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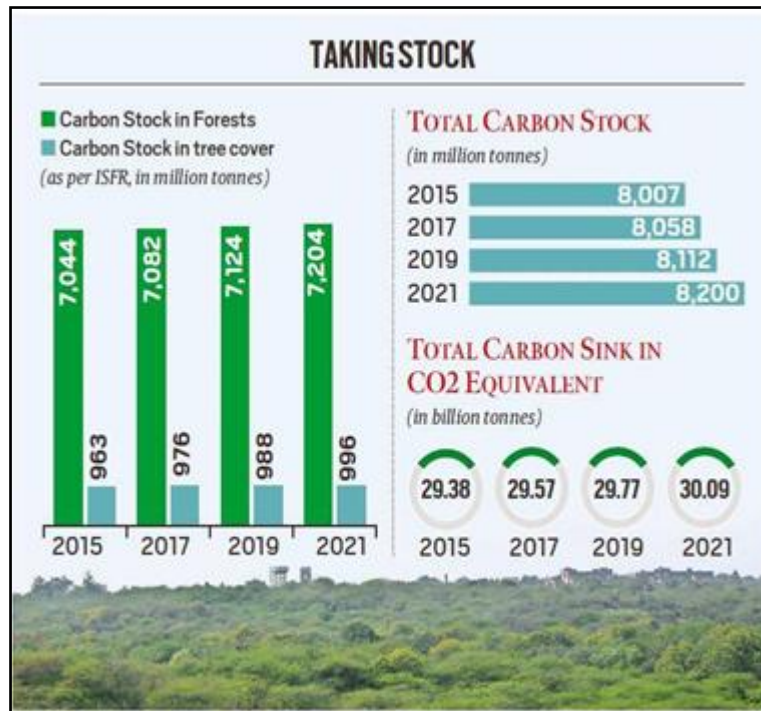
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Topic 1. MEETING CARBON SINK TARGET

Important for Subject: Environment



India changed its climate commitments. It announced that it would cut the intensity of the emission of its economy (emissions per unit of GDP by 45 percent from the levels of 2005 instead of the 33-35 percent that was promised earlier. Also, it said it would make sure that renewable sources of energy comprise at least 50% which is more than 40 percent in the initial total installed capacity for electricity generation.

- The third goal -- a pledge to increase the size of its carbon sink from 2.5 or 3 billion tons of carbon equivalent carbon dioxide by 2030, through the development of new forest and forest cover -- was not addressed. One year earlier when the prime minister Narendra Modi spoke about India's five-point "Panchamrit" action plan during the Glasgow climate conference that was scheduled for 2021, it hadn't there been no reference to the third goal.

The year of the baseline

- The carbon sink goal was not defined in detail in the year 2015. India had committed "to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent through additional forest and tree recovery by 2030", but it had made no mention of the

baseline year.

- It didn't specify which year this additional 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent carbon sink would be measured against.
- In addition, the growth rate of carbon stocks in the Indian forests and the tree cover is increasing despite the fact that the total carbon stock as of 2021 was a little lower than the FSI had predicted two years ago.

Carbon Sinks

- A carbon sink can be described as any reservoir, whether natural or not, that accumulates and stores carbon-containing chemical compound for an indefinite time and, in turn, reduces the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere.
- Globally the two biggest carbon sinks that are being used are the ocean and the vegetation.
- The public's awareness of the importance of carbon sinks has increased in the wake of the introduction in the Kyoto Protocol, which encourages the use of these sinks as a method for carbon offset.
- There are various strategies that can be employed to boost the efficiency of this process. Soil is a significant carbon-storing medium. The majority of organic carbon stored in the agricultural areas has been wiped out due to the intensive farming practices.
- "Blue carbon" signifies carbon that is locked up by marine ecosystems. Mangroves salt marshes, sea grasses, and salt marshes make the bulk of marine plant life. They contain large amounts of carbon.
- There are numerous efforts being made to increase natural sequestration within the oceans and soils.
- Additionally, a variety of projects to artificially sequester carbon are in progress, including changing building components, carbon capture geological sequestration and storage.

Topic 2. LONG LOST MOTH SPECIES CAUGHT ON CAMERA IN TN FOREST

Important for Subject: Environment

Recently, two researchers from Tamil Nadu have spotted a rare moth species for the first time in India in the buffer zone of Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve.

Mimeusemiaceylonica

- Mimeusemiaceylonica is a species of moth that is part of the Subfamily Agaristinae and the family Noctuidae.
- It is believed that this Moth specie was initially described and illustrated by English Entomologist George Hampson in 1893.
- It was the first species discovered by the government of Sri Lanka.
- The species was rediscovered after 127 years, during moth surveys which was carried out in the year 2000 within the Agasthyamalai Community-based Conservation Centre (ACCC) located within the buffer zone of the Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR) located in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.
- The discovery of Moth species within the district has added to the evidence of the diverse biodiversity of the area.

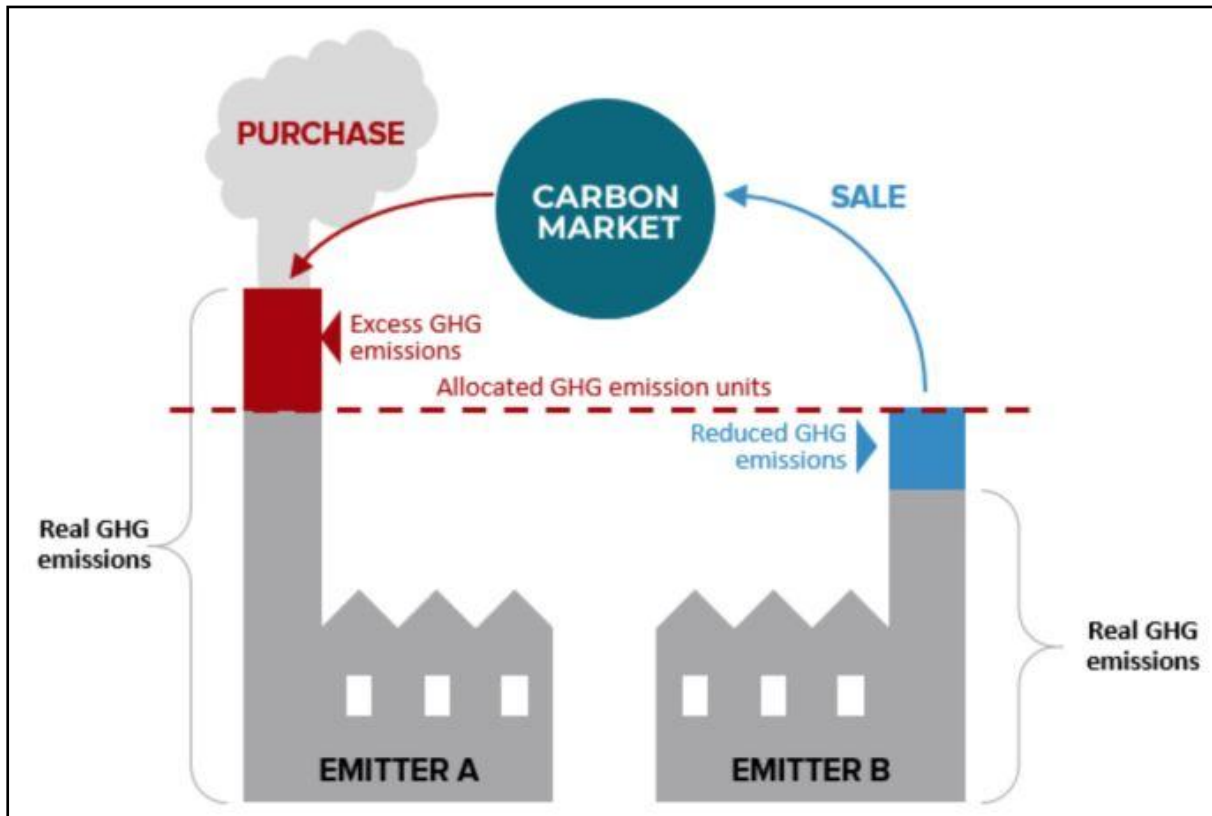
Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve

- The KalakadMundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR) located in Tirunelveli in Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari District in Tamil Nadu is one of the protected areas with a variety of wildlife and flora.
- It was declared "The "First Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu" as well as the 17th Tiger Reserve of the country.
- It is made up from it's Kanyakumari Sanctuary for Wildlife in South, and Nellai Wildlife Sanctuary in the north. Nellai Wildlife Sanctuary in the North.
- The Thamirabarani river Thamirabarani originates from this tiger sanctuary.
- It is referred to by the "River Sanctuary" with as fourteen rivers that originate from the Tiger Reserve.
- FloraThis zone has different types of vegetation that gradually shift to dry thorn forests into dry deciduous forest, humid and patches that is comprised of West coast wet evergreenforests at the top in the area.

- Fauna Lion the Tailed Macaque Nilgiri Tahr, Nilgiri Pipit, Grey Headed Bulbul, Blue Winged Parakeet etc.

Topic 3. INDIA WILL BE THE BIGGEST CARBON MARKET BY 2030

Important for Subject: Environment



By 2030, India will be the biggest carbon market in the world, Abhay Bakre, Director General, Bureau of Energy Efficiency, has said.

- Indian companies have been generating and selling carbon credits, their buyers have always been abroad.
- India is working towards building a fully domestic carbon market, where both buyers and sellers are Indian entities.

Background

- In December 2022, Parliament passed the Energy Conservation (Amendment)
- Bill, 2022. The Bill amended the Energy Conservation Act, 2001, to empower the government to establish carbon markets in India and specify a carbon credit trading

scheme.

- Government announced a list of 13 activities that will be considered for the trading of carbon credits under Article 6.2 mechanism to facilitate transfer of emerging technologies and mobilise international finance in India.
- Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022
- The Bill empowers the Centre to specify a carbon credits trading scheme.
- Under the Bill, the central government or an authorised agency will issue carbon credit certificates to companies or even individuals registered and compliant with the scheme.
- These carbon credit certificates will be tradeable in nature. Other persons would be able to buy carbon credit certificates on a voluntary basis.

About Carbon Markets

- Carbon markets are a tool for putting a price on carbon emissions. It allows the trade of carbon credits with the overall objective of bringing down emissions.
- These markets create incentives to reduce emissions or improve energy efficiency.
- For example, an industrial unit which outperforms the emission standards stands to gain credits.
- Another unit which is struggling to attain the prescribed standards can buy these credits and show compliance to these standards. The unit that did better on the standards earns money by selling credits, while the buying unit is able to fulfill its operating obligations.
- It establishes trading systems where carbon credits or allowances can be bought and sold.
- carbon credit :A carbon credit is a kind of tradable permit that, per United Nations standards, equals one tonne of carbon dioxide removed, reduced, or sequestered from the atmosphere.
- The owners of the credits sell them to those obligated to reduce carbon dioxide emissions but are unable to do so by their own efforts.
- Carbon allowances or caps: Carbon allowances or caps, meanwhile, are determined by countries or governments according to their emission reduction targets.

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement

- Article 6 of the Paris Agreement provides for the use of international carbon markets by countries to fulfill their NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions).
- NDCs are climate commitments by countries setting targets to achieve net-zero emissions.
- Article 6.2 provides an accounting framework for international cooperation, such as linking the emissions-trading schemes of two or more countries.
- Article 6.4 establishes a central UN mechanism to trade credits from emissions reductions generated through specific projects. For example, country A could pay for country B to build a wind farm instead of a coal plant. Emissions are reduced, country B benefits from the clean energy and country A gets credit for the reductions.
- Article 6.8 establishes a work program for non-market approaches, such as applying taxes to discourage emissions.

Bureau of Energy Efficiency

- Bureau of Energy Efficiency is a statutory body set up under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency assists the government in developing policies and strategies with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy within the overall framework of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001. It functions under Ministry of Power.

Topic 4. TREATY ON MARINE BIODIVERSITY OF AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION (BBNJ)

Important for Subject: Environment

In the very first instance ever, United Nations members have agreed to a quick completion of the Inter-Legitimately binding Instrument of BBNJ in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Background

- The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea was created on the 14th of April the year

1994 before marine biodiversity was an established notion.

- An modernized framework to safeguard marine life in the deep sea had been in discussion for more than 20 years.
- How do I know what is the BBNJ treaty?
- The BBNJ Treaty also called the Treaty of the High Seas is an international treaty which aims to protect and sustainably exploit the marine biodiversity of regions outside of national jurisdiction.
- The high seas are included, which fall outside of exclusive economic zones and comprise almost half of Earth's surface.
- These areas are not currently managed as only one percent are protected.
- The High Ambition Coalition on BBNJ was established by the BBNJ in Feb 2022 to discuss and reach an ambitious and comprehensive outcome.
- The most important areas of the agreement
- The talks focus on the things that have been agreed on, for instance the
- Sustainable and conservation for marine genetic resources
- Instruments for area-based management, like marine protected zones, Emissions assessments for environmental impacts, as well as Technology transfer and capacity building Consensus reached
- A new organization will be established to oversee the protection of marine life and to establish protected marine areas in the oceans of the high seas.
- The treaty provides the ground regulations for the conduct of environmental impact assessments for commercial operations in the oceans. Many marine species, such as whales, dolphins, sea turtles and many fish, undertake long annual migrations that cross national borders as well as the high seas.

The importance to this convention:

- Beyond the jurisdictional area of coverage: BBNJ refers to the regions that are not under the control of any one nation, like oceans in the upper reaches, bottom of deep waters, as well as the international seabed region. These areas are crucial to the health of the ocean, the health of the coastal population and the overall ecological sustainability of the earth.
- The entire ocean is covered BBNJ covers 95 percent of the ocean. It also provides an

array of vital ecological and cultural, economic, social, scientific, and food security benefits for humanity.

- A hard-earned the consensus: BBNJ is governed by a plethora of international conventions, agreements and bodies, however, there is no one complete framework to regulate actions in these fields.

Topic 5. ANTIBIOTIC DRUGS ADMINISTERED ON LIVESTOCK CUT CARBON IN SOIL AND AFFECT CLIMATE, SAYS IISC

Important for Subject: Environment

A study was carried out by researchers in the Spiti region of the Himalayas by the researchers from the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science (IISc). It was discovered that livestock grazing contributes to a lower storage of carbon in soil when compared with grass-grazing by wild herbivores.

- According to the research team the researchers, the variation between carbon and carbon dioxide storage due to the use of antibiotics for veterinary use such as tetracycline, which is used on animals.
- It was discovered the moment antibiotics enter soil through urine and dung and urine, they modify the microbe communities of the soil, which could affect carbon sequestration and could affect the mitigation of climate change.
- In a prior study, it was found that herbivores play an important part in stabilizing the pool of soil carbon within the region. The current study demonstrates the differences regarding how they affect the carbon stock of soils among livestock species like cattle and sheep when compared with wild herbivores like the Ibex and yak.
- According to the most recent study that shows soils from the livestock and wild areas sharing many similarities however, they are different in one important parameter known as the carbon utilization effectiveness (CUE).

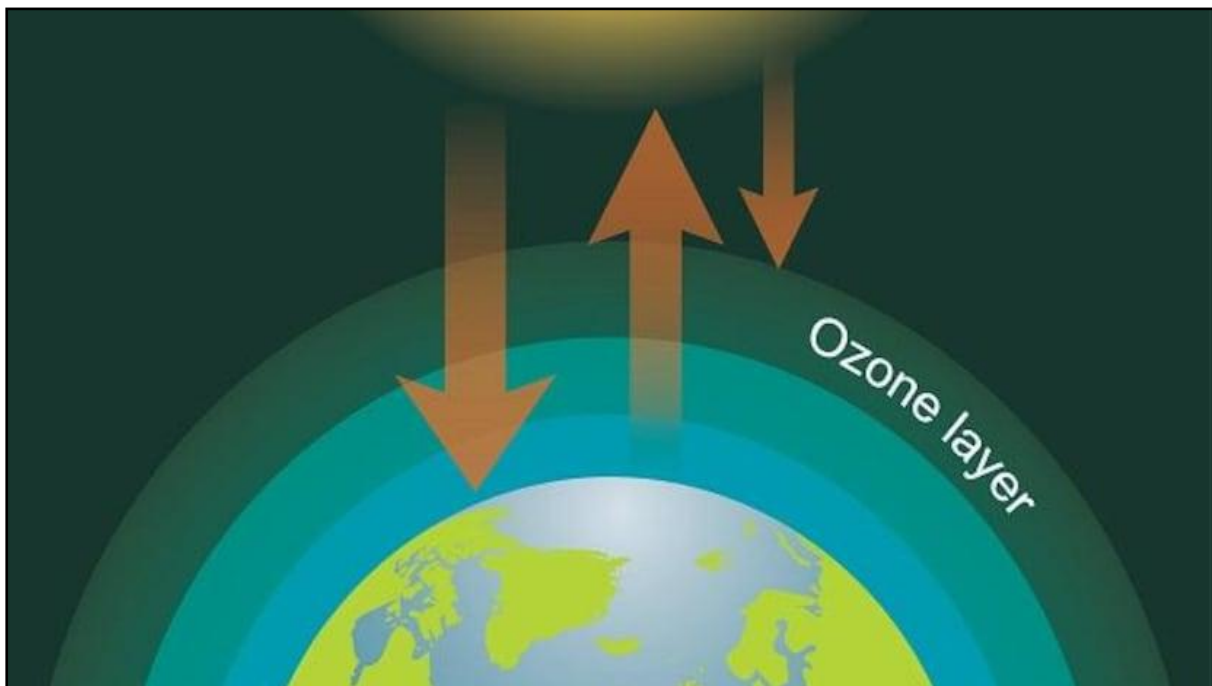
Carbon use efficiency

- The efficiency of carbon use (CUE) is an crucial measurement of carbon(C) transfer from the atmospheric biomass to terrestrial biomass and indirectly measures the amount of carbon released via autotrophic respiratory respiration from the plants into the atmosphere.

- Efficiency of the carbon cycle (CUE) is the measure of the capacity that microbes have to hold carbon within soil.
- The soils in the pastures was lower in CUE by 19% due to the fact that antibiotics, such as Tetracycline affect soil's microbial activity and may remain within the soil over an extended amount of time.

Topic 6. SMOKE PARTICLES FROM WILDFIRES CAN ERODE OZONE LAYER

Important for Subject: Environment



The researchers discovered a brand new chemical reaction that caused smoke particles generated by the Australian wildfires made the depletion of ozone more severe.

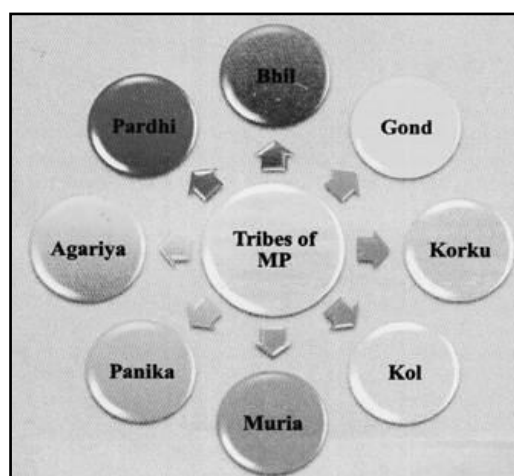
More on the News:

- The smoke of recent wildfires is in danger of slowing or even reverse the process of recovery of Earth's ozone layer according to an investigation.
- Scientists from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US discovered that wildfires could release smoke into the stratosphere. There, particles are able to drift for more than an entire year.
- When suspended in the air, these particles can cause chemical reactions that degrade the layer of ozone.

- The model developed by the researchers suggests that the fires caused a change on the Polar Regions, destroying parts of the Ozone gap that extends over Antarctica. Ozone:
- The gas Ozone that is made by 3 oxygen molecules (O₃). It is naturally found in tiny (trace) quantities at the top of the air (the stratosphere).
- Ozone helps protect living things on Earth from sun's UV (UV) ultraviolet (UV) radiation.
- Within the atmosphere below (the troposphere) close to the surface of Earth Ozone is produced by chemicals that react with air pollutions from automobile exhaust as well as gasoline vapors and other pollutants. At the ground level the high levels of ozone can be harmful to humans and plants.
- Ninety percent Ozone in the atmosphere is within the stratosphere the stratosphere is the layer between 10 and 50 kilometers in altitude
- Natural levels of oxygen in the stratosphere is the result of the balance of sunlight that produces ozone, and chemical reactions which destroy it.
- Ozone is destroyed by the reaction of molecules that contain hydrogen, nitrogen bromine, chlorine, or nitrogen.
- Increased levels of human-produced gases such as CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) have led to increased rates of ozone destruction, upsetting the natural balance of ozone and leading to reduced stratospheric ozone levels. The decreased levels of ozone increased the radiation that is harmful to the environment reaching planet's surface.

Topic 7. MADIA GOND TRIBES FORCED TO LEAVE ANCESTRAL LAND

Important for Subject: Environment



Madia Gond tribes are forced to move out of ancestral territory, because of the increasing conflict between humans and animals.

More on the News:

- In 2007 625.82 square kilometers of land in the Tadoba reserve were occupied by
- Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, which was declared as a crucial habitat for tigers.
- in 2022 there were six deaths in the human animal conflict between the 12th to 24 in the Chandrapur district all by themselves. One of the primary factors behind the rise in humananimal conflict is the energy and coal mining stations that are located close to forestsand natural corridors, through which animals move to adjacent forests, according to experts.
- The forest department started moving the tribesresiding in the area since they were no longer allowed to make use of forest land as their daily income or the cattle could not be grazed anymore.
- The tribes relocated to new territory face negative consequences as a result of inadequate resettlement facilities.

The Madia Gond Tribe

- There is a Madia Gond group is an indigenous group which is primarily located in the district of thGadchiroli in Maharashtra, India. They also reside in areas that are part of Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.
- They are predominantly forest dwellers who depend on the forestsfor their daily income that includes fishing, hunting, and collecting forest produce. They also engage in shift cultivation and plant crops such as millets, rice, and pulses.
- They play a variety of distinct musical instruments which include their mandar, the tarpa and Nagada. Their dances are performed at various times, such as weddings, harvest festivals and even religious ceremonies.
- However it is true that the Madia Gond tribe is facing a variety of problems currently, including displacement from their land due development activities such as mining and construction inaccessibility to basic services such as health and education and discrimination from the dominant caste groups.

Adoba Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary

- Adoba Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary is an area of protection within the Chandrapur district in Maharashtra, India.
- It was founded at the end of 1985 and encompasses an area of 635.47 acres.
- This sanctuary an element of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve that comprises the Tadoba National Park.
- The park is Maharashtra's longest-running and most extensive national park..
- It is the home of a diverse array of animals, such as leopards, tigers wild dogs, sloth bears and the hyenas and sambar deer chital, deer that bark, and a variety of species of birds.
- The Andhari River, which flows through the sanctuary is a major source of water to the birds and animals.

Critical Tiger habitats (CWH)

- Critical wildlife habitats/Tiger habitats (CWH) can be identified under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
- Critical wildlife habitat is defined as areas in National Parks and Sanctuaries that must be protected for the purpose of wildlife conservation.
- It is decided and notified to the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests following an open consulting with an expert Committee.

Topic 8. OLD HOMES OF KASHMIR'S COLD VALLEY

Important for Subject: Environment

The historic homes of Kashmir Valley. Kashmir Valley are living examples of sustainable and climate-resistant architecture.

More on the News:

- The Kashmirian architecture developed in response to the climate in the Valley which included addressing the extreme winter conditions.
- Houses were constructed in a way so that they were able to adapt to the weather conditions as well as the availability of building materials.
- The houses were constructed using an wooden frame as well as walls that were constructed of clay and mud, which protected them from cold and controlling the

temperature inside the home.

- The mud is the one with the highest capacity to retain heat and that's the reason for rooms covered with the mud feel warm even in cold winters.
- Kashmir is recognized as a place with the highest tectonic activity, and is also vulnerable to high intensity earthquakes. The two principal techniques used in construction - the dhajji and taq were able to withstand the ravages of nature including earthquakes with high intensity.
- A large portion of homeowners and experts in architecture say the modern design and construction doesn't take into account local climate conditions.
- But, the traditional structures used for air flow and insulation are easily recreated in modern constructions that are based on modern design and contemporary aesthetics.

TAQ SYSTEM OF CONSTRUCTION

- In the taq construction system there is a bearing wall that embeds horizontal timbers into masonry. In the construction method taq, the horizontal wood is embedded within the masonry walls on each window lintel and floor level. Taq construction is an masonry bearing construction using horizontal timber lacing incorporated into the masonry in order to stop it from cracking and spreading. Taq construction is a masonry piers ranging from 1 to 2 feet square, and the windows bay (taqshe) 3-4 feet wide. Based on this, the dimensions that is typical of a kashmiri house could be represented by a the 3taq (window bay) to 13 taq (window bay) in width. . The masonry piers are strong enough to support the vertical loads. The bays can be equipped with windows, or a wall made of masonry in accordance with the floor plan as well as the construction's orientation. In the taq method of construction, the various elements of the construction are placed in an modular layout of masonry piers as well as window bays that are linked as ladder-like construction since timber is utilized at every floor level as well as window lintel, which is where masonry is encased. A mixture of masonry unreinforced and wood laid on weak mortar provided structures the needed flexibility. The wooden bands held the walls of the mud mortar and gave the necessary ductility to a fragile structure. The most important aspect of the strength of Taq is that the entire mass of the brickwork can be allowed to be borne by the timbers, which keeps them in place. the timbers also prevent the building from expanding. The forces that spread can result in time, due to different settlement or

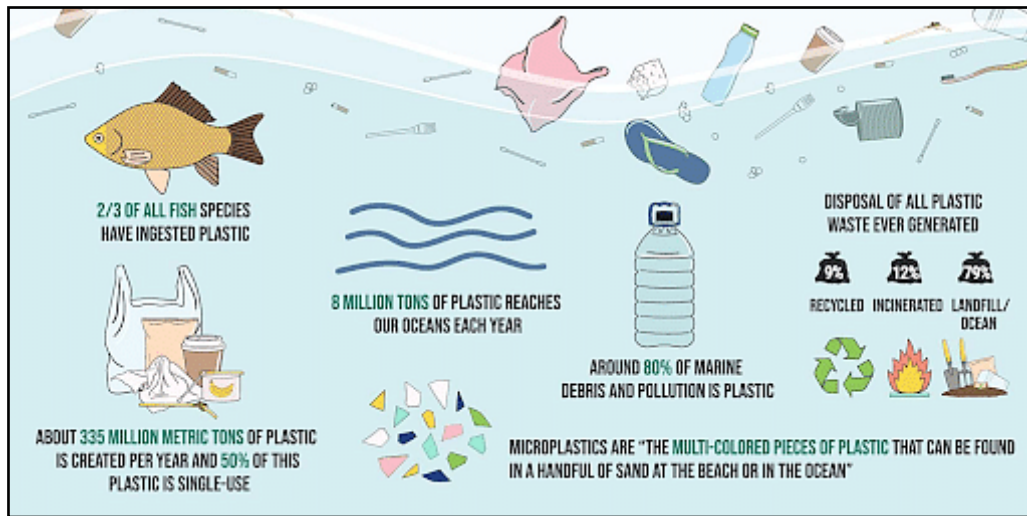
within a single moment during an earthquake. The weight of the wall in which the timbers are encased serves to "pre-stress" the wall, aiding in its resistance to the forces of lateral force.

DHAJJI-DEWARI SYSTEM OF CONSTRUCTION

- Dhajji Dewari is a wood frame in which the masonry has been packed to create an exterior wall, which results in an unbroken wall composed of masonry and wood. In the Dhajji-Dewari construction system, there is a frame made of wood that has been packed with masonry. The wood used in this system are able to be placed horizontally, vertically, or bent to the wall of masonry. These wood members separate the masonry wall in order that cracks do not extend to the wall, and eventually adds the wall with strength. Dhajjidewari can be described as a variant of mixed construction using masonry and timber which is widely used in a variety of forms as well as in non-earthquake zones.
- While earthquakes might be a factor in its continued use in earthquake zones timber and masonry frame construction likely evolved due to its cost-effective and effective use of materials. The term dhajjidewari is derived from Persian meaning "patchwork quilt wall", which is a suitable description of the structure of which it refers. The Persian name could be a hint to Persian influence on the development of this type of construction. It's quite like Turkish itis building, and was popular outside of Turkey and possibly due to the influences on The Ottoman Empire. Dhajjidewari is made up of a complete frame of timber that is connected with the masonry. The masonry will fill in the holes within the frame to create walls.

Topic 9. MARINE PLASTIC POLLUTION

Important for Subject: Environment



Polymer plume. More than 170 trillion pieces of plastic are floating around the oceans, according to a research

More on the News:

- Oceans around the globe are polluted by ever-growing smog of plastic comprised mainly of micro plastics, as per the findings of a recent study.
- A total of 171 trillion particles of plastic of a weight of 2.3 million tons, floated in the oceans of the world in 2019 according to the study, which was published in Plos One on March 8, 2023.

Sources of Marine Plastic:

- The major sources of marine plastics are soil-based, which comes from storm and urban water runoffs, sewer overflows beach users, poor sanitation and disposal of waste industrial activities and construction as well as illegal disposal.
- Ocean-based plastic is primarily derived from fishing industries and marine activities, as well as aquaculture.
- In the presence of UV radiation from the sun or wind, currents, or other natural forces the plastic breaks down into tiny particles, referred to as micro-plastics (particles smaller than 5 millimetres) and nano-plastics (particles less than 100 nanometres).
- Additionally, microbeads, a kind of micro-plastic are extremely small pieces of

polyethylene plastic manufactured that are utilized to exfoliate the skin in beauty and health products like cleansers and toothpastes. They are tiny particles can easily traverse water filters and eventually end in the oceans and lakes.

Impact of Plastic Pollution:

- On Marine Environment The most noticeable and disturbing impact of marine plastics is the ingestion, suffocation , and intermingling from hundreds of species of fish.
- Floating plastics can also aid in the spreading of invasive marine organisms and bacterial species which can alter ecosystems.
- On Food and Health: Toxic substances build up in the surfaces of plastics due to long exposure to ocean water. When marine animals ingest plastic particles, the contaminants get into their digestive systems and then, over time, are absorbed into the food chain.
- Effects of HTML0 upon Climate Change: Plastic is a petroleum-based product, can also cause global warming. If plastic waste is burned incinerated, it release carbon dioxide in the aire and increases carbon emissions.
- Impacts on tourism the use of plastic waste reduces the beauty of tourist attractions and can result in a decrease in revenues from tourism, as well as significant economic burdens resulting from the maintenance and cleaning of places.

Global Efforts:

- The 1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping Wastes and Other Matter (or the London Convention)
- The 1996 Protocol to the London Convention (the London Protocol)
- The 1998 Protocol of 1978 to International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).
- The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) examines the plastic marine debris and the ability of it to carry harmful substances is one of the most significant new environmental problems that is threatening the planet.
- In 2015, at the G7 Summit at Bavaria, Germany, the dangers of microplastics were recognized in the Leaders"Declaration.
- GloLitter Partnerships (GLP) is a program initiated through the International

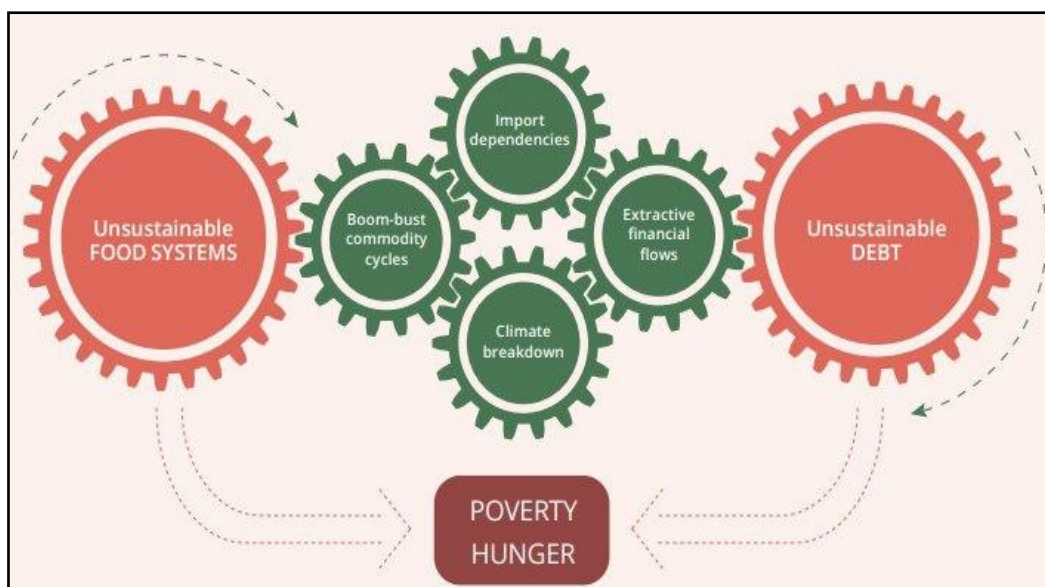
Maritime Organization (IMO) as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the initial funding came by Norway's Government of Norway.

Clean Seas Campaign:

- The United Nations Environment Programme launched the Clean Seas Campaign in 2017.
- The goal: The goal was to inspire a global movement to change the direction of plastics by reducing the use of harmful, unavoidable and hazardous plastics such as single-use plastics as well as phasing out deliberately to add microplastics.
- In the past, more than 63 nations have committed to doing their part to improve plastic management, including actions, reducing the use of plastics that are used only once.
- The campaign will now focus on the issues that cause sea pollution and solutions, and will call for urgent action from the world.
- The Campaign is a part of the objectives that are part of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter and the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment.

Topic 10. IPES REPORT HIGHLIGHTS GLOBAL HUNGER CRISIS AMID HIGH DEBT

Important for Subject: Environment



A minimum of 21 nations include Afghanistan, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Haiti,

- Lebanon, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Zimbabwe were in the process of reaching devastating levels of the aforementioned debt and hunger in 2022, as per an updated report.

More on the News:

- Public debt in the world reached the highest level in nearly sixty years and many countries were having to decide between paying off debt and feeding their people in the report of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food).
- More than 60 percent of low-income countries, and 30 percent of countries of middle-income were thought to be in high-risk in (or currently in) financial trouble.
- The poorest nations of the world were able to see the cost of paying off their debts increase by 35% in 2022, according to the report was titled Stopping the cycle of insane system of food, hungry and debt
- This highlighted how it was clear that the problem of food prices was now entering the danger zone and the debt crisis could cause millions more to fall into the abyss of hunger.
- International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems - is an multi-faceted and independent panel composed of specialists guided by the latest methods to think about sustainability, research, and food systems.
- Since 2015, IPES Food has in shaping the debate around reforming global food systems by conducting the use of research-based policy, and through direct involvement in the policy process.
- A total of 23 expert experts representing 16 nations across five continents The panel brings together the most innovative experts regarding global food systems - including an World Food Prize laureate, holders of the Legion d'Honneur, a Balzan Prize winner, and two winners from the Right Livelihood Award.
- IPES-Food jointly chaired by Olivier de Schutter who is the current UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights as well as Maryam Rahmanian, an expert independent on food systems and agriculture.

- The panel includes experts from the fields of environmental science as well as nutritionists, development economists, sociologists and agronomists, along with skilled professionals from civil society and social movements. The panel adopts a systemic approach that acknowledges the complicated and interconnected challenges in the food system and factors that determine the way we make decisions.
- IPES-Food is not a recipient of funding from either corporations or governments. This allows the group to provide independent analysis that tackles the most pressing issues.

Topic 11. OSCAR WIN FOR ‘THE ELEPHANT WHISPERERS’

Important for Subject: Environment

Indian document *The Elephant Whisperers* emerged as the winner of the, Best Documentary Short category at the 95th Academy Awards, among the five films nominated.

More on the News:

- The documentary explores the life of Bomman and Bellie, two Indigenous people who take taking care of two orphaned babies elephants, Raghu and Ammu. The film shows the bond between the elephants as well as the couple who care for the young calves.
- The film also showcases the breathtaking natural beauty and splendour of Tamil Nadu's Mudumalai National Park and offers a glimpse into the daily lives of the Kattunayakan community, an indigenous group which is found in parts in South India.
- It also stresses the importance of engaging local communities within the conservation process.
- The documentary illuminates the constant conflict between animals and humans that has led to Raghu suffering the loss of his mother due to electrocution as well as Bellie losing her companion to an attack by a tiger.
- It is its first Indian film to win the Academy Award for the Documentary Short category.

Kattunayakan tribes:

- Kattunayakan was one of these tribes that were the authentic inhabitants of the forest. According to their name, they were once the kings of the forest areas. They are not a part of other tribes, and they still practice the occult of black magic and sorcery.

- They are totally dependent on the forests and the products of the forest and live off honey, barks, and roots of plants as well as any tiny animals they capture or slither down with bows and archers. They are called Then Kurumas because they gather honey from the forests.
- They practice a religion that is deeply grounded in their culture. They worship birds, animals as well as rocks, trees, snakes and just about everything natural. They also revere their ancestors.
- The physical features of hill tribes are obvious in them while their languages are a blend from the various Dravidian languages.
- It is believed that the Kattunayakan community is located today within Wayanad, Kozhikode and Malappuram districts. Although they are known as Kattunayakan in Wayanad and Kozhikode districts, those who are part of the areas in the interior in Nilambur in Malappuram district are referred to as Cholanaickanand people living on the plains in Malappuram district are referred to as Pathinaickans.

Topic 12. NGT APPOINTED COMMITTEE HOLDS KOCHI CORPORATION RESPONSIBLE

Important for Subject: Environment

The State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC) on Solid Waste Management appointed by the National Green Tribunal has held the Kochi Corporation responsible for all the fires that occurred in Brahmapuram dump site. Brahmapuram dumpsite.

- SLMC report reveals a variety of flaws at the dump site which could cause more incidents in the near future.
- The company made no any progress made in the bio mining process under taken by an outside service supplier.
- It is also unclear whether they'd set up an sufficient fire-fighting equipment in the yard.

What is Biomining?

- Biomining is the process of processing minerals using microbes.
- Biomining is the practice that uses microorganisms (microbes) to remove metals of interest to the economy from mine waste.

- Biomining methods can be used to cleanse areas that are affected by metals.
- The most valuable metals are typically found within solid mineral deposits. Certain microbes are able to oxidize these metals, which allows them to dissolve in water. This is the principle for most biomining. It is utilized for metals that are easier to recover when they dissolve as opposed to being extracted from solid rock.
- Another method of biomining that is used for metals that are not dissolvable by microbes, employs microbes that break down surrounding minerals, allowing it to be simpler to extract the metal of interest from the rock.

What metals are being mined currently?

- Biomining is a major focus of current operations. important metals like copper, uranium gold, and nickel that are often found in the sulfidic (sulphur-bearing)
- Microbes excel in oxidizing sulfidic mineral sulfides and transforming metals such as copper and iron into forms that dissolve more quickly.
- Other metals, such as gold, are not dissolve by this microbial process, but are easier to mine using traditional methods because the minerals that surround the metals are dissolving and eliminated by microbiological processes.
- If the metal in question is directly dissolvable in the process of biomining, it is known as " bioleaching," and when the metal of interest becomes more easily accessible, and "enriched" in the material left behind, it's described as " bio oxidation."

What are the processes employed to extract bio-mine?

- Heap leaching Freshly extracted material is shifted directly into heaps, which are later bioleached.
- dump-leaching Low-value ore, such as waste rock is stored in a closed pit followed by bioleaching to remove some of the precious metals from the heap.
- Agitated leaching broken rocks put in a large vessel that is shaken in order to spread the microbes and the material equally and accelerate the process of bioleaching.
- Leaching time varies between days and months, slowing this process down compared to traditional methods of mineral extraction.
- Heap and dump leaching are among the oldest and most well-established biomining methods However, the practice of leaching that is agitated is becoming more

widespread in minerals that are resistant to leaching, such as copper sulfides such as the chalcopyrite.

- Are there any environmental hazards of biomining? The release of microbes in the local environment is considered to be minimal.
- The biggest environmental dangers are caused by the leakage and processing of the metal-rich, acidic solution that is created by microbes.
- The risk is controlled by making sure that biomining is carried out in controlled conditions, with appropriate sealing procedures and waste management protocols.

How widespread is biomining?

- Biomining is presently a small component of the overall mining industry. In the world, about 10 percent of the copper mined is extracted by bioleaching. Biomining is also a major factor in the gold sector, in which five percent of gold is created through bio-oxidation.

Differential ties between Bio-capping as well as Biomining:

- About National Green Tribunal
- It is an specialized body that was established pursuant to the National Green Tribunal Act (2010) for the purpose of ensuring effective and speedy resolution of disputes related to environmental protection as well as conservation of forests as well as the other resources of nature.
- After the creation of NGT, India became the third country to establish a specialized environmental tribunal, just after Australia as well as New Zealand, and the first emerging country to establish one.
- NGT must provide decisions on appeals or applications in the first six months following submission of the same.
- The NGT has five spots of sitting. New Delhi is the principal location of sitting and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai are the other four.
- Structure of NGT
- The Tribunal is composed consisting of the Chairman, Judicial Members as well as Expert Members. They will serve for a the period of five years. They are not eligible to be reappointed.

- The Chairperson is chosen by the Central Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI). A selection committee will be created for this purpose.
- **Powers & Jurisdiction**
- The Tribunal has the power to decide on any civil case that involves a substantial questions relating to the environment (including the enforcement of any legal right related to the environment).
- As a statutory adjudicatory institution similar to Courts in addition to the original area of jurisdiction upon the filing of an application NGT is also able to exercise appellate authority, allowing appeals as an appeals Court (Tribunal).
- It is important to note that the Tribunal is not bound by the rules laid out in the Code of Civil Procedure 1908, but shall be guided by the principles of 'natural justice'.
- When deciding on any order, decision or award, it must apply to the sustainable development principles as well as the principle of precaution and the principle of polluter pays.
- A decision/order/award issued by a Tribunal can be made executable by an order of an administrative court.
- The NGT Act also provides a procedure to impose a penalty in the event of non-compliance.
- An appeal to a denial of an order, decision or decision of the NGT can be made before the Supreme Court generally within 90 days from the date of the notification.

The NGT handles civil cases within the seven laws that relate to the environment.

These comprise:

1. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974,
 2. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977,
 3. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980,
 4. The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981,
 5. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986,
 6. The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 and
 7. The Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- Any violation of this law or to any decision made by the government in accordance with these laws may be contestable before an NGT

Topic 13. VP APPOINTS OWN STAFF ON HOUSE COMMITTEES

Important for Subject: Polity

Eight members of the personal staff of VicePresident and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar have been appointed to 20 committees that come within the ambit of the Upper House.

- There is no past precedent of personal staff working on the committees.
- Four of these staffers are employed with the Chairman's office and four of them with the VicePresident's Secretariat.
- Each Standing Committee has an official of the rank of Additional Secretary or Joint Secretary assisting in its functioning who also attends the meetings, which are strictly confidential.

Parliamentary Committee

- India's Parliament has multiple types of committees. They can be differentiated on the basis of their work, their membership and the length of their tenure.
- However, broadly there are two types of Parliamentary Committees– Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees.
- The Standing Committees are permanent (constituted every year or periodically) and work on a continuous basis.

Standing Committees can be classified into the following six categories:

1. Financial Committees
 2. Departmental Standing Committees
 3. Committees to Enquire
 4. Committees to Scrutinise and Control
 5. Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business of the House
 6. House-Keeping Committees or Service Committees
- While the Ad Hoc Committees are temporary and cease to exist on completion of the task assigned to them.
 - They are further subdivided into Inquiry Committees and Advisory Committees.
 - The principal Ad hoc Committees are the Select and Joint Committees on Bills.

Topic 14. CONCERNS OVER LINKING AADHAAR WITH VOTER ID

Important for Subject: Polity

More than 60 percent of Indian voters have linked to their Aadhaar to their personal information in the rolls of electoral votes.

- The linking exercise has led to coverage of more than 90% in States such as Tripura but is not as successful in states such as Gujarat and Delhi since only 30 percent of voters have been able to provide their Aadhaar to officials in the election.
- The linkage of Aadhaar to voter IDs is done through filling out Form 6B that is supplied by election officials. It is the consequence of Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021 that has allowed the linking.
- Although The Election Commission of India (ECI) has stated that linking of the Aadhaar is voluntary Form 6B requires the voters to state that they don't have an Aadhaar to prevent them from doing so.
- Prior to the passing of the Election Laws (Amendment) Act in the year 2000, the Supreme Court had restricted the obligatory utilization of Aadhaar to welfare schemes as well as PAN-linked accounts.
- A number of activists have voiced concerns over coercion, disenfranchisement and privacy in the wake the linking process.
- There have been some concerns regarding privacy concerns as Aadhaar linking can allow parties to micro-target voters.
- Members of the NGO Swechha have stated that documents obtained by an Right to Information (RTI) request revealed that more than 20 lakh voters had been removed from voter rolls in Telangana as a result of an Aadhaar linkage exercise linking from Aadhaar along with the Voter ID
- The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill 2021 was approved by the Parliament which allowed the linkage of electoral roll information with Aadhaar. Aadhaar ecosystem
- The bill changed specific provisions of the Representation for Peoples Act, 1950, and the Representation Act of 1951.
- The section 23(4) was added in the Act on Representation of People 1950.
- It allows an electoral register officer request people who have already been enrolled to supply their Aadhaar number. This is in order to stop the issue of multiple enrollments of the same person in various locations.

- To reflect this change In June 2022 the government issued a notice of modifications in those rules. Registration of Electors Rules 1960.
- The use of discretionary language in the amendments was followed by assurances from the government as well as the EC that the linking of Aadhaar to the voter ID is an option.
- The ambiguities in Form 6B that are issued under the new rule 26B have eliminated the concept of the right to choose that is incorporated into the changes Concerns over linkage.
- With the Puttaswamy decision In the case of Puttaswamy, in the Puttaswamy judgment, Supreme Court of India explored the constitutionality of the mandatory linking of the Aadhaar to bank accounts was constitutional , or not.
- The Court in the case of mandatory linking of Aadhaar to bank accounts noted that the deprivation of a person of their property rights due to not linking fell under the test of proportionality.
- While other methods for verification and authentication are acceptable, if the person is not a holder of an Aadhaar for voter verification, due to the vast coverage of Aadhaar the present model would effectively require Aadhaar linking.
- In this case it is important to be considered if the requirement for an Aadhaar holders to mandatorily supply Aadhaar to verify or authenticate is not a violation of their autonomy in information (right right to be protected) which allows users to choose the official document they would like to use to verify and authenticate.
- The Supreme Court in the Lal Babu Hussein case, 1995 was adamant that the right to vote is not abridged with only four identification documents Voters can count on any other form of proof of identity to obtain an election right.

Topic 15. TRIBAL WOMEN TOO ARE ENTITLED TO EQUAL SHARE IN PROPERTY, RULES MADRAS HC

Important for Subject: Polity

The Madras High Court has ruled that tribal women have the right to share equally in family property in accordance with the Hindu Succession Act, 1956.

- The judge urged that the Tamil Nadu government to initiate appropriate steps to meet the requirement of distributing appropriate notifications via Central government.

- The section 2(2) in the Hindu Succession Act 1956, to ensure the equal rights to property rights of women from tribal communities in the state.
- Section 2 (2) of the Hindu Succession Act
- As per section 2(2) in the Hindu Succession Act, the law that guarantees equal shares to both female and male heirs isn't applicable to those belonging to Scheduled Tribe communities.
- Central Government has to issue a separate announcement to extend property rights to ST Women.

Hindu Succession Act 1956

- The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 was enacted in the Indian Parliament in order to modify as well as codify law regarding intestate succession or willful succession among Hindus,
- Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs.
- In one Act the Act provides a unifying and comprehensive system of succession and inheritance.
- The Act repeals the Hindu woman's property that is limited. The property owned by an Hindu female is kept as her sole property and she gets the full power to manage it and dispose of it in her will whenever she wants.
- Certain provisions from this Act was amended in 2005 through Act of 2005, the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005.
- Principal aspects from the Hindu Succession Act
- The Act establishes a standard and complete system of succession and inheritance in one Act.
- The law was passed to codify and amend the law that governs succession in the intestate or unwilled manner between Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.
- The Hindu woman's property is eliminated by the Act.
- The section 6 of the Act was changed to create a daughter of coparcener also a coparcener through born " in her own right in the same manner as the son".
- It also granted the daughter equal rights as well as obligations "in the coparcenary property as she would have had if she had been a son".
- It eliminated females "limited owner" status.

- The Act applies to: anyone who is Hindu by faith in any of its forms or development including the following: a Virashaiva or an Lingayat or a follower of the Brahma, Prarthana or Arya Samaj; anyone with a Buddhist, Jain, Sikh in their faith; to anyone else of whom there is no Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew in any way, until it is proven that the individual concerned was not governed according to this Hindu Law;

Exceptions:

- Anyone who is found guilty of murder is not eligible to receive any inheritance from the victims.
- If a family member decides to convert to Hinduism then he or she is still eligible to inherit.
- However it is the descendants of the converted relative aren't eligible for inheriting from Hindu relatives except if they changed to Hinduism prior to the demise of the parent.
- **What were the rights to property of a daughter prior to 2005?**
- It was the Mitakshara School of Hindu law was the foundation as well as a subset in the Hindu Succession Act, 1956.
- In accordance with the law the person who is born into the Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) becomes a coparcener through birth.
- The law applies also for Buddhist, Sikhs, Jain and those who follow Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj, and Brahma are also Hindus but not to anyone who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew according to religious belief. The law is also applicable for any further changes.
- A coparcener may not be the same as a HUF member of HUF. All coparceners are members, but they may not be considered coparceners. The spouse or husband of a coparcener isn't an individual coparcener within the family, even though they are members. The advantage of being coparcener means that coparceners are the only ones who may apply for the partition of the property.
- A daughter, upon marriage, will no longer be a HUF member under her father. She would not be entitled to the rights of maintenance or a share in the assets of the HUF even if the property was divided after the wedding.
- Female members weren't qualified to be a Karta or a member of HUF because only a

coparcener could be eligible to be Karta of the HUF. Karta for the HUF.

- Notice: According to the Hindu Succession Act 1956, a person born into the Hindu Undivided family (HUF) is granted a legal right to inherit the ancestral properties of his parents. Thus, the person is a coparcener (joint-heir) due to birth.

Topic 16. NAGALAND CIVIC BODY POLLS TO HAVE 33% QUOTA FOR WOMEN

Important for Subject: Polity

The State Election Commission of Nagaland has announced that it will hold elections in 39 Urban Local Bodies (ULB) in the space of nearly two decades on May 16 with 33 percent of seats reserved for women.

- Elections for ULB have not been held in 2004 due to the issue of "unresolved" Naga peace talks and the reservation for women that several tribal groups opposed, arguing that it violates the particular rights of Nagaland granted by the Article 371(A) in the Constitution.
- A plan to hold ULB elections with a 33 percentage women's representation in 2017 provoked anger by protesters who set the government's buildings on fire. It also led to an resignation by R. Zeliang as the Chief Minister.
- On the 9th of March 2022, representatives of throughout the Naga society unanimously approved of ULB elections, with 33% reservation for women.
- The decision was made during an informal meeting of all stakeholders, including church groups, civil society organisations as well as tribal groups as well as political parties and NGOs, which was held with the help of the State government, in presence of lawmakers.
- Organizations like the Naga Mothers' Organization (NMA) have welcomed the announcement for the ULB elections.
- Women Reservation in ULB's
- The 1974th Constitutional Amendment of 1992 not only mandated gender discrimination, but also offered constitutional protections for the long-standing need to ensure female representation in the political system on a subnational scale.
- The key features in the article 243T(3) are:
- It also made women's reservation of at least 33 per cent of all seats within the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) required.

- Not less than 33 % of the seats in this country are reserved for women who belong to the SC/ST communities.
- At at least 34 percent positions for chairpersons in urban local authorities are specifically reserved for women.
- In order to ensure that the benefit that the reserve has is equally distributed across all regions in the City, reserve seats are allocated to the various constituencies of the city on a rotating basis.
- Special Provisions relating to Nagaland The article 371A deals with the specific provisions pertaining to Nagaland. State of Nagaland.
- Article 371A (1) (b) The governor of Nagaland is a particular person regarding the law and order in the state for as long as the internal conflicts resulted from the rival Nagas persist.
- For instance, in article 371A (1) (b) of the Constitution significant functions like "transfer and posting of officials" that are entrusted to the administration the law and above the district level , will be subject to the consent of the Governor.

Topic 17. NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MINORITIES

Important for Subject: Polity

The chairman of the National Commission for Minorities, announced the creation of the Global Punjabi Association (GPA).

- The aim for the organization is to bring together the Punjabi community that is spread all over the world, and encourage their culture and language.
- As per members that they have spoken to, members believe that the GPA-- a recognized organization as per the Act on Societies and will have its located in Amritsar.
- It should take the necessary steps to provide the required assistance and guidance to the most talented and meritorious Punjabis for competitive exams for employment in services as well as entrepreneurship, and other businesses.
- The GPA was to take up the issues related to Punjab/Punjabis with the concerned authorities/organisations/Governments in a peaceful, democratic and lawful manner for their prompt redressal.

- **About National Commission for Minorities**
- It is an statutorily-created body as per the National Commission for Minorities Act 1992 for the goal of protecting and securing minorities' interests as stipulated in the Constitution of India and laws passed by the Parliament and state legislatures.
- National Commission for Minorities consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and five members.
- The members of the Committee, comprising the Chairperson are members of minority communities.
- Each member is elected for a term of three years beginning from the date when they take office.
- The Act provides for the annual report along with the memorandum of actions that is taken on the recommendations contained in it along with the reasons for not accepting the recommendations, if they are to be presented annually to the Parliament.
- The NCM Act defines a minority as "a community notified as such by the Central government."
- At first, five religious communities that included., Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) were declared as minorities from the Union Government. In 2014 Jains have also been notified of their status as a different minority community.
- State Government formed State Minorities Commissions at their state capitals. State Capitals.

Functions:

- Assessing the progress made in minorities' advancement within the Union and States.
- The protection of minorities' rights is a feature in the Constitution and in laws passed by the legislatures of the states and Parliament. legislatures
- Recommendations for the efficient application of safeguards to the protection of the rights of minorities by central or state government.
- Examining specific complaints concerning the deprivation of rights and protections of minorities
- The need for studies to be conducted to study the causes of discrimination against minorities, and then recommending actions to end the discrimination.

Topic 18. COTTON CORPORATION OF INDIA

Important for Subject: Polity

The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) will procure fair average quality (FAQ) quality cotton from farmers up to 30 March for 2022-2023 season.

- The CCI announced in a press statement that its minimum support rate (MSP) scheme is an alternative channel of marketing for cotton farmers to market Q-grade cotton at MSP prices.
- **About Cotton Corporation of India**
- Cotton Corporation of India was founded in the year 1970 under the Companies Act 1956.
- It's the Government of India's corporate agency that is involved in various aspects of procurement, trade, as well as exports of cotton.
- CCI is controlled through Textile Policy 1985, which was issued by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.
- CCI has operations in states that are currently in operation as of now: Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Orissa.

Topic 19. CENTRE RELEASES 1.40 LAKH CRORE ON TAX DEVOLUTION TO STATES

Important for Subject: Polity

This is the government's 14th installment of tax devolution that is more than 1.40 lakh crores to states.

- "The Union Government has released 14th instalment of tax devolution to state governments amounting to Rs 1,40,318 crore today, as against normal monthly devolution of Rs 70,159 crore," the finance ministry announced in a statement released on Friday.
- The move is consistent with the pledge to government officials of the Union government to assist states in accelerating their development and capital expenditure as well as their development expenditures, the statement said.

- In the present, as per recommendations of the fifteenth Finance Commission recommendations, 41 percent of the tax paid from the Centre is transferred in 14 installments to states in an fiscal year.

Tax Devolution

- Tax Devolution is the process of making recommendations to distribute the tax revenues among both the Union in the United States and states.
- This is an important primary duties of a finance commission as per Article 280(3) (a) of the Constitution.
- Vertical Devolution: distribution of net tax-deductible earnings between Union and the States.
- Horizontal Devolution: distribution of net tax-deductible income between states. Allocation of state income
- State central transfers comprise the devolution of tax pools that are divisible and transfers to Centrally Sponsored Schemes Finance Commission grants, other transfers , and loans to capex.
- In this case, taxes devolution accounts for more than 70 percent.
- Taxes transferred to States are non-tied funds which means that states can spend them at their own discretion.

Grants states:

- Revenue Deficit Grants to States:
- Revenue deficit grants stem from the need to satisfy the fiscal demands of the States in their revenue accounts which are to be fulfilled, even after taking into account the tax- and non-tax resources as well as tax transfer to them.
- Revenue Deficit can be defined as the difference between current expenditure and revenue received which includes the tax as well as non-tax.
- These grants are distributed in accordance with the recommendations by the Finance Commission in monthly installments to cover the deficit in the Revenue Accounts in the States after devolution (of that divisible tax pool belonging to the Central).
- The 15th Finance Commission has recommended post-devolution revenue deficit grant that amount to around the amount of Rs. three trillion in the five years which

will conclude FY26.

Statutory Grants:

- Article 275 authorizes Parliament to make the grants for states that require financial aid, not for all the states. Each year the funds are credited into the India Consolidated Fund.
- In addition to this fundamental constitutional provision, the Constitution sets aside specific funds to help promote the welfare of tribes that are scheduled within a state, or to improve the administration in the scheduled areas of states, like Assam.
- The Finance Commission recommends the states which receive statutory grants (both specific and general) in accordance with Article 275.

Discretionary Grants (Article 282):

- It enables each Centre and states to grant grants to any public cause, even if it is not in their legal jurisdiction.
- In this regard under this provision, the Centre grants awards to states. These grants are called discretionary grants. The reason for this is that the Centre does not have any obligation to make these grants, and that the decision is entirely at the Centre's discretion.
- The grants serve a dual objective: to support the state financially in achieving plans targets and provide some leverage to the Centre to influence and coordinate state actions to implement this plan.

Topic 20. NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Important for Subject: Polity

13/16 Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the 3rd session of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) at Vigyan Bhawan.

- Jointly managed with The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) The NPDRR will consist of four plenary sessions as well as a Ministerial Session as well as eight thematic sessions.
- About National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) :

- It was created through The Indian Government in 2013, to connect all the segments of the community that is affected by disasters in India that includes officials from the government mayors, parliamentarians and mayors the media and international organizations, non-governmental organizations as well as representatives of local communities, scientific or academic establishments as well as corporations, among others.
- NPDRR is an multi-stakeholder National Platform where everyone participants come together to share their knowledge about their experiences, opinions, experiences and thoughts, and to discuss the most recent developments and developments in the field of disaster loss (DRR).

Functions:

- It facilitates exchange of ideas, experiences and thoughts, showcases the results of both research and actions and explores the possibilities of working across continents.
- Based on that platform National Action Plans on Disaster Risk Reduction will include a strategy direction as well as an action plan. The topic of the 3rd session of NPDRR is "Building Local Resilience in a Changing Climate".
- The topic is closely aligned with the 10 Point Agenda, which was announced by Prime Minister of India to develop local capacities, specifically in the setting of a rapidly evolving catastrophe risk scenario due to climate changes.
- Organizational Structure:
 - NPDRR is headed by Union Home Minister and is headed by the minister of state who is in responsible for Disaster Management within the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 - A Vice-Chairman from the National Disaster Management Authority is an integral part of the structure.
 - The Special Secretary/Additional Secretary/Joint secretary accountable of the Disaster Management Division in the Ministry of Home Affairs acts as the convener for the NPDRR.

Topic 21. ORDINANCE MAKING POWER OF GOVERNOR

Important for Subject: Polity

Tamil Nadu Speaker M. Appavu stated on Friday that M. Appavu was convinced that "some pressure" mounted on Governor R.N. Ravi and forced him to reconsider the Bill to prohibit online gambling and to regulate online games.

- The Governor himself had issued an ordinance regarding the issue in the past however, he did not ratify the Bill approved by the Assembly He stated.
- Ordinance Making Power of Governor
- Article 213 stipulates that the governor of the state can adopt ordinances if the legislative assembly of the state (or one of the two houses for states having bicameral legislatures) is not in session.
- These laws possess the exact legal effect and force like an Act of legislature, but they are only temporary in their nature.

Properties of the Ordinance:

- An ordinance may be retroactive and, therefore, may be adopted before it is approved.
- A law passed during the time that the legislators are in session, is considered null and unenforceable.
- To remain a law in force, the Ordinance has to be ratified by the legislature within 6 weeks after its dissolution. Its existence is end if the legislature fails to decide to act after six weeks following the reconstitution.
- Acts or laws, as well as incidents that occur because of the ordinance will remain in force until the time the ordinance expires.
- Ordinance promulgation is not to be considered as a substitute to the Governor's legislative power.
- Ordinances are only valid on topics in which the State legislature has the power to adopt laws.
- Ordinances can't be used to take away basic rights of citizens as guaranteed in Constitutional law. Indian Constitution.
- The law could additionally be declared to be null unenforceable should the legislature pass an amendment to it.

- The Governor is also able to revoke an Ordinance any point however, his authority to amend or revoke an Ordinance isn't discretionary He can also issue or revoke an Ordinance only upon the guidance by the Council of Ministers headed by the chief minister of the assembly.
- It is the governor of the State is not able to pass any law without consent to the President in the following situations.
- Bills with similar provisions need the approval of the President prior to the introduction of any Bill to the Assembly.
- **Which Bills have similar provisions where the Governor has thought of putting the Bills for the consideration of the President?**
- These bills include similar provisions, and they require approval by the President.
- The misuse of the Ordinance's making power
- The deliberate obliteration of the legislative process:
- Sometimes, it is apparent where the legislature is deliberately ignored to avoid discussions and deliberations about contentious legislative plans.
- This goes contrary to the ethos and the spirit of democracy.

Repromulgation and revocation of ordinances:

- As stated by the Supreme Court, re- the promulgation of ordinances is an "fraud" on the Constitution and is a destabilization of legislative procedures especially when the government tries to avoid making the ordinances available to the legislature.

Undermining the Doctrine of Separation of Powers:

- in the Kesavananda Bharati in the Kesavananda Bharati vs. State of Kerala case 1973 The Supreme Court listed the separation of powers as an "basic feature" of the Constitution.
- The repudiation is a breach of the separation of power, because it permits the executive to create permanent law without any input from the legislature or even approval.
- **The pleasure from Governor**
- Ordinances can only be issued when the Governor is sure that there are sufficient circumstances to warrant this, thus allowing the potential for misuse that the law

permits.

Supreme Court's Judgements:

- It was stated that DC Wadhwa against. The State of Bihar (1987) that the power of the legislature that the executive has to make regulations is only to be used only in certain circumstances and not to substitute the power to make laws that is the legislative power.
- Supreme Court in Krishna Kumar Singh v. the State of Bihar held that the power to issue ordinances cannot be an unconditional entrustment but "conditional upon satisfaction that circumstances exist rendering it necessary to take immediate action".
- Even after a number of harsh judgments on the legality of ordinances and ordinances, both the Centre and the state government have not heeded the Supreme Court's rulings.
- For instance, in 2013 and 2014 The Securities Laws (Amendment) Ordinance was adopted three times.

Topic 22. SAME-SEX UNION CAN ROCK SOCIETAL VALUES

Important for Subject: Polity

The Centre has briefed the Supreme Court that it is opposed to petitions seeking acceptance of gay unions, saying that the "legislative understanding of marriage in the Indian statutory and personal law regime" is limited to marriages between biological males as well as women. Any alteration "would cause a complete chaos with the delicate balance of personal laws in the country and in accepted social norms".

- In addition, it said it was stated that "the Petitioners cannot claim a basic right for same-sex marriage to be recognised under the laws of the country" despite the fact that it is not a crime under Section 377 in the Indian Criminal Code (IPC).
- The affidavit was made to the Union Government before the Supreme Court in response to various petitions which sought acceptance of the same-sex unions. In November 2022 and January 2023 the Supreme Court had given notifications about these petitions.
- Same-Sex-Marriage all over the Globe
- The same-sex marriage is the union of two individuals who are of the same sexual sex

or gender.

- Similar-sex unions were also popular throughout Ancient Greece and Rome, in the ancient Mesopotamia and in certain regions in China and at specific periods in the early European time.
- In the year 2022 the marriage of couples who are same-sex is legally legal and recognized in 33 countries which include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, etc.
- Adoption rights are not generally granted, though most countries that have a same-sex marriage permit couples to adopt jointly as married couples do.
- 34 countries have rules for marriage that ban union between couples of the same sex.
- Other nations have constitutionally mandated Islamic law that is usually taken to mean that it prohibits unions between couples of the same gender.
- In certain states, homosexuality itself is considered a crime.
- The first law that guaranteed equality in marriage between gay and couples with opposite genders was approved by the Netherlands in 2000.
- Social science research suggests that the exclusion of gay and lesbian couples from marriage is stigmatizing and creates a sense of discrimination towards gay and lesbians.
- The argument against marriage between two people is based on assertions such as the notion that homosexuality is a sin and is an anomaly.
- **Same-sex-marriage: in India.**
- The right to marry is a fundamental rights in accordance with article 21.
- However, marriage between a man and woman is not legally recognized in India.
- Section 377 of The Indian Penal Code: Unnatural offenses; Anyone who is knowingly involved in carnal relations against the natural order with any person, woman or animal will be punished with life imprisonment or with an imprisonment in either case for a time that may last up to 10 years and also to pay an amount of fine.
- The adoption law bans the adoption of children by couples who are identical to each other.
- In the current law the law states that one person is not able to inherit property left behind by their sex lover.

- In the present, marriages between homosex partners are not accepted in India however this can be altered by incorporating an amendment to the Special Marriage Act.

Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954:

- The first Special Marriage Act was enacted in 1872 after an 1860 campaign started by Brahma Samaj to facilitate marriage ceremonies.
- Renouncing any religious beliefs was not compatible with the modern notions of individualism, liberalism and autonomy for the individual.
- Thus, the 1954 law replaced the 1872 Act which had the obligation to abjure one's religious beliefs was eliminated.
- It was one of the initial steps towards the creation of a Uniform Civil Code. The idea was that if we were to have an open modern, modern, secular as well as progressive legal system, then we must initiate the experiment on our own.
- Thus, those planning an interfaith wedding could be registered as a part of the SMA. If your marriage is recognized in accordance with the SMA the laws of your religious faith will not apply.
- The law requires married couples to notify the Marriage Officer at least 30 days prior to the date for wedding.
- The notice is able to be examined by "any person." Anyone can oppose the wedding.
- **Supreme Court on IPC 377, Homosexuality**
- The Constitutional court that made up the Court unanimously ruled that the law should be made to criminalize intimate sexual contact that is consensual and private between adult of the same sex under
- Section 377 of the IPC was not constitutional.
- Article 14: Equal rights with respect to the law.
- Article 15 bans discrimination on the basis of religion, race or birthplace.
- Article 21 provides protection of life and liberty.
- Equal protection of citizens and equality of the law
- **Key Points of the Judgement**
- Homosexuality is reported in over 1500 species and isn't exclusive to humans.
- Constitutionality is not governed by morality or majoritarians. Morality and Human Rights are more important than religious rights.

- Morality and social norms cannot be used to defy the rights of a single person.

Topic 23. EC POWER TO DE-REGISTER A POLITICAL PARTY

Important for Subject: Polity

The Election Commission of India has made a submission to the Allahabad High Court that it is not a competent authority to prohibit rallies based on caste that are organized by political parties during the period between elections or to stop them from participating in future elections.

- The argument was submitted through the Election watchdog in the form of a Public Involvement Litigation (PIL) request made by Moti Lal Yadav at the High Court in the year 2013, seeking to ban all political rallies which organize caste rallies.
- The PIL plea also seeks instruction to ECI to terminate the registrations of these political parties that organize these rallies.
- **EC Submissions on Court**
- Importantly significant, the ECI claimed that it developed a set of strict guidelines that ban electioneering on ethnic lines or casting votes based on creed, caste, or religion. However, violations of these rules is not a matter to be addressed by the ECI during the election time.
- The ECI also advised that the Court that it has the power to decide to take action against delinquent politicians, parties, candidates for contest, and their representatives who appeal to caste boundaries in their campaign for election only during the period of elections (after that the code of conduct model comes in until the end of the polls) and that, outside of this time frame, it will not initiate actions against political parties.
- **EC Power regarding De-registration of an Political Party**
- The ECI cannot cancel registrations of parties because of violation of the Constitution or breaking the promise made to it at the time of registration with the ECI pursuant to Section 29A (5).
- ECI claimed that although it is able to register a party under Section 29A the Representation of the People Act 1951. The commission is no authority to disregister any party, unless it is on restricted grounds outlined in Supreme Court order in the case of Indian National Congress vs. Institute of Social Welfare and Others (2002).
- Indian National Congress vs Institute of Social Welfare (2002) :

- This case focused on how it is the ECI pursuant to Section 29-A of the RPA 1951 is able to deregister or cancel a party's registration.
- The court ruled that ECI does not have a specific mandate to disregister a political group in violation of Indian Constitution, except in the rare instances such as (a) the time a party is registered through fraud; (b) when a political party changes its terms of rules or association, which violates the constitution or notifying that the Commission the fact that they have abandoned loyalty to it or to the Indian Constitution or its principles or its principles; and (c) in the event that the government of India declares that a political organization illegal in accordance with UAPA 1967. UAPA 1967.

Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan vs UOI:

- In Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan UOI vs UOI (2014), the Supreme Court requested the Law Commission to consider the possibility of whether ECI should be given the authority to deregister political parties since it is not able to execute effectively.

Law Commission:

- The recommendations of the Law Commission are still pending before the Parliament.
- This has led to a lack of effective oversight of political party by ECI. The legislation in this gray issue is the necessity urgently needed and a major electoral reform that may eliminate the democratic-political system of certain of its flaws.

Topic 24. SECTION 8 (1) (J) OF RTI ACT

Important for Subject: Polity

MPs and activists on Monday expressed their concern about an amendment proposed to the Right to Information (RTI) Act in 2005.

- This draft Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2022, which the government could introduce during the Budget Session, removes provisions in Section 8(1) (j) that permit disclosure to the public interest.
- 10/20 Following the modification 10/20, after the amendment, RTI Act would say that any personal information is not to be made public and would eliminate the notion of disclosure that is based on the greater public interest.
- Section 8(1) (j) of the RTI Act, 2005

- Section 8 (1) mentions exemptions from the requirement to provide information under RTI Act.
- The section 8(1) (j) in the RTI Act, 2005 encapsulates the information that relates to personal information, the disclosure of which is not connected to any public or private need, or will result in an unreasonable violation of the privacy of the individual, unless CPIO or SPIO or the Appellate Authority is satisfied that the greater public interest justifies disclosure of this information. In such a case, it should be protected from disclosure.
- Additionally, the information that is not able to be denied the legislature as well as members of the State Legislature shall not be orally denied to anyone.
- Therefore the Act's The section 8(1) (j) of the Act permits officials to deny access to information if it infringes upon the privacy rights of a person, but permits the disclosure of information if there is a compelling public interest.

Topic 25. INDIA SENDING 20,000 TONNES OF WHEAT TO AFGHANISTAN VIA CHABAHAR

Important for Subject: International Relations

- India is planning to ship its next wheat shipment to Afghanistan for aid through an Chabahar port located in Iran.
- The decision was made public at the first meeting of the India- Centralasia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan in Delhi because the agreement signed with Pakistan to transport the wheat via the land route is now expired, and talks to extend the duration haven't produced any results.
- It was the first JWG meeting took place in the aftermath of the India-Central Asian summit in January 2022.
- In the JWG, India also accepted to provide "customised capacity building courses" for United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) officials and join in initiatives to combat the trafficking of drugs and to support rehab efforts to Afghan drug users, particularly women.
- In the aftermath of the human rights situation that was raging in Afghanistan, India had announced its collaboration in cooperation with UN World Food Programme (UNWFP) to deliver 22,000 tonnes of cereals to Afghanistan.

- India has sent approximately 40,000 tonnes of the 50,000 tonnes promised in an agreement with the former Pakistan government. However, the shipment was stopped after the flooding in Pakistan and the period granted by Pakistan was over.
- India has in past utilized in the past to use Chabahar shipping route in the past to deliver wheat cargoes to Afghanistan.
- **India-Central Asia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan**
- The Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan began its first meeting at New Delhi on March 7 2023.
- The Special Envoys as well as Senior Officials from the Republics of India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan were present at the meeting.
- It was reported that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) and United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) country representatives also participated in the discussion, according to the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The Envoys debated the most important questions pertaining to Afghanistan as well as the country's security, political, and humanitarian conditions. The participants reiterated their support to an Afghanistan that is safe, peaceful and stable. They also stressed how important it was to protect Afghanistan's sovereignty as well as its territorial integrity while avoiding intervening in the internal affairs of the country.
- **India-Central Asia Summit 2022**
- India was the host of India's first Central Asia Summit virtual format in January 2022.
- The event was attended by the presidents from the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan.
- The first India-Central Asia summit was held on the occasion of the 30-year anniversary in diplomatic relations between India as well as Central Asian countries.
- Key Points

Institutionalisation of the Summit:

- The group discussed the next steps to take in the development of relations between India and Central Asia to new highs.
- In a significant agreement, the Leaders decided to establish the Summit procedure by deciding to have it held every two years.

- They also agreed to hold regular meetings between foreign ministers, trade Ministers Secretaries and Culture Ministers of the Security Council to prepare the foundations for the Summit meetings.
- A Secretariat for India Central Asia located in New Delhi would be set in order to help support the new mechanism.

India-Central Asia Cooperation:

- The Leaders debated a range of suggestions to strengthen cooperation in the areas of connectivity and trade and development cooperation, as well as security and defence, particularly on cultural and people-to-people interactions. The proposals included: Round-Table on Energy and Connectivity.
- Joint working groups at the highest official level regarding Afghanistan and the use for Chabahar port.
- The presentation the best of Buddhist shows in Central Asian countries and commissioning of an Indian-Central Asian dictionary of words commonly used in everyday life.
- Joint counter-terrorism exercises.
- Visit of a 100-member youth group annually each year Central Asian countries to India and special classes specifically designed to Central Asian diplomats.
- A extensive Joint Declaration was adopted by the leaders, which outlines their vision of an ongoing and broad India-Central Asia partnership.

Afghanistan:

- They reiterated their firm commitment to a peaceful safe and secure Afghanistan with an inclusive and representative government.
- India expressed its commitment in providing humanitarian assistance in aid to Afghan people.

Topic 26. CHINA HAS SENT ASSURANCES BACKING IMF PACKAGE, RANIL TELLS PARLIAMENT

Important for Subject: International Relations

China has assured that it will aid in the restructuring of Sri Lanka's debt which will remove the largest obstacle for the struggling country to obtain the needed USD 2.9-billion bailout package by the IMF the Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe said on Tuesday.

- The month of January was a time when India was a strong supporter of the efforts by India to obtain loans from the world's lender to help it recover from its most severe economic downturn.

Background:

- Sri Lanka has been currently facing the worst economic crisis it has faced since it gained independence from Britain since 1948. Policymakers have been faced with a myriad of issues in the last year, such as a lack of dollars, an exploding inflation, and a raging recession.
- China, Japan, and India are Sri Lanka's top three bilateral lenders.
- Sri Lanka owes India around \$1 billion, which will be paid under the plan for restructuring debt.
- New Delhi also separately provided Sri Lanka with about \$4 billion in quick assistance during the months of January through July of last year. It also provided credit lines and a currency swap arrangement and deferred payments for imports.

Need of The Assurances:

- New Delhi's support is a crucial moment in the history of Sri Lanka as it has to bring its hugely overdue budget in place in order to access the \$2.9 billion IMF loan that was signed in September.
- Sri Lanka has to secure prior assurances of financing from its creditors, to put its huge credit burden onto a sustainable track and increase its revenue before the global lender can release the money.
- The IMF has emphasized the importance of joint talks with the three Sri Lanka's major bilateral lenders three major bilateral creditors - China, Japan and India.

Topic 27. IBSA CAN PLAY VITAL ROLE IN REFORMING DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

Important for Subject: International relations



According to the Geneva-based Diplo Foundation, the tripartite IBSA Forum which includes India, Brazil, and South Africa could play an crucial part in reforming digital governance in a moment when geopolitical tensions on the internet are growing.

- The foundation further notes that the initial tangible outcomes of IBSA's digital dynamism will be evident in the course of India's G-20 presidency, that will be a catalyst for the creation of a modern gold standard in data.
- The report has revealed that digitisation is the main driver of growth in IBSA economies, and that India with a thriving digital economy is leading of them all.
- According to the report from the Diplo Foundation Digital geopolitics is expected to focus on concerns of the security of satellites and submarine cables as well as the production of semiconductors and the freedom of information.
- India's G-20 presidency calls to establish a new standard for data that will help to address conflicting issues regarding the freedom of data as well as the sovereignty of data.

About IBSA Forum

- The IBSA is an trilateral initiative for development between India, Brazil and South

Africa to facilitate South-South exchange and cooperation.

- The grouping was formalized and renamed as the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the Foreign Ministers of three countries came together at Brasilia (Brazil) the 6th June 2003. They also signed the Brasilia Declaration.
- IBSA has neither an office in its headquarters, nor does it have a Permanent executive secretary.
- At the top it relies at the Summits of heads of State and the Government.

Joint Naval Exercise:

- IBSAMAR (IBSA Maritime Exercise) is a key element of IBSA trilateral defense collaboration.
- seven editions IBSAMAR have been to date, with the latest being held in Port Gqeberha (also also known as Port Elizabeth), South Africa in the month of October 2022.

IBSA Fund:

- In 2004, the IBSA Fund (India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation) is an unique Fund that funds development projects are carried out using IBSA funds in the other developing countries.
- The fund is administered through The United Nations (UN) Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).
- Every IBSA member nation is obliged be contributing \$1 million annually in the IBSA fund.

IBSA Fellowship Programme:

- It is focused on multilateral institutional frameworks that coordinate, aid and facilitate sustainable development worldwide and joint research to facilitate collaboration and exchange of information in the areas of macro-economics as well as trade and development and other areas that might be of interest inside the IBSA framework.

Topic 28. SAKHAROV FREEDOM AWARD

Important for Subject: International Relations

Ukrainian human rights organisation, Truth Hounds, has been awarded the 2023 Sakharov Freedom Award for exposing war crimes as reported in the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) who established the award.

- The NHC acknowledged the non-governmental group for recording war crimes and possible human rights violations.
- This is the first time that a Ukrainian organisation has been awarded this award in 2022.

About the Sakharov Prize:

- The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is given every year by the European Parliament.
- Sakharov Freedom Award Sakharov Freedom Award was created in the year 1988, by Norwegian Helsinki Committee to recognize individuals and groups defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- The first recipients of this award include South African Nelson Mandela and Russian dissident Anatoly Marchenko.
- The award is named after the Soviet political activist and physicist Andrei Sakharov and the prize amount is 50 000 euros.
- The ceremony for the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize will be held on the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo on the 25th of May in 2023.

Topic 29. SCO MEMBER STATES

Important for Subject: International relations



SC to host a three-day meeting of Chief Justices from SCO member states

SCO:

- The SCO is an intergovernmental permanent international organization. It is an Eurasian economic, political and security alliance that has been the principal security pillar in the region.
- It was founded in 2001. This was followed by the Shanghai Five mechanism.
- The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the most powerful authority in the SCO. It meets each year and decides on rules and directives on the most important issues within the organization.
- The organization has two permanent institutions that are The SCO Secretariat based in Beijing. It is the executive Committee members of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) located in Tashkent.

- Eight states are members: India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- 4 observer states: Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia

Topic 30. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

Important for Subject: International Relations

What exactly is it?

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a law passed through the European Parliament was elected in the month of May to establish the strictest ground rules for all companies that store, collect or use personal information of residents of the 28 EU countries. The law was enacted on May 25, following the grace period of two years. The main goal in the GDPR law is to guarantee that privacy is one of the most fundamental rights of EU residents. It requires all businesses that handle personal data to be transparent and open regarding what they intend to use it for and to obtain the consent of the user prior to sharing it. This law requires companies to obtain consent from users via an explicit opt-in or through a signature on an authorization form. It's goodbye to checkboxes that are checked by default.

Topic 31. U.S.-INDIA INITIATIVE ON CRITICAL AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY (ICET)

Important for Subject: International Relations

The Indian Minister for Commerce and Industry and U.S. Secretary of Commerce applauded the recent launch of the S.-India Initiative on Emerging and Critical Issues.

- The U.S.-India collaboration concerning Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET):
- It was announced through the US president and Indian Prime Minister on the eve of the Quad summit in May 2022.
- The goal is To raise and extend Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in technology and defense collaboration between the government as well as the businesses and academic institutions of both countries.
- This initiative is led by both the National Security Council Secretariat in India as well as members of the US National Security Council.

- This initiative will help to create connections between government as well as academia and industry in fields like AI quantum computing biotech, 5G/6G, semiconductors, and space.
- In iCET, the both sides identified six priority areas for co-development and co-production. They include: the strengthening of innovation ecosystems as well as defense innovation and technology collaboration and resilient supply chains for semiconductors as well as space.
- STEM (science engineering, technology and math) ability and next-generation telecom.

Topic 32. 5TH UN CONFERENCE ON LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDC5)

Important for Subject: International Relations

The Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) ended with the adoption of the Doha political declaration ‘by the world leaders.

- The declaration issued by the president of the state is the most important outcome from the second session of the LDC5 conference that was held under the title "From Potential to Prosperity" in Qatar between March 5-9, 2023.
- The document was adopted a few years after the version of DPoA to be used for 2022-2031 Decade (2022-2031) was approved during the initial portion of the LDC5 conference on March 17, 2022 , in New York.

About the Declaration:

- This declaration is focused on implementing the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) -which is a 10-year plan that aims to help the world's 46 most vulnerable nations on the right track to achieve the mandated by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- The five major deliverables from the DPoA The five key deliverables from the DPoA - for example, an an online college, graduate support package as well as a food stock holding solution and an investment support center and a resilience and crisis mitigation building mechanism that will address the important issues facing the LDCs and will set the stage for a more prosperous, fair and sustainable future.
- The declaration by the Qatari government at Qatar is significant as it is amidst

simultaneous global threats of rising costs for living, inflation, as in addition to the impacts of climate change.

- It is expected to assist the LDCs to address the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to be able to resume a pathway to reach the SDGs and tackle climate change, and make progress toward a sustainable and irreversible transition.
- It's also expected to aid the LDCs in overcoming the economic and social impacts of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Least Developed Country (LDC)

- They are the countries in the developing world that are listed by the UN with the lowest indicators of socioeconomic growth.
- The idea first came into existence in the mid 1960s and was codified by UN resolution 2768 adopted in November 1971.
- In the words of the UN The UN LDC is "a country that exhibits the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development, with low levels of income, human capital and economic diversification, high levels of economic vulnerability, and a population that is disproportionately reliant on agriculture, natural resources, and primary commodities."
- **The UN determines three requirements to be met by a nation to be considered an LDC:**
- It must be able to show an income gross national (GNI) per person that is below the limit of USD 1,230 on a three-year average.
- It should not perform well in a human assets composite index, which is based on indicators like health, nutrition, and education.
- The country should demonstrate the economic vulnerability, such as being susceptible to natural disasters or being subject to structural economic limitations.
- The countries must satisfy a combination of all three criteria simultaneously and are evaluated on a tri-annual interval by UN.
- At present, the UN lists 46 countries that are LDCs. Of these, 33 are from Africa and nine are from Asia and three of them from the Pacific as well as one in the Caribbean.

Note:

- Bhutan is a mountainous landlocked nation, which is frequently listed as one of the most happiest nations in the world is scheduled to, on the 13th December of this year become the seventh country to be removed out of the United Nations' (UN) list of Least Developed Countries (LDC).

Topic 33. WHY IS 2023 THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS?

Important for Subject: International Relations

The UN has declared 2023 to be an International Year of Millets.

How do you define millets?

- Millets, a hardy dryland crop that are grown across Asian as well as African countries are getting more and more popular for their nutritional value
- Why should we celebrate?
- These types of events bring attention to less well-known subjects such as, for example, crops. They also encourage an international exchange of ideas and research and development and also boost trade.
- In 2013 which was when it was declared the International Year of Quinoa, Quinoa gained traction as a super food and is being grown across the globe. Researchers have found that the sudden surge in its popularity helped farmers, however, it also led to an economic boom and bust cycle. It is possible that the same thing could happen to millets.

How is International Year decided?

- In general, a member country sends a proposal to UN through an appropriate agency, like the FAO for millets.
- The proposal of India to FAO received internal approvals prior to being presented to the UN General Assembly and was passed with the support of 71 nations. India is the Chair, and Nigeria and ICRISAT are the Vice-Chair of the FAO International Committee for the International Year of Millets.
- Although this is a global occasion, since millets fall under the category of food and agriculture and food and agriculture, it is also the case that the FAO is the appropriate implementation agency, working with technical experts, a variety of UN member

states and representatives from across the globe and other stakeholders, including private sector, academia, as well as civil society.

- The IYM2023 is a consolidated and unified call for international cooperation to promote millet in a variety of ways.
- The most renowned popular food trends of the past few years is quinoa which gained worldwide notoriety as a super food because of the International Year of Quinoa 2013 (IYQ2013). Quinoa was also a neglected and unexploited crop that was cultivated in 50 countries prior to the year 2013. Following IYQ2013, the number was increased to 123 countries. This staple, which is native to the Andean region is being grown in a variety of climate zones. Similar to millets, quinoa is climate resistant, which is able to improve nutrition security, and is a viable alternative to rice and wheat. But, experts have found the phenomenon of a boom and bust cycle in which plants like quinoa are able to rise to the spotlight suddenly.

Millets in India:

- While the area under millet cultivation fell by 56% in India production increased by 11.3 up to 15.3 millions tonnes as Hughes notes. This was due to introduction and improvement of varieties and hybrids, as well as more efficient cultivation practices. In all, millet production has increased by over two times, while the pearl millet's productivity has increased by three times.

Topic 34. AUSTRALIA TO BUY US NUCLEAR SUBMARINE UNDER AUKUS

Important for Subject: International Relations



Australia has revealed plans to purchase as many as five U.S. nuclear-powered submarines to build a new model using U.S. and British technology under an ambitious plan to increase Western strength throughout Asia. Asia-Pacific to counter rising China.

- The announcement was made at an event held at the San Diego, California, naval

base, where U.S. President Joe Biden was in attendance with Australian Premier Anthony Albanese and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

- US stated that it has "safeguarded stability in the Indo-Pacific for decades" and added that the submarine alliance could boost "the prospect of peace for decades to come."
- US President Trump has stressed that Australia is a member of an alliance that was formed as AUKUS together with Washington as well as London in the last 18 months, won't get nuclear weapons.
- Yet, acquiring stealthy submarines with nuclear reactors in charge puts
- Australia is a member of an elite group and is at the leading the U.S.-led efforts to defend against Chinese militarization.
- IAEA, UN nuclear watchdog is a nuclear watchdog of the UN, and has stated that it must make sure the "no proliferation risks" will be a result of the deal.
- **Information on Submarine's deal.**
- The United States, Australia and Britain revealed details of a plan to supply Australia with "nuclear-powered" attack submarines in the 2030s.
- In the agreement under the agreement, it is expected that the United States intends to sell Australia three US Virginia class nuclear-powered submarines by the end of 2030 and with the alternative for Australia to purchase two more should it require.
- The multi-stage plan would end by British as well as Australian manufacturing and operating a brand new submarine class called SSN-AUKUS.
- SSN-AUKUS will be an trilaterally designed vessel based on the next generation of Britain's design.
- It will be constructed within Britain or Australia and feature cutting-edge U.S. technologies.
- Britain will receive the first submarine, SSN-AUKUS, in the later 2030s, while Australia would get its first submarine in the early 2040s.
- Mechanism for funding: Australia will also offer an additional \$3 billion in the coming four years the production facilities in both the US as well as those in the UK under its fiscal commitment and US production lines receiving the majority of funding. US receiving the largest portion of the funds for improvements.

AUKUS partnership

- In September 2021, the enhanced trilateral security partnership of Australia, United Kingdom, and United States is named as "AUKUS".
- This is a trilateral defense agreement for Indo-Pacific.
- The goal of AUKUS was to ensure a fair Indo-Pacific that is open and free in the long run. It provoked a fierce response from China and its territorial ambitions in the Indo Pacific could be a major factor in the creation of the group.
- The initial major project of AUKUS will be the delivery of an "nuclear-powered" submarine fleet for Australia.
- However, these countries have stated that they do not intend to arm new submarines using nuclear weaponry.
- This is due to Australia is an observer of The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that prohibits the country from developing or deploying nuclear weapons.

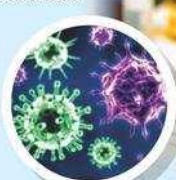
Topic 35. H3N2 VIRUS: INFLUENZA VIRUS KILLS 2, CENTRE ISSUES ADVISORY

Important for Subject: Science and tech

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ABOUT H3N2

- It is a subtype **A influenza virus** currently circulating in humans apart from **H1N1** strain
- According to WHO, only influenza type A viruses are known to have caused **pandemics**
- The viral strain can cause severe respiratory conditions in immunosuppressed people
- Several influenza-like illness (ILI) cases reported in Ranchi are suspected to be influenza cases
- **Rajendra Institute of Medical Science and MGM Medical College Jamshedpur** have





been identified to conduct testing

➤ Samples are tested on the same **RT-PCR** machine with a different set of kit

➤ Private laboratories charge ₹**6000** to test a sample

➤ Flu vaccines available in the market are known to be effective against most strains





India has witnessed two deaths, with one within Karnataka and Haryana caused by the Influenza A subtype H3N2 virus.

- **H3N2 Virus**

- Influenza viruses that cause the viral virus known as flu can be classified into four kinds that include A, B C, and D.
- Influenza A can be further classified into several subtypes. One of them is H3N2.
- According to the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the H3N2 virus caused the outbreak of the flu in 1968 that resulted in the death of more than a million people around the world.
- The types that carry the disease have drastically changed over the last five decades as those born between the late 1960s and 1970s were sick as children.

- **Symptoms/Cure/Preparedness of H3N2**

- The symptoms are the same as those of other influenza (cough and body ache, fever and headache as well as sore throats, stuffy or runny nose and severe fatigue).
- Based on the Indian Medical Association (IMA) An H3N2-related infection typically lasts for 5-7 days , and typically targets people who are under 15 years of age or over 50 years old age.
- Self-hygiene is the most effective method to stop spreading H3N2.
- Oseltamivir is a medicine that is used to treat H1N1 infections is suggested by the World Health Organization for the treatment of H3N2 infections as well.
- The Indian government has made the medicine available to an open health care system, free at no cost.
- The Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the National Centre for Disease Control of India is undertaking a real-time surveillance of cases of influenza-like/severe acute respiratory infections present in health facilities.

- **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme**

- The Integrated Disease Surveillance Project was initiated in 2004 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the help of the World Bank, in 2004.
- It continued to be it was the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) during the 12th Plan (2012-17) in the National Health Mission with a domestic budget.
- In it there is it is a Central Surveillance Unit (CSU) located in Delhi, State

Surveillance Units (SSU) in all States and Union Territories (UTs) headquarters and District Surveillance Units (DSU) in all Districts have been created in all Districts.

Programme Components:

- The integration and centralization of surveillance by establishing surveillance units at the Centre at State, District and Centre levels.
- Human Resource Development Training of State Surveillance Officers (SSOs) as well as District Surveillance Officers (DSOs), RRT and other paramedical and medical personnel on the principles of surveillance for disease.
- Utilization to make use of Information Communication Technology for collection of data, collation, compilation distribution and analysis of information.
- Intensification of public health laboratories.
- Inter Sectoral Coordination for Zoonotic diseases.

Topic 36. NASA HANDS OVER NISAR SATELLITE TO ISRO

Important for Subject: Science and technology

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has received the NASA-ISRO

- **SAR (NISAR) satellite**
- **NISAR Satellite**
- NISAR is a spacecraft built by space agencies from India and the US and India through a partnership arrangement that was signed in 2014.
- The satellite, which weighs 2800 kilograms, is comprised of both the L-band and S band synthesized aperture radar (SAR) instruments that make it an double-frequency imaging satellite.
- While NASA has provided L-band radar, GPS and a high capacity solid-state recorder for storing data and a payload-specific data subsystem ISRO has supplied an S band radar and the GSLV launch system and spacecraft.
- Another key element to the satellite's design is the massive 39-foot reflector for the stationary antenna.
- Made from silver-plated metal mesh, the reflector is designed to be used to direct the radar signals released and taken in by the feed facing upwards onto the instrument's

structure.

Objectives of NISAR

- When it is launched into space, NISAR will be able to observe subtle changes in the earth's surface and help scientists better comprehend the causes and the consequences of such changes.
- It can detect warning indicators of natural catastrophes like the eruption of volcanoes and earthquakes or landslides.
- This satellite can also monitor groundwater levels and track the flows of glaciers and the ice sheets, as well as examine the world's forest and agricultural areas and agricultural regions, which will help us aid in understanding carbon exchange.
- Through the use of SAR, also known as synthetic aperture radar (SAR), NISAR will generate pictures with high resolution.
- SAR can penetrate the clouds and can gather data both throughout the day and at night regardless of weather conditions.

Topic 37. INSPIRE

Important for Subject: Science and Technology

Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) Scheme:

- Attract young people to the fascination and pursuit of science at a young age.
- Help the country develop the necessary crucial resource pool for growing and strengthening the S&T system as well as the R&D base using a longer-term view.
- It was officially launched on the 13th of December 2008

INSPIRE comprises three elements:

- Scheme for Early Attraction of Talent (SEATS):
- Its goal is to lure young people with talent to pursue science through the awarding of an INSPIRE Awards of up to Rs 5000 for one million learners in between the ages of 10 and 15 years old, with a range of classes from Class VI up to the Class X standard.
- It is organizing camp for around 50k science students in Class XI and global scientists and leaders to discover the excitement of new discoveries on an annual basis. It does

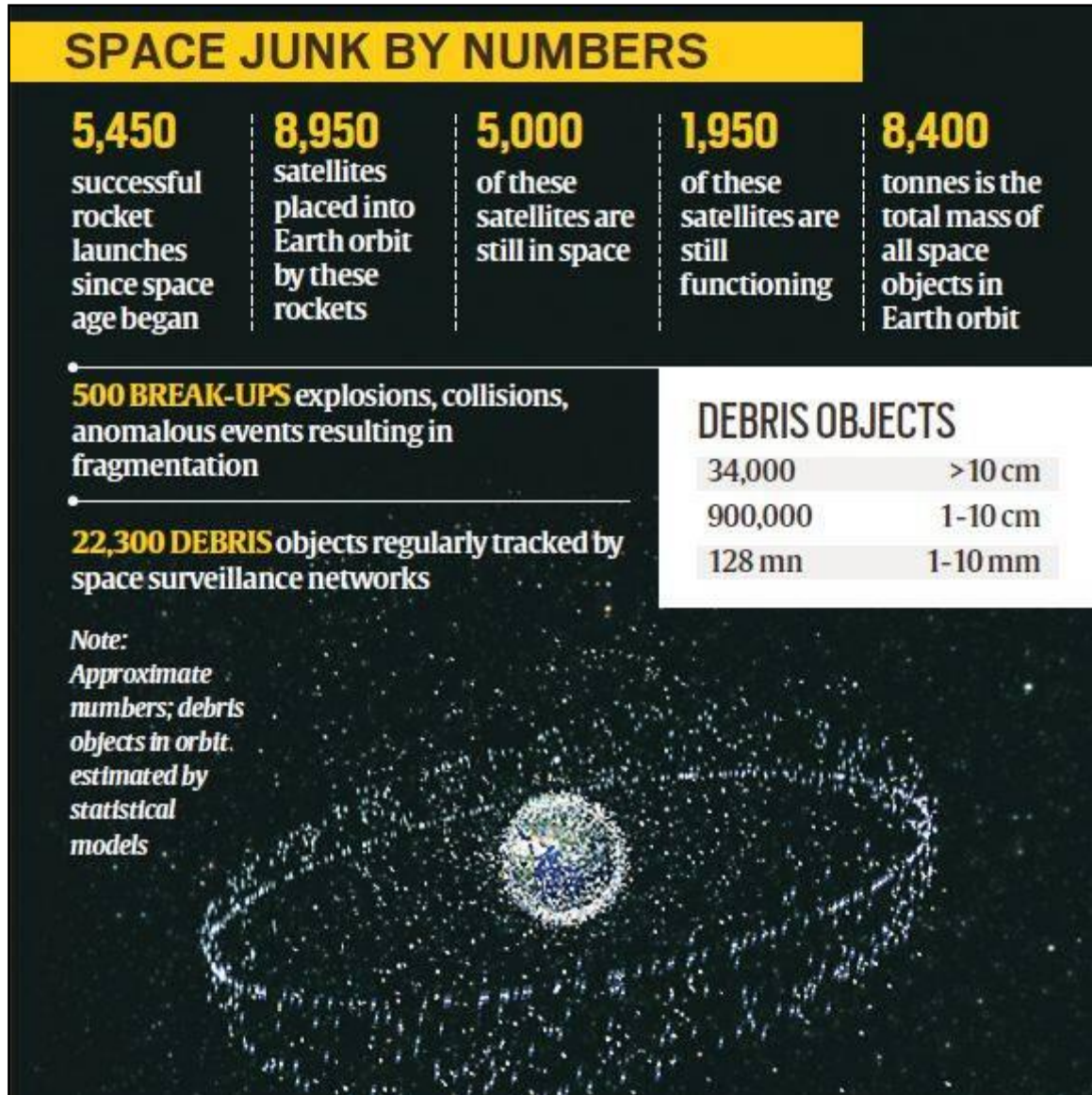
this through INSPIRE Internship.

Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE):

- Its goal is to improve the rates of commitment of talented young people to further education scientifically intensive programs through the provision of scholarship and mentoring.
- The scheme provides 10,000 scholarships every year for the rate of 0.80 lakh per year to young people with talent in the age range 17-22 years. The scheme is designed to help students pursue Master and Bachelor level studies in natural sciences.
- The most important aspect of the program is the mentorship assistance provided to all students.
- **Assured Opportunity for Research Careers (AORC)**
- It aims to draw to, keep, and nurture talented young scientists Human Resource for strengthening the R&D base and foundation. It is comprised of two parts.
- In the first part i.e. In the second component, which is called INSPIRE Fellowship (age range of 22-27 years) It offers the opportunity to receive 1000 fellowships per year to complete doctoral studies in both applied and fundamental sciences, including engineering and medicine.
- In the second part i.e. in the INSPIRE Faculty scheme It provides a guaranteed opportunities every year to 1,000 post-doctoral researchers with an age range of 27-32 years. This is done through tenure track and contract posts for five years in the basic as well as applied sciences.

Topic 38. SMALL DEBRIS ORBITING EARTH POSE THREATS TO SPACE ASSETS

Important for Subject: Science and Technology



On March 7, 2023, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully carried out a controlled re-entry for the decommissioned Megha Tropiques1 (MT1). The satellite, which was launched over a decade ago was designed to study the clouds of zones of the tropical globe. It was anticipated to make its final impact in the Pacific Ocean. ISRO claimed that the satellite was destroyed as part of its efforts to minimize debris from space, particularly in the highly dense Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

Space debris

- Space junk refers to any piece of debris or machinery that humans have left in space, primarily within Earth orbit.
- This includes dead satellites as well as fragments of rocket body fragments and spacecrafts, and so on.
- As of now, about 20000 objects -- including space debris and satellites - are clogging the low-Earth orbit.

What is the reason for space debris?

- Unoperational / expired / destroyed satellites, rocket parts or spacecrafts. Anti-satellite tests which cause the destruction or incapacitation of satellites to serve strategic or tactical objectives (like Mission Shakti conducted by DRDO China's 2007 ASAT test, etc.)
- Super-constellations satellites being planned by companies like Space X 's Starlink project

Kessler syndrome

- This idea was first proposed by NASA scientist Donald Kessler in 1978.
- A Kessler disorder is situation that occurs when the density of objects within Low Earth Orbit (LEO) is so high that collisions between objects can trigger an increase in the probability of further collisions.

ISRO's Efforts

- 'Project NETRA' is an alarm system for early detection that operates in space to identify debris and other threats that could be harmful to Indian satellites.
- The US, Russia and Europe have similar systems in place to monitor space objects and communicate collision warnings.

Topic 39. WORLD IS OFF TRACK ON SODIUM INTAKE REDUCTION GOAL:

WHO

Important for Subject: Science and Technology

Based on the World Health Organization report on salt consumption, both food corporations and governments should establish more ambitious goals in order to decrease the amount of salt consumed.

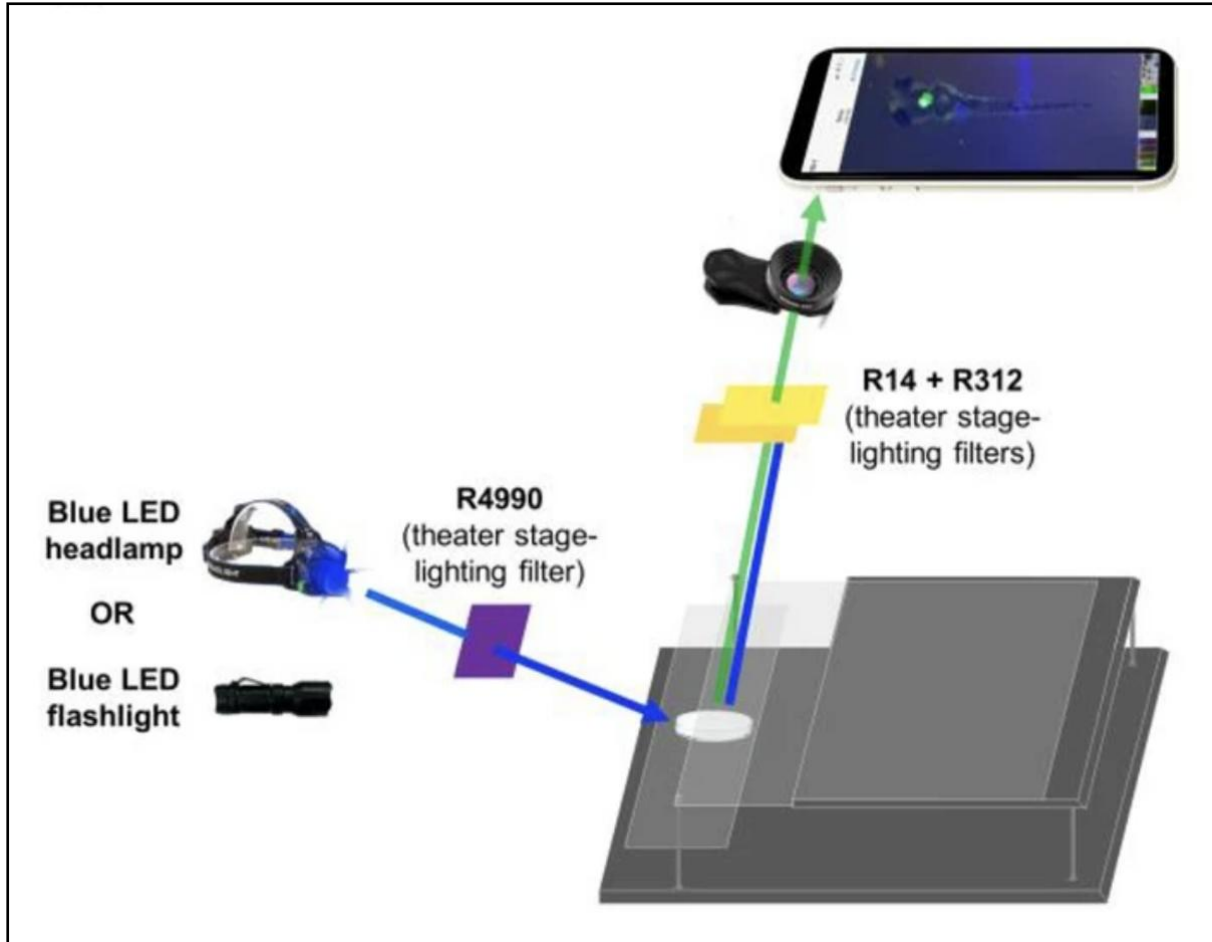
- It is a crucial mineral, but it can increase the risk of stroke, heart disease and premature death if consumed in large quantities. The most significant sources of sodium are the table salt (sodium chloride) However, it can also be found in other condiments, such as sodium glutamate.
- The report indicates that only 5 percent of WHO members are covered with comprehensive and obligatory sodium reduction policies, while the remaining 73 percent of WHO member states are not covered by an entire range of ways to implement of these policies.
- The world's average intake of salt is estimated at 10.8 grams daily, which is more than twice the WHO guidelines for less than five grams of salt a day (one teaspoon).

There is growing evidence of the link between the consumption of high amounts of sodium and the higher risk of developing other diseases like gastric cancer osteoporosis, obesity, and kidney diseases, the WHO declared.

- WHO's suggestions include rewriting food items to be less salty and setting goals for sodium content in food and meals as well as establishing public purchasing policies that limit sodium-rich or salty food items in public facilities like hospitals, schools as well as nursing homes, workplaces and other places of work Labeling on the front of packaging that assists consumers pick products that are lower in sodium and also encourages behaviour change and large-scale media campaigns to decrease sodium and salt consumption.

Topic 40. SCIENTISTS DEVISE 'GLOWSCOPE' TO BRING FLUORESCENT MICROSCOPY TO SCHOOLS

Important for Subject: Science and technology



Researchers from the Winona State University, Minnesota have developed a concept for a "glowscope", which could allow for greater accessibility and the accessibility the fluorescence microscope.

About Fluorescence Microscopy:

- A microscope with a fluorescence analyses an object through the lens of how light it emits is re-emitted after it has taken in, e. the way it sparkles. It is the basic concept.
- **How does it work?**
- It is lit by the light of a certain wavelength.
- Particles inside an object absorb the light and emit it at a higher frequency (i.e. the color is different). They are known as "fluorophores".

- The object is then infused with fluorophores prior to being put in the magnifying glass.
- If the fluorophores are fluoresced in a fluorescent microscope, it is possible to observe them as they move through the object, showing the shape of the object's interior and other aspects.
- Scientists have come up with a variety of fluorophores that can be used to study and identify various entities, from specific DNA sequences as well as protein complexes.

Applications:

- It's used to photograph particular characteristics of small specimens like microbes.
- It also helps visually enhance 3-D images at smaller dimensions.
- It permits multicolor staining and labeling of cells' structures, and the evaluation of the physiological condition of a cell.
- The most favored method of studying the dynamic behavior that can be observed by live-cell imaging.
- Different molecules are now colored with different colors, allowing different kinds of molecules observed simultaneously.
- **Optical Microscopy**
- The optic microscope also referred to as an optical microscope examines an object through the study of how it absorbs, reflect or disperses visible light.
- It employs one or more lenses to magnify the images of small specimens using visible light.
- They are placed on top of the observer's eye to increase the size of the image, allowing it to be examined with greater clarity.

Topic 41. ROOM-TEMPERATURE SUPERCONDUCTORS

Important for Subject: Science and technology

A study has announced the discovery of superconductivity at room temperatures in lutetium hydroxide that is nitrogen-doped with about a thousand atoms of pressure.

- Superconductors with room-temperature
- Recently, scientists from the University of Rochester in the US have announced that

they have made the discovery of superconductivity at room temperatures in lutetium hydride doped with nitrogen at around a thousand atmospheres of pressure.

- According to researchers, nitrogen's presence led to the results.
- The nitrogen-doped lutetium-hydride crystal showed superconductivity in the jiggling motion of the crystal. Furthermore, scientists have concluded that the correct quantity of nitrogen could trigger the appropriate amount of jiggling to cause superconductivity at room temperatures, without destabilizing the crystal.
- However, the findings have been viewed as controversial due to scientific critiques of the techniques used by researchers to analyze the data as well as different subtraction methods.

Superconductors:

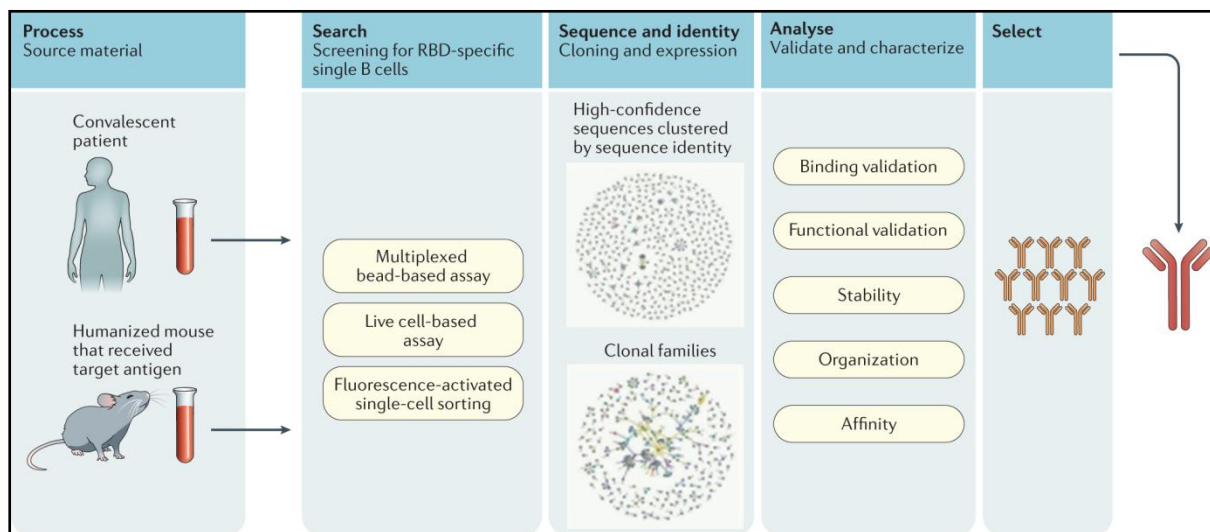
- Superconductors are materials that are not able to block the flow of electricity and thus conduct electricity with no losses in energy.
- There is no sound, heat or other type of energy will be dissipated from the material after it has reached its critical temperature (T_c) which is that is the point at which the substance becomes superconductive.
- Critical temperature of superconductors is that temperature where the electrical resistivity of the metal decreases to zero.
- Researchers have discovered that superconductors exhibit quantum phenomena, and could provide revolutionary technology including quantum computing.
- A few of the most well-known examples of superconductors include Aluminium Magnesium diboride Niobium copper oxide barium Yttrium and Iron Pnictides.
- According to research study, all the materials that are considered to have superconducting properties in certain circumstances, and in other circumstances. they block flowing current.
- Example: Aluminum becomes superconducting when it's cooled to temperatures below its critical point i.e. less than -250°C .
- Researchers from all over the world are searching for materials with superconductive properties under ambient conditions like the pressure of a few atmospheres and at temperatures of room temperature.
- Studies have shown that hydrogen as well as materials that are based on it may hold

immense promise in this direction.

- Example: In the year 2019 researchers from Germany discovered lanthanum hydride (LaH10) is a superconductor even at -20 degrees C but with more than 1 million atmospheres of pressure, which is nearly the same as pressures in the middle of the Earth.

Topic 42. PROMISES OF MONOCLONAL ANTIBODY TECHNOLOGY

Important for Subject: Science and technology



- WHO has stated that Monoclonal antibodies are a promising technology that promises improved disease prevention and management in Africa.
- They are employed to treat diverse types of diseases and not only infections.

Monoclonal Antibody

- They are lab-created versions of B cells that replicate the immune system of the body..
- The goal is to facilitate the creation from proteins which are specific to foreign bodies known as antigens.
- They're known as monoclonal since they're made by a only one clone from B cell. Thus, you could get exactly the same duplicates of the same protein made many times over and that's why they're known as Mab.
- MAb is a type of protein that can be created outside of the human body, but you must focus on the kind since the substances produced by our bodies is of various types,

including hundreds.

- No matter what infection you are suffering from There is an antibody that is produced within the body. However, if you produce it from outside, it needs to be specific.
- MAb can be used to treat diverse types of diseases and not only infections.

For Example - Cancer Treatment:

- It isn't an illness however, you can make use of monoclonal antibodies to fight it.
- For treating cancer, the most common treatment is chemotherapy, which involves using drugs. However, these drugs are typically in fact cytotoxic. They destroy everything, as well as normal cells and cancer cells.
- Sometimes, we emit radiation, but radiation can't select which cells it will kill.
- However, MAb can target specific areas of concern and attack the cells.
- These are not infectious diseases however, you can treat them with Mab.
- MAb can be utilized to combat illnesses like malaria and other ones since they are designed to fight anything perceived as being outside.
- For example, Mali was chosen to conduct a clinical trial because malaria remains extremely common in the country.

Significance for Africa

- The heads of state of Africa recognize that technology is essential to increasing the pace of economic growth on the continent as expressed within the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063.
- In this way the AU set their development organization to set up the Africa
- United Nations high-level Panel on Emerging Technologies to provide expert guidance in the field of the development of technology.
- The foundation allows the continent to take advantage of current and emerging technology and innovations with significant potential to turn Africa's science base into an advantage in competition.

Topic 43. VISION SCREENING CRITICAL TO NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY PLAN

Important for Subject: Government Schemes

With the Supreme Court's Committee on Road Safety observing that there are 1.5 lakh deaths each year caused by road accidents and eye health organizations, the top eye health groups are calling for inclusion of eye exams for motorists as part of the National Road Safety Plan (NRSP).

- While the preventive measures that are included in the plan includes the wearing of seat belts, reducing speed of intersections, roads and road design, and not overloaded the road, there is a pressing necessity to include eye correction exercises for commercial vehicle drivers in the program, according to prominent non-profits working in the eye healthcare field.

Background

- The nearly 1.5 million road deaths each year represent 11 percent of the global deaths due to road accidents.
- Many vision projects with commercial driving communities have revealed significant amounts of uncorrected blurry eyes -as well as distance vision needed to spot traffic coming up and to avoid dangers on the road, as in close vision required to view navigation apps in the case of bus, truck auto drivers.

National Road Safety Policy/Plan

- The government came up with The National Road Safety Policy (NRSP) in the year 2010 based on the recommendations of the S Sundar Committee.
- The Government is determined increase awareness of safety concerns and offer assistance to State Governments and local authorities in ensuring road safety.
- In the course of this policy, government evaluated standards that govern road design and maintenance of vehicles.
- Other Government Initiatives

District Road Safety Committees:

- District Road Safety Committees (DRSC) were formed in every district under

the Section 215 of the Motor Vehicle Act of 1988.

- The DRSCs have the responsibility of performing an ongoing review of the traffic collisions that occur in the district and obtaining information about incidents and their causes, accidents locations, as well as information about the victims.
- They also have the responsibility of the development of a district road safety plan and an emergency medical plan, and ensuring ambulances are accessible and linked to hospitals.

Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019:

- The government changed in 2019 the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act in the year 2019 and increased road security steps: (a) creating a National Road Safety Board to give advice to the government regarding the management of traffic and roads (Notified in September).
- 2021); (b) Higher fines for traffic violations; (c) Recalling defective vehicles that pose danger to people and the environment; (d) Creating a Solatium Fund for victims of collisions with cars; (e) Penalties to the driver for violations committed by juveniles; (f) Regulated corruption by automated testing for drivers' licences and fitness certificates (FC).

Good Samaritan Law:

- It also protects Good Samaritans from civil and criminal liability. Act also safeguards the Good Samaritans from legal and civil responsibility.
- In the month of October, 2021, in October 2021, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) published guidelines for the scheme to award awards to those who help save the victim of a fatal accident that involved the motor vehicle.
- A Good Samaritan refers to a person who voluntarily offers to provide emergency medical assistance to someone hurt in an accident, other emergency circumstance.
- In 2016 In 2016, in 2016, the Supreme Court of India gave "force of law" to the guidelines on the protection of Good Samaritans, which were issued in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- Good Samaritan Law protects Good Samaritans from being harassed e.g. police are not allowed to use the Good Samaritans to conduct an investigation, or hospitals

shouldn't refuse treatment for victims of accidents and be able to afford First Aid.

Topic 44. PUSHHP PORTAL

Important for Subject: Government Schemes

The Central Government has launched a High Price Day Ahead Market and Surplus Power Portal (PUSHHP) which will make sure that power is available in the peak demand time of.

- This year this year, the Power Ministry expects that the demand will be significantly greater than the last. Thus, a distinct segment known as HP DAM has been created to accommodate those systems that the price for power generation could be higher than the threshold of Rs 12. It is the HP DAM segment will accommodate coal-based import and gas-based plants.

Topic 45. NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FUND

Important for Subject: Government Schemes

A committee headed by Home Minister Amit Shah has approved a further Central aid worth Rs1,816.16 crore.

- It was issued as part of the National Disaster Response Fund to Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Meghalaya and Nagaland and Nagaland, which were affected by flooding as well as landslips, cloudburst and landslips in 2022.
- This aid goes in addition to the amount of money that is provided from the Centre to the States in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), already placed at the disposal of States.

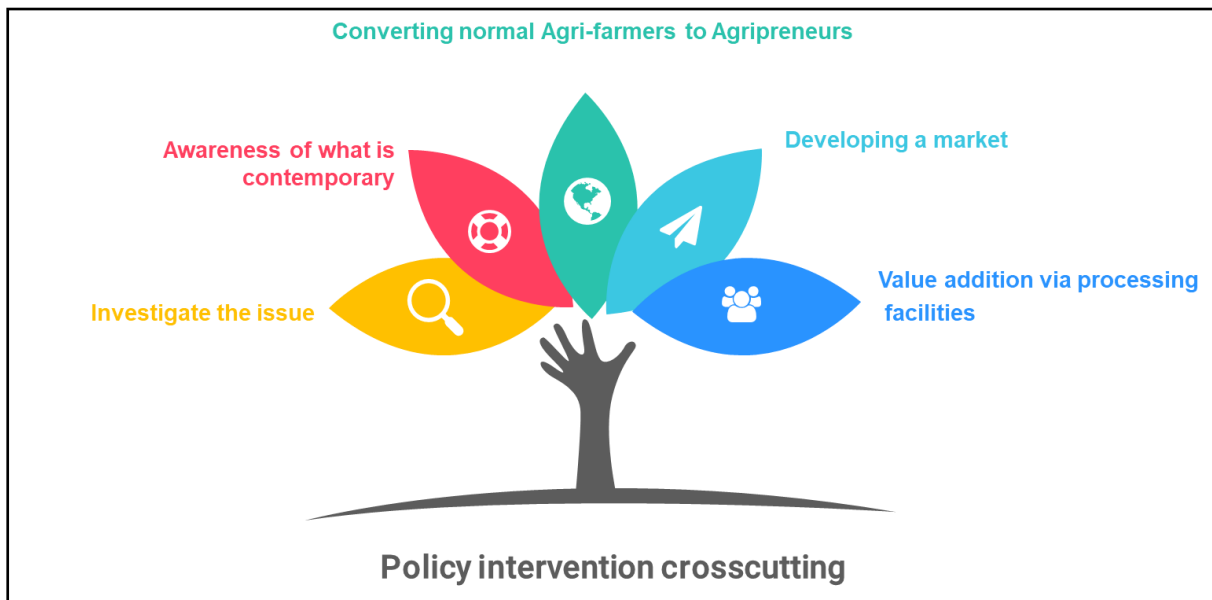
About National Disaster Response Fund

- The National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) was established by Section 46, of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 is a supplement to the SDRF of a State in the event of a catastrophe that is of a severe nature, if adequate funds aren't available in the SDRF.
- It is an fund administered by the Central Government for meeting the costs for emergency relief, response and rehabilitation following any catastrophe or threat to the situation.

- NDRF money can be used to pay for emergency intervention, rehabilitation and relief.
- It is funded by the levies of a cess on certain products, which is subject to customs and excise duty and annually approved by the Finance Bill.
- The need for additional funds over what is allowed under the NDRF is met by all budgetary sources.
- The DM Act also contains a provision the DM Act to encourage any individual or organization to contribute towards the NDRF.
- It is maintained in the "Public Accounts" of the Government of India.
- Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) examines the financials of NDRF.
- Department of Agriculture and Cooperation under the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) oversees relief efforts to deal with drought-related calamities hailstorms, pests and cold waves/frost. other natural calamities are supervised by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Topic 46. SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES TO ATTRACT YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

Important for Subject: Government Schemes



Programmes/schemes to lure young people to agriculture and related industries and to promote the growth of entrepreneurial skills:

- The Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) Department of

Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, implements:

- Establishment of Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centers (AC&ABC)
- Skills training programs (minimum 200 hours ('during) designed for Rural Youth and Farmers including women farmers
- **Skill Training of Rural Youth (STRY)**
- Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)
- Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Related Industries Renewal (RKVYRAFTAAR) to help promote Agri-Startups' Certified Farm Advisor/Certified Livestock advisor program post graduate Diploma in Management (Agri Business Management) [PGDM (ABM)] [PGDM (ABM)]
- Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) through Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) implements the following
- Technologies Assessment and Demonstration for its Application and Capacity Development via Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs).
- Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture (ARYA)
- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Different initiatives that are implemented by Agriculture Skill Council of India (ASCI) an affiliate of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is listed in the following:

- Entrepreneurship training Apprenticeship program Vocationalization of Schools Education The vocationalization process for Higher Education (UGC associated Colleges)
- **The Banks and Lending Institutions**
- The loan for farmers and youth to support various activities in agricultural and related sectors such as loans for crop, construction via Agri Infrastructure Fund (AIF), Kisan Credit Card (KCCs) Value-added entrepreneurial ventures under Pradhan Mantri
- Formalization of Micro Enterprises (PM FME), Farmer Producer Organization (FPOs), Self Help Group (SHGs) etc
- In 2022-23, the government has increased the credit for agriculture amount to. 18.00 lakh crore, up from Rs. 16.50 lakh crore during 2021-22.

Topic 47. MPLADS (MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT LOCAL AREA DEVELOPMENT SCHEME) FUNDS

Important for Subject: Government Schemes

The government on Tuesday reversed an amendment to the guidelines that govern the use of MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) funds that appeared to make it easier to reserve a specific part for areas that are which are dominated by Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

- Guidelines for Advisory: In order to give adequate attention to the construction of infrastructure in regions dominated by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, it would be beneficial for members of Parliament to suggest each year the construction of works that cost at the minimum of fifteen per cent, 7.5 per cent of the MPLADS total entitlements for the year, for areas that are primarily inhabited by Scheduled Caste people, or Scheduled Tribe population respectively
- The previous guidelines, in implemented since the year 2016, allowed for the flexibility of spending money for or SCs or STs according to the population in a specific constituency. Additionally, they had the option to allocate the amount in any other region of the state, provided there was not an enviable SC/ST population within an MP's district.

The new guidelines:

- "MPLADS funds can be used for creation of immovable public assets on government-owned land, and movable public assets for government-owned and government-controlled institutions only, i.e. the central state/UT as well as local governments, as well as institutions that are aided by the government." State-owned institutions provided there was not an enumerable population of SC/ST in the MP's parliamentary district.
- According to the updated guidelines cooperative societies - excluding cooperative housing societies - will be eligible for aid under MPLADS and on a similar basis to "registered trusts or societies, but solely for the purpose of creating permanent assets to benefit communities as well as public utility
- MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) money

- Under MPLADS, MPs have the power to suggest works that are of a developmental nature, with a focus on the creation of lasting community assets within the areas that concern drinking water supply, education for primary students as well as public health, sanitation and roads within their constituents.
- MPLAD is an Central Sector Scheme which was first announced on December 23, 1993.
- The work's recommendations are presented by Members of Parliament for the improvement of the society.
- The work is carried out by District Authorities, in line to the State Government's administrative, technical and financial regulations.
- At first the Scheme was in the hands by the Ministry of Rural Development and Planning. In the month of October 1994 this scheme transferred over to the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.
- In this scheme, each MP has the right to spend \$5 million annually.
- MPs will get two crore each, instead of the previously approved Rs5 cr.
- According to the 'Guidelines on Members of Parliament Local Area Development
- Scheme (MPLADS) is a publication of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in June of 2016. the MPLAD funds could also be used to implement of schemes, such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) and conservation of water by rainwater harvesting, as well as Sansad Aadarsh Gram Yojana, and so on.

Functioning

- Every year, MPs get an amount of Rs. 5 crore divided into two installments of 2.5 crore each. 2.5 million each. The funds under MPLADS are not lapsable.
- Lok Sabha MPs have to advocate for the district authority projects within the Lok Sabha constituencies, while Rajya Sabha MPs have to allocate the money to the state that been elected in the House.
- Nominated Members of both Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha are able to recommend work anywhere in the country.
- MPs should recommend each year, projects that cost minimum 15 percent of MPLADS benefits per year for areas that are populated by Scheduled Caste

population and 7.5 percent for areas that are populated by ST populations.

- District Authority District Authority would be responsible for the overall coordination and oversight of the work in the scheme at district level. It will also be responsible for inspecting at 10 percent of the work being carried out each year.

Topic 48. HOUSE PANEL APPREHENSIVE ABOUT PM-PVTG ALLOCATION

Important for Subject: Government Schemes

The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment expressed displeasure in the way that such a large spending plan (15000 crores) was being planned at a time while the Ministry of Tribal Affairs does not have any data on PVTG populations across several States or Union Territories.

PM- PVTG Development Mission:

- The Finance Minister has announced the launch of a brand new scheme known as "the Pradhan Mantri PVTG (Particularly vulnerable Tribal Groups) Development Mission in the Union Budget 2023-24.
- A amount of Rs 15,000 crore over 3 years has been set aside for the socio-economic development of this group.
- It is scheduled to be launched in the context of 'Reaching The Final Mile' which is one of seven Saptarishi Priorities outlined in the current Budget.
- PVTGs Mission PVTGs Mission aims to provide essential services such as water, housing, roads as well as telecom, education, and health care in PVTG areas throughout the nation.
- The program follows the strategy to Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana which is based on needs and aims to maximize the use of the available resources under different programmes and targets specific results.
- Implementation: Among the ministries that are likely to be brought into together with Tribal Affairs Ministry, to carry out the PM-PVTG mission, is rural Development Ministry, the Water Resources Ministry, the Education Ministry, the Health Ministry and the Women and Child Development Ministry.

Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (VKY):

- The Scheme was introduced in 2014 as a central Sector Scheme by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- The plan aims to general improvement of the tribal population with an approach based on outcomes to ensure that all desired benefits, services and goods through the various programs and schemes of the Central and State governments covered by their respective tribal sub-plans get to them.

PVTG:

- Particularly vulnerable tribe group
- 75 tribal groups have been as such by Ministry of Home Affairs as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)s.
- The criteria to determine the most vulnerable tribes are the following:
 - Technology that is pre-agricultural in its level
 - Low literacy level
 - Backwardness in economics
 - A population that is declining or stagnant.
- PVTGs live within the 18 States as well as UT of the A&N Islands.
- In addition to a variety of programs of Government of India and the State Governments in which the PVTG population is also benefited alongside other people, Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the one that oversees the development of Specially Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)'specifically for the PVTG group.
- The scheme includes the 75 PVTGs identified in 18 States as well as the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- The plan aims to manage their socio-economic growth in a comprehensive way in order to preserve the cultural and historical heritage of the communities through an methods of development at the level of habitat.
- The projects covered under this scheme are driven by demand.

Topic 49. EMIGRATION ACT

Important for Subject: Government Schemes

In 2022, immigration clearances were issued to 3,734,434 Indians Of which 10,654 were from Punjab the Lok Sabha was informed.

- The Emigration Act of 1983 regulates the emigration process of semi-skilled, skilled, and untrained employees and certain professionals like nurses, to work in 18 countries.

Emigration Act 1983

- Presently, labour Recruitment is conducted through the Act.
- The Act talks about the issue of labour Migration out of the country (Especially the west of Asia as well as Gulf Countries) for jobs.
- The middlemen, the agency that recruits must be certified by the Government..
- The document explains in detail the charges for recruitment and the minimum requirements for service that must be met.
- It was designed to safeguard individuals who go to work abroad.
- Emigration Bill 2022
- It is intended to replace and enhance on the earlier law, the Emigration Act, 1983.
- Emigrants can be defined as Indian citizens who are seeking to leave or have left of India to find work.
- New division for policy:A new emigration policy division is created under the Ministry of External Affairs. It has help desks and welfare committees to help workers from countries of migration.

The Draft Bill will create two authorities:

- Bureau of Emigration Policy and Planning (BEPP) The functions of the BEPP consist of formulating guidelines on matters pertaining to welfare issues of migrants and the negotiation of social security and labour agreements with countries of destination.
- It proposes the appointment of one officer at the joint secretary level as the head of planning and policy for emigration.
- Bureau of Emigration Administration (BEA): It will be responsible for keeping an

inventory of Indian Emigrants and will implement strategies and programs to improve the wellbeing of the immigrants.

- Nodal committees are established in the states and union territories (UTs): They are constituted under the chief emigration officer. They are responsible for initiating actions to prosecute organizations who are involved in the trafficking of individuals and are involved in training programmes prior to departure and upgrading programmes for aspiring emigrants.
- A Digital record must also be kept which will record the information of Indian immigrants as well as the blacklisted immigrants.
- Employers' accreditation Employers who plans to hire immigrants must seek accreditation from the appropriate authority. The accreditation is valid for five years.
- Penalties: The offences have been declared to be punishable by the possibility of imprisonment for a period that cannot be shorter than three years, but could extend to seven years or an amount of fee, which shall not be less than 3 lakh rupees but it could go up to five lakh rupees or both.
- Human resource agencies They are recognized by an Competent Authority and are engaged in recruiting employers. The right to appeal against the decisions by the competent authority with regards to the registration of these agencies will fall at the discretion of the central government
- It bans the operation of Human Resource Agencies except in the event that they are registered as a company as per the Companies Act, 2013 or a Limited Liability Partnership under the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 or a partnership registered under the Indian Partnership Act, 1932.

Topic 50. MONEY LAUNDERING LAWS WILL NOW COVER CRYPTOCURRENCY TRADE

Important for Subject: Economy

- In a Gazette notice that was published, The Finance Ministry said the anti-money laundering laws have been applied to the crypto industry, safekeeping, and financial services related to it.
- The government has put The Prevention of Money-Laundering Act 2002 on digital currencies or assets in order to improve the oversight on digital currencies.

Implications

- In the future, Indian crypto exchanges will be required to be able to report suspicious activities to authorities such as the Financial Intelligence Unit India (FIU-IND).
- This decision coincides with the worldwide trend of requiring platforms for digital assets to comply with anti-money-laundering standards similar to those that are followed by other regulatory entities such as banks or brokers for stocks.
- This implies that any financial fraud that involves cryptocurrency assets could now be scrutinized through The Enforcement Directorate.

Virtual Assets

- Digital assets represent value that are able to be transferred or traded electronically.
- They could include cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Ethereum, or Litecoin and other tokens of value or coins which are produced and exchanged with blockchain technology.
- According to the Income Tax Act, virtual assets are classified as capital assets to tax purposes. Therefore, any losses or gains arising from the sale or exchange could be subject to tax on capital gains depending on the time duration and other relevant aspects.
- **Financial Intelligence Unit - India (FIU-IND)**
- It was established to be established by the Government of India on the 18th of November, in 2004 as it was the principal agency responsible for collecting, processing, analyzing and disseminating data concerning suspicious banking transactions.
- FIU-IND is also accountable to coordinate and strengthen efforts of international and national investigatory, security and intelligence agencies to pursue worldwide efforts to stop the financing and laundering of terrorist activities.
- The FIU is an independent, non-governmental organization that reports directly on behalf of the Economic Intelligence Council (EIC) headed by the Finance Minister.
- FIU-IND is a multi-disciplinary organization with an authorized capacity of 75 employees from different organisations like Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC), Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Department of Legal Affairs and

Intelligence agencies.

Topic 51. FLOATING SOLAR PANELS

Important for Subject: Economy

- In over 12 countries across the globe floating solar farms are offering an appealing alternative to the ground-mounted solar panels, that could dramatically improve the efficiency of clean energy as the world strives to reduce carbon emissions.
- Solar farms of immense size can be seen on top of lakes throughout China, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Portugal, Singapore and Switzerland.

Floatovoltaics:

- Floating solar, also known as floating photovoltaics (FPV), sometimes called floating photovoltaics, panels that are mounted on a structure that can float on the surface of a body of water usually an reservoir or lake.
- Similar to land-based systems floating solar panels produce energy from sun's rays.
- However, those bodies of water these farms sit on aid in cooling the panels, which allows them to be 15percent more efficient than solar panels that are based on terrestrial sources according to an estimate by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute.
- A first photovoltaic floating array was developed by Japan around 2007. Today, the world's most massive floating solar power plant is located in Shandong, China.
- **Structure of the Floating Solar Plants**
- It is a system of solar panels that are floating also known as floatovoltaics and photovoltaics installed on a structure to allow it to float on top of a body of water.
- It usually has floating systems or pontoons or mooring structure to stop panels from slipping and sliding within the water and keep it close to shoreline,
- The photovoltaic system produces electricity through thermal energy as well as an underwater cable to transfer the energy generated to the substation.
- The floaters on the which solar modules are mounted are constructed using the high-density polyethylene (HDP) materials.

Floating solar plants- significance:

- Floating solar power plants are considered an alternative solution to problems with land availability. The idea is to install solar panels that sit on floats on lakes, dams and other similar bodies of water.
- Floating solar makes sense in areas that have high costs for land and low access to.
- As water restrictions increase all over the globe floating solar may assist in conserving water the supply.
- The panels could restrict the evaporation of their reservoirs and lakes in which they are situated.
- Early signs indicate that these structures may lower the likelihood of harmful blooms grow on water bodies.

Challenges:

- Price: Despite being land neutral However, the costs of the floating systems, including anchoring as well as installation, maintenance and transmission means that the total cost of floating solar systems more costly than land-based systems at this early stage of development.
- technical issues Besides these two important problems of instability and corrosion additional issues are the long-term effects of a moist environment on cables, modules secure transmission of power from the floats to the closest feeder point, environmental impacts on the body of water and marine life, etc. need to be considered and addressed in order to help to make the system more cost effective.

Topic 52. INDIA MUST PREPARE TO CURB VOLATILITY RISK OF INTERNATIONAL RUPEE: RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Important for Subject: Economy

- A India should be ready to handle to deal with the unpredictable volatility which is likely to be seen in the market for foreign exchange as the country moves further toward an internationalisation process for the currency a deputy governor at RBI has said in recent times.
- **Volatility of currency**
- The term "currency volatility" refers to the quantity and frequency of fluctuations in

the value of a currency.

- It is determined by measuring it by calculating the dispersion of changes in exchange rates in relation to the mean expressed by weekly, daily and monthly standard deviations.
- The greater that number is, the more the risk of having a volatile length of.
- In the case of currency volatility, there are sudden changes to rates of exchange of currency pairs over an extremely short time.
- Therefore, if it were the case that US Dollar began to rise and then fall in value in comparison to Rupee. This could be classified as the volatility of a currency pair.

Internationalisation of Rupee

- The exchange of rupees internationally is an ongoing process that will increase the usage of the local currency for cross-border transactions.
- It involves promotion of the rupee in trade in export and import and later various current transactions followed through its utilization in capital transactions on accounts.
- Insofar as the rupee's value is concerned, it's fully convertible on the current account however it is not fully convertible in the capital account.
- Current and Capital accounts are two of the components of the Balance of Payments.
- While the current account is concerned mostly with the export and import of services and goods, the capital account consists of the movement across borders of capital through loans and investments.

Need:

- The excessive dependence on dollars coupled with global economic crisis and inflation have led to the decline of the rupee and its falling to an unheard-of low. If the rupee were to be internationally traded, India would not have to rely on US dollars for trade.
- RBI has granted domestic traders to pay their import-export bill in rupees.

Advantages of Internationalization:

- Appreciate the value of currency This will increase its demand in the international

market for rupee.

- Reduce the volatility of exchange rates: Rupee-denominated payments can help to reduce the volatility of prices that are that is associated with dollars.
- Making significant savings in Indian foreign reserves.
- Use HTML0 to circumvent sanctions Improved the acceptance of and trade in rupees can assist India diversify its market basket, avoiding sanctions and restrictions enforced by the west.
- Enhance its status as a major economic force
- **Risks associated with it**
- The impact on money policies: The globalization of the rupee limits the country's ability to develop a monetary strategy specifically tailored to local economic demands.
- It is expected that the Indian economy will be more vulnerable to global economic volatility.
- The use of managed currency was to shield the economy from damage during the recessions in the years 1980 and in 2008. The situation could not be the case any longer.
- The outflow of hot money the complete internationalization of currency will increase the possibility that hot currencies (highly susceptible for sudden exodus) for capital assets.
- For instance, the East Asian crisis of 1997.

Topic 53. CRYPTO TRADE WITHIN PMLA AMBIT

Important for Subject: Economy

To control the market for crypto In order to control the crypto market, authorities from the Ministry of Finance announced that all digital assets that are virtual (VDAs) will fall under the scope under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA). The month of July was 2022 the news media reported by The Enforcement Directorate recorded approximately 5422 cases with attached proceeds of around Rs104702 crore and was able to file

- Prosecution Complaints filed in nearly 992 cases resulted in the confiscation of Rs869.31 crores. The court also found guilty 23 defendants under the PMLA (Till

March 2022). PMLA (Till February 2022).

Information about the change:

- According to the notice, Indian crypto exchanges will be required to be able to report any suspicious activity involving crypto to Financial Intelligence Unit - India (FIU-IND).
- FIU-IND is accountable for collecting, processing, and analysis, and disseminating information regarding suspicious financial transactions to police agencies and overseas FIUs.
- As per the provisions of Sections 5 as well as 8(4) and 8(4) of the PMLA Act, the ED has the discretionary power in the search and seizure of property suspected of being stolen without any court approval.
- Methods to monitor cryptocurrency transactions that facilitate money laundering:
- It is important to note that the VDAs' technical aspect creates an entirely new challenge that will need the intelligence unit to extend their intelligence-based framework.
- The Egmont group suggests the right examination of crypto wallets, their addresses and blockchain records and even hardware identifiers, such as IMEI
- (International Mobile Equipment Identification), IMSI (International Mobile Subscriber Identity) or SEID (Secure Element Identifier) numbers together with numbers for the MAC addresses.

Scenario for other countries:

- According to PwC's "Global Crypto Regulations Report 2023 The report states that many nations around the globe are in different stages of creating similar regulations.
- Numerous countries such as Singapore, Japan, and Switzerland along with Malaysia have laws regarding regulatory frameworks as well as they are not alone. U.S., U.K., Australia, and Canada are also working in this direction.
- China, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have issued a general prohibition regarding crypto currency.
- The European Union is also working on a cross-jurisdictional regulation and supervision structure that will cover crypto assets.

Topic 54. MAURITIUS LOSES EDGE ON EQUITY INFLOWS

Important for Subject: Economy

Mauritius is losing importance as a preferred option for equity investment into India due to the increased supervision of the island and perceptions that it is an tax safe haven.

- Investments from Mauritius as measured by capital assets held in custody by the equity market have dropped by 46% to 2.5 trillion as of February, down from the 4.67 trillion in the previous year. The recent months witnessing the most significant drop.
- "Old investments which were made through Mauritius that were grandfathered into the system are being sold. In the purchase of Indian equity markets is being done in safer and better areas like Singapore or the Netherlands as there isn't any treaty advantage for equity investments made from Mauritius
- Tax treaties between India as well as Mauritius was revised in 2016, after which the capital gain on the sales of shares became tax-deductible. Shares bought prior to April 1, 2017 were to be grandfathered according to the revised treaty agreements. The tax rate on capital gains made between 1 April 2017 until March 31, 2019 was set to be limited up to 50 percent of current domestic taxes in India.
- Mauritius was added to the grey list at the request of the FATF at the beginning of February and this had a profound impact on the credibility of Mauritius as a reputable and responsible place of business.
- The jurisdictions that are under increased scrutiny are actively working in conjunction with the FATF to fix strategic flaws. The island nation was able to get from the grey list in the month of October in 2021.
- As the stricter KYC standards according to the FATF standards, and Singapore adopting the VCC system at the same time FPIs in Mauritius are currently looking to move their base to other countries by removing themselves from this Indian markets for capital.
- Singapore has achieved success with the Model of the VCC that has seen nearly 300 VCCs being set in January 2020.
- Some of the selling may also be due to the decline of the Indian rupee that has appreciated by more than 8% over the past year, which has impacted the profits of FPIs. The current tax season may be a reason for FPIs to book losses and then write it

off on the books of account. The greater scrutiny of Mauritius funds as a result of the Adani controversy could also have led to some sales, according to experts.

- However, the debt investments of Mauritius have been stable, as capital gains on investments in debt are protected by the tax treaty between India and Mauritius. Treaty. Mauritius remains the number one destinations to make FDI in India at the end of December the previous year.

Topic 55. SILICON VALLEY BANK 'CONTAGION' MAY LEAVE INDIA UNSCATHED, SAY FINANCE MINISTRY

Important for Subject: Economy

As the aftermath of the financial collapse of Silicon Valley Bank is starting to be felt throughout the world experts believe that it is unlikely that Indian banking system isn't likely to suffer any significant impact on the banking system. However, there is some effects on the mood that the markets have.

- Silicon Valley Bank's demise is the biggest failure of a bank ever since Washington Mutual collapsed at the peak in the crisis over 10 years back.
- **About Silicon Valley Bank**
- Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) was a commercial bank with its headquarters located in Santa Clara, California.
- SVB was the 16th largest bank of its size in the United States at the time of its collapse in March 10th, 2023 and was also the biggest bank by deposit within Silicon Valley.
- It was a state-chartered institution that was controlled through the California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI) and was an affiliate of the Federal Reserve System. The bank was headquartered across 13 countries and regions.

What did go wrong at SVB?

- The financial institution most well-known for its connections with top-performing tech startups around the world and venture capital was the victim of a bank run.
- The bank's run usually caused by panic (customers withdraw their funds at the same time) rather than genuine insolvency, forces the bank into insolvency.

- Bank run events have been reported throughout history , including those during Great Depression and the 2008-09 financial crisis.

Implications

- The SVB's massive deposits (startups and high-end tech workers) are not safe.
- It is the Federal government is able to insure deposits of up to \$250,000, and any amount above it is deemed uninsured and most likely to go into the hands of the government through an orderly manner.
- Many businesses are looking to raise funds to cover the costs of office and payroll - which could result in layoffs and furloughs.
- **There isn't a buyer for SVB.**
- Is this a sign that there is another recurrence of the global financial crisis of 2008?
- SVB was massive, yet it enjoyed an unique position in the market by serving almost exclusively the world of technology and VC-backed businesses.
- The other banks are diverse across various areas, customers, and geographic areas and are able to withstand the worst of recessions and substantial increase in unemployment.
- But, if the 'contagion results' of SVB or increased interest rates affect more international banks, a rush to safety among investors from around the world could affect capital flows to emerging markets.
- The contagious effect is the reason for the possibility of spreading of economic crises or booms across different countries or regions.
- The basic premise behind this scenario that price fluctuations in one market are the result of volatility or shocks in another market is an ideal information flow.
- **The impact on Indian economy**
- Many Indian startups [particularly those in the SaaS (software as service) sector] don't just are able to access accounts but banks was also a major lender.
- For instance an investment of of \$1.7 million was made in One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm.
- The funding available to start-ups is diminishing and this could be a significant obstacle, particularly for businesses that are young.

Topic 56. RBI HAS ALLOWED BANKS OF 18 OTHER NATIONS TO TRADE IN RUPEE

Important for Subject: Economy

The banks of 18 nations have been allowed through the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to create Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs) to settle transactions using Indian rupees.

Background:

- The process for SVRAs was initiated in July 2022, when the RBI announced that it would implement an additional arrangement to invoice as well as settlement of imports and exports in INR.
- India has been a strong supporter of the idea of trading using local currency, in order to boost exports.

Special Vostro accounts

- Vostro accounts are also known as vostro accounts. Vostro account is an account that banks in the country have for banks from abroad that use the local currency.
- Domestic banks utilize it to offer global banking solutions to their customers who have global banking requirements.
- It is a fundamental branch of correspondent banking which includes the use of a bank (or the intermediary) to facilitate wire transfers, conduct business transactions, receive deposits and gather documentation for the other bank.
- It gives banks from the country more access to financial markets and also serve international customers without needing to physically be present in foreign countries.
- It is SRVA is an added arrangement to the current system that makes use of free-convertible currencies and operates as a complementary system.
- Indian exporters may be able to receive advances in INR from clients overseas and, in the future, encourage INR to be an internationally accepted currency when that rupee's settlement system gets traction.

The initiative's name:

- The SVRAs may be established by banks from countries that are partners by contacting authorized Dealer (AD) banks located in India that might be granted

permission by RBI after the proper procedure.

- The RBI has granted approval to both foreign and domestic AD Banks in 60 cases to open SRVAs for banks from 18 countries.
- The countries include Botswana, Fiji, Germany, Guyana, Israel, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Oman, Russia, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda and the United Kingdom.
- The procedures for trading in INR are defined by RBI in its Circular (No 10 RBI/2022-2023/90, dated on "International Trade Settlement using Indian rupees"). RBI has clarified the issues concerning the operationalization of SRVAs via FAQs, which are accessible to importers, banks, exporters as well.
- **Banks' eligibility criteria**
- Authorized banks can open multiple SRV accounts on behalf of various banks from the same country.
- In addition, the balances of the account may be repatriated in freely convertible currencies and/or the currency that is the currency of the beneficiary partner nation dependent on the transaction, which is the reason to which the account was charged.
- The banks of the country must be able to provide, for the public's perusal financial parameters for the respective bank.

Topic 57. HAILSTORM, UNSEASONAL RAIN DAMAGE CROPS IN THREE STATES

Important for Subject: Geography

According to Bihar officials from the Bihar government Rain and hailstorms in areas of north and south Bihar close to Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday damaged the fruiting and flowering oilseeds pulses, vegetables, tobacco crops and flowering mango orchards.

- Unseasonal rains and hailstorms in the last 2 days have caused immense destruction to crops in many locations within Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh officials have said Hailstorms
- A hailstorm is an storm that causes precipitation that is ice. Hailstorms can cause severe destruction to property and crops.
- Within India, hailstorms mostly are affecting the eastern and northern Himalayas and western Himalayas, with the highest storms occurring in March and April.

- Unlike other forms of water ice precipitation, such as graupel (which is made of rime ice), ice pellets (which are smaller and translucent), and snow (which consists of tiny, delicately-crystalline flakes or needles), hailstones usually measure between 5 mm (0.2 in) and 15 cm (6 in) in diameter.
- It is possible to experience hail in most storms (as it is caused by cumulonimbus) and within 2 miles (3.7 kilometers) of the main storm.
- Hail formation requires conditions with a strong upward motion of air in conjunction with the thunderstorm that is the source (similar with tornadoes) and lower elevations of the freezing levels.
- In mid-latitudes, the hail is common close to the continent's interiors while, in tropical zones, it tends to be limited to higher altitudes.
- Hailstones typically fall at greater speed as they increase in size, but other factors like melting the air, friction with the wind, or with other hailstones and rain could slow their progress through the earth's atmosphere.
- **Ideal conditions for hailstorms**
- Hail develops in the updraft area of a thunderstorm. Conditions at the atmosphere that favor formation of a hail-bearing storm include:
 - Instability at a high level, high moisture content, low temperature,
 - Shear of high vertical winds.

Topic 58. DIEGO GARCIA

Important for Subject: Geography



- An total of sixteen Indian fishermen - seven from Kerala Six of Tamil Nadu and three from West Bengal -- have been rescued by authorities from Diego Garcia of British Indian Ocean Territory during the time they were fishing in the deep ocean.

About Diego Garcia

- Diego Garcia, coral atoll that is the largest and southernmost part of the Chagos Archipelago, in the middle of the Indian Ocean, part of the British Indian Ocean Territory.
- It covers an area that is 17 square miles (44 square kilometers) It consists of a sand-fringed V-shaped cay approximately fifteen miles (24 km) in length and an average width of seven miles (11 km) and its lagoon is open at its northern of its northern end.
- The HTML0 was discovered through the Portuguese in the 16th century It was throughout its history a part of Mauritius.
- In 1965, it was divided from Mauritius to form an integral part of newly established British Indian Ocean Territory.
- Following that, the inhabitants in the Chagos Archipelago were forcibly removed and the Chagos Archipelago was handed over to the US.
- The US created its important Indian Ocean military base at the Chagos Archipelago.

TOPIC 59. INDIA AND AUSTRALIA EYE STRONGER TIES IN CRITICAL MINERALS FIELD

Important for Subject: Geography

CRITICAL MINERALS

OUR GROWING DEPENDENCE ON CRITICAL MINERALS

WHAT ARE CRITICAL MINERALS? Minerals deemed critical vary by country. The United States classifies **35 minerals** as critical because they are:

- essential to economic and national security,
- from vulnerable supply chains, or
- a key part of the manufacturing of a product. ¹

TOP INDUSTRIES THAT RELY ON CRITICAL MINERALS

- 1 Telecommunications and electronics
- 2 Energy
- 3 Defence
- 4 Aerospace
- 5 Transportation

2

CRITICAL MINERALS ARE EVERYWHERE



Lithium is used to create batteries.



Potash is used in fertilizer.



Helium is used in MRIs.



Indium is used to make LCD screens.



Uranium is used in radiation therapy.



Strontium is used in fireworks.

3

The Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and his Australian counterpart Don Farrell announced the formal resume of negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) that will cover the "much wider" area of commercial cooperation.

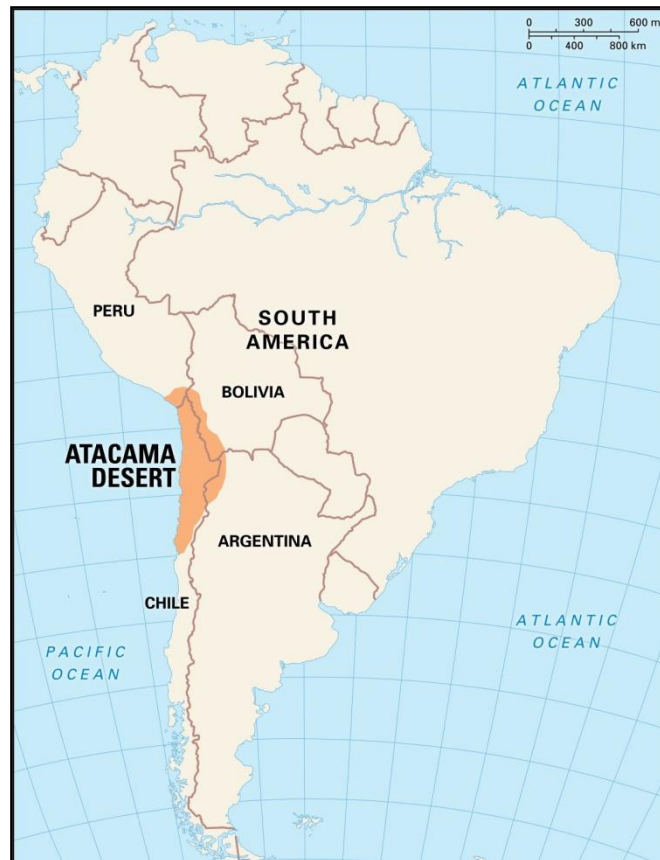
- Ministers from both nations have also reached an agreement to enhance the existing cooperation and to extend their agreements to Critical Minerals of India and Australia
- Investment Partnership.
- Australia announced that it would pledge US\$ 5.8 million for the 3 year IndiaAustralia Critical Minerals Investment Partnership.

Critical Minerals:

- Critical minerals are minerals that form the basis of the most modern technologies and are in danger of disruptions to supply chains.
- They are used in a variety of ways including cellophanes, computer, batteries and electric automobiles, and renewable technologies like wind turbines and solar panels.
- It usually includes lithium, graphite and cobalt that are used for the production of EV batteries. Rare earths utilized to make magnets, and silicon, which is the most important mineral used in making solar panels and computer chips.
- What is the significance of this resource?
- As nations around the globe accelerate their shift towards a clean digital energy and a digital economy, these critical resources are essential for the system that powers the change.
- Any supply shock could be devastating to the strategic autonomy and economy of a nation dependent on other countries to obtain crucial minerals.
- However, these supply risks are due to the lack of availability increasing demand and a complicated value chain for processing.
- The complex supply chain may be interrupted by hostile regimes or due to unstable political regions.

Topic 60. ATACAMA DESERT

Important for Subject: Geography



Artificial Intelligence (AI) as well as machine-learning may transform the search for life on other planets.

- A team of researchers have successfully trained an AI to map bio signatures -- any feature which provides evidence of past or present life -- in a three-square kilometer area of Chile's Atacama Desert.
- The AI significantly reduced the amount of land that the team had to explore and increased the chances of discovering life-forms living in one the most driest areas on earth.

Atacama Desert

- The Atacama Desert is the name of a 600-mile (1,000 km) plateau located in the north of Chile close to the borders between Peru, Bolivia and Argentina in South America.
- The Atacama Desert is the most dry non polar desert on earth, and is the only desert in

the world to get less rain than deserts in the polar regions.

- In reality, it's so dry that many meteorological stations located in deserts have not registered a rainfall. Because of the harsh climate living things like plants and animals is practically non-existent, especially in the lower part of the Atacama Desert.
- The areas of the northern coast, however, get a bit more rain and, as a result they are less dry.

What is it that makes this? Why is the Atacama Desert so dry?

- Three distinct reasons lead to three reasons that contribute to Atacama Desert being the driest spot on earth.
- The primary cause is because the desert is located in the opposite direction of Andes in relation to the prevailing winds. As you can see, the current trade winds that carry humid air are forced to rise. The moist air condenses and eventually falls on the opposite side the Andes towards the Atacama. This is commonly known as a rain shadow. Atacama-Desert
- The third reason is the high pressure in air. In essence, the air that is descending warms up, which means that any moisture within changes into water vapour (gas but not liquid) instead of rain.
- The last cause could be an effect of freezing Humboldt Current from the Pacific Ocean. The wind that is onshore is chilled and they can't take in water in the sea.
- The cumulative effect of these three points results in the most dry spot on earth.
- The diversity of species in the Atacama Desert is highly restricted. Certain regions within the desert have become just too dry to support any living species at all.
- The desert butterfly, Scorpions and wasps, Atacama toad Iguanas, lava Lizards and many more. They are among these of Atacama Desert fauna. Birds that are found within the Atacama Desert include sparrows Hummingbirds, Andean flamingos Humboldt penguins, and more. Sea lions and seals can be observed along the coastline.
- The Atacama Desert has the world's biggest supply of sodium Nitrate and is an important resource. This is why the area was heavily mined during the 1940's. A number of mining towns were later abandoned.
- The Atacama Desert is also filled with metallic minerals like silver, copper, gold and

iron, in addition to non-metallic minerals like important deposits of lithium, boron sodium nitrate, sodium nitrate and potassium salts.

- The Atacama Desert forms part of the dry Pacific edge that is South America.

Topic 61. LIGHTNING AS A 'NATURAL DISASTER'

Important for Subject: Geography

Many states have demanded that 'lightning' be recognized as a natural catastrophe due to the fact that deaths caused by it are higher than any other natural disaster in the nation.

About Lightning:

- Lightning is a massive spark of electricity that is a part of the atmosphere, between clouds, air, or even the ground.
- In the beginning phases of growth, the air acts as an insulation between negative and positive charge in the cloud, as well as between clouds and ground.
- If the opposing charges are sufficiently high the insulating capacity of the air is destroyed and there's a rapid discharge of electricity. This is referred to as lightning.
- The lightning flash temporarily unites the charged regions of the atmosphere, until the opposite charges begin to accumulate.
- Lightning can happen between opposing charges in the cloud of thunderstorms (intra clouds lightning) or between opposing charges within the cloud as well as in the earth (cloudto-ground lightning).

Major Causes of lightning:

- The lightning phenomenon is the result of an electric discharge that occurs by the imbalance of cloud formations and ground or even within the clouds themselves.
- In a storm, the collision of particles of ice, rain, or snow in storm clouds create an imbalance between storm clouds and ground. They can also negatively affect the lower regions of the storm cloud.
- The objects on the ground like trees, steeples as well as the Earth itself, get positively charged, causing an imbalance, which nature attempts to correct with the help of passing currents between two charges.
- The heat causes the air around it to expand rapidly and vibrate, which causes the

sound of thunder that is heard for within a brief time following the sighting of the flash of lightning.

- If the positive and negative charges get large enough that a huge spark lightning strikes the two charges in the cloud.
- The majority of lightning strikes occur within clouds, however often it occurs between the clouds as well as the surface.
- A positive charge accumulates on the ground underneath the cloud, drawn by the negative charge at the cloud's bottom and the positive charge on the ground is concentrated around everything that is able to stick up, including lightning conductors, trees, and even human beings.
- The positive charge that comes from the ground joins the negative charge generated by the clouds and creates a flash of lightning is released.

Lightning is included as a natural catastrophe:

- The Centre should consider lightning as an "natural disaster" to minimise the number of deaths caused by lightning.
- This will aid States plan long-term mitigation strategies by coordinating efforts with local authorities and reconstruction actions to create a resilient infrastructure.

Topic 62. ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE (AIWC)

Important for Subject: History

All India Women's Conference (AIWC). The oldest women's group in India was established in the year 1927, through Margaret Cousins in to boost the education of women and children. The organization has since expanded its reach to address other issues related to women's rights.

Genesis:

- In 1926, during the prize-giving ceremony at Bethune College, Calcutta, the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, Mr. E F Oaten, had spoken to female students as the ones "who alone can help adequately to remedy what is wrong in women's education," and asked women to "tell us with one voice what they want and keep on telling us till they get it". This request prompted the Mrs. A.L.Huidekoper, a lady from Ireland who

was a teacher at Bethune College, to write a few pieces for Stri Dharma, which was a monthly publication of the Women's Indian Association of Chennai. The article caught the attention to another Irish lady Mrs. Margaret Cousins who decided to take action to accomplish the goal of enhancing women's education across the country.

First step:

- The first conference, dubbed "the "All India Women's Conference on Educational Reform" was held at Fergusson College, Poona from 5-8 January 1927, under the presidency of Maharani Chimnabai Gaekwar of Baroda. The Resolutions that were passed at the Conference included almost every issue related to education, from the issue of primary Schools all the way to issues relating to Adult and College Education. The only one exception was the resolution that endorsed Sir Hari Gurr's Age of Consent Bill. When examining the requirements for education the resolution was found to be that reforms in social policy were associated with it. It was believed that early marriage was one of the primary obstacles to the educational attainment for girls.
- The Second Conference was in Delhi in 1928. Her Highness the Begum Mother of Bhopal was the President. Lady Irwin Vicereine of India started the proceedings. The Conference was attended by approximately 200 participants from 30 diverse constituents across India agreed to a the need for compulsory elementary education of girls. This was the first conference that led to the creation for the All India Women's Education Fund, "to serve not only for propaganda but also for starting of institutions based on the ideals of the Conference". The issue of different treatment of children from depressed classes was also addressed. SmtKamaladevi Chattopadhyay, one the eloquent leaders of the conference, stated, "Education is the birthright of every child that comes into this world and it claims that right from society."

Noteworthy Campaign

- In addition to reaffirming Resolutions of the initial gathering, there were resolutions adopted to support Ra Saheb's Bill for Restraint of Early Marriages. A detailed campaign plan was devised in this direction, and included lectures and propaganda meetings as well as posters and literature and petitions, postcards (to be distributed to the members of the Assembly) and more. One of the most significant elements at this

Conference is The Women's Delegation that waited on the Viceroy as well as the leaders of the various political parties within the Central Legislatures to gain the approval of each for the fight against child marriage.

Topic 63. PHAD PAINTINGS

Important for Subject: History

It was the Phad Se Padh (Study with Phad) initiative was established in Delhi Schools in collaboration and the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Memorial Trust.

Phad Painting:

- Phad painting is part of Rajasthan, the state. Rajasthan.
- Art of drawing phads is around 700 years old. It is believed that it originated in Shahpura which is located 35 km far from Bhilwara located in Rajasthan. The continual royal patronage provided the art a significant boost. art form that has endured and thrived over the years.
- Phad painting portrays the heroic acts of a hero figure and the everyday life of an ordinary peasant. It also depicts the rural life of wildlife and birds as well as wildlife and flora.
- The prints are of the art of historic people such as Goga Chauhan Prithviraj Chauhan Amar Singh Rathore and Teja Ji.
- These represent scroll paintings that are hung on a long rectangular pieces of cloth. The tale of Pappu Ji and Narayandev Ji's lives is usually told in the present day.
- These are painted using vegetable colours on a long piece of cloth referred to as a phad and is either fifteen feet, or thirty feet.
- Big eyes and round faces make up the subject. They usually include stories that are upbeat and pompous and images of the parade.

Topic 64. ANTIQUITIES ABROAD: INDIAN AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS

Important for Subject: History

About Antiquities

- The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act (1972) provides definitions of "antiquity" as - any artwork, coin, sculpture epigraph or other piece of art or craft or any other object or object that is not part of an underground cave or structure or any other object or object that demonstrates craft, science or theology, religion, customs and morals as well as politics of the past; or any other item or object that is that is of historical significance.
- The minimum age to be considered antique for one of the previously mentioned items to be regarded as antique is 100 years.
- To be considered a "manuscript, record or other document which is of scientific, historical, literary or aesthetic value" the time period can be "not less than 75 years."

International Conventions w.r.t. Antiquities:

- The 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Methods of Interdicting and Preventing illegal import, export and transfer of ownership over cultural Property can be regarded as an international convention.
- The convention calls on states Parties to take steps to prevent and stop the illegal trade in the cultural heritage.
- It establishes a common structure for States Parties to agree on the steps to take to prevent and stop the export, import and exchange of culture property.
- As of today to date, to date, the Convention is ratified in 143 countries (including India).
- In 2000 in 2000, in 2000, the General Assembly of the UN as well as The UN Security Council in 2015 and 2016 also expressed concerns regarding the issue.
- An INTERPOL report for 2019 concluded that, nearly 50 years following that UNESCO Convention, "the illicit international traffic of cultural items and related offences is sadly increasingly prolific."

Indian Laws w.r.t. Antiquities:

- In India In India, the Item-67 on the Union List, Item-12 of the State List, and Item-40 of the Concurrent List of the Constitution are all about India's history.
- Prior to Independence Before the war, the Antiquities (Export control) Act had been passed in 1947 to make sure the fact that "no antiquity could be exported without license."
- Post-independence After independence, post-independence, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act in 1958 was passed.
- In addition to this, the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 (AATA) was enacted in the year 1976.
- According to the AATA the AATA, no person can is allowed to engage in the business of trading or selling antique subject to the conditions and terms of a license.
- This license is issued to The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Provenance and the Ownership of an Antiquity:

- Provenance includes a list of all owners beginning from when the object left its maker's hands until the point at which it was purchased by the present owner.
- The first thing to do to establish ownership of the property is to have a complaint (FIR) submitted to the police.
- In accordance with the UNESCO 1970 Convention, a requester must provide all documentation and other proof needed to establish the claim for return and/or recovery.

How to Check for Fake Antiquities?

- According to the section 14(3) of the AATA, "Every person who owns or controls or owns any antique" shall register such antique with the officer who registers" and receive the certificate to prove this registered."
- So far, the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities began in March.
- 2007 has recorded 3.52 thousand antiquities out of the 16.70 lakh that it has recorded for "effective check" of illegal actions.
- It is a tiny fraction of the total number of antiquities that are found in the country (estimated at around the 58 lakh mark).

Can India bring back Antiquities?

- Three categories are available to choose from -
- Antiquities that were taken from India before independence;
- They were removed prior to independence, up until the month of March in 1976 i.e. prior to the implementation of AATA and
- Antiquities removed from the country from April 1976.
- For items that fall into the two categories above Requests must be addressed bilaterally or in international forums.
- Antiquities belonging to the second and third categories can be recovered quickly by bringing a dispute by way of a bilateral agreement with proof of ownership, and with the assistance in the UNESCO convention.

Topic 65. IN CAMBODIA, A BATTLE FOR DEMOCRACY, INCLUSIVENESS

Important for Subject: History

The arrest of Opposition Leader Kem Sokha who was found guilty of treason in an audiencia municipal tribunal located in Cambodia. Cambodian capital Phnom Penh has attracted criticism from the international community as well as human rights organizations.

- Because of the effects of the dictatorship of Pol Pot and the constant periods of war that was officially declared over in the year 1991. Cambodia has been struggling for years to lift its economy out of being a low-income country. In addition, there are increasing concerns over democratic freedoms and inclusive growth in the Southeast Asian country.
- There have also concerns about the increasing Chinese investments in Cambodia.
- A 187-km expressway connecting to Sihanoukville port town to Phnom Penh, the capital city. Phnom Penh has been built by the help of a Chinese funding of around \$2 billion which is now component of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

India's Presence in Cambodia

- India is currently working on renovating the sites dating back to the 12th century at the Angkor Wat temple in the city of Siem Reap in Cambodia.
- India as well is engaged in the expansion of technical training, providing livelihood

support as well as assisting local entrepreneurs.

- The locals, however, believe that India could help in promoting the rule of law in Cambodia because without democracy the development efforts do not reach the people.

Angkor Vat Temple

- Angkor Wat is a temple complex located in Cambodia and is one of the biggest religious sites around the globe.
- It is an UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- It was initially constructed to serve as an Hindu shrine dedicated to god Vishnu to the Khmer Empire It became an Buddhist temple by the close of the 12th century.
- It was built by Khmer King Suryavarman II in the middle of the 12th century in Yasodharapura (present-day Angkor) is the capital of the Khmer Empire in the Khmer Empire, was his temple of state and eventually mausoleum.
- Architecture Angkor Wat, also known as Wat in Khmer language is world's biggest religious structure that covers around 400 acres (160 hectares) and is the top of Khmer architecture. Style elements include the ogival lotus-bud-shaped towers with axial galleries that connect enclosures, and the cruciform terraces.

Topic 66. TROPEX EXERCISE 2023

Important for Subject: Defence

Indian Navy's largest Operational -level exercise TROPEX for 2023 that was carried out throughout the vast expanse of IOR over the course of four months between Nov 22 to Mar 23, concluded last week Arabian Sea.

- **Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX 2023)**
- The operational level exercise is held every year and has participation by not just the entire Indian Navy units but also of Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard assets.
- The event saw the participation of about 70 Indian Navy ships, six submarines, and more than 75 aircraft.
- In the course of the exercise the surface combatants of the Indian Navy including Destroyers, Frigates and Corvettes, as well as aircraft and submarines are subjected to

intricate operational maritime deployments.

- The general exercise structure comprised Sea Vigil, the Coastal Defence exercise Sea Vigil as well as The Amphibious Exercise AMPHEX.
- Timeline: Nov 2022 to March 2023.

Sea Vigil

- Sea Vigil is an exercise that is a national-wide coastal defense exercise which was first conceptualized in 2018 to enhance security of the maritime environment following the '26/11' Mumbai terrorist attack.
- The exercise is carried out through the Indian Navy in coordination with the Coast Guard and other ministries engaged with maritime operations.
- The exercise will be conducted throughout the entire 7516-km coastline as well as the Exclusive Economic Zone of India.
- The exercise includes all Coastal States as well as Union territories, as well as the other stakeholders in maritime affairs, which includes the fishing communities and coastal communities.
- Sea Vigil and TROPEX together will tackle the whole spectrum of Maritime Security challenges.

AMPHEX

- AMPHEX is a program that aims at jointly training elements of the three services in various aspects of amphibious operations, to increase cooperation and synergy.
- AMPHEX 23 was the first time that this exercise was carried out in Kakinada it was also the biggest AMPHEX ever conducted to this point.
- AMPHEX 2023 successfully demonstrated the amphibious capabilities and verified the outstanding coordination among the three Services to carry out the entire range operation amphibious.

Topic 67. MALABAR EXERCISE

Important for Subject: Defence

It is an annual event that involves the navies from India, Japan, and the U.S. held alternately in the Indian Pacific and Indian Oceans.

- It was established with a bilateral agreement in 1992 between India as well as the U.S.
- It was then extended to trilateral format following the addition of Japan in the year 2015.
- Along with the inclusion of Australia It has evolved into an exercise that is quadilateral with India, USA, Japan and Australia.
- India and Japan defence forces have organized an array of bilateral exercises. These include JIMEX, SHINYUU Maitri, and Dharma Guardian.
- In contrast, India and USA have joint military exercises, specifically, YudhaAbhyas. Other exercises conducted between India and Australia include Pitch Black and AUSINDEX.

Topic 68. INDIA REMAINS WORLD'S LARGEST IMPORTER OF ARMS: SIPRI REPORT

Important for Subject: Defense

In the report from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

- (SIPRI), India is the top arms importer between the years 2018-2022 despite the drop in imports by about 11% between 2013 and 2017 and between 2018-2022.
- As per the research Russia has been the biggest suppliers of arms to India between 2013 and 2022. However, the proportion of imports total from Russia is down from 64 percent to the current 45%.
- France has overtaken the US (11 percent) in order to be the second largest arms supplier to India and accounts for more than 30% of India's defense imports.
- The most recent report also been revealed to have:
- In the top 10 countries exporting arms during the time period from 2018 to 2022 India has been the top exporter of arms towards Russia, France and Israel.

- India is the second-largest export market for South Korea and the third largest market for South Africa.
- Saudi Arabia is the second biggest arms importer, in the world, after India.
- The tensions between India and its neighboring countries like Pakistan and China are the main factor in the increase in arms imports and the drop in the percentage of imports as compared to the 2013 to 2017 period is due to the complexity of India's complicated and slow procurement of arms, the efforts to diversify the arms suppliers and the efforts by the government to become self-reliant in the defense sector.
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
- SIPRI is an independent international institution dedicated to the study of conflicts, weapons, arms control, and disarmament.
- was established in 1966 and situated at Stockholm (Sweden), SIPRI offers analysis, data and suggestions to policy makers media, researchers, and the general public.
- It is often considered to be among the top think tank.

Topic 69. PARROT LADY OF KHAJURAHO

Important for Subject: Art and Culture



Around 27 repatriated Indian antiquities will be displayed at the nation's capital to raise awareness about the dangers of illegal trafficking in antiquities.

- The exhibits of antiquities included among the exhibits was the " Parrot Lady of Khajuraho" sculpture was the main attraction.
- Parrot Lady of Khajuraho sculpture
- "The "Parrot Lady of Khajuraho" is a 900-year-old sandstone statue.
- It is an three-foot sculpture which is stunningly carved. It depicts an attractive woman with the parrot on her right ear, which symbolises love.
- Some historians believe that” the "Parrot Lady" may have been the queen of
- Khajuraho portrayed as the stunning "Abhisarika, “or the cupid-struck woman constantly engaged in conversations and with the pet bird she keeps.
- The sculpture was transported through Delhi across the border to Canada (Toronto) before it returned into India via Canada in 2015 in compliance to The 1970 UNESCO Convention.
- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is the principal agency for dealing with antiquities around 244 stolen or missing artefacts have been returned to India until now.

Topic 70. RAJASTHAN RIGHT TO HEALTH BILL

Important for Subject: Governance

The recently concluded Rajasthan Assembly budget session reopened discussions on The Right to Health Bill.

- If the bill passes the hospitals, clinics, and labs that are privately and publicly run must provide affordable and free medical services.
- The Bill is being criticized by doctors from private hospitals who say that it was quickly drawn up, does not take into account practical considerations, and may make it more difficult for the industry that is already regulated to the point of being excessively.
- **The key points in the Bill**
- The Right to Healthcare Bill, 2022, was introduced in the State Legislature by the Rajasthan State government in September 2022.

- Healthcare professionals and patients have rights through the legislation and also require the government to ensure the protection of these rights legally and demands the establishment of grievance resolution system.
- residents of Rajasthan will have the right to free exams, medication as well as diagnostics, transport in emergencies and medical care in all health facilities of the public in addition to reasonably priced procedures. The Bill recognizes health as an important public benefit instead of a source of making money.
- Twenty rights are described in the clause 3 in the legislation that includes the rights of informed consent as well as the right to receive details (in forms of medical record and other documentation) concerning the diagnosis and treatment process, as well as the right to receive treatment without discrimination of caste, class, gender, age, or other forms of discrimination.
- The obligation to provide adequate medical care is transferred to the government as per Article 4 of the Bill. It is the government's "obligated" to allocate funding to establish institutions, allocate funds, and establish grievance redressal procedures.
- The government should develop an employment policy for the health industry in section 4. This demands a fair and equitable allocation of nurses, physicians and other health specialists across every level of the system.
- **Right to Health in Indian Constitution**
- It is important to note that the the right of health isn't explicitly included as a right in the Indian Constitution. The idea of "right to health" is taken from the constitutionally protected right for life as well as liberty (Article 21).
- Courts have in past cases emphasized the state's responsibility to protect and improve the health of citizens by citing constitutional provisions such as Article 38 (promotes the welfare of the people) in addition to Article 47 (directs the state to provide for the nutritional and health requirements).
- **Health Index for States**
- The Health Index for States was developed by Niti Aayog, in collaboration with the health ministry and The World Bank has rankings for larger states, smaller states, and Union territories.
- It is constructed based on 23 health-related parameters ranging from mortality rates and the ratio of sexes to working cardiac health units.

- In the year 2019, Kerala was the best performer then followed by Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.
 - The results of the index showed that states with less economic output, are doing better in terms of overall health, well-being and wellbeing.
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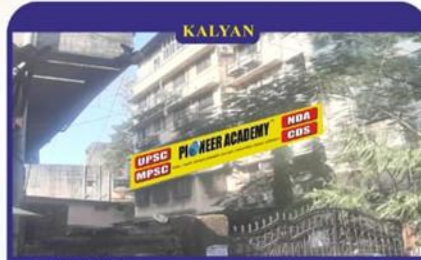
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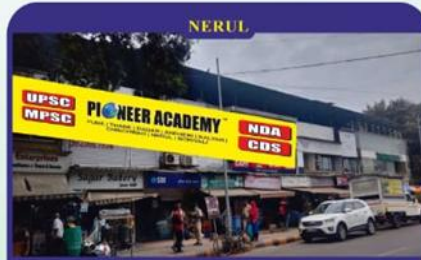
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