the potential of **impacting the sovereignty and integrity of the nation**.
- **Imposing Political Ideology:** The SC underlined that foreign contributions **may tend to influence or impose political ideology**.

Note:

- Thus, FCRA amendments are **essentially conceived in the interest of public order** as the intent is to prevent misuse of donations coming from foreign sources.

- **Upholding Legislation:** In this scenario, it had become necessary for Parliament to step in and provide a **stringent regime for effectively regulating the inflow and utilisation of foreign contribution.**

What is Foreign

Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010?

- Foreign funding of persons in India is regulated under FCRA act and is implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs.**
 - Individuals are permitted to accept foreign contributions without permission of MHA.
 - However, the **monetary limit** for acceptance of such foreign contributions shall be less than **Rs. 25,000.**
- The Act ensures that the **recipients of foreign contributions adhere to the stated purpose** for which such contribution has been obtained.
- Under the Act, organisations are **required to register themselves every five years.**

What were the

Amendments done in the Act?

- **Prohibition to accept foreign contribution:** It bars public servants from receiving foreign contributions.
- **Transfer of foreign contribution:** It prohibits the transfer of foreign contribution to any other person.
- **Aadhaar for registration:** **Aadhaar number** is mandatory for all office bearers, directors or key functionaries of a person receiving foreign contribution, as an identification document.
- **FCRA account:** The foreign contribution must be received **only in an account designated by the bank as FCRA account** in such branches of the State Bank of India, New Delhi.
- **Restriction in utilisation of foreign contribution:** It allowed the government to restrict usage of unutilised foreign contribution.
- **Administrative Capping:** While NGOs earlier could use up to 50% funds for administrative use, the new amendment restricted this use to **20%.**

Dispute over Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal

Why in News?

Recently, the Haryana Vidhan Sabha has passed a resolution seeking completion of the **Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal.**

- The canal, once completed, will **enable sharing of the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas** between Haryana and Punjab.

What is the Background?

- **2020:**
 - **SC directed the Chief Ministers of both states to negotiate and settle the SYL canal issue** at the highest political level to be mediated by the Centre.
 - Punjab has asked for a tribunal for fresh time-bound assessment of the water availability.
 - Punjab holds that there has been no adjudication or scientific assessment of river waters in the state till date.
 - The **availability of Ravi-Beas water has also come down** from the estimated 17.17 MAF in 1981 to 13.38 MAF in 2013. A fresh tribunal would ascertain all this.

What are the Key Highlights about Sutlej and Yamuna River?

- **Sutlej:**
 - The ancient name of **Sutlej River is Zaradros (Ancient Greek) Shutudri or Shatadru (Sanskrit).**
 - It is the **longest of the five tributaries of the Indus River** that give the Punjab (meaning "Five Rivers") its name.
 - Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Satluj are main tributaries of Indus.
 - It rises on the **north slope of the Himalayas** in Lake La'nga in southwestern Tibet.
 - Sutlej River meets the Beas River in Harike in the Ferozpur district before entering Pakistan.
 - The combined rivers then form the Panjnad, the link between the Five Rivers and the Indus.
 - **Luhri Stage-I Hydro Electric Project** is located on River Satluj in Shimla and Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh.

Note:



drishti

- **Yamuna:**
 - **Source:** The river Yamuna, a **major tributary of river Ganges**, originates from the Yamunotri glacier near Bandarpooch peaks in the Mussoorie range of the lower Himalayas at an elevation of about 6387 meters above mean sea level in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.
 - **Basin:** It meets the Ganges at the Sangam (where **Kumbh mela** is held) in **Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh** after flowing through **Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi**.
 - **Important Dam:** Lakhwar-Vyasi Dam (Uttarakhand), Tajewala Barrage Dam (Haryana) etc.
 - **Important Tributaries:** **Chambal, Sindh, Betwa and Ken**.

Supreme Court Strikes Down Vanniyar quota

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court struck down the 10.5% internal reservation to Vanniyakula Kshatriya community in Tamil Nadu**.

What did the Supreme Court Held?

- The Supreme Court held that 10.5% internal reservation to Vanniyakula Kshatriya community **violates the fundamental rights of equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunity** of 115 other **Most Backward Communities (MBCs) and De-Notified Communities (DNCs)** in Tamil Nadu.
- The allotment of 10.5% reservation to a single community from within the **total Most Backward Classes (MBC) quota of 20% in the State**, leaving only 9.5% to 115 other communities in the MBC category, was **without «substantial basis»**.
- Further, the court said there was **no assessment or analysis done prior to the 2021 Act** to back the claim that the Vanniyakula Kshatriyas were relatively more backward than the other MBCs and DNCs.

What is Vanniyakula Kshatriya Reservation?

- Reservation in Tamil Nadu **comprises 69% under a 1994 Act** protected under the **Ninth Schedule of the Constitution**.

- Out of the 69%, backward classes, including Christians and Muslims, get 30%, MBCs get 20%, Scheduled Castes 18%, and Scheduled Tribes 1%
- The Vanniyakula Kshatriya reservation was provided under the State within the reservation for the **Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities Act, 2021**.
- Vanniyakula Kshatriya (including **Vanniar, Vanniya, Vannia Gounder, Gounder or Kander, Padayachi, Palli and Agnikula Kshatriya**) community.
- The **second Tamil Nadu Backward Commission in 1983**, held that the population of Vanniyakula Kshatriyas was found to be 13.01% of the State's total population.
- Therefore, provision of **10.5% reservation to a community with a population of 13.01% could not be called disproportionate**.

Digital Platform FASTER

Why in News?

Recently, **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** launched the digital platform **FASTER (Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records)**.

- The Supreme Court has also launched other programs involving technology like **Artificial Intelligence (AI) based portal 'SUPACE'** in the judicial system aimed at assisting judges with legal research.
- **eCourts Mission Mode Project** is a pan-India Project, monitored and funded by the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, for the District Courts across the country.
 - The objective of the project is to provide designated services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary through ICT enablement of courts.

What is a FASTER Digital Platform?

- **About:**
 - It is a **digital platform to communicate interim orders, stay orders, bail orders etc.**, of the **Supreme Court** to authorities concerned through a secured electronic communication channel.
- **Need:**
 - There have been **cases where jail inmates are not released despite bail orders** passed by the Supreme Court due to delay in communication of such orders.

Note:

- So, it was needed to utilise information and communication technology tools for efficient transmission of court's orders.

Merger of Film Bodies under National Film Development Corporation

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** announced the **merger of four film media units**, including the Films Division, Directorate of Film Festivals, National Film Archive of India, and Children's Film Society of India with the **National Film Development Corporation**.

- The decision is in line with **Bimal Julka-led expert committee's (2020) report** on rationalisation, closure and merger of film media units.

What are the Key Points?

➤ About the Four Film Media Units:

- **Films Division:**
 - It was **established in 1948** and is the **oldest of the four units**.
 - It was **created primarily to produce documentaries and news magazines** as publicity for government programmes and to keep a cinematic record of Indian history.
- **Directorate of Film Festivals:**
 - Set up under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in 1973 by the Government of India, it is entrusted with the **objective of promoting Indian films**.
 - DFF also strives to promote inter-cultural understanding through film-based cultural exchanges.
- **National Film Archives of India:**
 - The National Film Archives of India was established in 1964 with the primary objective of acquiring and preserving Indian cinematic heritage.
- **Children's Film Society of India:**
 - CFSI started functioning in 1955 as an **autonomous body under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.

- CFSI promotes films that provide **healthy and wholesome entertainment** for children to broaden their perspective and encourage them to reflect on the world around.

➤ About NFDC:

- **National Film Development Corporation (NFDC)** is a **Public Sector Undertaking (PSU)** working under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** which was **established in 1975** with a view to **promote and organize an integrated development** of the Indian Film Industry and to foster excellence in cinema.
- It is currently headed by **Ravinder Bhakar**, who is also the chief executive officer of the **Central Board of Film Certification**.

SVANidhi se Samriddhi

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has launched '**SVANidhi se Samriddhi**' program in additional 126 cities across 14 States/ UTs.

- **Quality Council of India (QCI)** is the implementing partner for the program.

What is SVANidhi se Samriddhi?

➤ About:

- It is an **additional program of PMSVANidhi**, launched on 4th January 2021 in 125 cities to **map the socio economic profile of the PM SVANidhi beneficiaries and their families**.
- It assesses beneficiaries' potential eligibility for various Central welfare schemes (8) and facilitates the linkages to these schemes.
 - These schemes include **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana**, **PM Suraksha Bima Yojana**, **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana**, **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana**, **Registration under Building and other Constructions Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act (BOCW)**, **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** portability benefit – **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)**, **Janani Suraksha Yojana**, and **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**.

Note:



drishti

➤ **Coverage:**

- In Phase 1, it covered approximately 35 Lakh Street vendors and their families.
- Phase 2 aims to cover 28 Lakh Street vendors and their families, with a total target of 20 Lakh scheme sanctions for FY 2022-23. The remaining cities would be gradually added to the program.

➤ **Achievements:**

- In the year 2020-21 (despite challenges posed due to Covid-19 pandemic), the program was successful in providing social security benefits to the street vendor families and thereby protecting them from any risks and vulnerabilities of life and livelihoods.
- The program has **two-fold achievements**:
 - One, **a central database of Street vendors and their families is created** on various socio-economic indicators.
 - Second, **a first of its kind inter-ministerial convergence platform is established between various Central Ministries** to extend the safety net of welfare schemes to street vendor households.

What is PM SVANidhi Scheme?➤ **About:**

- Prime Minister Street Vendors AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) was announced as a part of the **Economic Stimulus-II under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.
- It has been implemented since 1st June 2020, for providing affordable working capital loans to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to **Covid-19 lockdowns**, with a sanctioned budget of Rs. 700 crore.

➤ **Aims:**

- To benefit over 50 lakh street vendors who had been vending on or before 24th March 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/rural areas.
- To promote digital transactions through cash-back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 1,200 per annum.

➤ **Features:**

- The vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly installments in the tenure of one year.

- On timely/early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy of 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on a quarterly basis.
- There will be no penalty on early repayment of the loan. The vendors can avail the facility of the enhanced credit limit on timely/early repayment of the loan.

Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the Government of India introduced in the Lok Sabha the **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022**.

- The bill envisages to **prohibit financing of any activity in relation to WMD** and to **empower to act against financiers of such activities**.
- This Act of Parliament received the assent of the President on the 6th August, 2022.

What are the highlights of the Bill?

- **Background:** The bill seeks to modify the **Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005**.
 - This Act **covers unlawful activities relating to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems**.
 - It also provides for **integrated legal measures** to exercise controls over the export of materials, equipment and technologies in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and for prevention of their transfers to non-State actors or terrorists.
- **Objectives of the Bill:** The Bill aims to achieve three objectives:
 - **Prohibit financing** of activities linked to WMD.
 - Empower the **Centre to freeze, seize or attach funds**, financial assets or economic resources for preventing such financing.

Note:

- **Prohibit making available funds**, financial assets or economic resources for any prohibited activity in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

What are Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)?

- These are weapons with the **capacity to inflict death and destruction** on such a massive scale and so indiscriminately that its very presence in the hands of a hostile power can be considered a grievous threat.
- Modern weapons of mass destruction are either **nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons**—frequently referred to collectively as **NBC weapons**.
- The term weapons of mass destruction has been in currency **since at least 1937**, when it was used to describe **massed formations of bomber aircraft**.
 - For example, **Nuclear bombs used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki attack in Japan**.
- Efforts to control the spread of WMD are enshrined in international agreements such as:
 - **Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of 1968**
 - **Biological Weapons Convention of 1972**
 - **Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993**
- **India has not signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, but is signatory to both Biological Weapons Convention and Chemical Weapons Convention.**

Tour of Duty Scheme

Why in News?

The **Department of Military Affairs** is moving towards finalising the “**Tour of Duty (ToD)**” scheme.

- Under this scheme, **youngsters will be recruited as soldiers only for three years**.
- This is being done in the backdrop of the urgent need **to curb the ballooning salary and pension bills** that are adversely impacting military modernization.

What is the “Tour of Duty (ToD)” scheme?

- **Background:** The scheme was being **pushed by the late Chief Of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat**.
- **About:** It involves recruiting soldiers, which will be called **Agniveers**, for a fixed period of three years.
 - It will be a **voluntary engagement**.

- It is also known as the **Agnipath entry scheme**.
- It is for youths who “**do not want to make defence services their permanent vocation, but still want to experience the thrill and adventure of military professionalism**”.

- **Benefits to Soldiers:** The soldiers would be given a **payout** along with **priority in recruitment to certain government jobs**, including the **central armed police forces**.
- An effort is also on to **nudge corporate India** into hiring such **ex-ToD recruits for specific lines of work** in the private sector on a priority basis.
 - **Benefits to Government:** ‘Tour of Duty’, will help not only resolve the **issue of shortages of personnel but also reduce the burden of pay rises and pensions**.
- As per the original ToD proposal, the “prospective life-term saving” in the cost of engagement of a single jawan who leaves after **17 years of service with pension and other benefits**, as compared to a ToD jawan will be **Rs 11.5 crore**.
- The cumulative money saved in **pay and gratuity payouts can consequently be used for the much-needed military modernization**.

One Health

Why in News?

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has launched a **pilot project in the state of Uttarakhand to implement the One Health Framework by One Health Support Unit**.

- The key objective of the Unit is **to develop a national One Health roadmap based on the learnings of the pilot project implementation**.

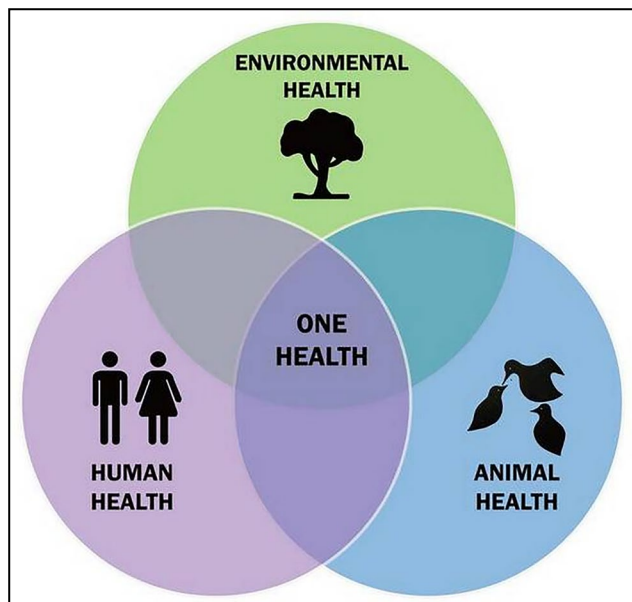
What is the One Health Concept?

- **About:**
 - One Health is an approach that recognizes that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment.
 - One Health’ vision derives its blueprint from the agreement between the tripartite-plus alliance

Note:

comprising the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**, the **World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)**.

- It's purpose is to encourage collaborations in research and sharing of knowledge at multiple levels across various disciplines like human health, animal health, plants, soil, environmental and ecosystem health in ways that improve, protect and defend the health of all species.



Mission Integrated Bio-refineries

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of State Science & Technology launched a major futuristic **PPP (Public Private Participation)** mode initiative for 'Clean Energy' with the full launch of "**Mission Integrated Bio-refineries**".

- **Material Acceleration Platforms (MAP)** set up by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** were also launched which will leverage emerging capabilities in next-generation computing, **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and machine learning, and **robotics** to accelerate the pace of materials discovery up to 10 times faster.

What is the Mission Integrated Bio-refineries?

- The Mission is **Co-led by India and the Netherlands**. Also involved are Brazil and Canada as core members,

and the **European Commission** and the United Kingdom as supporting members.

- This is the sixth Mission launched by **Mission Innovation**, and joins initiatives focused on clean hydrogen, green power systems, net zero shipping, carbon dioxide removal and urban transitions.
- It **will advance sustainable biorefining pathways and technologies** to support the development and commercialization of bio-based fuels, chemicals and materials, by also considering process energy demands.
- This will support **de-risking new and emerging technology**, while improving the cost-competitiveness of bio-based alternatives, notably **biofuels**.
- The Mission **unites a dynamic and results-oriented partnership** of countries, international organisations, the corporate sector, academic institutions and civil society to accelerate innovation for renewable fuels, chemicals, and materials for a low- carbon future.
 - It will **accelerate Clean Energy solutions through Public -Private Alliances**.

What is Mission Innovation?

- Mission Innovation is a **global initiative to catalyse action and investment in research, development and demonstration to make clean energy affordable, attractive and accessible to all this decade**.
 - Launched alongside the **Paris Agreement in 2015**.
- It is the main **intergovernmental platform addressing clean energy innovation** through action-oriented cooperation.
- Its **members represent over 90% of global public investments** in clean energy innovation and have increased their annual investments by USD 5.8 billion since 2015.
- The **23 members of Mission Innovation are**: Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, **India**, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, the UK, the USA, and the European Commission (on behalf of the European Union).

Broadcast Seva Portal

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** has launched the **Broadcast Seva (BS) Portal**.

Note:

- The portal is likely to help 900 satellite TV channels, 70 teleport operators, 1,700 MSOs, 350 Community Radio Stations (CRS) and 380 private FM channels, among others.

What is the BS Portal?

- **About:**
 - It is a **360 degree digital solution that will** facilitate stakeholders in seeking permissions, applying for registration, tracking applications, calculating fees and executing payments.
 - This **portal will provide its services under the wider umbrella efforts of Digital India to all stakeholders** to private satellite TV channels, teleport operators, Multi-Service Operators (MSOs), community and private radio channels, etc.
- **Objective:**
 - To provide a single point facility to the stakeholders and applicants to apply for various registrations, permissions and licences issued by I&B Ministry for broadcast related activities.

Animal Disease Free Zones

Why in News?

In order to boost exports of **value-added meat products**, the Government of India has called on stakeholders to work towards the **creation of region-specific animal disease-free zones in the country**.

What are Animal Disease-Free Zones?

- Animal Disease-free zone means a **clearly defined part of a territory containing an animal subpopulation with a distinct health status** with respect to a specific disease for which required **surveillance, control and biosecurity measures have been applied for the purpose of international trade**.

What are related

Initiatives Taken by the Government?

- **National Animal Disease Control Programme**
 - It aims to control and eradicate **Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis** amongst the livestock in the country.
- **National Livestock Mission**

- It envisages **setting up animal farms for their rearing in order to produce good quality meat** and thereby quality value-added products.

➤ Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund

- This is the first major fund launched by the government that includes a diverse set of stakeholders such as **Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO)**, private dairy players, individual entrepreneurs, and non-profits within its ambit.

➤ Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)

- APEDA was established by the Government of India under the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985**.
- It promotes **exports of agriculture and animal fresh and processed products by setting standards and specifications**, suggesting and supporting improvement in packaging, marketing strategies, facilitating the development of products for export, setting export zones, and organising

Voting Rights for Overseas Citizens

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister for Law and Justice in response to a question in the **Lok Sabha** stated that the government is exploring the possibility of **allowing online voting for Non-Resident Indians (NRI)**.

What is the Background?

- In 2020, the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** in a proposal to the Law Ministry proposed to extend the facility of postal ballots to eligible NRIs for the various State Assembly elections to be held in 2021.
- The ECI then, had proposed amending the **Conduct of Election Rules, 1961**, in order to allow this facility.
- The postal ballots were to be sent to **NRIs electronically** after which they will send the ballots back, after choosing their candidate, via post.

What is the Current Voting Process for Overseas Voters in Indian elections?

- It was through the **Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 2010**, eligible NRIs who had stayed

Note:



drishti

abroad beyond six months were allowed to vote, but only in person at the polling station where they have been enrolled as an overseas elector.

- Prior to 2010, an Indian citizen who is an eligible voter and was residing abroad for more than six months, **would not have been able to vote in elections**. This was because the **NRI's name was deleted from electoral rolls** if he or she stayed outside the country for **more than six months at a stretch**.
 - An **NRI can vote in the constituency** in his/her place of residence, as mentioned in the passport, is located.
 - He/She can **only vote in person** and will have to produce her passport in original at the polling station for establishing identity.

How has the existing facility worked so far?

- **Low Proportion of Eligible Overseas:**
 - From merely **11,846 overseas voters who registered in 2014**, the number went up to **close to a lakh in 2019**. However, only low proportion of such voters turned up to vote.
- **Provision to Visit the Polling Booth Discouraged Eligible Voters:**
 - The **provision of having to visit the polling booth in person has discouraged eligible voters** from exercising their mandate.

What Steps are taken by the Government for Overseas Voters?

- In the **winter session** of Parliament in 2017, the government **proposed to remove the restriction imposed by Section 20A of the Representation of the People Act**.
 - 20A of the Representation of the People Act **required them to be physically present to vote in their constituencies**.
 - The Bill **provided for overseas voters to be able to appoint a proxy to cast their votes** on their behalf, subject to conditions laid down in the **Conduct of Election Rules, 1961**.
 - The Bill was later passed in 2018, but lapsed with the dissolution of the **16th Lok Sabha**.
- The ECI **then approached the government to permit NRIs to vote via postal ballots**.

- **Postal ballots** is similar to a system that is already used by service voters, (a member of the armed Forces of the Union; or a member of a force to which provisions of the **Army Act, 1950** are applicable) which is the **Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System or ETPBS**.

What is Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS)?

➤ **About:**

- **For Service Voters:**
 - The **Conduct of Election Rules, 1961** was **amended in 2016** to allow service voters to use the **ETPBS**.
 - Under this system, **postal ballots are sent electronically to registered service voters**.
 - The service voter can **then download the ETPB** (along with a declaration form and covers), register their mandate on the ballot and send it to the returning officer of the constituency via ordinary mail.
 - The **post will include an attested declaration form** (after being signed by the voter in the presence of an appointed senior officer who will attest it).
- **For NRIs (Proposed):**
 - In the case of NRI voters, those seeking to vote through ETPBS will **have to inform the returning officer at least five days after notification of the election**.
 - The **returning officer will then send the ballot electronically via the ETPBS**.
 - The NRI voter can **then register her/his mandate on the ballot printout** and send it back with an attested declaration in a process similar to the service voter.

Determination of Minority in India

Why in News?

Recently, the Union government has told the **Supreme Court (SC)** that state governments can now grant minority status to any religious or linguistic community, including Hindus.

Note:



drishti

- The SC had sought the Union government's response in a plea that sought **directions for framing of guidelines identifying minorities at the state level.**
- The expression "minorities" appears in some Articles of the Constitution, but is **not defined anywhere.**

What is the Case?

- The plea contended that **Hindus are in a 'minority' in six states and three Union Territories of India** but were allegedly not able to avail themselves of the benefits of schemes meant for minorities.
 - Plea Showed as per **2011 census** Hindus have become a minority in **Lakshadweep (2.5%), Mizoram (2.75%), Nagaland (8.75%), Meghalaya (11.53%), J&K (28.44%), Arunachal Pradesh (29%), Manipur (31.39%), and Punjab (38.40%).**
- They should be given minority status in these states in accordance with the principle laid down by the **SC in its 2002 TMA Pai Foundation and 2005 Bal Patil Case ruling.**
 - **TMA Pai Case:**
 - The SC had said that for the purposes of Article 30 that deals with the rights of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions, **religious and linguistic minorities have to be considered state-wise.**
 - **Bal Patil Case:**
 - In 2005, the SC in its judgement in 'Bal Patil' referred to the TMA Pai ruling.
 - The legal position clarifies that henceforth **the unit for determining status of both linguistic and religious minorities would be 'state'.**
- The petition claimed that NCMEI (National Commission for Minority Education Institution) Act 2004 gives unbridled power to the Centre and is "manifestly arbitrary, irrational, and offending".
 - Section 2(f) of **NCMEI Act 2004** confers power to the Centre to identify and notify minority communities in India.

What is the Centre's Stand?

- The Centre said the petitioners' argument is not correct **since states can also "certify institutions as being minority institutions** as per the rules of the said state.
 - The Centre pointed out that **Maharashtra had notified Jews as a minority community in 2016**

and Karnataka had notified **Urdu, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Tulu, Lamani, Hindi, Konkani and Gujarati as minority languages.**

- **Parliament and State legislatures have concurrent powers to enact law to provide for the protection of minorities** and their interests.
- Matters such as **declaring the followers of Judaism, Bahaism, and Hinduism** who are minorities in Ladakh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Kashmir, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab and Manipur can establish and **administer educational institutions of their choice in the said state and laying down guideline(s) for identification of minority at state level** may be considered by the concerned state governments.
- The **TMA Pai ruling also "reveals that the SC has nowhere eroded the power of the Central Government to notify a community as a 'minority'.**
 - The **Parliament was empowered under Article 246** of the Constitution read with Entry 20, "economic and social planning", of the Concurrent List to **enact laws** to promote and protect the interests of minorities.
 - Parliament has the legislative competence and the Central government has the executive competence to notify a community as a minority **under Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act of 1992.**

What are the Constitutional Provisions for Minority?

- **Article 29:**
 - It provides **that any section of the citizens residing in any part of India having a distinct language, script or culture of its own, shall have the right to conserve the same.**
 - It grants **protection to both religious minorities as well as linguistic minorities.**
 - However, the SC held that the scope of this article is not necessarily restricted to minorities only, as use of the word '**section of citizens**' in the Article includes minorities as well as the majority.
- **Article 30:**
 - All minorities shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Note:



drishti

- The protection under Article 30 is confined only to minorities (religious or linguistic) and does not extend to any section of citizens (as under Article 29).
- **Article 350-B:**
 - The 7th **Constitutional (Amendment) Act 1956** inserted this article which provides for a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities appointed by the President of India.
 - It would be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution.

Who are the minorities notified by the Government of India?

- Currently, only those communities notified under section 2(c) of the **NCM Act, 1992**, by the central government are regarded as minority.
- In 1992, with the enactment of the NCM Act, 1992, the MC became a statutory body and was renamed as the NCM.
- In 1993, the first Statutory National Commission was set up and five religious communities viz. **The Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) were notified as minority communities.**
- In 2014, Jains were also notified as a minority community.

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences

Why in News?

Recently, a 2-judge bench of the Supreme Court has delivered a split verdict on the issue whether **Section 155(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure** will apply to the investigation of an offence under **Section 23 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO).**

- As per **Section 155(2) CrPC**, a police officer cannot investigate a non-cognizable offence without the order of a Magistrate.
- **Section 23 of POCSO** relates to the **offence of disclosure of the identity of the victim of the sexual offence.**

- One of the judges opined that **disclosure of the identity of a child** who is a victim of sexual offences or who is in conflict with the law is in **fundamental breach of the right of the child to dignity, the right not to be embarrassed.**

What are the Related Initiatives?

- **Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Unit**
- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**
- **Juvenile Justice Act/Care and Protection Act, 2000**
- **Child Marriage Prohibition Act (2006)**
- **Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2016**

What are the Related Constitutional Provisions?

- The Constitution guarantees to every **child the right to live with dignity (Article 21), the right to personal liberty (Article 21), the right to privacy (Article 21), the right to equality (Article 14) and/or the right against discrimination (Article 15), the right against exploitation (Article 23 & 24).**
 - **Right to free and compulsory elementary education** for all children in the 6-14 year age group (Article 21 A)
- **The Directive Principles of State Policy**, and in particular **Article 39(f)**, cast an **obligation on the State to ensure that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.**

Principle of Reasonable Accommodation

Why in News?

Recently, in the context of **hijab controversy**, the **Karnataka High Court** ruled in favour of the State's circular that required students in **educational institutions** should only wear prescribed uniforms.

- The decision effectively upheld the **denial of entry to students wearing the hijab.**
- The court rejected an argument in support of permitting Muslim girls wearing head-scarves that was based on the **principle of 'reasonable accommodation'.**

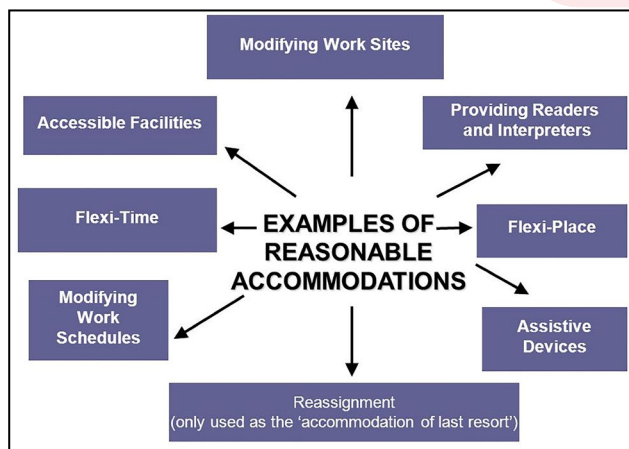
Note:



drishti

What is the Principle of 'Reasonable Accommodation'?

- **About: 'Reasonable accommodation'** is a principle that promotes equality, enables the grant of positive rights and prevents discrimination based on **disability, health condition or personal belief**.
 - Its use is primarily in the **disability rights sector**.
 - It **captures the positive obligation** of the State and private parties to **provide additional support to persons with disabilities** to facilitate their full and effective participation in society.
 - For a person with disability, the constitutionally guaranteed **fundamental rights to equality (Article 14), the six freedoms (Article 19) and the right to life (Article 21)** will ring hollow if they are not given this additional support that helps make these rights real and meaningful for them.
- **Article 2 of UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD):** It is necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.



What is the Legal position on this in India?

- In India, the **Rights of People with Disabilities Act, 2016**, defines 'reasonable accommodation' as "necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise of rights equally with others".

- The definition of 'discrimination' in **Section 2(h)** includes 'denial of reasonable accommodation'.
- **Jeeja Ghosh and Another v. Union of India and Others (2016):** The Supreme Court, held that Equality not only implies preventing discrimination but goes beyond in remedying discrimination against groups suffering systematic discrimination in society.
 - In concrete terms, it means embracing the notion of positive rights, affirmative action and reasonable accommodation."
- **Vikash Kumar v. UPSC (2021):** The court ruled that **benchmark disability**, that is a specified disability to the extent of 40%, is related only to special reservation for the disabled in employment, but it need not be a restriction for other kinds of accommodation.
 - It also said **failure to provide reasonable accommodation amounts to discrimination**.

Bail Provision Under UAPA

Why in News?

Recently, a Delhi court granted bail to a former Congress (Political Party) councillor in an **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 (UAPA)** case filed in connection with the 2020 anti-**Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019**, (CAA) protests.

What is the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019?

- The CAA provides citizenship to six undocumented non-Muslim communities (**Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians**) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who **entered India on or before 31st December, 2014**.
- It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the **Foreigners Act, 1946** and the **Passport Act, 1920**.
 - The two Acts specify punishment for entering the country illegally and staying here on expired visas and permits.

What was the Current Ruling?

- The **court granted bail** to the accused despite the prosecution arguing that there were limitations contained in **Section 43D(5) of the UAPA**, a provision which makes grant of bail virtually impossible, as it leaves little room for judicial reasoning.

Note:

- The Defence argued that Section 43D UAPA only puts restrictions but is not an absolute bar to the grant of bail.

What are the Bail Related Provisions and Issues in UAPA?

- The major problem with the UAPA lies in its **Section 43(D)(5), which prevents the release of any accused person on bail** if, police have filed the chargesheet that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such person is prima facie true.
 - The effect of Section 43(D)(5) is that **once the police elect to charge an individual under the UAPA, it becomes extremely difficult for bail to be granted**. Bail is a safeguard and guarantee of the constitutional right to liberty.
- This provision leaves very little room for judicial reasoning, and makes the grant of bail virtually impossible under UAPA.
 - In the case of **Zahoor Ahmed Shah Watali**, the **Supreme Court** in 2019 confirmed that **courts must accept the state's case without examining its merits**.
 - However, **courts have since read this provision differently, emphasizing the right to a speedy trial** and raising the bar for the state to book an individual under UAPA.

What is Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967?

- The UAPA was enacted in 1967, and later **strengthened to be modelled as an anti-terror law by the government in 2008 and 2012**.
- In August 2019, Parliament cleared the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019** to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.
- In order to **deal with the terrorism related crimes**, it deviates from ordinary legal procedures and creates an exceptional regime where constitutional safeguards of the accused are curtailed.
- Between 2016 and 2019, the period for which UAPA figures have been published by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, a total of 4,231 **First Information Report (FIR)** were filed under various sections of the UAPA, of which 112 cases have resulted in convictions.

PM-DAKSH Scheme

Why in News

Recently, **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has launched '**PM-DAKSH**' (**Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi**) **Portal** and '**PM-DAKSH**' **Mobile App** to make the skill development schemes accessible to the target groups - Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Safai Karamcharis.

Key Points

- **About**
 - PM-DAKSH Yojana is **being implemented from the year 2020-21**.
 - Under this, **eligible target groups are provided with the skill development training programmes** on Short Term Training Program; Up-Skilling/Reskilling; Entrepreneurship Development Programme, and Long Term Training Programme.
- These **training programmes are being implemented through** the government training institutes, sector skill councils that have been constituted by the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**, and other credible institutions.
- **Eligibility:**
 - Marginalized persons of **SC (Scheduled Caste), OBC (Other Backward Classes), Economically Backward Classes, Denotified tribes, Sanitation workers** including waste pickers, manual scavengers, transgenders and other similar categories.

NPPA's Role in Fixing Drug Prices

Why in News

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) may allow a **price hike of over 10% in the drugs and devices listed under the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)**.

- The escalation which is expected to have an impact on nearly 800 drugs and devices is propelled by the rise in the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)**.

Note:

What is NPPA and its Mandates?

➤ About

- NPPA was **constituted by the Government of India in 1997 as an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers** as an independent Regulator for pricing of drugs and to ensure availability and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices.
- It was made to fix/revise prices of controlled bulk drugs and formulations and to enforce price and availability of the medicines in the country, **under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995-2013 (DPCO)**.
 - A **bulk drug** — also called **Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API)** — is the chemical molecule in a medicine that lends the product the claimed therapeutic effect.

➤ Mandates

- To implement and enforce the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order in accordance with the powers delegated to it.
- To deal with all legal matters arising out of the decisions of the NPPA.
- To monitor the availability of drugs, identify shortages and to take remedial steps.
- To collect/maintain data on production, exports and imports, market share of individual companies, profitability of companies etc., for bulk drugs and formulations and undertake and/or sponsor relevant studies in respect of pricing of drugs/pharmaceuticals.

How does the Pricing Mechanism work?

- **All medicines under the NLEM are under price regulation.** The NLEM lists drugs used to treat fever, infection, heart disease, hypertension, anaemia etc and includes commonly used medicines like paracetamol, azithromycin etc.
 - The Health Ministry prepares a list of drugs eligible for price regulation, following which the **Department of Pharmaceuticals incorporates them into Schedule 1 of DPCO**.
 - The Standing Committee on Affordable Medicines and Health Products (SCAMHP) will advise the drug price regulator the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) on vetting the list. The NPPA then fixes the prices of drugs in this Schedule.

- As per the Drugs (Prices) Control Order 2013, **scheduled drugs, about 15% of the pharma market, are allowed an increase by the government as per the WPI (Wholesale Price Index) while the rest 85% are allowed an automatic increase of 10% every year.**
 - The **annual change in prices of scheduled drugs is controlled and rarely crosses 5%.**
 - Under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940**, the **drugs are classified in schedules** and regulations are laid down for their storage, display, sale, dispensing, leveling, prescribing etc.
- The **pharma lobby is now asking for at least a 10% increase for scheduled drugs too** rather than going by the WPI.

Export Preparedness Index 2021: NITI Aayog

Why in News?

Gujarat has been named **India's top State** in terms of export preparedness for the **second year** in a row as per the **Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2021** released by the **NITI Aayog**.

- **Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu were ranked second, third and fourth** in the index, as coastal States with higher industrial activity and access to sea ports account for a majority of India's exports.

What is the Export Preparedness Index(EPI)?

- **Aim:** To identify challenges and opportunities, enhance the effectiveness of government policies and encourage a facilitative regulatory framework for export.
- The index entails **four pillars, eleven sub pillars and sixty indicators** and covers across 28 states and 8 UTs.
- **Four Pillars:**
 - **Policy:** A comprehensive trade policy providing a strategic direction for exports and imports.
 - **Business Ecosystem:** An efficient business ecosystem helping states attract investments and create an enabling infrastructure for individuals to initiate start-ups.
 - **Export Ecosystem:** Assess the business environment, which is specific to exports.

Note:



drishti

- **Export Performance:** This is the only output-based parameter and **examines the reach of export footprints** of States and Union Territories.
- **Eleven Sub-pillars:**
 - The index also took into **consideration 11 sub-pillars** - export promotion policy, institutional framework, business environment, infrastructure, transport connectivity, access to finance, export infrastructure, trade support, R&D infrastructure, export diversification, and growth orientation.
- **Features of Index:** The EPI is a **data-driven effort to identify the core areas crucial for export promotion at the sub-national level** (states and union territories).
 - It explores and highlights India's export potential by examining the different contributions made by each state and union territories
- **Performance of Indian States/UTs:**

Himalayan		
State	Score	Rank
Uttarakhand	47.79	1
Himachal Pradesh	40.43	2
Tripura	27.46	3
Sikkim	27.41	4
Manipur	15.78	5

Caastal		
State	Score	Rank
Gujarat	78.86	1
Maharashtra	77.14	2
Karnataka	61.72	3
Tamil Nadu	56.84	4
Andhra Pradesh	50.39	5

Landlocked		
State	Score	Rank
Haryana	55.20	1
Uttar Pradesh	51.09	2
Madhya Pradesh	51.03	3
Punjab	50.99	4
Telangana	47.92	5

UT/City States		
State	Score	Rank
Delhi	43.66	1
Goa	41.95	2

Jammu and Kashmir	30.06	3
Chandigarh	28.41	4
Puducherry	47.92	5

Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2022

Why in News?

The **Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2022** is likely to be tabled in the Parliament.

- It aims to **merge the Capital's three municipal corporations — South, North and East** — ten years after the trifurcation of the civic body.

What is the background and Need for Reunification?

➤ Background:

- In 2011, the government proposed the **trifurcation of the MCD for better efficiency**.
- The ministry of home affairs then cleared the proposal in November 2011, following which the Delhi government convened a special assembly session and passed the **Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill in December 2011**.
- The final notification for the trifurcation was issued in January 2012, carving out **North, South, and East Delhi** municipal bodies with **104 awards given to the first two, and 64 to the latter**.

What is a Municipal Corporation?

➤ About:

- In India, the Municipal Corporation is the **urban local government that is responsible for the development of any Metropolitan City having a population of more than one million people**.
 - Mahanagar Palika, Nagar Palika, Nagar Nigam, City Corporation, and so on are some of the other names for it.
- The Municipal Corporations are **established in the states by the acts of the state legislatures**, whereas in the **Union Territories through the acts of the Parliament**.
- Municipal governments **rely heavily on property tax revenue** to fund their operations.

Note:

- The first municipal corporation in India was created in **Madras in 1688, followed by municipal corporations in Bombay and Calcutta in 1726.**
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - In the Constitution of India, no provision was made for the establishment of local self-government, **except the incorporation of Article 40 in the Directive Principles of State Policy.**
 - The **74th Amendment Act, 1992** has inserted a **new Part IX-A into the Constitution** which deals with the administration of Municipalities and Nagar Palikas.
 - It consists of **Article 243P to 243ZG**. It also added a new **twelfth schedule** to the Constitution. The 12th schedule consists of 18 items.
- **Composition:**
 - Each municipal region is divided **into geographical constituencies known as wards** based on the population of that particular city.
 - Each ward **elects a representative, who is chosen by the residents** of that ward. Members of the wards committee are **elected for a five-year term on the basis of adult franchise.**
 - A **councillor or corporator** is a chosen representative of a certain ward.
 - The **population of a city determines the number of wards** in a municipal area. **Scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, disadvantaged classes, and women** have seats reserved.

Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav

Why in News?

Recently, the government launched a nation-wide campaign called **Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav** on the eve of the **International Women's Day (8th March).**

- The aim of the campaign is **to bring back four lakh out-of-school adolescent girls in the 11-14 years age group** into the education system.

What are the Key Points of the Campaign?

- **Aim:** The project aims to **work on a complete system for out-of-school girls** by building on existing schemes and programmes such as **Schemes for Adolescent Girls**

(SAG), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), and National Education Policy (NEP).

- **Implementing Agency:** The campaign is being steered by the **Ministry of Women And Child Development** in partnership with the **Ministry of Education.**
- **Implementation:** The campaign focuses on **convergence and coordination** between ministries, departments and states.
 - The campaign **will be implemented as part of the BBBP project**, with the primary beneficiaries being over 4,00,000 out-of-school adolescent girls.
 - **Over 400 districts across all states will be funded under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme** for grassroots level outreach and awareness generation to sensitise communities and families to enrol adolescent girls in schools.
 - Further, **funding from Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, and Anganwadi workers (AWWs)** will be further incentivised for counseling and referring out of school adolescent girls.
- **Data to be Collected:** It strives to collect data on out-of-school girls, **based on their visits to anganwadi centres for nutrition, nutrition education and skilling.**

Swatantrata Sainik Samman Yojana

Why in News?

The Centre has approved the continuation of the **Swatantrata Sainik Samman Yojana (SSSY)**, under which freedom fighters and their eligible dependents are given pension and other financial benefits, till 2025-26.

What are the Key Points?

- **About the Scheme:**
 - The scheme provides for a **monthly Samman Pension to freedom fighters**, as a token of respect for their contribution in the national freedom struggle.
 - On their demise, **pension is provided to their eligible dependents viz. spouses and thereafter, unmarried and unemployed daughters** and dependent parents, as per prescribed eligibility norms and procedure.

Note:

- It is implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (Freedom Fighters Division)**.
- There are 23,566 beneficiaries across the country covered under this scheme.

Daylight Harvesting

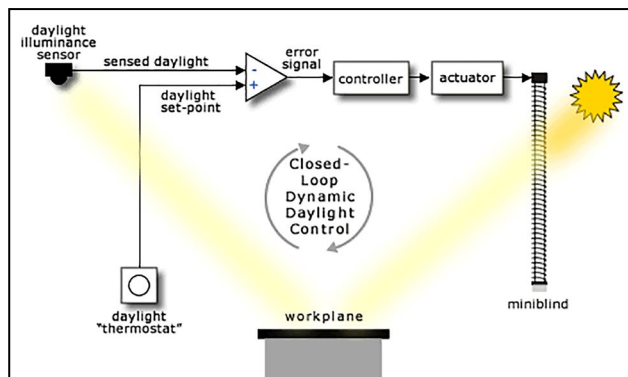
Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Science & Technology has decided to promote a unique **Start-up** in the latest **Daylight Harvesting Technology** in order to **reduce carbon footprint** and improve the **buildings energy efficiency**.

- The Ministry will give **Rs 5 Crore of the 10 Crore** project to Skyshade company for developing **new technologies for basement illumination on a 24x7 basis**.
- The company aims to create **Green & Net zero buildings and to participate and contribute in national missions** under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**.

What is Daylight Harvesting?

- Daylight Harvesting is a method of **saving the energy costs** associated with lighting. It **makes use of the available sunlight**.
 - The **solar energy** spectrum has 45% energy as visible light and this can be used to harvest **building illumination for about 9-11 hours a day**.
- It is one of the most advanced techniques used in sustainable lighting designs for contemporary buildings.
- It **automatically dims or adjusts the brightness of light** in response to the amount of natural light available in a space.
- Utilising natural daylight coming through the windows or skylights **minimises the amount of energy used in artificial lighting**.
- The daylight harvesting system **employs light sensors, also known as photocell sensors, to detect the prevailing light level** in the environment.
- It then sends the intensity of light received to a controller, which is connected to the lighting control system. The control system **in turn adjusts the electric lights automatically** according to the measured light level.



Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)

Why in News?

Recently, the Central government has decided to adopt a **new criterion for selecting members of the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)**.

What Changes have been made to the BBMB rules?

- A notification has been issued to amend the **BBMB Rules 1974**, thereby **changing the criteria for the selection** of whole-time members of the Board.
 - As per the **BBMB Rules, 1974**, the member (power) in BBMB was from Punjab and the member (irrigation) was from Haryana but the requirement has been removed in the amended rules.
- New rules **specify technical qualifications for the appointments** and pave the way for appointment of the **members from across India and not only Punjab and Haryana**.
- The new rules have been **opposed by the engineers' fraternity, farmers** as well as the **political parties of Punjab**.
 - The engineers have pointed out that **hardly any engineer would qualify for appointment as per the new specifications**, which appear to be tailor-made for some personnel to be appointed from outside Punjab and Haryana.
- On the other hand, officials have argued that the changes have been made in **pursuance to a judgement of the Punjab and Haryana High Court** in the case of **Jagmohan Singh Vs Union of India**.

Note:

What is the Genesis of the BBMB?

- The genesis of BBMB lies in the **Indus Water Treaty** signed between **India and Pakistan in 1960**.
 - Under the treaty, waters of three eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—were allotted to India for exclusive use while Indus, Chenab and Jhelum rivers were allocated to Pakistan.
- In India, a master plan was drawn to harness the potential of these rivers for providing assured irrigation, power generation and flood control.
 - **Bhakra and Beas projects** form a major part of this plan and were established as a joint venture of the then undivided Punjab and Rajasthan.
- Following the reorganisation of Punjab on 1st November 1966, and the creation of the state of Haryana, the **Bhakra Management Board** was constituted under Section 79 of the **Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966**.
- The administration, maintenance and operation of Bhakra Nangal project was handed over to **Bhakra Management** on 1st October 1967.
- The Beas Project Works, on completion, were transferred from **Beas Construction Board (BCB)** to **Bhakra Management Board** as per the provisions of Section 80 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966.
 - Pursuant to this **Bhakra Management Board was renamed as Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)** w.e.f. 15th May 1976.
- Since then, **BBMB regulates supply of water and power** to Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh.

What is the Constitution of the BBMB Management?

- It includes a **chairperson and two whole time members** who are from the partner states of Punjab and Haryana.
 - They are designated as **Member (Power)** and **Member (Irrigation)** from Punjab and Haryana, respectively.
- There is representation from **each member state including Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh** as nominated by the respective state governments.
- The total strength of BBMB is about **12,000 employees** and out of these 696 are Group A officers and are posted from the partner states.

Demand for Rajya Sabha Seat to Chandigarh

Why in News?

Recently, the **Chandigarh Municipal Corporation** has approved a proposal to amend **Article 80 of the Constitution** so that its councillors could send a representative to the **Rajya Sabha**.

- **Article 80 of the Constitution of India** deals with the **composition of the council of states** also called the **Upper House and Rajya Sabha (Upper House)**.
- So far, Chandigarh has **no representation in the Rajya Sabha**.

What is the Demand of the Proposed Bill?

- The bill (**Private Member Bill**) sought the **adding of a provision** provided that the representative of the **Union Territory of Chandigarh in the council of states shall be elected by an electoral college**.
 - The electoral college should consist of elected members of the Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh constituted under the **Punjab Municipal Corporation (Extension to Chandigarh) Act, 1994** in Article 80 of the Constitution.
- An amendment has also been sought to the **Fourth Schedule of the Constitution** with 'Entry 32, Chandigarh'.
 - The fourth Schedule contains **provisions as to the allocation of seats in the Council of States**.
 - It contains the **number of seats represented in the Council of states (Rajya Sabha)** from each State and Union Territory.

Where does Chandigarh Stand?

- **Chandigarh is a Union Territory** without any legislative assembly and has a **seat of Member of Parliament (MP)** in the Lower House (Lok Sabha) or House of the People.
- Chandigarh residents **elect an MP every five years through direct voting**.
 - The **union territories of Puducherry, Jammu and Kashmir and the National Capital Territory of Delhi** have representation in the Rajya Sabha, while **Ladakh, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli — Daman and Diu, Andaman and Nicobar**

Note:



drishti

Islands and Lakshadweep are unrepresented in the upper house.

What are the Legal Objections?

- The elected Municipal Corporation Councillors **do not form the electoral college** for selecting a member for **Upper house (Rajya Sabha)** because it is beyond the powers of the Municipal Corporation.
 - **Between 1966 and 1990**, MPs for Rajya Sabha in Delhi were selected by the members of the Metropolitan Council of Delhi.
 - There is a difference between the Metropolitan Council and Municipal Corporation.
 - There is also a **distinction between the electoral college of legislatures and electoral college of MC councillors**.
 - Also **Chandigarh has no legislative Assembly like Delhi**, which also is a Union Territory, and the city also lacks a metropolitan council, which exists in the national capital.
- Also, selecting Rajya Sabha MP, is **beyond the listed scope of functions of the municipal corporation**.
- If the functions of the civic body are to be extended beyond the listed scope of functions **it would not be feasible and would go against the constitutional mandate** of any such Municipal Corporation.
 - As the civic body gave its assent to the amendment, UT Administration will **send it to the Ministry of Home Affairs** for further consideration and then it will be **forwarded to the Parliament**.

E-bill Processing System

Why in News?

Recently, the Finance Minister launched the **E-bill Processing system on the occasion of 46th Civil Accounts Day (1st March)**.

- It was announced in the **Union Budget 2022** to use the technology for facilitating the financial inclusion drive in India.
- The **“Civil Accounts Day” is observed** every year to mark the anniversary of the inception of the **Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS)** on 1st March, 1976.
 - The ICAS performs a key role in delivery of **financial management services** for the Government of India (GoI).

What are the Key Points?

➤ About:

- E-bill system is part of **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)** and **Digital India Eco-System’ to bring in broader transparency** and expedite the process of payments.
- In simple words, e-Bill Processing System is a **way of transacting the bills digitally rather than the traditional use of paper**.
 - **Currently**, the suppliers of various goods and services to the Government have to submit physical, ink signed copies of their bills to the respective Ministries/Departments/offices of the Government of India.
- Customers will be able to **get their bills online**, via e-mail, or in the **machine-readable data** forms when billed electronically.
- Under the newly launched e-Bill system, **vendors/suppliers can upload their bills online along with supporting documents** from the convenience of their homes/offices at any time through digital signature.
- At the backend too, the **electronic bill received will be processed by the authorities digitally at every stage** and finally, the payments will be credited digitally to the bank account of the vendor.

➤ Developed By:

- Developed by the **Public Financial Management System (PFMS)** Division in the office of the Controller General of Accounts in the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

What are the Major Objectives of the E-bill Processing System?

- To Provide convenience to **all vendors/suppliers of the government to submit their bills/claims at any time**, from anywhere.
- Eliminate physical interface between suppliers and government officers.
- Enhance efficiency in processing of bills/claims.
- Reduce discretion in processing of bills through the **“First-In-First-Out” (FIFO) method**.

What is PFMS?

- The PFMS, earlier known as **Central Plan Schemes Monitoring System (CPSMS)**, is a **web-based online**

Note:

software application developed and implemented by the Office of Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Ministry of Finance.

- PFMS was initially **started during 2009** as a **Central Sector Scheme** of the **Planning Commission** with the objective of tracking funds released under all Plan schemes of the Government of India, and real time reporting of expenditure at all levels of Programme implementation.
- The **primary objective of PFMS is to facilitate a sound Public Financial Management System for the Government of India (GoI)** by establishing an **efficient fund flow system** as well as a payment cum accounting network.

Janaushadhi Diwas

Why in News?

Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI), under the aegis of Department of Pharmaceuticals is going to celebrate their 4th **Jan Aushadhi Diwas**.

- This will **generate awareness** about the **usages of generic medicines** and benefits of **Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana**.
- The theme of this year's (2022) Janaushadhi Diwas is **Jan Aushadhi-Jan Upyogi**.

What is Pradhan Mantri

Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)?

- **PMBJP** is a campaign launched by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals in 2008** under the name Jan Aushadhi Campaign.
 - The campaign was revamped as **PMBJP in 2015-16**.
- **Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI)** is the implementation agency for PMBJP.
 - The Bureau of Pharma **Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)** of India works under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers.
 - BPPI has also developed the **Janaushadhi Sugam Application**.
- A medicine is **priced on the principle of maximum 50% of average price** of the top three brands branded medicines. Thus, the **prices of Jan Aushadhi Medicines are cheaper by at least 50%** and in some cases, **by 80% to 90% of the market price of the branded medicines**.

What is the objective of the PMBJP?

- To make **available quality medicines, consumables and surgical items** at affordable prices for all and reduce out of pocket expenditure of consumers/patients.
- To **popularise generic medicines among the masses** and dispel the prevalent notion that low priced generic medicines are of inferior quality or are less effective.
 - **Generic medicines** are unbranded medicines which are equally safe and having the same efficacy as that of branded medicines in terms of their therapeutic value.
- To **ensure easy availability of the menstrual health services** (Janaushadhi 'Suvidha' sanitary napkins) to all women across India.
- Generate **employment by engaging individual entrepreneurs** in the opening of PMBJP Kendras.

What is Janaushadhi Kendra?

- These are the **centres from where quality generic medicines** are made available to all.
- **Bureau of Pharma PSUs in India (BPPI)** supports Janaushadhi Kendras as a part of **PMBJP**.
- The Government has **set a target to increase** the number of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs) to **10,500 by the end of March 2025**.
 - As on **31st January, 2022**, the number of stores has increased to 8,675.
- Product basket of PMBJP comprises **1451 drugs and 240 surgical instruments**.
 - Further, **new medicines and nutraceuticals products** like protein powder, malt-based food supplements, protein bar, immunity bar, sanitizer, masks, glucometer, oximeter, etc. have been launched.

Amendment to the Mines and Minerals Act 1957

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved a **proposal to amend the Second Schedule to the MMDR (Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation) Act** to specify the **royalty rates of certain minerals**, including potash, emerald and platinum group of metals.

- **MMDR Act, 1957** regulates the mining sector in India and specifies the requirement for obtaining and granting mining leases for mining operations.

Note:



drishti

What is the Background?

- The Act was **amended in 2015** to usher in new regime of granting mineral concessions through auction **to ensure transparency and non-discrimination in allocation of mineral wealth** of the country.
- To give further impetus to the mineral sector, the **Act has been further amended in 2021**. Under the reforms, the Government has given a **major boost to auction of mineral blocks, increasing production, improving ease of doing business** in the country and increasing the contribution of mineral production to **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.
- The Ministry of Mines **has also taken steps to increase exploration of minerals**, which has led to the availability of more blocks for auction.
 - Exploration activities have increased **not only for traditional minerals** such as iron ore, bauxite, limestone but **also for deep-seated minerals, fertilizer minerals, critical minerals** and minerals which are imported.
 - In the last 4-5 years, central agencies such as the Geological Survey of India and Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd have carried out exploration and handed the reports to the states.

What are Mineral Concessions?

- There are **three kinds** of mineral concessions, viz Reconnaissance Permit (RP), Prospecting License (PL) and Mining Lease (ML).
- **RP** is granted for preliminary prospecting of a mineral through regional, aerial, geophysical or geochemical surveys and geological mapping.
- **PL** is granted for undertaking operations for the purpose of exploring, locating or proving mineral deposit.
- **ML** is granted for undertaking operations for winning any mineral.

What are the Key Points related to Approval?

- The approval would **ensure auction of mineral blocks in respect of Glauconite, Potash, Emerald, Platinum Group of Metals, Andalusite and Molybdenum** thereby reducing import of these minerals saving valuable **forex reserves**.
 - Glauconite and Potash are used as fertilizer in agriculture. Platinum group of metals and Andalusite and Molybdenum are high-value minerals used across industries.

- The Ministry of Mines has proposed **reasonable rates of royalty** in order to encourage better participation in the auction of mines.
 - A royalty is a fee that is imposed by local, state or federal governments on either the amount of minerals produced at a mine or the revenue or profit generated by the minerals sold from a mine
- The Ministry of Mines will **provide a methodology for the calculation of Average Sale Price (ASP) of these minerals** required for enabling the auction of these mineral blocks.
- The rate of royalty for Andalusite, Sillimanite and Kyanite which are **mineral polymorphs** are kept at the same level.
 - Polymorphs are minerals with the same chemical composition but different crystal structures.
- The approval will help **generate empowerment opportunities in the mining sector as well as the manufacturing sector** which will further help in ensuring inclusive growth of a large section of the society.
 - The approval would ensure **auction of mineral blocks in respect of Glauconite, Potash, Emerald, Platinum Group of metals, Andalusite and Molybdenum for the first time** in the country.

37th Foundation of National Crime Records Bureau

Why in News?

Recently the **37th Foundation Day of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** was celebrated (11th March 1986).

What is the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)?

- **About:**
 - 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)**.
- **Functions:**
 - The Bureau has been entrusted to maintain **National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO)** and share it with the **States/UTs on regular basis**.

Note:



drishti

- NCRB has also been **designated as the Central Nodal Agency** to manage technical and operational functions of the '**Online Cyber-Crime Reporting Portal**' through which any citizen can lodge a complaint or upload a video clip as an evidence of crime related to child pornography, rape/gang rape.
- The responsibility of implementation of the **Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** has also been given to the NCRB.
 - 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.

➤ Major Publications:

- **Crimes in India**
- **Accidental Deaths and Suicides**
- **Prison Statistics**
- **Reports on Missing Women and children in India**

What is the State of Crime in India?

- According to the **Crime in India Report 2020**:
 - **Communal riots** registered an **increase of 96% in 2020** over the previous year.
 - The number of cases registered for **crimes against women, children and senior citizens**, theft, burglary, robbery and dacoity, among others, **dropped by about 2 lakh**.
 - Cases under the '**environment-related offences**' category **increased by 78.1%** in the country in 2020.
 - The rate of **cyber crime** (incidents per lakh population) also increased from 3.3% in 2019 to 3.7% in 2020.

Sagar Parikrama

Why in News?

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying will inaugurate the '**Sagar Parikrama**' to know the problems of **Coastal Fisher folk**.

What is Sagar Parikrama?

- It is a navigation journey to be **conducted in all coastal states/UTs through a pre-decided sea route** to demonstrate solidarity with all fisherfolk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholders.
- It is envisioned as a part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsava' **saluting our great freedom fighters, sailors and fishers**.
- The Parikrama will start from Mandvi, Gujarat in 1st phase and will be organised in other districts of Gujarat and other State/UTs in subsequent phases.
 - The **first leg of 'Sagar Parikrama'** shall start on 5th March 2022 from **Mandvi and end at Porbandar** on 6th March 2022.
 - The entire distance will be covered **from the coastline of Mandvi** on the coast of the **Arabian Sea** in the Kutch district of Gujarat, situated at the estuary where the **river Rukmavati meets the Gulf of Kutch**.
 - The **Rukmavati River** is a south flowing river originating in the central Kutch District and empties into the Arabian Sea
- It will also conduct **interaction programmes with fishermen, fisher communities and stakeholders in these locations** and districts in order to know the problems of Coastal Fisher folk.
- It is envisaged in the sea across the coastal belt demonstrating solidarity with all fisher folk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholders as a spirit of **Atma Nirbhar Bharat**.

What is the Scenario of the Fisheries Sector in India?

- India is the **second major producer of fish** through aquaculture in the world.
- India is the **4th largest exporter of fish in the world** as it contributes 7.7% to the global fish production.
- Currently, this sector provides **livelihood to more than 2.8 crore people within the country**. Nevertheless, this is a sector with untapped potential.
- The fisheries sector has demonstrated double-digit average annual growth of 10.87% since 2014-15 with record fish production of 145 lakh tons during 2020-21 as per the **Economic Survey for 2021-22**
- Despite challenges pertaining to infrastructure, the measures by the Central government in the past recent years ensured that the **fisheries sector continued to register an annual growth rate of more than 10%**.

Note:

Key Points

Details

Summary

--

[illegible]

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Summary