

CURRENT AFFAIRS

WEEKLY

WEEK: I
FEBRUARY
2023

MAINS

GS- II

- INDIA TO AMEND 1960 INDUS WATER TREATY WITH PAKISTAN
- INCREASE IN DEATH PENALTY BY TRIAL COURTS
- GOVERNMENT TO UNVEIL NATIONAL DATA GOVERNANCE POLICY
- PANEL FOR OBC SUB-CATEGORISATION GETS ITS 14TH EXTENSION
- NBDSA ISSUES "GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTION OF HATE SPEECH
- THE DOMICILE BILL IN JHARKHAND

GS- III

- TASKS FOR INDIA'S MILLET REVOLUTION
- ECONOMIC SURVEY 2022- 23
- DEFENCE BUDGET 2023
- BUDGET PROMOTING CLEAN ENERGY
- ONGC TO MAP INDIA'S GEOTHERMAL RESOURCES
- TIGER COUNT & EFFORTS TO CONSERVE THEM

PRELIMS

GEOGRAPHY

- Consequences of El Niño returning in 2023

ART & CULTURE

- Digitalising ancient inscriptions

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- Critical and Emerging Technologies Dialogue

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

- Bangladesh hill tribes seek support against their 'extermination'

ENVIRONMENT

- New genus of wasp identified
- Red-headed vulture finally seen
- Kelp forests on decline: study

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- Country's indigenous mobile operating system BharOS
- IOC starts exportation of aviation gasoline
- Global report on neglected tropical diseases 2023

NEWS IN SHORTS

- Mughal Garden renamed as Amrit Udyan
- Maru Mahotsav 2023
- Aditya-L1
- Indigenously made weapons, women power showcased at Republic Day parade
- National Child Science Congress
- Situational awareness in aviation and its criticality
- Exercise Topchi 2023
- National Tourism Day 2023
- 52 Avian species observed in Ladakh

SPECIAL

- Important Policies In Union Budget 2023-24

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The current affairs articles are segregated from prelims and mains perspective, such separation is maintained in terms of structure of articles. Mains articles have more focus on analysis and prelims articles have more focus on facts.

However, this doesn't mean that Mains articles don't cover facts and PT articles can't have analysis. You are suggested to read all of them for all stages of examination.

CONTENTS

WEEK - 1 (FEBRUARY, 2023)

Section - A: MAINS CURRENT AFFAIRS			
Area of GS		Topics in News	Page No.
GS II	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">India to amend 1960 Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan	3
GS III	POLITY AND GOVERNANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase in Death penalty by trial courts	4
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Government to unveil National Data Governance Policy	6
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21	6
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Panel for OBC Sub-Categorisation Gets its 14th Extension	7
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">NBDSA issues “guidelines for prevention of hate speech	8
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">The domicile Bill in Jharkhand	9
	ECONOMY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tasks for India’s millet revolution	9
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Economic Survey 2022- 23	10
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Defence budget 2023	11
	ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Budget promoting Clean Energy	12
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">ONGC to map India’s geothermal resources	13
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tiger Count and efforts to conserve them	13
Section - B: PRELIMS CURRENT AFFAIRS			
Area of GS		Topics in News	Page No.
GS I	GEOGRAPHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consequences of El Niño returning in 2023	18
	ART AND CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Digitalising ancient inscriptions	19



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GS II	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	● Critical and Emerging Technologies Dialogue	20
	POLITY & GOVERNANCE	● Bangladesh hill tribes seek support against their ‘extermination’	21
GS III	ENVIRONMENT	● New genus of wasp identified	21
		● Red-headed vulture finally seen	22
		● Kelp forests on decline: study	23
	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	● Country’s indigenous mobile operating system BharOS	23
		● IOC starts exportation of aviation gasoline	24
		● Global report on neglected tropical diseases 2023	24
Section - D: SHORT NEWS			
Area of GS		Topics in News	Page No.
ART AND CULTURE		● Mughal Garden renamed as Amrit Udyan	28
		● Maru Mahotsav 2023	28
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY		● Aditya-L1	28
		● Indigenously made weapons, women power showcased at Republic Day parade	29
		● National Child Science Congress	30
		● Situational awareness in aviation and its criticality	30
		● Exercise Topchi 2023	31
ECONOMY		● National Tourism Day 2023	31
ENVIRONMENT		● 52 Avian species observed in Ladakh	32
IMPORTANT POLICIES IN UNION BUDGET 2023-24			33



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SECTION: A

(MAINS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

INDIA TO AMEND 1960 INDUS WATER TREATY WITH PAKISTAN

CONTEXT:

India has announced to reconsider its Indus Water Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan citing disputes over the Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects in Jammu & Kashmir.

What is India's present stand on IWT?

- New Delhi has issued a notice to Islamabad seeking modification of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) under **Article XII (3)** of the IWT which deals with the "final provisions" of the treaty.
- The notice follows Pakistan's continued "intransigence" in implementing the treaty, by raising repeated **objections to the construction of hydel projects on the Indian side.**
- The notice, sent through the Commissioner for Indus Waters, gives Pakistan 90 days to consider entering into intergovernmental negotiations to rectify the material breach of the treaty.
- India also boycotted the Pakistani case at the **Permanent Court of Arbitration** at The Hague in the Netherlands.
- India mentioned that they were left with no choice but to demand that Pakistan come to the table to negotiate amendments to the treaty.

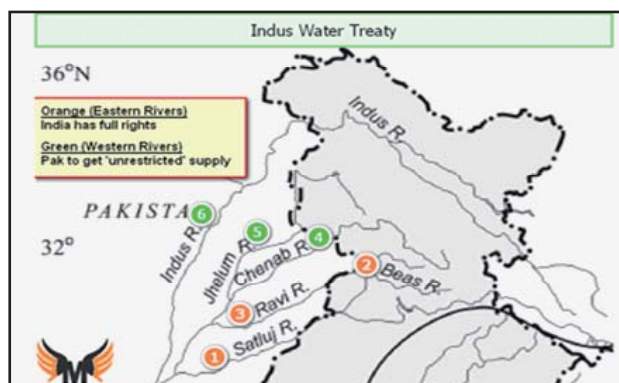
Indus Water Treaty (IWT), 1960:

- The six-decade-old treaty governs the sharing of waters of six rivers in the Indus system between the two countries.
- **Main Rivers:** Indus River, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej.
- The basin is mainly shared by **India and Pakistan** with a small share of **China and Afghanistan.**
- Under the treaty signed between **India and Pakistan in 1960**, all the waters of
 - **Eastern rivers**, namely **Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas (Eastern Rivers)** were allocated to India for exclusive use
 - **Western rivers** - **Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab** were allocated to Pakistan except **for specified domestic, non-consumptive, and agricultural use** permitted to India as provided in the Treaty.

- India has also been given the **right to generate hydroelectricity** through **run-of-the-river (RoR)** projects on the Western Rivers which, subject to **specific criteria** for design and operation is unrestricted.

River Indus: Geographic Location

- The Indus is a trans-boundary river of Asia and a trans-Himalayan river of South and Central Asia.
- The 3,120 km (1,940 mi) river rises in mountain springs northeast of Mount Kailash in Western Tibet, flows northwest through the disputed region of Kashmir, bends sharply to the left after the Nanga Parbat massif, and flows south-by-southwest through Pakistan, before emptying into the Arabian Sea near the port city of Karachi.
- **Significance:**
 - The river has historically been important to many cultures of the region.
 - The 3rd millennium BC saw the rise of the Indus Valley civilization, a major urban civilization of the Bronze Age.
 - During the **2nd millennium BC**, the Punjab region was mentioned in the Rigveda hymns as **Sapta Sindhu** and in the Avesta religious texts as **Saptha Hindu** (both terms meaning "seven rivers").



The objected projects

- India is constructing two hydroelectric power projects on:
 - **Kishanganga river**, a tributary of **Jhelum**
 - **Chenab**
- Pakistan has raised objections to these projects, and dispute resolution mechanisms under the Treaty have been invoked multiple times. But a full resolution has not been reached.

What is the dispute all about between India and Pakistan?

- Both countries held different positions when Pakistan raised objections regarding the technical design features of the **Kishanganga (330MW) and Ratle (850 MW) hydroelectric power plants** located on the tributaries of the Jhelum and the Chenab, respectively, designated as “**Western Rivers**”.
- However, **under Articles III and VII of the treaty**, India is permitted to construct hydroelectric power facilities on these rivers (subject to constraints specified in Annexures to the Treaty).
- Differences were also discernible when Pakistan approached the **World Bank to facilitate** the setting up of a court of arbitration to address the concerns related to these two projects referred to in **Article IX Clause 5** of the treaty, and when India requested the **appointment of a Neutral Expert** referent to **Clause 2.1 of Article IX** on the settlement of differences and dispute of the treaty, respectively.
- Pakistan, invoking **Article VII Clause 2 on future cooperation**, raised objections on the construction and technical designs of the **Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai hydropower plants** located on the **Marusudar River**, a tributary of the **Chenab**, in the **Kishtwar district** of Jammu and Kashmir.

- India has raised concerns on issues such as Pakistan's blockade of the **Fazilka drain**, which resulted in water contamination in the border areas.

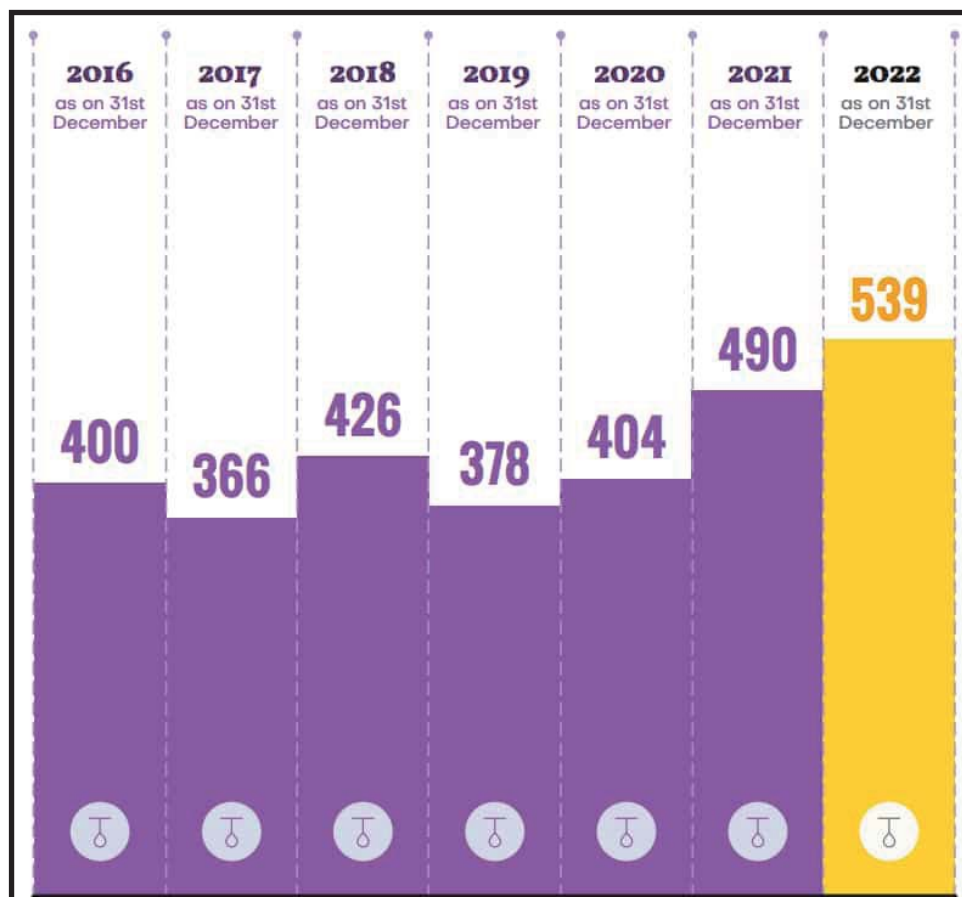
INCREASE IN DEATH PENALTY BY TRIAL COURTS

CONTEXT:

According to the **Annual Death Penalty Report 2022**, Indian courts in 2022 awarded a record 165 death sentences, the highest in over two decades.

About the report:

- Released by:** ‘Project 39A’, a criminal reforms advocacy group with the National Law University, Delhi.
- Key highlights:**
 - According to NCRB data, **165 death penalties** were awarded by **trial courts since 2000**.
 - The corresponding figure for the last five years was;



- **146 in 2021, 78 in 2020, 104 in 2019, 163 in 2018, and 110 in 2017.**
- **Sole decision taken by trial courts:** The report notes that **3% of the death penalty** cases were decided by trial courts "without any materials on mitigating circumstances of the accused and without any state-led evidence on the question of reform."

What is the death penalty in India?

- **Hanging and shooting** are the two methods of the death penalty in India.
- According to the **Criminal Procedure Code**, hanging is the method of execution in the civilian court system.
- The **Army Act, of 1950**, however, lists hanging and shooting as official methods of execution in the military court-martial system.
- Under the provisions of criminal procedure, the death penalty must be awarded as an alternative punishment to life imprisonment which the offenders may be sentenced to in '**rarest of rare cases**'.

Rarest of rare cases

Rarest rare cases can be described as those when the murder is committed in an extremely brutal, ridiculous, diabolical, revolting, or reprehensible manner so as to awaken the intense and extreme indignation in the community. When total depravity and cruelty are the motives behind a murder.

The process to grant a death sentence:

- **Mercy petition process:** For a convict to file a mercy petition, his/her death sentence must be confirmed by a high court first.
- **The law says:** "The death sentence convict can appeal to the Supreme Court. If the Supreme Court either refuses to hear the appeal or upholds the death sentence, then the convict or his relatives can submit a mercy petition to the President of India (Articles 72) or the Governor of the State (161).
- **Grounds to seek mercy appeal:** physical fitness, age, the law was too harsh, or the convict is the sole breadwinner of the family.
- According to **Article 72 of the Constitution**, the power to pardon — the philosophy of which is "every civilised country recognises and provides for the pardoning power as an act of grace and humanity in course of law" — lies with the President.
- The Article also states that he/she can grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or suspend, remit or commute the convict.

The mercy petition is reviewed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which consults the state involved, before going to the President.

Supreme Court's stand:

- A three-judge bench headed by then Chief Justice of India **U U Lalit** had referred the issue of **reconsidering death penalty** sentencing to a five-judge bench.
- The court had asked for a "uniform approach" to **granting real and meaningful opportunities** to convicts on death row.
- The court has also mandated trial courts to collect psychiatric and psychological evaluations of the convict before holding that there is no possibility of reform and awarding a death sentence.

What are the issues in the current system?

A Supreme Court Bench led by Justice U.U. Lalit made the following observations:

- **Quick decision:** In some cases, trial courts sentence a person to death merely hours after conviction.
- **Little effort to unearth the issue:** Little effort is taken to unearth or understand the circumstances which led a person to commit the crime. In short, trial judges hardly know the people they are sending to the gallows.
- **Ignored individual details:** No effort is ever made to dig deeper into a convict's childhood experiences, multi-generational history of physical and mental health issues, exposure to traumatic events and other familial, social and cultural factors crucial in order to undertake an individualised sentencing enquiry.
- **Mitigation expert:** The court said a "mitigation expert", a qualified professional with unhindered access to the convict's past, ought to be at the centre of this change in outlook.

Capital Punishment and international standards:

Capital punishment finds its place in international human rights treaties as a facet of the right to life as imbibed in "**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ('ICCPR')**", it was later discovered that implementation of capital punishment violates the norms of the prohibition against cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment and punishment. With the enforcement of the **second ICCPR**, there had been an increasing trend towards the removal of capital punishment as a way of punishment.

- This '**one-size-fits-all**' approach while considering mitigating factors during sentencing should end. A more enlightened approach has to be evolved. The apex court's introspection may be a sign of the judiciary veering away from the death penalty.

GOVERNMENT TO UNVEIL NATIONAL DATA GOVERNANCE POLICY

CONTEXT:

While announcing the Union Budget for year 2023-24, the Finance minister has mentioned that the government is going to unveil National Data Governance Policy to enable access to anonymized data to start-ups in order to boost development.

Background:

- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** released a draft of this policy in May 2022 for public consultation.
- An expert committee report submitted to MeitY on whether a company can be classified as a “**data business**” based on certain **parameters, the type and quantity** of data collected after which anonymized data from these firms can be **obtained by a community**.

Who can acquire data?

- Any group of people who are bound by common interests and objectives. An example of non-personal data sharing is general traffic data in a city from ridesharing apps.

Objective:

- It will aim to ensure greater citizen awareness, participation, and engagement with open data, increase the availability of datasets of national importance, and identify datasets suitable for sharing and improve overall compliance to secure data sharing and privacy policies and standards.

Key features:

- A core component of the data governance framework will be the formation of an India Data Management Office (IDMO) under the IT ministry.
- The **anonymized datasets** will be offered as part of the India datasets programmes to the AI (artificial intelligence) ecosystem, which will be a kinetic enabler for the digital economy.
- It will lay out some guidelines for sharing of non-personal data by private entities

Significance:

- Datasets that represent India's consumers is a huge opportunity for the **next generation of artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms**.
- The datasets will be provided for governance research, which even the government can use to create better targeted policies, more AI researchers can look at technology solutions.

How start-ups can be benefitted?

- As part of the policy, the Indian government will also build the **India Datasets program**, which will consist of **non-personal and anonymised datasets** from Government entities that have collected data from Indian citizens or those in India.
 - Private entities will be encouraged to share such data.
 - For start-ups, ability to have access to anonymised data will be a phenomenal capability that really should help overall **AI Machine Learning (AIML)** research, outcomes, solutions, companies, everything becomes significantly better.

ALL INDIA SURVEY ON HIGHER EDUCATION (AISHE) 2020-21

CONTEXT

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

Key highlights of the survey:

- The data shows that **total student enrolments** reached 4.13 crore.
- **The rise in distance education:**
 - The survey also revealed that in the year when the COVID-19 pandemic began, there was a **7% rise in enrolments** in distance education programmes.
- **Increase in enrolment of students from weaker sections of society:**
 - There were **2 lacks more SC students** enrolled in 2020-21 compared to the previous survey.
 - About **3 lack more ST students** and **6 lack more OBC students** getting enrolled for higher education.

- Overall enrolment reduced:

- While the increase was noted in **absolute numbers** compared to 2019-20, the **proportion of SC students dropped to 14.2% in 2020-21 from 14.7% the previous year.**
- The **proportion of OBC students** also dropped to 35.8% in 2020-21 from 37% the previous year.

- Data for minority communities:

- The proportion of **Muslim students** enrolling on **higher education dropped** from 5.5% in 2019-20 to 4.6% in 2020-21.
- Also the proportion of '**other minority students**' dropped from 2.3% to 2% in the year 2020-21.

- Women participation:

- Female enrolment in **higher education programmes** had increased to 49% of total enrolments in 2020-21 compared to 45% the previous year.

- The **Gross Enrolment Ratio**: For all enrolments (as per the 2011 Census) increased by over 2 points to 27.3.

The **highest enrolment** was seen at the **undergraduate level**, which accounted for 78.9% of all enrolments, followed by **postgraduate level courses**, which accounted for 11.4% of the year's total enrolments.

The popular courses:

- At Undergraduate level**: The highest enrolment at the undergraduate level was in the Arts stream, followed by science and Engineering.
- At Postgraduate level**: At this level, the highest number of enrolment was in the Social science stream.
- At STEM platform**: The overall figures for STEM enrolments (at all levels of higher education) showed that women lagged behind men, who accounted for over 56% of enrolments in these fields.
- At PhD level**: The most popular course was in the field of **Engineering and Technology**, followed by Science.

The Listing for Institutions:

- During 2020-21, the number of Universities has increased by 70, and the number of Colleges has increased by 1,453.
- The maximum increase came in **State public universities** and **State private universities**, increasing to 17 and 38 respectively,
- The number of universities increased followed by a rise of 14 in the **number of Institutes of National Importance** and an increase of 3 in the **number of Central Universities**.

Data for Teachers:

- The number of teachers increased across **higher education institutes**, but the SC and ST teachers continued to be under-represented.
- At the All-India level**:
 - 2% of teachers belong to the General category;
 - 2% to OBC
 - 1% to SC and
 - 5% to the ST category
- Minority community teachers**: About 5.6% of teachers come from a Muslim minority group and 8.8% are from other minority groups.
- Women representation**: There were **75 female teachers for every 100 males** across institutes in the country.
- The teacher-pupil ratio**:
 - It was at 27 for all universities, colleges and standalone institutions and at 24 if only regular mode is considered.
 - It concluded that the best teacher-pupil ratio was found in States like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka

PANEL FOR OBC SUB-CATEGORISATION GETS ITS 14TH EXTENSION

CONTEXT:

The commission under former Chief Justice of the Delhi high court, **G. Rohini**, which is tasked with the sub-categorisation of the Other Backward Classes, has been given its 14th extension by the President.

Background

- The commission under **Justice Rohini** was formed in October 2017.
- The commission was formed by the President under **Article 340** of the constitution.
- Objective**: to slot the nearly 3,000 caste groups that makeup India's OBCs into categories.
 - The commission would then have to recommend how the 27% reservation for OBCs could be distributed among these sub-categories in a manner that was most equitable.
- It was first given 12 weeks to slot the nearly 3,000 caste groups that makeup India's OBCs into categories.

Need to make classification:**Uneven distribution**

- In 2018, a consultation paper prepared by the commission was reported to have found that of the jobs and educational positions reserved for OBCs at the Central level, 97% have gone to people from **less than a quarter of all OBC sub-castes**.
- In addition, **938 OBC sub-castes** – which make up 37% of the total number – have **no representation** at all in the reserved seats.

- To examine the **uneven distribution of reservation benefits** among different castes in the central OBC list.
- To work out the mechanism, criteria, norms, and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorisation within such OBCs.
- To take up the exercise of identifying the respective castes/communities/sub-castes/synonyms for **comprehensive data coverage**.

Evolution of OBC status in India:

- The **Kalelkar Commission**, set up in 1953, was the first to identify backward classes other than the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) at the national level.
- The **Mandal Commission Report, 1980** estimated the OBC population at 52% and classified 1,257 communities as backward.
 - ▶ It recommended increasing the existing quotas, which were only for SC/ST, from 22.5% to 49.5% to include the OBCs.
- **Constitutional Backing for OBC reservation:**
 - The central government reserved **27% of seats in union civil posts and services for OBCs [Article 16(4)]**.
 - ▶ The quotas were subsequently enforced in central government educational institutions [Article 15 (4)].
- In 2008, the Supreme Court directed the central government to exclude the creamy layer (advanced sections) among the OBCs.
- The **102nd Constitution Amendment Act, of 2018** provided constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), which was previously a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.

NBDSA ISSUES “GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTION OF HATE SPEECH

CONTEXT:

The News Broadcasting and Digital Standards Authority (NBDSA) issued “guidelines for the prevention of hate speech”.

What is in the guideline?

- The guidelines direct editors, editorial personnel, anchors, journalists and presenters who are part of its member organisations to refrain from using “language and agenda-driven words”, “terms and adjectives” and “all forms of expression” which among other things advocate violence or engender hatred against individuals or communities.

About NBDSA

- Incidentally, the NBDSA covers nearly 80% of all news and digital channels.
- The Authority was originally set up by the News

Broadcasters Association (NBA) 14 years ago as the News Broadcasting Standard Authority (NBSA).

- The name was later changed to NBDSA as the body opened itself to digital platforms too.

What comes under hate speech?

- There is no **international legal definition** of hate speech, and the notion of what constitutes “hateful” speech is debatable.
- Hate speech is defined as any form of communication, whether spoken, written, or physical, that criticizes or discriminates against a person or a group based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender, or other identity factors.

Legal Provisions of Hate Speech in India:

- Responsible speech is the essence of the liberty granted under **Article 21** of the Constitution.
- **Article 19(2)** of the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression to all citizens of India.
- Hate speech has not been defined in any law in India. However, legal provisions in certain legislations prohibit select forms of speech as an exception to freedom of speech.

Legislations around Hate speech: The Indian Penal Code, 1860 (hereinafter IPC);

- **Section 124A** IPC penalises sedition
- **Section 153A** IPC penalises 'promotion of enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony'.
- **Section 153B** IPC penalises 'imputations, and assertions prejudicial to national integration'.
- **Section 295A** IPC penalises 'deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage the religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs'.
- **Section 298** IPC penalises 'uttering, words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person'.
- **Section 505(1) and (2)** IPC penalises the publication or circulation of any statement, rumour or report causing public mischief and enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes

THE DOMICILE BILL IN JHARKHAND

CONTEXT:

The Jharkhand Governor has returned the domicile Bill, which defines a 'local' in the state on the basis of 1932 land records to the state government to "seriously review" its legality.

Background:

- The Jharkhand government has **introduced the bill in its Assembly session** and once it is passed by the state Assembly it will be sent to the **Union Government with a proposal to place it in the 9th schedule** of the Indian Constitution.
- In Jharkhand; various tribal groups have been demanding **1932 as the cut-off year** because that year the **land survey and revenue register** was done in the large parts of the State.

About the Bill:

- The domicile Bill defines a 'local' in Jharkhand on the basis of 1932 land records.
- The Bill mentions that only **local persons**, as identified under it, would be **eligible for appointment** in class 3 and 4 positions of the state government.
- According to the **proposed domicile policy**, people who have their **names or their ancestor's name** in the land records of 1932 or before, will be considered local **inhabitants of Jharkhand**.

- Those who have lost their land records or have land records which are illegible or are landless people can approach their respective **Gram Sabhas for their inclusion**.
- This is not in accordance with **Article 16** of the Constitution, which guarantees equality in employment.
- The Governor mentioned that **only Parliament** has been empowered to impose any kind of conditions in matters of employment.

Governor's argument against the Bill:

- The Governor said that while various areas of Jharkhand are covered under the Fifth Schedule (dealing with provisions for Scheduled Tribes), in the case of **Satyajit Kumar vs. State of Jharkhand**, the Supreme Court has again declared 100 per cent reservation given by the state in scheduled areas as unconstitutional.
- Such a provision clearly appears to be inconsistent, having adverse effect on the fundamental rights and when the State Legislature is not vested with the power to pass a Bill in such cases.

State government's argument:

- The Jharkhand government had included a provision in the Bill that it would come into force only after the Centre carried out amendments to include it in the **Ninth Schedule**, putting it beyond judicial scrutiny.

The **Ninth Schedule of the Constitution** contains a list of **central and state laws** that cannot be challenged in court.

However, courts in the past have said that laws can be reviewed if they **violate fundamental rights or the basic structure of the Constitution**.

TASKS FOR INDIA'S MILLET REVOLUTION

CONTEXT:

Despite the tremendous benefits associated with millet, there are serious constraints to increased millet cultivation and consumption in the country.

About Millets:

- Millet is a collective term referring to a number of small-seeded annual grasses that are cultivated as grain crops, primarily on marginal lands in dry areas in temperate, subtropical, and tropical regions.

- **Two groups of millets** are grown in India.
 - **Major millets** include **sorghum, pearl millet and finger millet**
 - **Minor millets** include **foxtail, little millet, kodo, proso, and barnyard millet**
- **Benefits:** Millets have
 - **special nutritive properties:** they are high in protein, dietary fibre, micronutrients and antioxidants
 - **special agronomic characteristics:** drought-resistant and suitable for semi-arid regions

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

What are the real problems?

- Decline in the area under millet cultivation
- Low productivity of millet
- Changing food habits

Recent Government Interventions

- The Government of India and State governments, notably **Karnataka and Odisha**, have initiated Millet Missions.
 - Odisha already has a dedicated millets mission that undertook procurement of 32,302 tonnes worth Rs 109.08 crore, mainly of ragi, in 2021-22.
- Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana might want to do the same in bajra, just as Maharashtra may for jowar, Karnataka for ragi, and Madhya Pradesh for Kodo/ kutki.

ECONOMIC SURVEY 2022- 23

CONTEXT:

The government tabled the Economic Survey 2022-23 which laid out the outlook for India's growth, inflation and unemployment in the coming years.

What is the Economic Survey?

- The Survey provides a **detailed report** of the national economy **for the year along with forecasts**.
- It touches upon everything from **agriculture to unemployment to infrastructure**.
- It is prepared by the **Economic Division** of the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)**.

The comments or policy solutions contained in the Survey are not binding on the government.

Key takeaways of the survey:

- **GDP growth:** India's growth estimate for FY23 is higher than for almost all major economies.
 - Despite strong global headwinds and tighter domestic monetary policy, if India is still expected to grow between 6.5 and 7.0 per cent.
 - India's underlying **economic resilience**; of its **ability to recoup, renew and re-energise** the growth drivers of the economy.
- **Inflation:**
 - The RBI has projected headline inflation at 6.8% in FY23, outside its comfort zone of 2% to 6%.
 - High inflation is seen as one big factor holding back demand among consumers.
 - However, there is an optimistic view about the inflation levels and trajectory, as private investment can help to recoup.
- **Unemployment:**
 - The employment levels have risen in the current financial year.
 - The job creation appears to have moved higher with the initial surge in exports, a strong release of the "pent-up" demand, and a swift rollout of the capex.

The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**, which showed that **urban unemployment rate** for people aged 15 years and above declined from 9.8% in the quarter ending September 2021 to 7.2% one year later.

- **Outlook for 2023-24:**
 - It projected a baseline GDP growth of 6.5% in real terms in FY24.
 - Poor global growth may widen **India's trade deficit** and make the rupee depreciate.
 - Similarly, **sustained monetary tightening** (higher interest rates) may drag down economic activity in FY24.

What does it mean to India?

- **A decadal growth:** India's economy has recovered from the Covid disruption and, at long last, is poised to see sustained robust growth in the rest of the decade.
- **Reduction in Non-performing assets and banking activities:** Indian economy is thus well placed to grow at its potential in the coming decade, similar to the growth experience of the economy after 2003.

Challenges:

- India's potential growth rate without inflation becoming a problem which had fallen to just 6%.
- The **unemployment rates** underestimate the alarming stress in the labour market, because labour force participation rate (or the proportion of people demanding jobs) is itself quite low.
- India is the **world's most populous country** with a growing youth bulge.
- It has the world's largest pool of **poor people and the largest pool of malnourished children**.

DEFENCE BUDGET 2023**CONTEXT:**

The Union Budget presented in Parliament by Finance Minister allocated ₹5.94 lakh crore for the Defence Ministry, a 13% increase year-on-year from last year's budget estimates.

Defence Budget Estimates (2023-24)

- Total allocation: ₹5.93 lakh crore
- Revenue allocation: ₹2.7 lakh crore
- Capital expenditure: ₹1.62 lakh crore
- Pension: ₹1.38 lakh crore
- Civil: ₹22,612 crore

Highlights for Defence sector:

- The **non-salary revenue** outlay has gone up by 44% from ₹62,431 crore the previous year to ₹90,000 crore in the Budget Estimates of 2023-24.
- The **fund allocated to the sector is for following purpose:**
 - This will cater to sustenance of weapon systems and platforms, including ships and aircraft, and their logistics;
 - boost fleet serviceability; emergency procurement of critical ammunition and spares;
 - procuring and hiring of niche capabilities to mitigate capability gaps wherever required;
 - progress stocking of military reserves; and
 - Strengthening forward defences.
- Capex for defence:** It received a **nominal 7% increase** compared with the 33% rise in the country's overall capital expenditure commitment.
- Capital expenditure for **military modernisation** also saw a 6.7% rise by ₹10,230 crore year-on-year to ₹1.62 lakh crore.

- For Agniveers:

- The enhanced allocations will also cater to training **aids and simulators for Agniveers** and ensure that they achieve the set standards of training for induction in the defence forces.

Agniveer Corpus Fund:

- This will cater to the **Seva Nidhi severance** package to be given to Agniveers on completion of four years. Individuals would have to contribute **30% of their monthly income** to the fund during service, which will be equally matched by the government.
- The government will also pay to the **subscriber interest**, as approved from time to time, on the contributions in the account and the entire pay-out will be **tax-free**.

- For pensioners:

- There was also a major hike in the allocation for defence pensions on account of the revision of the **One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme**.
- Allocation for the Defence Research and Development Organisation is ₹23,264 crore, a 9% increase year-on-year.
- Payment of arrears will be paid from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022, which have been calculated at approximately ₹23,638 crore as per the applicable Dearness Relief (DR).

Dearness relief:

- Dearness Relief means **the relief due to pensioners/family pensioners upto average CPI 1510**.

- For logistics and Infrastructure:

- The capital budget of the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** has gone up by 43% to ₹5,000 crore from ₹3,500 crore in 2022-23.
- The estimates are committed towards infrastructure strengthening in the border areas, particularly the Northern Borders.

The BRO is close to finishing some key infrastructure projects in the eastern sector and improving all-weather connectivity along the LAC.

- For different arms of Forces:

- A 6.7% increase year-on-year, ₹37,242 crore has been earmarked for the Army, a year-on-year increase of 16.32%
- ₹52,804 crore for the Navy, a y-o-y increase of 10.96% and
- ₹57,137 crore for the Indian Air Force (IAF), 2.79% increase in y-o-y basis.

BUDGET PROMOTING CLEAN ENERGY

CONTEXT:

In the Union Budget 2023-24, Green hydrogen, clean energy storage and transmission are the key drivers of the government's "Green Growth" priority sector.

Key initiatives:

- **National Green Hydrogen mission:** With an outlay of Rs. 19,700 crore, the mission will facilitate the transition of the economy to low carbon intensity, reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports and make the country assume technology and market leadership
 - **Energy transition investment:** The FM has announced an outlay of Rs 35,000 crore for energy transition investment.
 - **Battery storage capacity:** The government will support setting up of battery storage capacity of 4,000 MWH in India with viability gap funding. The aim is to touch green hydrogen production of 5 million tonnes by 2030.
 - **Green credit programme:** A green credit programme will be notified under the Environment Protection Act.
 - **GOBARdhan scheme:** 500 new 'waste to wealth' plants under GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme will be established for promoting circular economy.
 - **CBG plants:** These will include 200 compressed biogas (CBG) plants, including 75 plants in urban areas, and 300 community or cluster-based plants at total investment of ` 10,000 crore.
 - **5% compressed biogas:** The government plans to introduce a 5 percent compressed biogas mandate for all entities marketing natural gas in India.
 - **National apprenticeship scheme:** To provide support to 47 lakh youths in 3 years, a Direct Benefit Transfer under a **pan India national apprenticeship scheme** will be rolled out.
- Schemes launched:**
- **PM Vishwa Karma Kaushal Samman:** PM Vishwa Karma Kaushal Samman-package of assistance for traditional artisans and craftspeople has been conceptualised, will enable them to improve quality, scale & reach of their products, integrating with MSME value chain.
 - **Free food scheme to continue till 2024:** From January 1, 2023, a scheme to supply free food grain to all **Antyodaya** and **priority households** for one year under **PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana** is underway.
 - **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:** The Budget 2023-24 allocated Rs 79,000 crore for the Pradhan Mantri AwasYojana (PMAY), giving a further boost to the government's programme to provide housing to the urban poor.
 - **MISHTI scheme:** The government will take up mangrove plantations along the coastline under the new MISHTI scheme. The Mishti scheme is aimed at preserving mangroves.
 - **Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Programme:** The Rs 2,200 crore programmes to improve the availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high-value horticultural crops will raise their cultivation area from a low 15%.
 - **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal VikasYojana 4.0:** The government will launch Pradhan Mantri Kaushal VikasYojana 4.0.
 - **PM Azad Yojana:** The outlay for PM Azad Yojana is being increased by 66% to over Rs 79,000 crore.
 - **Amrit Dharohar:** The scheme aims to encourage optimal use of wetlands, and enhance bio-diversity, carbon stock, eco-tourism opportunities and income generation for local communities.
 - **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme:** To provide stipend support to 47 lakh youth in three years, Direct Benefit Transfer under a pan-India National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme will be rolled out.
 - **National Financial Information Registry:** It will be set up to serve as the **central repository of financial and ancillary information**. This will facilitate efficient flow of credit, promote financial inclusion, and foster financial stability.
 - **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Mahila Samman Bachat Patra:** For commemorating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, will be made available for a two-year period up to March 2025.
 - **PM Vishwakarma KAushal Samman (PM VIKAS):** It is a package of assistance for traditional artisans and craftspeople. This will greatly benefit the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, women and people belonging to the weaker sections.

ONGC TO MAP INDIA'S GEOTHERMAL RESOURCES

CONTEXT:

The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) plans to map the geothermal energy sources of India in search of clean energy.

What is Geothermal Energy?

- Geothermal energy is heat that is generated within the Earth.
- Geothermal energy is stored in the form of heat beneath the earth's surface
- Type:** Renewable resource
- Source:** It is contained in the rocks and fluids beneath the earth's crust and can be found as far down as the earth's hot molten rock, magma.
- Impact on environment:** clean and carbon-free.
- Process:** A series of wells is used to generate steam from the Earth's internal heat energy and fed to the power plant to generate electricity

Geothermal Energy in India:

- Geothermal province:** There are seven geothermal provinces and a number of geothermal springs in India.



- Total potential:** According to the ministry of new and renewable energy, India has the potential to generate 10 gig watts (GW) of geothermal power.

- Major regions:** Ladakh (Puga and Chumathang regions) has been identified as the most resource-rich region in terms of geothermal energy in the country.
- Apart from Ladakh, there is abundant potential in Himachal Pradesh too which has several sources of geothermal energy along the rivers Alaknanda, Sutlej, Beas and Bhagirathi.
 - Efforts are also underway to utilize geothermal energy from oil and gas wells in the Gandhar oil field of ONGC's Ankleshwar asset in Gujarat.

India's Top Renewable Energy Projects:

- Puga Geothermal Energy Project, Ladakh
- Bhadla Solar Park, Rajasthan
- Jaisalmer Wind Park, Jaisalmer
- Rewa Solar Project, Madhya Pradesh
- Brahmanvel Wind Farm, Maharashtra
- Gobar Dhan BioCNG Plant, Indore
- Vankusawade Wind Park, Maharashtra
- Ramky Enviro Landfill, Gas to Bio CNG Plant, Hyderabad
- Shakti Sthala Solar Project, Karnataka
- Simhadri Floating Solar PV Plant, Andhra Pradesh
- Kurnool Ultra Mega Solar Park, Andhra Pradesh
- Pavagada Solar Park, Karnataka
- Muppandal Wind Farm, Tamil Nadu

About Maharatna ONGC:

- The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation is a central public sector undertaking under the ownership of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India.
- Headquarters:** Dehradun
- Founded in:** 1956
- ONGC is the largest crude oil and natural gas Company in India.

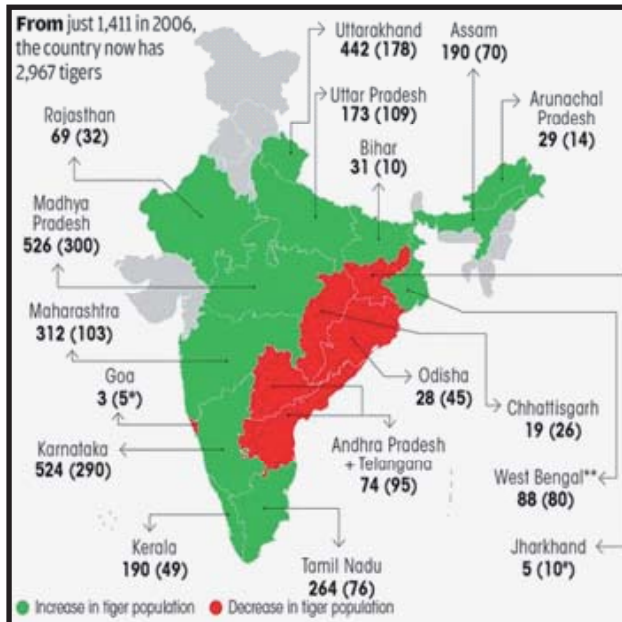
TIGER COUNT AND EFFORTS TO CONSERVE THEM

CONTEXT:

According to a 2018 report, there are 2,967 tigers (increased by 6% since the last census) in the country spread across 53 tiger reserves, a recent update made by the Central government.

About Tiger count in India:

- Every 4 years the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) conducts a tiger census across. The first was conducted in 2006.
- The Census (2014) reported 2,226 tigers in the country, up from 1,706 in 2010.



Project Tiger:

- Project Tiger was launched in 1973 for conserving our national animal
- It is a Centrally sponsored scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and climate change
- The project is administered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

National Tiger Conservation Authority:

- It was Established in 2005, following the recommendations of the Tiger Task
- It was given statutory status by the 2006 amendment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it.
- Functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

Tiger Relocation Projects:

- The tiger relocation project was initiated in 2018 wherein **two big cats**, a male (Mahavir) from Kanha Tiger Reserve and a female (Sundari) from Bandhavgarh from Madhya Pradesh were relocated to Satkosia Tiger Reserve in Odisha, to shore up the tiger population in the

- The relocation was meant to serve two purposes:
 - Reducing the tiger population in areas with excess tigers majorly reduces territorial
 - To reintroduce tigers in areas where the population has considerably reduced due to various reasons.

Tiger Special Protection Force:

- It will be effective in checking illegal human intrusion into the reserve through villages located on its fringes and serve as a second layer of protection for tigers
- The decision is in line with Central Government's guidelines for providing three-tier protection to tigers at reserves
- Three-tier protection for tigers at reserves
 - 1st layer of protection:** It is provided in the inner range by beat-level forest guards through regular patrols.
 - 2nd layer of protection:** It is provided by STPF.
 - 3rd layer of protection:** it comes from intelligence-gathering mechanisms in which forest, police and central intelligence agency personnel work together to prevent crimes like the poaching of tigers.

Global Tiger Forum:

- It is an Inter-Governmental international body working exclusively for the conservation of
- Established in 1994, the Global Tiger Forum (GTF) has its headquarters in New
- The General Assembly of GTF meets every three
- It is a global commitment to double the world's wild tigers by 2022
- The base year is 2006
- The goal has been set by the world wildlife Fund (WWF) through the Global Tiger Initiative, Global Tiger Forum, and other critical platforms
- All 13 tiger range governments came together for the first time at the Petersburg Summit(Russia- 2010) where they committed to double the number of wild tigers by 2022

Global Tiger Initiative:

- Global Tiger Initiative (GTI) was launched in 2008 as a global alliance of governments, international organizations, civil society, conservation, and scientific communities, and the private sector, with the aim of working together to save wild tigers from
- In 2013, the scope was broadened to include Snow
- The GTI's founding partners included the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Smithsonian

Institution, the Save the Tiger Fund, and International Tiger Coalition (representing more than 40 non-government organizations).

- The initiative is led by the 13 tiger range countries (TRCs).

Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Program (ITHCP):

- ITHCP was launched in 2014. It is a strategic funding mechanism that aims to save tigers in the wild, and their habitats and to support human populations in key locations throughout
- It has already facilitated 12 projects in six countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Myanmar) to better manage Tiger Conservation Landscapes.
- It is contributing to the Global Tiger Recovery Programme (GTRP), a global effort to double tiger numbers in the wild by 2022.
- **Petersburg Declaration:**
 - It aimed at promoting a global system to protect the natural habitat of tigers and raise awareness among people on white tiger conservation
 - This resolution was adopted In November 2010, by the leaders of 13 tiger range countries (TRCs) assembled at an International Tiger Forum in Petersburg, Russia
 - The resolution's implementation mechanism is called the Global Tiger Recovery Program whose overarching goal was to double the number of wild tigers from about 3,200 to more than 7,000 by

- 13 Tiger range countries are **Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.**

Challenges:

Although India is moving progressively towards conserving more and more tigers, a few threats are still there standing as a resistance in the conservation practices:

- **Tiger reserves with no tigers:** Mizoram's Dampa reserve, West Bengal's Buxa reserve and Jharkhand's Palamau reserve have no tigers left.
- **Lack of gene exchange:** The tiger reserves are having poor interconnectivity with each other due to which the gene exchange among the tiger population can barely take
- **Human-tiger conflict:** There has occurred a human-tiger conflict as the tiger conservation practice has grown but their natural habitats are already shrinking and hence, they are seeking their habitat in human habitation.
- **Poaching:** Poaching of tigers is taken as pride and every part of a tiger has a market value therefore they are being hunted indiscriminately for personal as well as commercial.
- **Development:** Linear developments such as that railways and roadways are critical issues in creating conservation.

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CONSEQUENCES OF EL NIÑO RETURNING IN 2023

CONTEXT:

Since 2020, the world experienced a rare three consecutive La Nina event and it has been predicted that the coming El Nino can have consequences across the globe, including India.

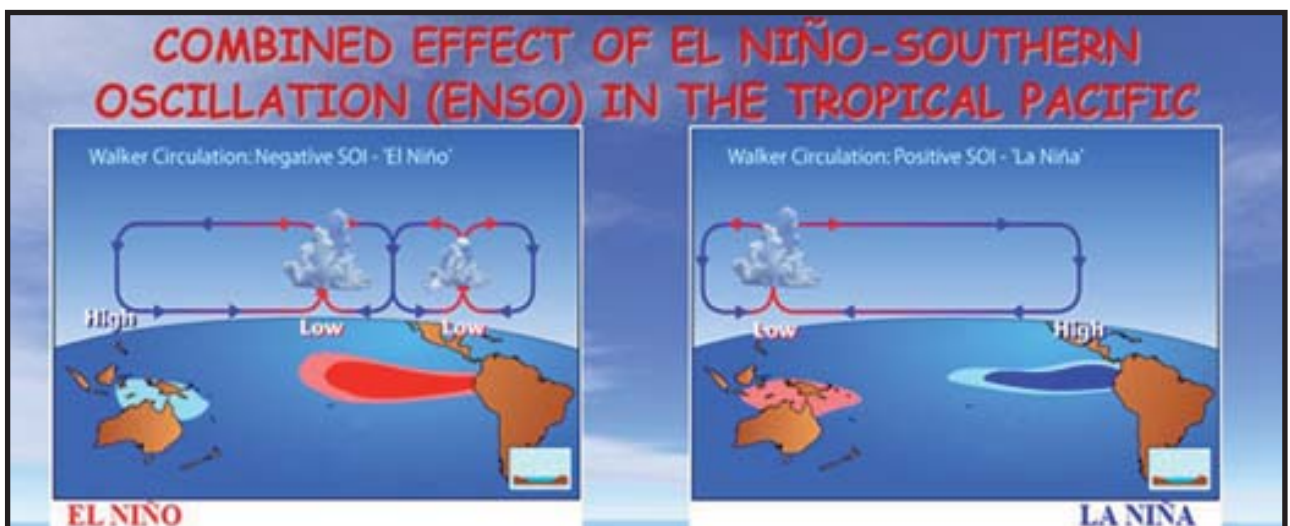
The upcoming El Nino:

- The change in sea surface temperature associated with **El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** might seem **marginal** but is enough to disrupt weather patterns globally.
- It can affect even the large-scale circulation of air in the polar stratosphere i.e. **8km above the Earth**.

- The US **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** has reported that the equatorial Pacific Ocean will return to its **neutral state between March and May of 2023**, and it is likely that **El Niño conditions** will develop during the **northern hemisphere's autumn and winter**.

How El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Operates?

- The combined phases of La Nina and El Nino are termed **El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)**.
- The phenomenon **affects rainfall patterns, global atmospheric circulation, and atmospheric pressure** across the planet.
- In the neutral state, (neither El Niño nor La Niña) **trade winds blow east to west** across the surface of the tropical Pacific Ocean, bringing warm moist air and warmer surface waters towards the western Pacific and keeping the central Pacific Ocean relatively cool.



Possible Consequences:

- **Likely to exceed 5°C above the target of the Paris agreement:**
 - During the process of ENSO, the rise and cooling process of seawater is simultaneous, however, the rise for a prolonged period can make significant changes in the upper atmosphere.
 - El Niño adds some extra heat to the atmosphere and is estimated can exceed to the 1.5°C threshold of the Paris agreement.
- **On the Australian coast:**
 - During El Niño, scientists expect less rain, higher temperatures and increased fire risk, especially during winter and spring in the southern hemisphere.
- As the globe heats up, some regions are warming faster than others. Australia can become 1.4°C hotter now than in the early 20th century.
- **In South America:**
 - South American weather is significantly disrupted every time an El Niño event occurs;
 - flooding on the west coasts of Peru and Ecuador and
 - Drought in the Amazon and northeast, where the consequences of crop failures can reverberate across the continent.
- **Disease outbreak:** During El Niño events, due to fall in precipitation and rise in temperature in Colombia, is linked to outbreaks of diseases spread **by insects, such as malaria and dengue fever**.
 - Higher temperatures during El Niño boost the rates at which mosquitoes breed and bite.

- **Less carbon intake:** Later on, the **Amazon rainforest dries and vegetation growth slows** so that less CO₂ is absorbed from the atmosphere, a trend repeated in the tropical forests of **Africa, India and Australia**.
- **In Northern Europe:**
 - The balance between high pressure over the Azores and low pressure over Iceland determines where the rain goes in Europe during winter by pushing the jet stream.
 - During El Niño winters, both pressure centres lose strength, and the jet stream brings wetter conditions to southern Europe.
- **Objective:** The government will also try to inculcate a culture of reading by collaborating with NGOs, which will provide age-appropriate reading material to everyone.
- **Key features:**
 - The **National Book Trust** and **Children's Book Trust** will also participate in the digitising event.
 - The library would be "device-agnostic".
 - A specialized repository will be made in a **digital epigraphy museum** by the digitization of **one lakh ancient inscriptions** in the first stage.
 - **Bharat Shared Repository of Inscriptions (Bharat SHRI)** will be set up in a **digital epigraphy museum**.

DIGITALISING ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS

CONTEXT:

The Union Budget highlighted the government's efforts for digitisation in the country, including a digital library for children and adolescents for preserving ancient inscriptions.

Highlights of the initiative:

- It will facilitate the availability of quality books in different **languages, genres and at different levels**.

Significance:

- States will be encouraged to set up physical libraries for them at **Panchayat and ward levels** and provide infrastructure for accessing the **National Digital Library resources**.
- To build a culture of reading and to make up for pandemic-time learning loss, the National Book Trust, Children's Book Trust and other sources will be encouraged to provide and replenish **non-curricular titles** in regional languages and English to these physical libraries.

Ancient Inscriptions:

Junagarh Rock inscription


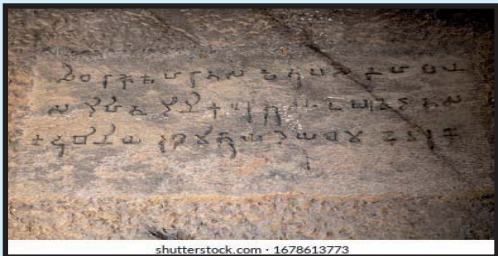



- The **Junagarh Rock inscription** of Rudradaman is considered as an early example of chaste Sanskrit, written in mid second century AD.
- It mentions that one of Chandragupta Maurya's governors, Pushyagupta, was responsible for building a dam on **Sudarshana Lake** near Girnar in Kathiawar.
- From another inscription of Skandgupta we came to know that this very dam was repaired during his reign, almost **800 years** after it was built.

Mahrauli Inscription / Garuda Pillar



- The **Mahrauli Iron Pillar** was originally placed on a hill near the Beas and was brought to Delhi by a King of Delhi.
- This pillar credits Chandragupta with conquest of the Vanga Countries by his battling alone against the confederacy of the enemies united against him.
- It also credits him for **conquest of Vakatkas** in a fight that ran across seven mouths of Sindhu.
- This pillar was established **by Chandragupta-II** of Gupta dynasty as **Vishnupada** in the honor of Lord Vishnu.

<p>Allahabad Pillar Inscription (Prayag Prasasti)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was issued by Samudragupta and was composed by Harisena. It is written in very simple and refined Sanskrit in <u>Champu kavya style</u>. It lists achievements of Samudragupta. This Inscription is a eulogy of Samudragupta and mentions about the conquests of Samudragupta and boundaries of the Gupta Empire. As per this inscription, Samudragupta defeated 9 kings in North, 12 Kings in South, reduced all the Atavika states to vassalage. It also mentions that more than five states in the frontier states surrendered and accepted his suzerainty. He had close contact with the kingdom of Ceylon and South East Asian colonies. The eulogy of Harisena describes him as hero of 100 battles. He performed Ashvamedha Yajna, this has been testified by a seal of Samudragupta bearing a Horse.
<p>Nasik Inscription</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The achievements of Gutamiputra Satkarni were mentioned in Nasik Inscription that was composed by his mother Gautami Balasri. The Nasik Prasasti describes Gautamiputra as the ruler of the Aparanta, Anupa, Saurashtra, Kukura, Akara and Avanti and defeated the Saka King Nahapana and restored the prestige of his dynasty by reconquering a large part of the former dominions of the Satavahanas.
<p>Nanaghat Inscription</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Nasik and Nanaghat inscriptions are the major sources that give detailed information about the Satavahana Empire. The Nasik inscription was made by Gautami Balasari and Nanaghat inscription was issued by Naganika.

CRITICAL AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES DIALOGUE

CONTEXT

India and the United States (US) held the inaugural meeting of the Critical and Emerging Technology initiative (iCET)

Background

- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe-Biden announced the initiative in May 2022.
 - The objective: "to elevate and expand our strategic technology partnership and defense industrial

cooperation between the governments, businesses, and academic institutions of our two countries".

What are Critical and emerging technologies?

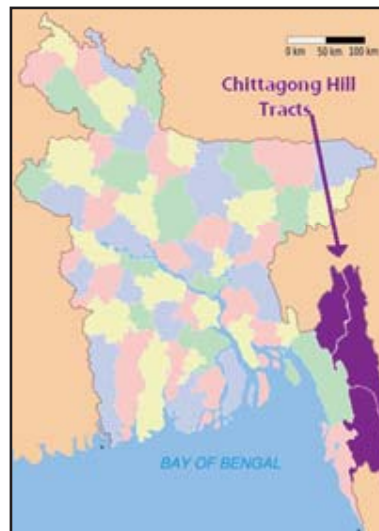
- Critical and emerging technologies are a subset of **advanced technologies** that are potentially significant to U.S. national security".
- They include **advanced computing, artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems and robotics, communication and networking technologies, financial technologies, quantum information technologies, and semiconductor technologies**, among others.

Initiatives by MeitY in Emerging Technologies

- Artificial Intelligence Committees Reports

- Centres of Excellence for Internet of Things (Gandhinagar, Bengaluru, Gurugram & Vizag)
- Centre of Excellence on Virtual & Augmented Reality (VARCoE) at IIT Bhubaneswar
- Centre of Excellence on Gaming, VFX, Computer Vision & AI at Hyderabad
- Centre of Excellence on Blockchain Technology at Gurugram
- Design, Development, and Deployment of National AI Portal (INDIAai)
- POC for AI Research Analytics and Knowledge Dissemination Platform (AIRAWAT)
- Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence

ethnic group: the Bawm, Pangkhua, Lusai, Khumi, Mro, and Khiang.



BANGLADESH HILL TRIBES SEEK SUPPORT AGAINST THEIR 'EXTERMINATION'

CONTEXT

An organisation representing the Chin-Kuki-Mizo communities living in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar has sought the help of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in ending the "policy of extermination" of ethnic minorities inhabiting the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh.

Who are Chin-Kuki-Mizo?

- Chin-Kuki-Mizo belongs to the same tribe with different names residing in Myanmar, Bangladesh and India with close geographical proximity along the border region between the countries.
- This ethnic armed group is engaged in political and military endeavours to establish an independent state in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- Their political front, the Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF), also has an armed component known as the Kuki-Chin Army (KNA).
- It emerged as a non-profit development organization, but since 2017, it has evolved into a separatist group.
- The Kuki-Chin is a geographical grouping of numerous Tibeto-Burman language-speaking ethnic communities that make up the majority in the Indian state of Mizoram and the Chin state of Myanmar.
- Along with the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, they also reside in the hilly regions of the Indian states of Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland.
- The KNF is made up of six members of the Kuki-Chin

The location (Chittagong Hill Tracts)

- The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is an impoverished hilly, forested area that sprawls over more than 13,000 sq km of the Khagrachari, Rangamati, and Bandarban districts of southeastern Bangladesh, bordering Mizoram to the east, Tripura to the north, and Myanmar to the south and southeast.
- A significant portion of the population is tribal, and culturally and ethnically different from the majority Muslim Bangladeshis who live in the country's deltaic mainland.
- The tribal population of the CHT has ethnic links with tribal populations in the adjacent areas of India, mainly in Mizoram.
- Mizoram shares a 318-km-long border with Bangladesh.

NEW GENUS OF WASP IDENTIFIED

CONTEXT:

The scientific community has named a new genus of wasp after the Soliga community of Karnataka.

About:

- Wasp is a **social winged insect** which has a narrow waist and a sting and is typically **yellow with black stripes**.
- It constructs a **paper nest from wood pulp** and raises the larvae on a diet of insects.

- The noning is done in recognition of the conservation of **forests and biodiversity** of the indigenous people.



- **Genus named:** *Soliga ecarinata* is an acknowledgement of the Soliga lifestyle which is rooted in the philosophy of sustainability since ancient days.
- This is the second genus of this subfamily **reported from India** and the first from South India

Key features of the Species:

- The new wasp belongs to the **subfamily Metopiinae** of Darwin wasps' family *Ichneumonidae*.
- The subfamily Metopiinae has **862 species in 27 genera** including two fossil genera.
- Most of these species are seen only in the **Palearctic region, Neotropical and Nearctic regions**.

The species is named '**ecarinata**' denoting the absence of ridges in certain body regions and this new insect is strikingly colourful and distinct from all its relatives.

The Soliga community:



- The Soliga people are a tribal community found in the **Biligiri Rangana (BR) Hills** in the district of Chamarajanagar, in the southern state of Karnataka, India.

- They belong to the **Australoid ethnic group**: dark complexion, curly hair, short stature, a dolichocephalic head, a sunken nasal root and a depressed nasal bridge.
- They speak the **Soliganudia** dialect that has 65% lexical similarity with **Kannada, a Dravidian language spoken in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra**.
- The Soliga used to practice **shifting cultivation**.
- They grow **Ragi (Finger millet, Eleusine coracana) for subsistence**.
- Their main source of income is harvesting and sale of Non-timber Forest Produce (NTFP) **like honey, nellikai (gooseberry, Emblica officinalis), bamboo, Paasi (Lichen), algae, wild turmeric, Indian blackberry, soapnut and nennari (wild root)**.
- They also make baskets using bamboo.
- **Religion followed:** Soliga people follow **naturism and animism** along with following Hindu practices and their main deities are Madeshwara.

RED-HEADED VULTURE FINALLY SEEN

CONTEXT:

For the first time since 2017, birders spotted a red-headed vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*) in the Bhatti mines area of Delhi.

About the Species

- The red-headed vulture species feed on carcasses of medium sized and large mammals.
- **Family:** The red-headed vulture belongs to the family Accipitridae.
- **Scientific Name:** *Sarcogyps calvus*
- **Habitat:** These red-headed vulture species are distributed in Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent.
- **Size:** The red-headed vulture is a large bird, measuring 75 to 85 cm in length and weighing 3,500 to 5,500 grams.
- **IUCN Status:** The IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) has categorized and evaluated these bird species and has listed them as "Critically Endangered".

KELP FORESTS ON DECLINE: STUDY

CONTEXT:

Kelp forests — underwater ecosystems formed in shallow water by the dense growth of several different species known as kelps — are declining because of climate change, showed a new study.

Key-highlights of the Study

- Kelp populations at **equatorward-range edges** are particularly vulnerable to climate change as these locations are undergoing warming at or beyond thermal tolerance thresholds.
- Due to this, the unique adaptive or evolutionary genetic diversity that the rear-edge populations (populations in warm, low-latitudes) may contain is also under threat due to rapid warming.
- *Ecklonia radiata*, the dominant and most widely distributed **Laminarian** kelp in the southern hemisphere, rapidly succumb to warmer temperatures in spring and summer when temperatures exceed 27 degrees Celsius.

What are Kelp Forests?

- Kelp forests are **large brown algae** that live in cool, relatively shallow waters close to the shore. They grow in dense groupings much like a forest on land.
- These underwater towers of kelp provide food and shelter for thousands of fish, invertebrates, and marine mammal species.
- Among the many mammals and birds that use kelp forests for protection or feeding are seals, sea lions, whales, sea otters, gulls, terns, snowy egrets, great blue herons, cormorants, and shore birds.
- These dense canopies of algae generally occur in cold, nutrient-rich waters. Because of their dependency upon light for photosynthesis, kelp forests form in shallow open waters and are rarely found deeper than 49-131 feet.
- In ideal conditions, kelp can grow up to 18 inches per day, and in stark contrast to the colorful and slow-growing corals, the giant kelp canopies tower above the ocean floor.
- Like trees in a forest, these giant algae provide food and shelter for many organisms.
- Also like a terrestrial forest, kelp forests experience seasonal changes.

COUNTRY'S INDIGENOUS MOBILE OPERATING SYSTEM BHAROS

CONTEXT:

The Ministry for Communications, Electronics and Information Technology tested 'BharOS', the recently-unveiled indigenous operating system developed by the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT).

What is BharOS?

- BharOS is **India's first homegrown mobile operating system**.
- It is **Linux kernel-based operating system** that is designed to be secure and powerful.
- **Developed by:** The BharOS was developed by **JandK Operations Private Limited (JandKops)**, which has been incubated by IIT Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation, a **Section 8 (Not for Profit) Company** established by IIT Madras.

Important Features:

Key features of the new made-in-India OS:

- **No default apps:** BharOS does not include any bloatware or default apps, giving users more storage space. Without any default apps, users are also not forced to use any app they may not trust.
- **NOTA updates:** BharOS offers "Native over the Air" (NOTA) updates, similar to Android, which means the software updates, will be automatically downloaded and installed on the device.
- **Access to PASS:** The new OS will also provide access to Private App Store Services (PASS), which offer trusted apps from specific organisations.

A PASS provides access to a curated list of apps that have been thoroughly vetted and have met certain security and privacy standards of organisations. This means users can be confident that the apps they are installing are safe to use and have been checked for any potential security vulnerabilities or privacy concerns

Need:

- Because all smartphones either run on Android or on iOS, there has always been a pervasive uneasiness about how these companies collect, store and use the data that is generated by Indian smartphone users.
- BharOS tries to address these issues.

Comparison of BharOS & Android:

Similarity	Difference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technically, BharOS is very similar to Android because they share the same basics. Because BharOS uses AOSP or Android Open Source Project, the functionalities and the methodologies both OS use are essentially the same. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What sets BharOS apart from Android, is that it is free from Google Services and Apps. Google has used its preinstalled apps and services to collect data, sometimes without explicitly asking a user. Similarly, other apps from Google's PlayStore share data with third-party services. BharOS does not come with any

IOC STARTS EXPORTATION OF AVIATION GASOLINE

CONTEXT

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has started the exports of aviation gasoline, which is used to operate unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and small planes.

About

- Aviation gasoline is a **high-octane aviation fuel** with superior performance and quality standards compared to imported fuels.

Unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)

UAV is an aircraft guided autonomously, by remote control, or both and that carries sensors, target designators, offensive ordnance, or electronic transmitters designed to interfere with or destroy enemy targets.

- Usually, flying schools use this fuel for **piston-engine aircraft**.
- The gas is certified by the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** and will benefit around 35 flying schools in the country.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)

- DGCA is the **regulatory body** in the field of Civil Aviation, primarily dealing with safety issues.
 - It is responsible for regulation of air transport services to/from/within India and for enforcement of civil air regulations, air safety, and airworthiness standards.
 - It became a **statutory body** under the **Aircraft Act, 2020**.
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are increasingly being used in modern warfare, including in Russia-Ukraine, so the development marks an important milestone for India from the perspective of defense preparedness.

- The beginning of fuel exports marks the entry of India into an estimated \$2.7 billion global market.

GLOBAL REPORT ON NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES 2023

CONTEXT

On World Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) Day (January 30, 2023), WHO released a new progress report 'the Global report on neglected tropical diseases 2023'.

Key-highlights of the Report

- NTDs continue to disproportionately affect the poorest members of the global community, primarily in areas where water safety, sanitation and access to health care are inadequate.
- Although as many as 179 countries and territories reported at least one case of NTDs in 2021, 16 countries accounted for 80% of the global NTD burden.
- Around 1.65 billion people were estimated to require treatment for at least one NTD, globally.
- The new progress report shows that the number of people requiring NTD interventions fell by 80 million between 2020 and 2021, and eight countries were certified or validated as having eliminated one NTD in 2022 alone.
- As of December 2022, 47 countries had eliminated at least one NTD and more countries were in the process of achieving this target.

What are Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)?

- NTDs are a group of infections that are most common among marginalised communities in the developing regions of Africa, Asia and the Americas. They are caused by a variety of pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, protozoa and parasitic worms.

- NTDs are especially common in tropical areas where people do not have access to clean water or safe ways to dispose of human waste.
- Examples of NTDs are: snakebite envenomation, scabies, yaws, trachoma, Leishmaniasis and Chagas disease etc.
- ◉ These diseases generally receive less funding for research and treatment than malaises like tuberculosis, HIV-AIDS and malaria.

NTDs in India

- India has the world's largest absolute burden of at least 10 major NTDs, including hookworm, dengue, lymphatic filariasis, leprosy, visceral leishmaniasis or kala-azar and rabies.
- Of the 12-13 NTDs existing in India only dengue, rabies, snakebite and leprosy are notifiable
- The most common NTDs in India: Lymphatic Filariasis, Visceral Leishmaniasis, Rabies, Leptospirosis, Dengue and **Soil-Transmitted Helminth Infections (STH)**.

Section: C

(SHORT NEWS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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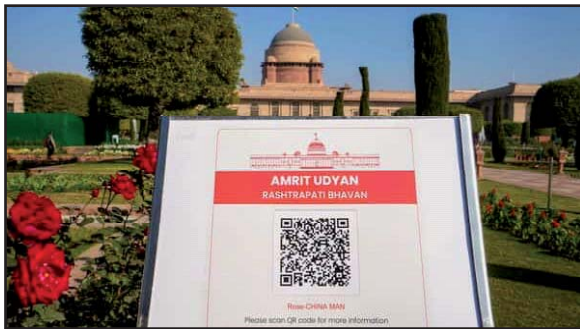


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Mughal Garden renamed as Amrit Udyan



The iconic Mughal Gardens at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi were renamed as the '**Amrit Udyan**'.

About:

- As the Mughal Gardens become **the Amrit Udyan**, a part of the grand Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- The renaming has done to end the long legacy of **foreign invasions** in the country.
- **Unique features of the garden:**
 - The Mughal garden was made in the **charbagh structure** which was intended to create a representation of an earthly utopia – jannat – in which humans co-exist in perfect harmony with all elements of nature.
 - The **roses** remain the star attraction of the **Rashtrapati Bhavan**.
 - It has **rectilinear layouts**, divided in **four equal sections**; these gardens can be found across lands previously ruled by the Mughal.
 - A defining feature of these gardens is the **use of waterways**, often to demarcate the various **quadrants of the garden**.
 - These were not only crucial to maintain the flora of the garden; they also were an important part of its aesthetic.
 - Fountains were often built, symbolising the "**cycle of life**."

Maru Mahotsav 2023



Maru Mahotsav or the Jaisalmer Desert Festival celebrated in Rajasthan during the month of February every year.

About the event:

- It is a **four-day long annual** event.
- Along the way, groups of artists performed folk dances like Kalbelia, Horse, Kachhi Ghodi, Gair etc.
- In this culture festival, **Celebrities Night, events on the sandy dunes of Pokhran Khudi**.
- A bevy of popular personalities, including Milind Gaba, Aastha Gill, Sawai Bhatt will perform at the event.

Aditya-L1



ISRO received the visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) to be integrated into the Aditya-L1 mission.

About Aditya-L1 mission:

- Aditya-L1 Mission is India's first solar mission planned by ISRO. Earlier the name was Aditya -1, which has been renamed as Aditya-L1 Mission.
- Aditya-L1 is the first Indian space mission to observe the Sun and the solar corona.
- It is ISRO's second space-based astronomy mission after AstroSat for a scientific expedition to study the Sun.
- ISRO planned to place the satellite in the halo orbit around the **Lagrangian Point (L1)**. Hence the mission was renamed as Aditya L1 mission.

Objectives of the mission:

- to help in tracking Earth-directed storms and predict their impact through solar observations
- to research the Sun's corona (Visible and Near-infrared rays), photosphere (soft and hard X-ray), chromosphere (Ultra Violet rays), solar emissions, solar winds and flares, and Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs), as well as conduct round-the-clock imaging of the Sun

Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) are large expulsions of plasma and magnetic fields from the Sun's corona.

Payloads used for the mission

- The 1,500 kg satellite carries seven science payloads with diverse objectives.
- **Seven science payloads:**
 - Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC)
 - Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT)
 - Aditya Solar wind Particle Experiment (ASPEX)
 - Plasma Analyser Package for Aditya
 - Solar Low Energy X-ray Spectrometer (SoLEXS)
 - High Energy L1 Orbiting X-ray Spectrometer (HEL1OS)
 - Magnetometer



Indigenously made weapons, women power showcased at Republic Day parade

The Indian military showcased only indigenous equipment and weapon systems to drive home the message of self-reliance in defence.

- **“Atma Nirbharta” (self-reliance) and “Nari Shakti” (women power)** were the two themes on display at the Republic Day parade.

“Atma Nirbharta” (self-reliance)

- **Military:** The Indian military showcased only indigenous equipment and weapon systems to drive home the message of self-reliance in defence.
 - The **Army's British-era 25-pounder guns** — which traditionally offered the symbolic 21-gun salute — were replaced by the indigenous **105-mm Indian Field Guns (IFG)** this year.
 - The Army's mechanised column comprised three **MBT Arjun MK-I**, one **Nag Missile System (NAMIS)**, two **BMP 2/2K**, three **Quick Reaction Fighting Vehicles (QRFV)**, two **K-9 Vajra Self Propelled Howitzer Guns**, one **Brahmos missile**, two **10m Short Span Bridges**, a **Mobile Microwave Node and Mobile Network Centre**, and two **Akash missile systems**.
- **Air Force:** A 50-aircraft grand air show was put up by the Indian Air Force (IAF).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It included 23 fighter aircraft, 18 helicopters, and eight transport aircraft alongside a Dakota aircraft. • Navy: Blending vintage and modernity, the Navy's vintage IL38 SD aircraft flew the first and last time, as well as the modern Rafale jet. ➤ The indigenous Light Combat Helicopter Prachand, inducted into the IAF was also part of the flypast. <p>"Nari Shakti" (women power)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Navy's tableau showcased a woman air crew of Dornier aircraft highlighting the all-women crew of a surveillance sortie undertaken last year. • Both the Navy and the IAF contingents were led by women officers. • Another woman Army air defence officer led the Akash missile system column.
<p>National Child Science Congress</p> 	<p>The 30th National Child Science Congress began at Science City in Ahmedabad.</p> <p>About the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a five-day congress which will conclude on 31st January 2023. • The Secretary of Gujarat Science and Technology department Vijay Nahera inaugurated the Congress in the virtual presence of Education minister Kuber Dindor. • Hosts: Gujarat Council on Science and Technology (GUJCOST), Gujarat Council of Science City, and SAL Education. • Participants: More than 1400 delegates including child scientists, escort teachers, evaluators, and government officials will attend the congress. • As many as 850 students from across the country will showcase their unique projects in Congress.
<p>Situational awareness in aviation and its criticality</p> 	<p>A Court of Inquiry has been set up to ascertain the cause of the crash of an IAF Sukhoi-30 (Su-30) and a Mirage-2000.</p> <p>Details of the news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two fighter jets had taken off from the Gwalior air base on a training sortie. • The Mirage-2000 crashed at Morena, Madhya Pradesh, killing its pilot Wing Commander Hanumanth Rao Sarathi. • The Su-30 crashed at Bharatpur, Rajasthan. Both pilots in the Su-30 ejected • Now the investigation is likely to ascertain, among other things, if loss of 'Situational Awareness (SA)' was one of the factors responsible for the tragedy. <p>What is situational awareness (SA) in aviation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simply put, it's the cockpit crew's mental picture of the aircraft's location in relation to the terrain and other aircraft in the vicinity in a constantly changing.

- An aircraft is constantly in motion and moves at great speed covering huge distances; presenting an ever-changing SA, the crew has to keep up with.
- The crew builds this '**mental model**' from the array of **cockpit instruments, maps, charts, data** being fed from outside (ATC, other pilots) and even 'looking outside' on a clear day.

Why is SA important for Civilian flying?

- **To avoid accidents:** The loss of SA has caused mid-air collisions between civilian aircraft too, especially in airspace near airports where traffic is high with several planes taking off or preparing to land around the same time.
- **Maintain terrain identifications:** Loss of SA has also caused **passenger jets to collide** with mountains in poor visibility.
- Technologies like the **Ground Proximity Warning System (GPWS)** and the **Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System (TCAS)** have vastly helped improve the cockpit crew's SA and, consequently, prevent potential collisions, in mid-air or with the terrain.

Exercise Topchi 2023



This year's edition of Exercise Topchi was recently conducted.

- Indigenously manufactured weapon systems were the highlight of the Indian Army's 'Exercise Topchi'.
- Exercise Topchi is an annual firepower demonstration and training exercise.
- This edition of "Exercise Topchi" showcased the integrated employment of firepower and surveillance assets to include guns, mortars, rockets, drones, and aviation assets.
- In line with the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', the highlight of the exercise was display and firing by indigenously manufactured artillery equipment viz K-9 Vajra, Dhanush, Indian field gun (IFG)/ light field gun (LFG) system and Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launchers.

Context: National Tourism Day is celebrated across the country on January 25 every year.

About

- The day is observed to cultivate awareness among the global community on the importance of tourism and its social, political, financial and cultural worth.
- National Tourism Day was first celebrated by the Indian government in 1948, according to reports.
- **Forms:** India offers several forms of tourism such as cultural, nature, heritage, educational, business, sports, rural, medical, cruise and eco-tourism.

Tourism Governance in India

- **Nodal Agency:** The ministry of tourism is the nodal agency in India to form national policies for the promotion and development of tourism.
- It also coordinates with central, state agencies and the public sector.



52 Avian species observed in Ladakh

Fifty-two avian species were observed in the '**Asian Waterbird Census-2023**' conducted in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

About:

- **Organised by:** The GoI-UNDP Himalaya project and department of wildlife protection had organised the census between **January 17 and January 19** in collaboration with Ladakh biodiversity council.
- The observations were recorded on the **eBird app**, which is an online database of bird observations providing scientists, researchers, and amateur naturalists with real-time data about bird distribution and abundance.
- The **total number of species** recorded across all the birding sites was 35, out of which 13 species were waterbird.
- The project was organised in and around two important **hot springs of eastern Ladakh** -- Chumathang, and Puga, along with other important birding sites such as **Tso Kar, and Shey and Phey villages along the banks of Indus River**.

The waterbird census:

- The International Waterbird Census is a monitoring programme operating in 143 countries to collect information on the numbers of waterbirds at wetland sites.
- India is also a part of this monitoring programme under the **Asian water bird census**.

IMPORTANT POLICIES IN UNION BUDGET 2023-24

CONTEXT:

The Finance Minister has presented the Budget 2023-24, and announced the introduction of many new government schemes in various sectors with additional benefits in the existing government schemes to enhance their scope.

- Let us look at them briefly.

New Government Schemes Proposed to be launched

- PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman (PM VIKAS)**
 - Artisans are provided financial assistance under the **PM Vishwakarma KAushal Samman scheme**.
 - The new scheme will enable artisans to improve their products' scale, quality and reach, integrating them with the MSMEs value chain.
- Atmanirbhar Horticulture Clean Plant Programme**
 - The Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Programme will be launched to boost the availability of quality and disease-free planting material for high-value horticultural crops at an outlay of Rs.2,200 crore.
- Pharma Innovation Programme**
 - In the Budget 2023, the Financial Minister proposed to launch a new programme to promote innovation and research in pharmaceuticals, which will be taken up through centres of excellence.
- Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programme**
 - The government has launched the Aspirational Blocks Programme, covering 500 blocks to provide essential government services across multiple areas such as nutrition, health, agriculture, skill development, education, financial inclusion, water resources and basic infrastructure.
- Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission**
 - The Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission will be launched to improve the socio-economic conditions of the **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**.
 - This mission will saturate PVTG habitations and families with basic facilities such as clean drinking water and sanitation, safe housing, health and nutrition, road and telecom connectivity, improved access to education and sustainable livelihood opportunities.
 - The government will provide an amount of Rs.15,000 crore to implement this mission in the coming three years.

- Green Credit Programme**

- The Green Credit Programme will be launched under the **Environment (Protection) Act** to encourage behavioural change.
- It will incentivise environmentally responsible and sustainable actions by individuals, companies and local bodies and help mobilise additional resources for such activities.

- PM-PRANAM**

- PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth (PM-PRANAM)** will be launched to incentivise states and UTs to promote the balanced use of chemical fertilisers and alternative fertilisers.

- Mahila Samman Bachat Patra**

- Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, a one-time small savings scheme, will be available for two years, i.e. up to March 2025. It will offer deposit facilities up to Rs.2 lakh in the name of girls or women for two years at a fixed interest rate of 7.5% with a partial withdrawal option.

Revision in Existing Government Schemes

- PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)**

- A scheme to supply free food grains to all priority and **Antyodaya households** for the next year will be launched under the **PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)**.
- This scheme will be implemented from 01/01/2023.
- It ensures nutritional and food security, with the entire expenditure of about Rs.2 lakh crore to be borne by the Central Government.

- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana and National Rural Livelihood Mission**

- The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana and National Rural Livelihood Mission achieved success by mobilising rural women into 81 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- The government will enable the SHGs to reach the next phase of economic empowerment through the formation of collectives or large producer enterprises, each with several members managed professionally.
- They will be enabled to scale up their operations through supporting policies to serve the large consumer markets.

- PM Awas Yojana**

- In the Budget 2023, the outlay for the **PM Awas Yojana** was enhanced by 66% to over Rs.79,000 crore.

◉ **Mission Karmayogi**

- The government has launched an integrated online training platform, **iGOT Karmayogi**, under Mission Karmayogi to provide continuous learning opportunities for government employees and to upgrade their skills.

◉ **GOBARdhan scheme**

- New 500 'waste to wealth' plants will be established under the GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme to promote a circular economy.
- These will include 300 community or cluster-based plants and 200 Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plants, including 75 plants in urban areas at a total investment of Rs.10,000 crore.

◉ **Skill India Digital Platform**

- The digital ecosystem for skilling will be expanded by launching a unified Skill India Digital platform for linking with employers, including MSMEs, enabling demand-based formal skilling and facilitating access to entrepreneurship schemes.

◉ **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme**

- Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under a pan-India National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme will be launched to provide stipend support to 47 lakh youth over three years.

◉ **Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs**

- The government will revamp the credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs through the infusion of Rs.9,000 crore corpus, effective from 01/04/2023.

- It will enable additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of Rs.2 lakh crore, and the cost of the credit will be reduced by about 1%.

Savings Scheme

- The maximum deposit limit is enhanced to Rs.30 lakh from Rs.15 lakh for the Senior Citizen Savings Scheme.
- The maximum deposit limit under the Monthly Income Account Scheme will be enhanced to Rs.9 lakh from Rs.4.5 lakh for a single account and Rs.15 lakh from Rs.9 lakh for a joint account.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0

- The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 will be launched to skill youth within three years. The scheme will cover the new age courses for Industry 4.0, like AI, coding, mechatronics, robotics, IoT, drones, 3D printing and soft skills.
- 30 Skill India International Centres will be set up to skill youth for international opportunities across different States.

◉ **PM Matsya Sampada Yojana**

- The government will launch a new sub-scheme under the PM Matsya Sampada Yojana with an investment of Rs.6,000 crore to enable activities of fish vendors, fishermen and micro and small enterprises for improving value chain efficiencies and expanding the market.



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