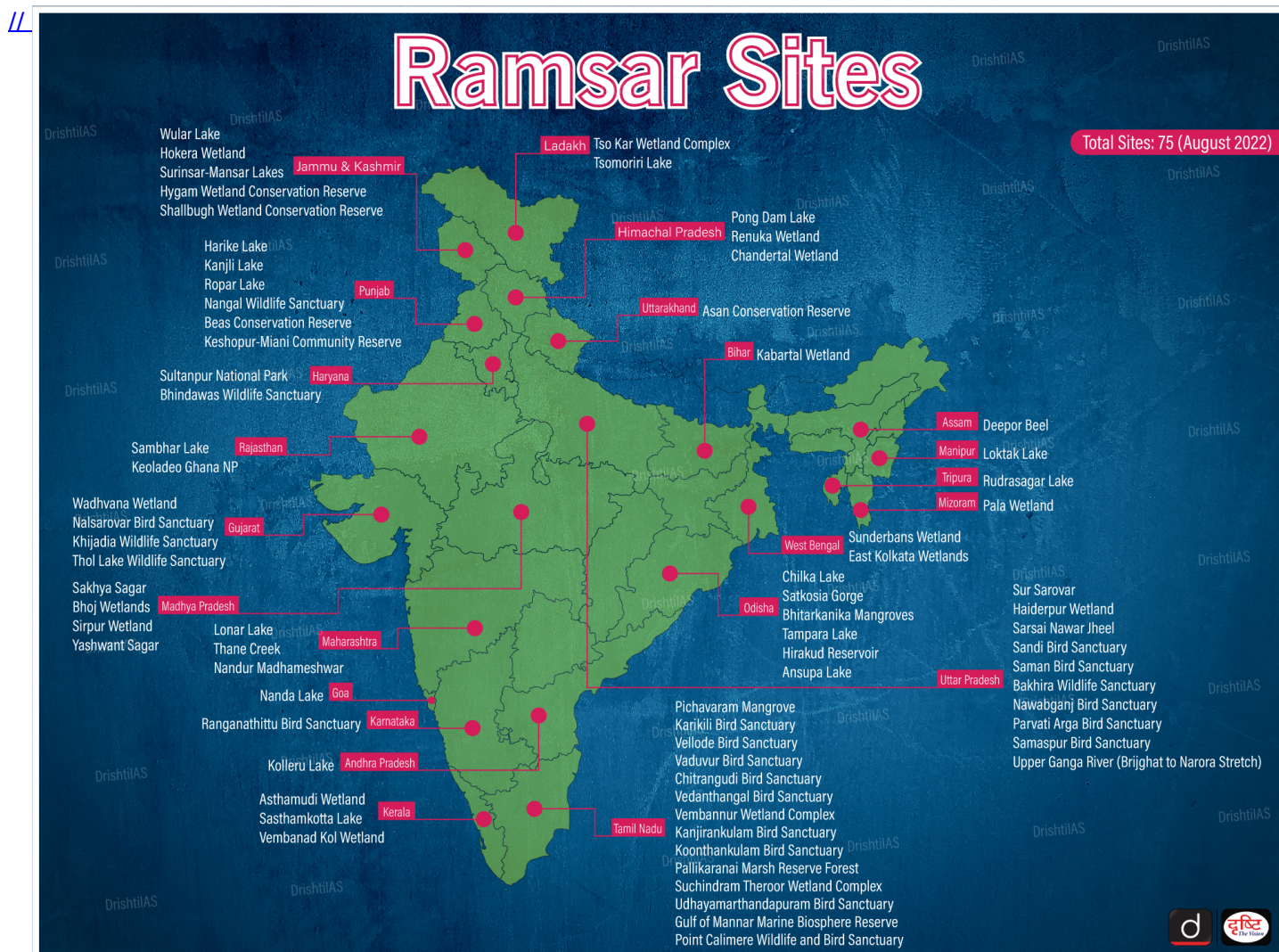




Ramsar Sites in India



Global Employment Trends for Youth: ILO

For Prelims: International Labour Organization, Blue Economies, Gender Gap, Waste Management, Wage Gap, Learning Regression.

For Mains: Findings of Global Employment Trends for Youth Related to India.

Why in News?

Recently, the [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#) has released a report titled “**Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people**”.

What is the International Labour Organization?

- **About:**
 - It is the only tripartite [United Nation \(UN\)](#) agency. It brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States (India is a member), **to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.**
 - Received the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) in 1969.
- **Establishment:**
 - **Established** in 1919 by the [Treaty of Versailles](#) as an affiliated agency of the [League of Nations](#).
 - Became the first affiliated specialized agency of the UN in 1946.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Reports:**
 - [World of Work Report](#)
 - [World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2022](#)
 - [World Social Protection Report](#)
 - **Social Dialogue Report**
 - [Global Wage Report](#)

What are the Findings Globally?

- **Gender Disparity in EPR:**
 - Young women exhibited **a much lower Employment-to-Population ratio (EPR)**, showing that young men **are almost 1.5 times** more likely than young women to be employed.
 - In 2022, 27.4 % of young women globally are projected to be in employment, compared to 40.3 % of young men.
- **Pandemic Impacted Youth Employment:**
 - [Covid-19 Pandemic](#) has worsened the **numerous labour market challenges facing those aged between 15 and 24 years**, who have experienced a much higher percentage loss in employment than adults since early 2020.
 - The total global number of unemployed youths is estimated to reach 73 million in 2022, **a slight improvement from 2021** but still six million above the pre-pandemic level of 2019.
- **Regional Differences:**
 - The recovery in youth unemployment is projected to diverge between low- and middle-income countries on the one hand and **high-income countries on the other.**
 - High income countries are the only ones **expected to achieve youth unemployment rates close to those of 2019** by the end of 2022.
 - Meanwhile, in the other country income groups, the **rates are projected to remain more than 1% above their pre-crisis values.**
- **Benefits of Green and Blue Economies:**
 - Young people were **well-placed to benefit from the expansion of the so-called green and blue economies**, centred around the environment and sustainable ocean resources respectively.
 - An additional **8.4 million jobs may be created** for young people by 2030 through green and blue investments, notably in clean and [renewable energies](#), sustainable agriculture, [recycling and waste management](#).

▪ **Broadband Coverage and Employment:**

- Achieving universal broadband coverage by 2030 may lead to **a net increase in employment of 24 million new jobs** worldwide, of which 6.4 million would be taken by young people.
- Investments in care sectors would create **17.9 million more jobs for young people by 2030.**

What are the Findings Related to India?

▪ **Decline in Youth Employment:**

- The youth employment participation rate declined by **0.9 % over the first nine months of 2021 relative to its value in 2020**, while it increased by 2 % for adults over the same time period.
 - The situation is particularly severe for **very young people aged 15-20 years.**

▪ **Low Young Female Employment:**

- Indian young women experienced **larger relative employment losses** than young men in 2021 and 2022.
- In general, the high youth employment losses in India **drive up the global average employment losses.**
 - Young **Indian men account for 16%** of young men in the global labour market, while the corresponding share for **young Indian women is just 5%.**

▪ **Gap in Online Education:**

- School closures lasted 18 months and among the 24-crore school-going children, only 8% of such children in rural areas and **23% in urban areas had adequate access to online education.**
- Given the deeply unequal access to online resources in developing countries, children from socio-economically disadvantaged families, which are the large majority, had almost **no access to education.**

▪ **Learning Regression:**

- School closures not only prevented new learning, but also led to the phenomenon of “learning regression”, that is, children forgetting what they had learned earlier.
- In India, 92% of children on average lost at least one foundational ability in language and 82% lost at least one foundational ability in mathematics.

▪ **Teachers are Paid Less:**

- The study found out that teachers in **non-state schools are often paid significantly less** than those in state schools.
- Teachers in low-fee private schools in India, Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan are paid between **one eighth and one half of what their counterparts in the state sector receive.**

▪ **Domestic work is Highly Informal:**

- Domestic work is **a highly informal sector in India**, and wages are extremely low and young women and girls are vulnerable to abuse.
- Reports of **abuse suffered by young domestic workers are common**, including verbal and physical abuse, and sexual exploitation.

What are the Recommendations?

- Investment in various sectors must be accompanied by the **promotion of decent working conditions** for all young workers.
- Young workers should be ensured that they enjoy **fundamental rights** and protections including freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, **equal pay for work** of equal value, and freedom from violence and harassment at work.
- Young people should be provided with well-**functioning labour markets with decent job opportunities** for those already participating in the labour market, along with **quality education and training opportunities** for those yet to enter it.

Q. International Labour Organization's Conventions 138 and 182 are related to (2018)

- (a) Child Labour
- (b) Adaptation of agricultural practices to global climate change
- (c) Regulation of food prices and food security
- (d) Gender parity at the workplace

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- In 2017, the Union Cabinet, GoI approved ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) of the International Labour Organization (ILO).
- **Convention No. 138:** India is the 170th ILO Member state to ratify Convention No. 138, which requires state parties to set a minimum age under which no one shall be admitted to employment or work in any occupation, except for light work and artistic performances.
- **Convention No. 182:** India also became the ILO's 181st Member state to ratify Convention No. 182. This calls for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including slavery, forced labour and trafficking; the use of children in armed conflict; the use of a child for prostitution, pornography and in illicit activities (such as drug trafficking); and hazardous work.
- These all are in line with the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, which completely prohibits employment or work of children below 14 years in any occupation or process and also prohibits the employment of adolescents (14 to 18 years) in hazardous occupations and processes.
- Additionally, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Central Rules, as recently amended, for the first time provide for a broad and a specific framework for the prevention, prohibition, rescue and rehabilitation of child and adolescent workers.
- With ratification of the two core ILO Conventions, India has ratified six out of eight core ILO Conventions. Four other conventions relate to abolition of forced labour, equal remuneration and no discrimination between men and women in employment and occupation.
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

[Source: TH](#)

India - UK Relations

For Prelims: India's UK Relations, Indo-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021, 2030 Roadmap for India-UK Relations, India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, India-UK FTA

For Mains: India's Bilateral Relations with UK, India-UK FTA and its significance

Why in News?

Trade between [India and the UK](#) is expected to double by 2030 driven by the proposed [free trade pact](#), investment in technology, diversification of [global supply chains](#) and ease of doing business, according to Britain Meets India (BMI) Report by Grant Thornton Bharat in partnership with [The Confederation of Indian Industry \(CII\)](#).

- **Business services** is the **top sector being eyed by the UK companies** in India, with **Maharashtra the leading investment destination** followed by **National Capital Region and Karnataka**.



What do we know about the Proposed Free Trade Agreement?

- **About:**
 - The proposed FTA is expected to **boost Indian exports in labour-intensive sectors** such as leather, textile, jewellery, processed agri-products and marine products, education, pharma, and health care.
 - **The UK is likely to look at reducing tariffs on products** such as apples, UK-manufactured medical devices and machinery.
 - UK companies also expect **India to take measures** to strengthen [data privacy](#) and **enforce contracts**.
- **India's Trade with UK:**
 - The UK remained the **sixth largest investor in India**, with a cumulative investment of approximately **USD 31.92 billion during FY 2000-22**.
 - This constituted around **5.4% of the total [Foreign Direct Investment \(FDI\)](#)** into India.
 - India's **trade in goods and services** with the UK amounted to **USD 31.34 billion in FY 2022**, as against USD 19.51 billion in 2015.
 - 618 UK Companies have been identified in India, they together employ approximately **4.66 lakh people** and have a combined **turnover of Rs 3,634.9 billion**.

What are the Recent Developments on India's Relations with the UK?

- Despite the challenge posed by the [Ukraine crisis](#), the India-UK relationship has been on an **upward trajectory**, exemplified by the conclusion of a [Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021](#).
 - The agreement also established a [2030 Roadmap for India-UK relations](#), which primarily outlines the **partnership plans for the bilateral relationship**.
- Both the countries held talks on **defence-related trade** and deepening [cyber security](#) and **defence cooperation** between the two countries.
 - A new **joint cyber security programme** is set to be announced to protect **online infrastructure in India and the UK**.
 - India and the UK also plan to hold the first **Strategic Tech Dialogue**, a ministerial-level summit on emerging technologies.
- Additionally, the UK and India have agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the **maritime domain** as the UK will join [India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative](#) and become a **major partner on maritime security issues in Southeast Asia**.
- In January 2022, India and the UK concluded the first round of talks for an [India-UK Free Trade Agreement](#).
 - The negotiations reflected shared ambitions to secure a **comprehensive deal between the fifth (UK) and sixth (India) largest economies** in the world.

What is a Free Trade Agreement?

- **About:**
 - It is a **pact between two or more nations to reduce barriers** to imports and exports among them.
 - Under a free trade policy, goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders **with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions** to inhibit their exchange.
 - The concept of free trade is the **opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism**.
- **India and FTAs:**
 - [India - Australia ECTA:](#)
 - India will benefit from **preferential market access** provided by Australia on 100% of its tariff lines.
 - India will be **offering preferential access to Australia on over 70%** of its tariff lines.
 - [South Asian Free Trade Area \(SAFTA\):](#)
 - A Free Trade Agreement confined to goods, but **excluding all services** like [information technology](#).
 - This agreement was signed to reduce customs duties of all traded goods to zero by the year 2016.

What are other Trade Agreements signed by India?

- [India-UAE CEPA:](#)
 - **The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** provides for an **institutional mechanism** to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
- [Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement \(CECPA\)](#) between India and Mauritius.
 - It is a **kind of free trade pact** that aims to provide an **institutional mechanism** to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
 - Under this agreement, **countries reduce or eliminate the duties on the products**. The countries also **relax** in the norms to promote the services trade.
- **South Asia Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA):**
 - It is for **promoting trade amongst the member countries** which came into effect in 1995.
- [Asia Pacific Trade Agreement \(APTA\):](#)
 - Previously the **Bangkok Agreement**, it's a preferential tariff arrangement that aimed at **promoting intra-regional trade through the exchange of mutually agreed**

concessions by member countries.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following countries: (2018)

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. India
5. Japan
6. USA

Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

- (a) 1, 2, 4 and 5
(b) 3, 4, 5 and 6
(c) 1, 3, 4 and 5
(d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

Ans: (c)

Explanation:

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has free trade agreements with six partners, namely the **People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Japan, India as well as Australia and New Zealand**. Hence, 1, 3, 4 and 5 are correct.
- ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the founding fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined on 7 January 1984, Vietnam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999, making up what is today the ten member states of ASEAN.
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Q. The term 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership' often appears in the news in the context of the affairs of a group of countries known as (2016)

- (a) G20
(b) ASEAN
(c) SCO
(d) SAARC

Ans: (b)

Explanation:

- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the five countries (Australia, China, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand) with which ASEAN has existing FTAs.
- Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

[Source: BS](#)

Guidelines to Regulate Digital Lending

For Prelims: Reserve Bank of India, Digital Lending, Integrated Ombudsman Scheme of RBI

For Mains: Concerns related to Digital Lending and steps taken by government in this direction

Why in News?

Recently, the [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) issued the first set of guidelines for digital lending, to crack down on illegal activities by certain players.

- Towards addressing concerns that had sprung up, the RBI had constituted a [Working Group on 'digital lending including lending through online platforms and mobile apps'](#) (WGDL) in January, 2021.
- The group has **proposed stricter norms for digital lenders in November 2021**, some of which have been accepted and included in the new norms while others are under examination.

What do we Know about Digital Lending?

- **About:**
 - It consists of **lending through web platforms or mobile apps**, by taking advantage of technology for authentication and credit assessment.
 - Banks have launched their own independent digital lending platforms to tap into the digital lending market by leveraging existing capabilities in traditional lending.
- **Significance:**
 - **Financial Inclusion:** It helps in **meeting the huge unmet credit need**, particularly in the microenterprise and low-income consumer segment in India.
 - **Reduce Borrowing from Informal Channels:** It **helps in reducing informal borrowings** as it simplifies the process of borrowing.
 - **Time Saving:** It **decreases time spent on working loan applications** in-branch. Digital lending platforms have also been known to cut overhead costs by 30-50%.

What are the Highlights of the Guidelines?

- **For Loan Disbursals and Repayments:**
 - **All loan disbursals and repayments** will be required **to be executed only between the bank accounts of the borrower and the Regulated Entities (RE)** without any pass-through or pool account of the Lending Service Providers (LSP) or any third party.
 - **Regulated Entities include** a bank or a non-banking financial company.
- **Regarding Payment:**
 - The new rules mandate that **fees or charges payable to LSPs in the credit intermediation process** will be paid directly **by the bank** or [Non-Banking Financial Companies \(NBFCs\)](#) and not by the borrower.
- **Regarding Loan Disclosure:**
 - All-inclusive cost of digital loans in the form of Annual Percentage Rate (APR) is required to be disclosed to the borrowers.
- **Regarding increase in Credit Limit:**
 - The new norm **prohibits any automatic increase in credit limit** without the explicit consent of the borrower.
- **Regarding Exiting Digital Loans:**

- It also **provides, as part of the loan contract, a cooling-off/ look-up period** during which the borrowers can exit digital loans by paying the principal and the proportionate annual percentage rate without any penalty.
- **To Protect Data Privacy:**
 - To protect data privacy, the **data collected by digital lending apps has to be need-based**, with the customer's prior consent, and can be audited, if required.
- **Grievance Redressal Officer:**
 - Banks will have to ensure that they, and the LSPs engaged by them, **must have a suitable nodal grievance redressal officer** to deal with [fintech- or digital lending](#) -related complaints.
 - This officer will also **deal with complaints against their respective Digital Lending Apps (DLAs)**.
 - Current guidelines allow for the borrower to complain to the [Integrated Ombudsman Scheme of the RBI](#) if their grievance was not resolved by the bank within 30 days.
- **Reporting of Loans:**
 - REs are required to ensure that **any lending done through DLAs has to be reported to [Credit Information Companies \(CICs\)](#)**, irrespective of its nature or tenor.
 - More importantly, lending through the Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) model also needs to be reported to CICs.

Who comes under RBI's New Purview?

- While announcing the norms, **RBI classified digital lenders into three categories.**
 - **Entities regulated by the RBI** and permitted to carry out lending business.
 - Entities **authorized to carry out lending** as per other statutory or regulatory provisions but not regulated by RBI.
 - Entities **lending outside the purview of any statutory** or regulatory provisions.
- The central bank's regulatory framework is focused on the **digital lending ecosystem of regulated entities** and the LSPs engaged by them to extend various permissible credit facilitation services.
 - However, **the lenders in the other categories do not come under the new guidelines and can consider formulating appropriate rules** and regulations on digital lending based on the recommendations of the working group.

What is the Need for Such Guidelines?

- With the advent of technological innovation, **there has been immense development in the digital lending ecosystem**, which has resulted in several fintech firms extending credit services.
- However, this growth has led to **mis selling to unsuspecting customers**, unethical business conduct by digital lenders and excessive engagement of third parties, and concerns over data privacy of the borrower.
- There have also been several complaints by consumers that **digital lending apps are charging exorbitant interest rates** or they were committing fraud, among others.

Way Forward

- India is on the verge of a digital lending revolution and making sure that this lending is done responsibly can ensure the fruits of this revolution are realized.
- Digital lenders should proactively develop and commit to a code of conduct that outlines the principles of integrity, transparency and consumer protection, with clear standards of disclosure and grievance redressal.
- Apart from establishing technological safeguards, educating and training customers to spread awareness about digital lending is also important.

[Source: TH](#)

Essential Commodities Act of 1955

For Prelims: Essential Commodity, Essential Commodities Act

For Mains: Issues Related to Essential Commodities Act 1955

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution** has invoked the **Essential Commodities Act of 1955** to curb tur dal prices surging.

- States and Union Territories are asked to **direct 'stockholder entities to upload the data of stocks held by them'** on an online monitoring portal of the Department of Consumer Affairs, on a weekly basis.

Why Invoking the Act?

- Tur prices have risen since mid-July 2022 **amid slow progress in Kharif sowing** as compared to last year 2021 due to **excess rainfalls and water logging conditions in parts of major Tur growing states** of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
- To **control any unwarranted price rise in the upcoming high demand festival months**, the government is taking pre-emptive steps to ensure overall availability and controlled prices of pulses in the domestic as well as overseas markets.
- To **limit attempts by some sections of traders and stockists to push the price for Tur dal upwards**, by resorting to '**restricted sales**' and **creating an Artificial Scarcity**.
 - **Artificial Scarcity** is the **purposeful limitation of production** of particular products (or services) in order **to raise prices and / or demand**.

What is the Essential Commodities Act 1955?

- **Background:**
 - The ECA Act 1955 was **legislated at a time when the country was facing a scarcity of foodstuffs** due to persistent low levels of foodgrains production.
 - The country was dependent on imports and assistance (such as wheat import from the US under PL-480) to feed the population.
 - To prevent **hoarding and black marketing of foodstuffs**, the **Essential Commodities Act was enacted in 1955**.
- **Essential Commodity:**
 - There is **no specific definition** of essential commodities in the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
 - Section 2(A) of the Act states that an **"essential commodity" means a commodity specified in the Schedule of the Act**.
- **Legal Jurisdiction:**
 - The Act **gives powers to the central government** to add or remove a commodity in the Schedule.
 - The Centre, if it is satisfied that **it is necessary to do so in the public interest**, can **notify an item as essential**, in consultation with state governments.
- **Objective:**
 - The ECA 1955 is used to **curb inflation by allowing the Centre to enable control by state governments of trade** in a wide variety of commodities.
- **Impact:**
 - By declaring a commodity as essential, the government **can control the production**,

supply, and distribution of that commodity, and impose a stock limit.

What are the Issues Related to Essential Commodities Act 1955?

- The [Economic Survey 2019-20](#) highlighted that **government intervention under the ECA 1955 often distorted agricultural trade** while being totally ineffective in curbing inflation.
- Such intervention **does enable opportunities for rent-seeking and harassment**.
 - Rent-seeking is a term used by **economists to describe unproductive income, including from corruption**.
- Traders tend to buy far less than their usual capacity and farmers often suffer huge losses during surplus harvests of perishables.
- This led to **farmers being unable to get better prices** due to lack of investment in cold storage, warehouses, processing and export.
- Owing to these issues, the Parliament passed the [Essential Commodities \(Amendment\) Bill, 2020](#).
 - However, due to farmers' protest the Government had to repeal this law.

Way Forward

- The ECA 1955 was brought when India was not self-sufficient in food grains production. However, now India has become surplus in most agri-commodities, and the amendments in the ECA 1955 is an important step by the government to achieve its target of doubling farmers' income and also for ease of doing business.

[Source: TH](#)

National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM)

For Prelims: NIPAM, IPR, International Treaties, National Initiatives

For Mains: NIPAM, Need for IPR, Treaties, Regulating IPR, National Initiatives

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:**
 - **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.
- **Need for IPR:**
 - **Encourages innovation:**
 - The **legal protection** of new creations encourages the **commitment of additional resources** for further innovation.
 - **Economic growth:**
 - The promotion and protection of intellectual property spurs **[economic growth](#)**, creates **new jobs and industries**, and enhances the quality and enjoyment of life.
 - **Safeguard the rights of creators:**
 - IPR is required to **safeguard creators and other producers** of their intellectual commodity, goods and services by granting them certain time-limited rights to control the use made of the manufactured goods.
 - **Ease of Doing Business:**
 - It promotes **innovation and creativity** and ensures **ease of doing business.**
 - **Transfer of Technology:**
 - It facilitates the **transfer of technology** in the form of **foreign direct investment**, joint ventures and licensing.

What are the Treaties and Conventions related to IPR?

- **Global:**

- India is a member of the [World Trade Organisation](#) and committed to the Agreement on [Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property \(TRIPS Agreement\)](#).
- India is also a member of **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**, a body responsible for the promotion of the protection of intellectual property rights throughout the world.
- India is also **a member of the following important WIPO-administered International Treaties and Conventions relating to IPRs:**
 - **Budapest Treaty** on the International Recognition of the **Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure**
 - **Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property**
 - Convention Establishing the **World Intellectual Property Organization**
 - **Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works**
 - [Patent Cooperation Treaty](#)
- **National:**
 - [Indian Patent Act 1970:](#)
 - This principal law for patenting system in India came into force in the year 1972. It replaced the **Indian Patents and Designs Act 1911**.
 - The Act was amended by the **Patents (Amendment) Act, 2005**, wherein product patent was extended to all fields of technology including **food, drugs, chemicals and microorganisms**.
 - [National Intellectual Property Rights \(IPR\) Policy 2016:](#)
 - **The National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy 2016** was adopted in May 2016 as a vision document to guide future development of IPRs in the country.
 - Its clarion call is **“Creative India; Innovative India”**.
 - It sets in place an **institutional mechanism** for implementation, monitoring and review.
 - It aims to incorporate and adapt global best practices to the Indian scenario.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the ‘National Intellectual Property Rights Policy’, consider the following statements: (2017)

1. It reiterates India’s commitment to the Doha Development Agenda and the TRIPS Agreement.
2. Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion is the nodal agency for regulating intellectual property rights in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- The **National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy** recognizes that India has a well-established TRIPS compliant legislative, administrative and judicial framework to safeguard IPRs, which meets its international obligations while utilizing the flexibilities provided in the international regime to address its developmental concerns. **It reiterates India’s commitment to the Doha Development Agenda and the TRIPS Agreement. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The **DIPP (now DPIIT i.e. Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade)** is recognised as the nodal department to coordinate, guide and oversee implementation and future development of IPRs in India. DIPP comes under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. According to the Indian Patents Act, a biological process to create a seed can be patented in India.
2. In India, there is no Intellectual Property Appellate Board.
3. Plant varieties are not eligible to be patented in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- **Section 3(j) of Indian Patent Act, excludes from patentability “plants and animals in whole or in any part thereof other than microorganisms, including seeds, varieties, and species, and essentially biological processes for production or propagation of plants and animals”. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- The **Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) was constituted in 2003** by the Government of India to hear and resolve the appeals against the decisions of the registrar under the Indian Trademarks Act, 1999 and the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- **Plant variety protection provides legal protection of a plant variety to a breeder in the form of Plant Breeder’s Rights (PBRs).** In India, the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers’ Rights (PPVFR) Act, 2001, is a sui generis system that aims to provide for the establishment of an effective system for the protection of plant varieties and the rights of plant breeders and farmers. A sui generis system is an alternative to the patent system. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

Mains

Q. In a globalized world, Intellectual Property Rights assume significance and are a source of litigation. Broadly distinguish between the terms—Copyrights, Patents and Trade Secrets. **(2014)**

Source: PIB

World Elephant Day

For Prelims: World Elephant Day, Convention of the Migratory species (CMS), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Elephant Reserves (ERs), Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme.

For Mains: Significance of Conserving Elephants and issues Related to the Elephant Species.

Why in News?

The [World Elephant Day](#) is celebrated every year on **12th of August**, with the aim to acknowledge Elephants' significance in our ecosystem.

- It emphasizes on **raising the awareness of the threats that elephants face in their daily lives**. Whether **poaching, mistreatment in captivity, or habitat loss**, every single factor plays a role in animal abuse.

What is the Significance of Celebrating Elephant Day?

- **About:**
 - Elephants are considered sacred in many cultures and are essential for maintaining a healthy ecosystem.
 - Elephants also encourage biodiversity.
 - They are an **intelligent species**, they have the **biggest brain of any land animal**.
- **Population:**
 - The **elephant population has reduced by 50% over the past 75 years**.
 - The current population estimates indicate that there are about 50,000 -60000 Asian elephants in the world.
 - More than 60% of the population is held in India.
- **Historical perspective:**
 - The campaign World Elephant Day was **initiated in 2012 to bring awareness to the disturbing situations of African and Asian elephants**.
 - The objective of this campaign is to **create a sustainable environment where animals are not exploited and taken care of**.
 - It was first observed by Canadian filmmakers Michael Clark and Patricia Sims with the Thailand-based Elephant Reintroduction Foundation.
 - In 2012, Patricia Sims **founded an organization called the World Elephant Society**.
 - The organization has succeeded to create awareness about the dangers confronted by the elephants and the inevitability to protect them globally.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) Red List of threatened species:
 - African Forest Elephant- **Critically Endangered**
 - African Savanna Elephant- **Endangered**
 - Asian Elephant- **Endangered**
 - [Convention of the Migratory species \(CMS\)](#): **Appendix I**
 - [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#): **Schedule I**

What are the Issues Related to Elephants in India?

- India has the **largest number of wild Asian Elephants**, estimated at 29,964 according to 2017 census by **Project Elephant**, i.e., about **60% of the species' global population**.
 - **Human -Elephant conflict:**
 - The friction between humans and elephants termed [Human-Elephant Conflict \(HEC\)](#) which **occurs mainly over space** and is a major concern across the country for governments, conservationists and people living close to the wild animals.
 - **Habitat loss:**
 - Loss of natural habitat and fragmentation have been bringing wild elephants closer to human habitations, sparking these conflicts.
 - Over 500 humans are killed in encounters with elephants annually, and crops and property worth millions are also damaged.
 - Many elephants are also killed in retaliation due to conflict.

What are the Initiatives taken by the Government?

- **Project Elephant:** Project Elephant was launched in 1991-92 as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.**
 - Estimation of wild elephant population in the year 2007, 2012 and 2017. **Karnataka** has the highest number of elephants followed by Assam and Kerala.
- **Elephant Reserves:** Elephant Reserve is a management entity notified by the State Governments as per recommendation of Government of India.
 - It includes Protected Areas, forest areas, corridors and private/reserve lands.
 - Agasthiyamalai (Tamil Nadu) will be the country's 32nd elephant reserve.
- **Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme** - Mandated by **Conference of Parties (COP)** resolution of **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).**
 - The MIKE program **started in South Asia in the year 2003 with the following purpose:**
 - To provide information needed for elephant range States to make appropriate management and enforcement decisions, and to **build institutional capacity within the range States for the long-term management of their elephant populations.**
 - **Mike Sites in India:**
 - Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve (Assam)
 - Deomali Elephant Reserve (Arunachal Pradesh)
 - Dihing Patkai Elephant Reserve (Assam)
 - Garo Hills Elephant Reserve (Meghalaya)
 - Eastern Dooars Elephant Reserve (West Bengal)
 - Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve (Odisha)
 - Shivalik Elephant Reserve (Uttarakhand)
 - Mysore Elephant Reserve (Karnataka)
 - Nilgiri Elephant Reserve (Tamil Nadu)
 - Wayanad Elephant Reserve (Kerala)

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. With reference to Indian elephants, consider the following statements: (2020)

1. The leader of an elephant group is a female.
2. The maximum gestation period can be 22 months.
3. An elephant can normally go on calving till the age of 40 years only.
4. Among the States in India, the highest elephant population is in Kerala.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 3 and 4 only

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- The elephant herd is led by the oldest and largest female member (known as the matriarch). This herd includes the daughters of the matriarch and their offspring. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Elephants have the longest-known gestational (pregnancy) period of all mammals, lasting up to 680 days (22 months). Hence, statement 2 is correct. Females between 14 - 45 years may give birth to calves approximately every four years with the mean interbirth intervals increasing to five years by age 52 and six years by age 60. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
- As per Elephant Census (2017), Karnataka has the highest number of elephants (6,049), followed by Assam (5,719) and Kerala (3,054). Hence, statement 4 is not correct.

- Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.

[Source: TH](#)

Butterfly Mine

Why in News?

The UK Ministry of Defence, in its **intelligence assessment** of the ongoing [war in Ukraine](#), has sounded an alarm on the possible use of **PFM-1 series 'Butterfly Mines'** by the Russian military in **Donetsk and Kramatorsk**.



What are the findings of the Intelligence Assessment?

- Russia might have deployed **anti-personnel mines** to deter **freedom of movement along its defensive lines in the Donbas (Donetsk & Luhansk)**.
 - These mines have the potential to inflict **widespread casualties** amongst both the military and the local civilian population.
- In Donetsk and Kramatorsk, Russia has likely attempted employment of **PFM-1 and PFM-1S scatterable anti-personnel mines**.
 - The PFM-1 and PFM-1S are commonly referred to as **'Butterfly mines' or 'Green Parrots'**.
 - These names are derived from the shape and colour of the mines.

What is Butterfly Mine?



▪ **About:**

- It is a **very sensitive** anti-personnel landmine.
- **An applied force of 5 kg** is enough to detonate the mine.
- It is **extremely dangerous**, even for small children.
- The major difference between PFM-1 & PFM-1S is that **the latter one comes with a self-destruction mechanism which gets activated within one to 40 hours.**

▪ **Uses:**

- They can be **dropped from helicopters** or through **ballistic dispersion** using artillery and mortar shells.
 - They glide to the ground without exploding and later explode on coming in contact.

▪ **Detection:**

- These mines are difficult to detect because **they are made of plastic and can evade metal detectors.**

▪ **Technical Specification:**

- They are moulded in **polyethene plastic** and have two wings, **one of which is heavier than the other.**
 - The **thicker wing is the pressure activation** for the main fuse which is contained in the central body.
 - The **thinner wing acts as a stabiliser for the mine** when it is air-dropped, thus giving it the name 'butterfly'.

▪ **Conventions on Anti-Personal Mines:**

- The anti-personal mines are banned by international convention on land mines but **Russia and Ukraine are not signatories to it.**
- There is a **1996 Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons-the Landmines Protocol** to which **Russia and Ukraine are signatories.**

[Source: IE](#)

Langya Virus

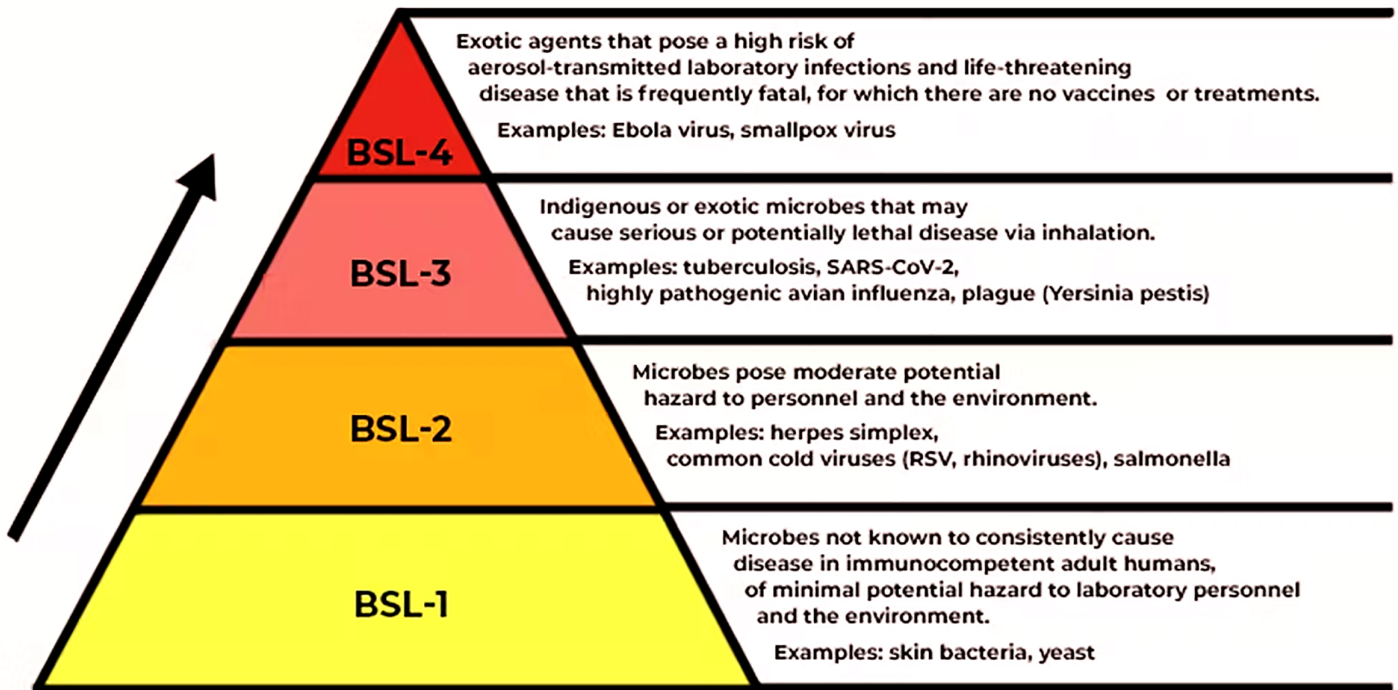
Why in News?

Amid the [Covid-19](#) and [Monkeypox](#) cases around, the new zoonotic **Langya Henipavirus** has raised concerns.

- The first case of the Langya virus was reported in 2019. The Langya virus has been classified among [Biosafety Level 4 \(BSL4\) Pathogens.](#)

What are the Biosafety levels?

- BSL is used **to identify the protective** measures needed in a laboratory setting to protect workers, the environment, and the public.
- Activities and projects conducted in biological laboratories are categorized by biosafety level.
- The four biosafety levels are BSL-1, BSL-2, BSL-3, and BSL-4, with BSL-4 being the highest (maximum) level of containment.



What is Langya Virus?

- **About:**
 - The Langya virus is a [zoonotic virus](#) which means it can be transmitted from animals to humans.
 - Langya is part of the **genus Henipavirus**, which has a **single-stranded RNA genome with a negative orientation**.
 - Unique features of *henipaviruses Paramyxovirinae* are their larger genomes, longer untranslated regions that are over 100 amino acids longer than any other known phosphoprotein in the family.
 - It is an **emerging cause of zoonosis in the [Asia-Pacific region](#)**.
- **Novel Langya Virus:**
 - The **newly discovered Langya virus is a 'phylogenetically distinct Henipavirus'**.
 - Other viruses of the type Henipavirus discovered earlier are the Mojiang, Ghanian, Cedar, [Nipah](#), and Hendra.
 - Of these, **Nipah and Hendra are known to have caused fatal illnesses in humans**.
 - Langya's genome organization is **"identical to that of other Henipaviruses"**, and that it is closely related to the **"Mojiang Henipavirus"**, which was discovered in southern China.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Fever, Fatigue, Cough, Nausea, Headache, Loss of appetite etc.
- **Treatment:**

- There are no licensed drugs or vaccines meant for humans.

How Impactful is Langya Virus?

- The Langya virus may **potentially be fatal to humans in case of severe infections.**
- Langya belongs to the same family of viruses as the deadly Nipah virus that is typically found in bats.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Adenoviruses have single-stranded DNA genomes whereas retroviruses have double-stranded DNA genomes.
2. Common cold is sometimes caused by an adenovirus whereas AIDS is caused by a retrovirus.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Viruses that infect human hosts can be categorized as adenoviruses and retroviruses
- Adenovirus is a type of virus that has no envelope whereas retroviruses are characterized as enveloped viruses. Adenoviruses have double-stranded linear DNA and are associated with two major core proteins. A retrovirus is a virus that uses RNA as its genetic material. When a retrovirus infects a cell, it makes a DNA copy of its genome that is inserted into the DNA of the host cell. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- Adenoviruses are common viruses that cause a range of illnesses. They can cause cold-like symptoms, fever, sore throat, bronchitis, pneumonia, diarrhoea, and pink eye (conjunctivitis). Whereas, retroviruses can cause several human diseases such as some forms of cancer and AIDS. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q. Among the following, which were frequently mentioned in the news for the outbreak of Ebola virus recently? (2015)

- (a) Syria and Jordan
- (b) Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia
- (c) Philippines and Papua New Guinea
- (d) Jamaica, Haiti and Surinam

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Ebola virus disease is a severe fatal illness in humans and non-human primates. The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission.
- The fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family are natural Ebola virus hosts.
- The Ebola virus is transmitted among humans through close and direct physical contact with infected bodily fluids, the most infectious being blood, faeces and vomit. The virus has also been detected in breast milk, urine and semen.

- Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia were in the news for the outbreak of Ebola virus. The most widespread outbreak of Ebola virus disease began in 2013 and continued until 2016, causing major loss of life and socio-economic disruption in the West African region, mainly in the countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.
- The **first cases were recorded in Guinea in December 2013. Later, the disease spread to neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Source: IE

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