# CURRENT AFFAIRS WEEKLY



## **MAINS**

- GS-I \* 'EVERY SECOND EXTREME POOR'
  IN THE WORLD IS A 'CHILD':
  REPORT
- GS- 

  ☐ The importance of Saudi Arabia to India
  - India-South Korea relations in the age of Indo-Pacific
  - Government notifies 31 Benches of GST Appellate Tribunal
  - Reservation for Women in Local Self Government
  - Relook at 'Har Ghar Jal initiative'
  - SC to examine validity of extending political reservation
  - Lok Sabha is ageing
  - RBI launches innovative program to revolutionize credit access for MSMEs
  - India's Basmati is reaping the rewards of research
  - □ Delay to achieve SDGs
  - Global impact of high BP: WHO Report
- GS-IV Taking a giant leap for a new ethics in outer space

## **PRELIMS**

### **HISTORY**

**b** Sindhudurg Fort

### **ART & CULTURE**

- 'The Sacred Ensembles' of the Hoysalas
- Santiniketan inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List

## **POLITY & GOVERNANCE**

- **b** Bima Sugam platform
- PM VishwakarmaScheme
- Kalaignar Magalir
   Urimai Thittam
- Parliament's new home
- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)
- The CEC and Other
  EC (Appointment,
  Conditions of Service

and Term of Office) Bill, 2023

### **ECONOMY**

 Unified portal for agristatistics (UPAg)

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- Heatwaves leading to ozone pollution
- Global Stocktake Report
- Planetary boundaries

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

- RNA recovery to resurrect extinct 'Tasmanian tiger'
- Long-necked dicraeosaurid dinosaur
- Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP)
- World Alzheimer's Day

## **NEWS IN SHORT**

- Parvushan Parv
- Earthquake light
- Hurricane Lee
- International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML)
- UKUSA agreement
- Arunachal launches Aadhaarlinked birth registration
- 'Kisan Rin Portal
- Rubber Board to increase area under rubber in Northeast
- RBI's Financial Inclusion index (FI-Index)
- Bharatkosh e-wallet
- Rising water vapour in

- atmosphere
- World Ozone Day
- Army to induct Dhanush guns by 2026
- CoBRA commandos of CRPF in Kashmir
- Biohacking
- Formation of water on the moon
- Inverse Vaccine (IV)
- Triton Island
- Isle of Rum
- Ghost orchid
- Indian peacock softshell turtle

## **SPECIALS**

Women's Reservation Bill gets approval



www.iasscore.in

## - Disclaimer -

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 - 3 (SEPTEMBER, 2023)

Section - A: MAINS CURRENT AFFAIRS					
Area of GS		Topics in News	Page No.		
	SOCIETY	'Every second extreme poor' in the world is a 'Child': Report	02		
GS II	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	The importance of Saudi Arabia to India	03		
		India-South Korea relations in the age of Indo- Pacific	05		
	POLITY & GOVERNANCE	Government notifies 31 Benches of GST Appellate     Tribunal	05		
		Reservation for Women in Local Self Government	07		
		Relook at 'Har Ghar Jal initiative'	09		
		SC to examine validity of extending political reservation	10		
		Lok Sabha is ageing	11		
GS III	ECONOMY	RBI launches innovative program to revolutionize credit access for MSMEs	12		
		India's Basmati is reaping the rewards of research	13		
	ENVIRONMENT	Delay to achieve SDGs	14		
	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	Global impact of high BP: WHO Report	15		
GS IV	ETHICS	Taking a giant leap for a new ethics in outer space	16		
Section - B: SPECIAL					
	Area of GS	Topics in News	Page No.		
GS II	POLITY & GOVERNANCE	Women's Reservation Bill gets approval	20		
Section - C: PRELIMS CURRENT AFFAIRS					
Area of GS		Topics in News	Page No.		
GS I	HISTORY	Sindhudurg Fort	24		
	ART & CULTURE	'The Sacred Ensembles' of the Hoysalas	24		
		Santiniketan inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List	26		









gs.scoreofficial



iasscore



in gsscoreofficial/

For Information, Contact: 8448496262 | Website: https://iasscore.in/

## GSSCORE

**An Institute for Civil Services** 

# **SUCCESS** IS A PRACTICE



R. P. SINGH



**RAJEEV CHOUDHARY** 



**GAURAV BANSAL** 





ANURAG PATHAK



PRAVEEN KUMAR



SIDDHARTH MITTAL

**RAJVARDHAN** 



**RAJNISH JINDAL** 

**SOURABH MISHRA** 



SHIVLAL GUPTA

**SMRITI RAO** 



**ABHISHIEKH SAXENA** 



VIRAJ C. RANE

THE MOST EXPERIENCED & SEASONED SUBJECT EX

GS II	POLITY & GOVERNANCE	Bima Sugam platform	27		
		PM Vishwakarma Scheme	27		
		Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thittam	28		
		Parliament's new home	28		
		Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)	29		
		The CEC and Other EC (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023	30		
	ECONOMY	Unified portal for agri-statistics (UPAg)	31		
GS III	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	RNA recovery to resurrect extinct 'Tasmanian tiger'	31		
		Long-necked dicraeosaurid dinosaur	33		
		Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP)	33		
		World Alzheimer's Day	34		
Section - D: SHORT NEWS					
	Area of GS	Topics in News	Page No.		
ART &	CULTURE	Paryushan Parv	36		
GEOGRAPHY		Earthquake light	36		
GEOGR	AFIII	Hurricane Lee	36		
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS		International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML)	37		
		UKUSA agreement	38		
POLITY AND GOVERNANCE		Arunachal launches Aadhaar-linked birth registration	38		
		'Kisan Rin Portal	38		
		Rubber Board to increase area under rubber in Northeast	39		
ECONO	IVI Y	RBI's Financial Inclusion index (FI-Index)	39		
		Bharatkosh e-wallet	40		
ENVIRO	NMENT	Rising water vapour in atmosphere	40		
		World Ozone Day	41		
		Army to induct Dhanush guns by 2026	41		
SCIENC	E & TECHNOLOGY	Biohacking	42		
		Formation of water on the moon	42		
		Inverse Vaccine (IV)	42		
DEFENSE COBRA commandos of CRPF in Kashmir 43					
LOCATION IN NEWS					
		Triton Island  Isla of Rum	43		
Isle of Rum  LOCATION IN NEWS					
• Ghost orchid 44					
		Indian peacock softshell turtle	44		
Mulan peacock solishen turtle					

## SSCORE

**An Institute for Civil Services** 

IAS MAINS 2024

A MARK BOOSTER PROGRAMME!

WEEKEND BATCHES



**GS PAPER 1, 2, 3, 4** + ESSAY WRITING



ENRICHMENT CLASSES for MARKS IMPROVEMENT

WEEKEND

**AUGUST** 





**ANTHROPOLOGY** By: SOURABH MISHRA



GEOGRAPHY ( PUB. AD.



**LAW** 

**By:** ANURAG PATHAK & DR. PRAVEEN KUMAR **By:** RAJEEV CHOUDHARY & ABHISHIEKH SAXENA

**By:** RAJNISH JINDAL



**© 8448496262** 



## Section A [MAINS]

- 'Every second extreme poor' in the world is a 'Child': Report
- **The importance of Saudi Arabia to India**
- **☞** India-South Korea relations in the age of Indo-Pacific
- **Government notifies 31 Benches of GST Appellate Tribunal**
- Reservation for Women in Local Self Government
- cs Relook at 'Har Ghar Jal initiative'
- SC to examine validity of extending political reservation
- Lok Sabha is ageing
- RBI launches innovative program to revolutionize credit access for MSMEs
- India's Basmati is reaping the rewards of research
- **OS** Delay to achieve SDGs
- Global impact of high BP: WHO Report
- Taking a giant leap for a new ethics in outer space



## 'EVERY SECOND EXTREME POOR' IN THE WORLD IS A 'CHILD': REPORT

Context:

According to an assessment named "Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty According to International Poverty Lines" by World Bank and UNICEF, India has highlighted that some 52 million children in extreme poverty and every second poor in the world is a child.

## Key-highlights of the assessment

- Basis of Assessment: This assessment of child poverty is based on the new poverty line of \$2.15.
- As per the report, world's extremely poor population is living below the international \$2.15 (Rs 178.38) poverty line and is increasingly being added by children.



In 2022, children accounted for 52.5 per cent of the total extreme poor population in the world.

### **♦** Key findings:

 Poor children are mostly found in two regions sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

## **International Poverty Line**

The international poverty lines were updated in 2022. The three poverty lines are:

- \$2.15 (extreme poverty)
- \$3.65 (lower middle income)
- \$6.85 (upper middle income)

## **India's Poverty Line**

- In India, the official consumption-based poverty line is still the Tendulkar Line, which is close to the World Bank \$1.9 a day line.
- On the basis of NSSO data, NITI Aayog carries the Poverty Line Calculation in India under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI).
  - Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's highest rate of children living in poverty at 40 per cent;
  - South Asia has 9.7 per cent.
  - These two regions together account for 90 per cent of extremely poor children in the world
- ➤ The assessment showed that in 2020 the **onset year of the pandemic** child poverty increased, breaking the trend of consistent decline.
- ➤ Among the children, the **poverty rate** is the highest for the **0-5 year age group**.
- ➤ Some 18.3 per cent (99 million) of children living in extreme poor households were below the age of five years.
- For India: According to the assessment, 11.5 per cent children live in extremely poor households.

## Reasons for rising poverty amongst Children

- Unemployment and Underemployment: A lack of job opportunities or access to only low-paying, parttime, or temporary work can lead to poverty.
- Income Inequality: It leads to a concentration of wealth among a small portion, leaving many families, including children, in poverty.
- Lack of Access to Quality Education: It perpetuate the cycle of poverty.
- Healthcare Costs: It can push families into poverty, especially if they have a child with a chronic illness or disability.
- **Family Structure**: Single-parent households, often led by single mothers, face a higher risk of poverty.

## **Impacts of child poverty**

- Cycle of Poverty: Child poverty can perpetuate a cycle
  of disadvantage. Children born into impoverished
  families are more likely to experience poverty as
  adults.
- Poor Health Outcomes: Children living in poverty often face inadequate access to healthcare, proper nutrition, and safe living conditions.
- Limited Opportunities: They often have fewer opportunities for extracurricular activities, such as sports, arts, and music, which are essential for their social and emotional development.
- Increase in Crime rates: The poverty can drive children into illegal works and vulnerable to drag into criminal activities.
- Negative impact on mental health



## What initiatives are taken by government to address the issue?

- POSHAN Abhiyaan has been a key nutritional plan devised for women and children
- Samagra Shiksha is an overarching program for school education extending from pre-school to class 12.
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) for housing

India has also shown significant reduction in the multi-dimensional poverty rate, from **55 per cent (2005–2006) to 28 per cent (2015–2016),** with 35 per cent among children.

- ♦ Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) for clean drinking water
- Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) directed at promoting cleanliness
- Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya) to ensure electricity in every house
- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) to allocate LPG connections to all below poverty line (BPL) families
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)
- **♦ Mid-Day Meal Scheme**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SAUDI ARABIA TO INDIA

Context:

Amid the announcement of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, a massive infrastructure project that would connect India to Europe via West Asia makes Saudi Arabia a critical partner for India in recent times.

So, let us take a look at their bilateral relations.

### **Background**

- For years, the Saudi Arabia-India relationship had always been shadowed by the **Kingdom's close** ties with Pakistan.
- That has changed, while Riyadh retains strong ties to Islamabad, there is no longer an "either-or" element, and the Kingdom has demonstrated geopolitical diversification in its relations with South Asia.
- The rise of jihadist extremism, the gradual decline of American power, and the rise of

- China have brought about transformational changes in India's engagements with the Gulf region.
- India's Prime Minister has demonstrated an increased willingness to cooperate with Saudi Arabia on a variety of security issues such as joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, counterterrorism, anti-money laundering, and terror financing.
- On the face of it, much of the deliberations have been shrouded over "terror talks": The historic visit of King Abdullah to India in 2006 had laid solid ground for the India-Saudi relationship.
- The "Delhi Declaration," signed between the two countries during his visit, stressed that terrorism was a scourge that "the governments would closely and actively cooperate" to fight against.
- The "Riyadh Declaration" signed in 2010 during then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Saudi Arabia emphasized cooperation on information exchange on terrorism.
- Enhanced security cooperation has added a new dimension in the bilateral ties between New Delhi and Riyadh.
- Saudi Crown Prince held bilateral talks with PM Modi after the recently concluded G-20 summit.
- India-Saudi Arabia has further deepened their strategic relationship by forming Strategic Partnership Council (SPC).

## **India-Saudi Arabia Relations:**

## **Economic Ties:**

- India and Saudi Arabia enjoy strong economic ties, with Saudi Arabia being India's fourth-largest trade partner, and India ranking as Saudi Arabia's second-largest trade partner.
- Indian companies have made substantial investments in Saudi Arabia, with approximately 2,783 Indian companies registered as joint ventures or whollyowned entities in the kingdom.



- Leading Indian corporate giants like L&T, Tata, Wipro, TCS, TCIL, and Shapoorji Pallonji have established a robust presence in Saudi Arabia, contributing to the economic partnership.
- Saudi Arabia has made significant direct investments in India, totaling around 3.15 billion dollars as of March 2022.
  - ➤ Key investors include prominent Saudi entities like Aramco, SABIC, Zamil, e-holidays, and the Al Batterjee Group.
  - The Public Investment Fund (PIF) of Saudi Arabia has also ventured into Indian startups through SoftBank Vision Fund, making investments in companies like Delhivery, Ola, Paytm, and PolicyBazaar.

## **Energy Cooperation:**

- Saudi Arabia is a key partner for ensuring India's energy security, and was its third largest crude and petroleum products source for FY23.
- ♦ India imported **39.5 million metric tonnes (MMT)** of crude from the country in FY23, amounting to 16.7% of India's total crude imports.
- India's LPG imports from Saudi Arabia stood at 7.85 MMT, and 11.2% of its total petroleum product imports, in FY 23.

### **Defense Partnership:**

- There is extensive naval cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia, and two editions of the bilateral naval exercise, Al Mohed al Hindi, have been concluded so far.
- Both sides also cooperate closely in the domain of defence industries and capacity-building.
- On defence ties, the joint statement said that the two sides commended their deepening cooperation, and agreed to continue work including joint exercises, training and high-level visits, and to "consider possibilities of joint development and production of defence equipment.

**Bilateral exercise 'Al Mohed Al Hindi 23'**, between Indian Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Force (RSNF) was held from **23 - 25 May** off Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia.

## **Indian Diaspora**

The Indian community in the kingdom is more than 2.4 million strong, widely respected for its contribution to the development of Saudi Arabia, and seen as a living bridge between the two countries.

## Significance:

Counter Terrorism Cooperation-Saudi Arabia has a substantial influence over Pakistan. India can use this influence to bring Pakistan to negotiating table for talks on terrorism.

- ➤ Saudi Arabia has shown an understanding of India's terrorism-related concerns and has agreed to work with India in countering the global menace.
- Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030-Vision 2030 plan of Saudi Arabia calls for diversification of the oildependent economy by attracting tourism and foreign investment and turning it into a global hub for business and culture.
  - ➤ Saudi Arabia needs India's technological assistance to execute Vision 2030.
  - ➤ This Vision opens up immense opportunities for Indian businesses like the IT sector and the infrastructure businesses.
- Saudi Arabia has one of the largest Sovereign Fund in the World- It is an important nation to invest fund in India particularly in National Infrastructure and Investment fund (NIIF). Saudi oil giant Aramco and the AbuDhabi National Oil Company have acquired 50% stake in the 44 billion dollars project in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.

## What are the Challenges in India Saudi Arabia Relations?

- Complexity of Middle East Politics-The politics of the Middle East are complex and multidimensional. There exist several fault lines like Saudi Arabia-Iran Rivalry, Saudi Arabia-Israel animosity. India faces a complex challenge to manage its relationship with all these countries without antagonizing others.
- Pakistan Factor-The Pakistan factor is also an important challenge in the development of strong India-Saudi Arabia relationship. Saudi Arabia is one of the largest granter of loans to Pakistan. Pakistan has been using its territory to breed terrorism and hatred towards India. This has also led to some discomfort in deepening of India Saudi Arabia Relationship in the field of counter terrorism.
- Nitaqat Program of Saudi Arabia-The Nitaqat program was introduced in 2011 in order to increase the employment of Saudi nationals in the private sector. Saudi policy of 'Nitaqat' have upset the large expatriate community of Indian working in the Kingdom.

## **Way forward**

Greater Integration of economies-Some labourintensive establishments from Saudi Arabia can be shifted to India which would reduce Kingdom's expatriate population. This would also eliminate the need to bring Nitagat Policies. with ISRO.

- Increased Cooperation in Space-With India's growing space prowess, space becomes an important domain of cooperation between the two countries. Newly established Saudi Space Agency can engage
- Increase in defence cooperation- India Saudi Arabia can uplift cooperation in the maritime security domain to safeguard the global oil supply chain.
- Expanding the areas of bilateral cooperation-India Saudi Arabia should expand the potential areas for next stage of bilateral cooperation in Indian infrastructure, agriculture, start-ups, skilling and IT.



## INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS IN THE AGE OF INDO-PACIFIC

Context:

India-South Korea bilateral defense deals and the recently held Korea-India Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue show the convergence between New Delhi and Seoul.

## **India-South Korea Relations:**

- Strong Historical Roots: India and South Korea share a deep historical connection dating back to 48 BCE when Princess Suriratna from India married King Kim Suro in Korea, a cherished part of Korean folklore.
- India and Korea engaged in trade and diplomatic exchanges. Indian traders, scholars, and travelers like Faxian and Xuanzang journeyed to Korea, contributing to the exchange of knowledge and culture.
- India and South Korea established formal diplomatic relations in 1973.
- Since then, the two countries have expanded their cooperation in various fields, including trade, technology, and culture.
- South Korean companies like Samsung, Hyundai, and LG have a significant presence in India, contributing to economic ties.

## **Shifting Global Dynamics for both countries:**

- Similar Security Challenges: India and South Korea face similar security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region due to the military growth of China and North Korea's nuclear capabilities.
- Quad and Global Dynamics: Both India and South Korea are part of the QUAD, a group of like-minded democracies in the Indo-Pacific, which plays a pivotal

role in ensuring a **Free and Open Indo-Pacific** and a rules-based maritime order.

## **Economic Partnerships and Security Cooperation:**

- Economic Synergies: Both nations are exploring opportunities for economic collaboration, including in areas like semiconductor manufacturing and electric vehicles.
- Defense and Security Cooperation: Joint ventures like the production of the K9 Vajra artillery gun and potential collaboration in naval shipbuilding technologies showcase their commitment to enhancing defense ties.
- Trade Deficit Challenge: Despite growing economic engagement, India faces a rising trade deficit with South Korea. Negotiations are ongoing to open up Korean markets to Indian products.

## **Way Forward**

- Alignment of Interests: Both India and South Korea share a substantial alignment of interests in a rapidly changing global landscape, including the ongoing power struggle between the US and China.
- Building Strong Connections: The two nations should work on building stronger bilateral, minilateral, and multilateral connections.
- Mutual Benefits: Trust and mutual benefit should be the pillars of their relationship.
  - ➤ Collaborating on economic, defense, and strategic fronts can help both India and South Korea navigate the evolving global dynamics successfully.



## GOVERNMENT NOTIFIES 31 BENCHES OF GST APPELLATE TRIBUNAL

Context:

The Finance Ministry has notified the constitution of 31 Appellate Tribunals across 28 States and eight Union Territories for the Goods and Services Tax (GST) setting the stage to resolve a growing number of taxpayer disputes with the Revenue Department.

## **About:**

- The States had proposed 50 tribunal benches to the GST Council. These tribunals will be implemented in phased manner.
- Amongst all, the first set of tribunals will become operational from January 2024.

- Under the order, Uttar Pradesh will have the highest number of benches of the GST tribunals, with three benches proposed to be set up across Lucknow, Varanasi, Ghaziabad, Agra, and Prayagraj.
- Karnataka and Rajasthan will have two benches each, while Maharashtra and Goa together will have three benches to take up appeals.
- Tamil Nadu, along with Puducherry, will have two benches, as will Gujarat along with the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu.
- Disputes arising in West Bengal, Sikkim, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will be taken up by two benches of the tribunal to come up in Kolkata.
- For the seven northeastern States, one tribunal bench has been proposed in Guwahati, with circuit benches in Aizawl, Agartala and Kohima that will be operationalised depending upon the number of appeals filed by suppliers in respective States.

## What is GST?

- GST was introduced through the 101st Constitution Amendment Act, 2016.
- It is one of the biggest indirect tax reforms in the country.
- It was introduced with the slogan of 'One Nation One Tax'.

### Objectives:

- ➤ To mitigate the double taxation, cascading effect of taxes, multiplicity of taxes, classification issues etc., and has led to a common national market.
- ➤ The GST that a merchant pays to procure **goods or services (i.e. on inputs)** can be set off later against the tax applicable on supply of final goods and services.
- ➤ The set off tax is called **input tax credit**.
- ➤ The GST avoids the cascading effect or tax on tax which increases the tax burden on the end consumer.

## Levied on:

- The GST has subsumed indirect taxes like excise duty, Value Added Tax (VAT), service tax, luxury tax etc.
- ♦ It is essentially a consumption tax and is levied at the final consumption point.

## **Role of GST Council**

The GST Council is a joint forum of the Centre and the states. It was set up by the President as per Article 279A (1) of the amended Constitution.

### Members:

- ➤ The members of the Council include the Union Finance Minister (chairperson), the Union Minister of State (Finance) from the Centre.
- ➤ Each state can nominate a minister in-charge of finance or taxation or any other minister as a member.

### **♦** Functions:

- ➤ The Council, is meant to "make recommendations to the Union and the states on important issues related to GST, like the goods and services that may be subjected or exempted from GST, model GST Laws".
- ➤ It also decides on various rate slabs of GST.

## **Key Facts:**

- Maharashtra was once again the highest-earning state at Rs.23, 536 crore, followed by Karnataka at Rs.10,317 crore and Gujarat at Rs.9,800 crore.
- Lakshadweep saw the highest year-on-year growth at 210%, followed by Ladakh with an impressive 113%.

## **About GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT):**

- The Central Goods and Service Tax Act, 2017 (CGST Act) in Section 109 mandates for the constitution of a GSTAT and its Benches.
- The GSTAT will be the specialized appellate authority for resolving disputes under the GST laws.
- The GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) or simply the Appellate Tribunal is the second appeal forum under GST i.e. for any dissatisfactory order passed by the First Appellate Authorities.

## **♦** Composition:

- ➤ The GST Tribunal will have one principal bench in New Delhi and as many benches or boards in states as decided by each state, subject to approval of the council.
- North-eastern states could opt for one bench for 2-3 states and an additional bench for very farflung areas.
- ➤ The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Appellate Tribunal is likely to be headed by a former Supreme Court judge or a former Chief Justice of a High Court.
- ➤ The principal bench and state boards would have two technical and two judicial members each, with equal representation from the Centre and states.



All four members would not sit for hearing each case. It depends on the threshold or value of dues involved.

## Powers of the Appellate Tribunal under GST

- As per the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the GST Appellate Tribunal holds the same powers as the court and is deemed Civil Court for trying a case.
- The Tribunal also has the power to impose penalties, revoke or cancel registrations, and take such other measures as may be necessary to ensure compliance with the GST laws.



## RESERVATION FOR WOMEN IN LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT

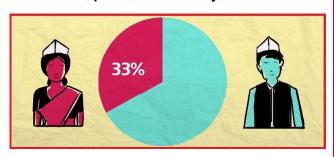
Context:

The Central government has introduced the Constitution (One hundred and Twenty-eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023, to reserve 33% seats for women in Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies. The quota will be applicable to the reserved seats for SCs and STs as well.

Earlier, the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts already mandated one-third women's reservation in Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies in India.

## **Background:**

The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1957 recommended the establishment of village-level agencies to represent community interests and implement government development programs. It called for elected local bodies with devolved resources, power, and authority.



- In 1977, the Asoka Mehta Committee proposed a transformation of Panchayati Raj into a political institution, citing its failure to fulfill its potential. The committee attributed this failure to an unsympathetic bureaucracy, lack of political will, and unclear roles.
- Some states, including Karnataka, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh, passed new laws based on

- the Asoka Mehta Committee's recommendations to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- In 1989, the Constitution (Sixty-fourth Amendment) Bill aimed to enhance Panchayati Raj Institutions nationwide but was defeated in the Rajya Sabha during Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's tenure.
- Both the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992 and the Constitution (Seventy-fourth Amendment) Act, 1992 were passed by Parliament in December 1992, and took effect on April 24, 1993 and June 1, 1993.

## The New Amendments for Local Self-Governance

- The 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts established local self-governance in rural and urban India respectively.
- The two amendments were added to the Constitution's Part IX, titled "The Panchayats" and Part IXA titled "The Municipalities" respectively.
- Following the two amendments, Panchayats and municipalities were termed as "institutions of selfgovernment".
- ♦ The **Gram sabha** became the basic unit of a democratic system in villages.
- In municipalities, the term "ward committees" was used. These bodies consisted of all adult citizens registered as voters, and the panchayat or municipality was made accountable to them.
- ♦ Direct elections for all three tiers of governance
  - ➤ Gram panchayat at village level,
  - Taluka or block Panchayat at the intermediate level, and
  - ➤ Zila panchayat or parishad at district level were introduced.
- States with a population of less than 20 lakh were exempted.

## **Provisions for Women under Part IX:**

- Out of the total 1/3rd seats reserved for women, 33% had to be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- Importantly, one-third of the seats of office-bearers and chairpersons at all levels had to be reserved for women as well.

### **Elections and Control:**

A five-year-tenure was prescribed for each body, and elections to the successor body had to finish before the previous body's term expired.

www.iasscore.in

- ♦ In case of the body's dissolution, an election had to be conducted **within 6 months** compulsorily.
- There would also be a State Election Commission in each state for superintendence, direction, and control of the electoral rolls for these elections.

## Subjects given:

- Under Article 243G, Panchayats were tasked with preparing plans for economic development and social justice on subjects in the Eleventh Schedule, including agriculture, land, irrigation, animal husbandry, fisheries, cottage industries, and drinking water.
- Administration: The 74th Amendment also provided for the setting up of District Planning Committees to consolidate the plans prepared by Panchayats and municipalities.

## How Women's position impacted after reservation in Local government?

- Transformative Role of Women's Reservation: Women, including sarpanches and block pramukhs, have provided reservation for women in local governance had elevated the discourse on women's rights.
- ♦ Empowerment beyond Urban Perspectives: Holding positions in local governance, signing formal documents, making decisions on education, and commanding respect in their families were seen as tangible fruits of the women's rights movement.
- Long-term Effects of Representation: The inclusion was seen as part of a process to create space and representation for women, offering opportunities similar to those in education, allowing them to thrive and contribute to the public sphere.

## **Need or inclusion of women in Politics:**

- As per data compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in India, women make up 14.44% of the 17th Lok Sabha.
- As per the latest available report of the Election Commission of India (ECI), women represent 10.5% of all Members of Parliament as of October 2021.
- ♦ For all the state assemblies, female MLAs' representation stands at an average of 9%.
- India's ranking in this regard has fallen over the last few years. It is currently behind Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

## What are the loopholes in Local government with Women Participation?

## Difficulties faced by women to represent in Panchayat Raj institutions are-

- Political intervention present in the Panchayats
- Women are made to act as proxies for men
- Husband takes the intervention of the elected women and operates on her behalf
- Women in rural areas lack the awareness of the political; rights they possess
- All the negative public opinions
- Lack of education of women in the rural areas
- Lack of training courses for the women
- Violence against women to suppress them from acting their rights

## How can Women be more Effectively Represented in Politics?

- Reservation of Seats: One of the most effective ways to increase women's representation in politics is to reserve seats for women in legislative bodies.
  - ➤ This has been implemented in some states like **Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal**, where a certain percentage of seats are reserved for women in local bodies.
- Political Parties should ensure Women Representation: Political parties should ensure that women are given adequate representation in candidate selection for elections.
  - ➤ They should make an effort to recruit women candidates and give them priority in winnable seats.
- Education and Training: Education and training programs can be conducted to empower women to participate in politics.
  - This will help women to build their confidence and skill set, and understands the complexities of politics.
- Address Social and Cultural Barriers: Women's effective representation in politics can be hindered by social and cultural barriers such as patriarchy and gender norms.
  - ➤ These issues should be addressed through campaigns, education and awareness programs, and social reform initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana etc.



## RELOOK AT 'HAR GHAR JAL INITIATIVE'

Context:

With the Jal Jeevan Mission, piped water to every village in India has risen from 1.2% in 2019 to 97.5% in 2023. This has eased women's burden of work, but acceptance is slow.

So, let us relook the points and targets under the Har Ghar Jal Mission.

### **About the Mission:**

Har Ghar Jal, which translates to "Water to Every Home," is a flagship mission of the Ministry of Jal Shakti.



## Broader objective:

- ➤ It is part of the broader **Jal Jeevan Mission**, which focuses on sustainable water supply management and water resource development in rural areas.
- ➤ It is also part of India's progress towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 6, which aims to ensure access to 'clean water and sanitation for all'.
- Objective: Its primary goal is to ensure that every rural household in India has access to clean and potable drinking water. The mission aims to provide tap water connections to all rural households by 2024.

## **Key Features of Har Ghar Jal:**

- · Capacity Building and Training
- Community Participation
- Infrastructure Development
- Water Quality Monitoring
- Development of utilities
- The mission focuses on improving and expanding the rural water supply infrastructure, including the creation of piped water supply systems.

- This involves constructing water sources, storage tanks, distribution networks, and individual household tap connections to deliver safe drinking water directly to people's homes.
- Administered by: It coordinates efforts across government departments and agencies, including the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and the Ministry of Jal Shakti, to ensure a holistic approach to water management.

## What is the progress so far?

- As per the data published on the Jal Jeevan Mission's official website, the number of rural households across the country that had access to piped and safe drinking water in August 2019 was 3.23 crore (which is 16.6% of all rural households).
- As of July 2, 2023, that number stands at 12.45 crore households. However, this is still only 64% of all rural households.
- ♦ So far, seven states and union territories have been certified as 'Har Ghar Jal'.

## What's causing the delay?

- The Russia-Ukraine war that resulted in "major shortages of steel and cement, critical to the manufacture and connection of metal pipes
- The lack of skilled manpower to make acceptable quality tanks, cisterns and water connections was also an issue.
- The pandemic COVID-19 led to delays in the implementation of the 'Har Ghar Jal initiative' Restrictions and disruptions affected the availability of resources and manpower required for the project.

### What are the loopholes?

A major challenge transporting water to villages sprawled across hundreds of kilometres is 'leakage'.

Water is a matter included in **Entry 17 of List-II**, i.e. State List.

- Unlike in cities and urban settlements where pumped water is stored in tanks, most of the villages with new tap connections don't have centralised or even individual storage tanks.
- Untreated water supplies are frequent in many regions causing diseases like Diarrhea, cholera etc.

## Suggestive measures

States/ UTs have been advised to plan and implement piped water supply schemes of bulk water transfer based on safe water sources such as **surface water sources or alternative safe ground water** sources for the villages with water quality issues.

- Rural Water Supply Department of State declares the village as 'Har Ghar Jal' village on the basis of work completion report of the field engineer associated with the project the villages are marked as 'reported Har Ghar Jal' in JJM IMIS.
  - ➤ The Gram Sabha should take a stand on the certification process.



## SC TO EXAMINE VALIDITY OF EXTENDING POLITICAL RESERVATION

Context:

After the five-judge bench started hearing the plea to examine the validity of the Constitution (104th Amendment) Act, 2019 under which petitioners raised question on can Parliament use its constituent powers to repeatedly amend Article 334 of the Constitution to extend the reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.

## **Background:**

- The British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald presented the "Communal Award" in 1933.
- ♦ This instituted the **reservation system** that is presently still in effect.



Following independence, the leaders of the country instituted the reservation system, which was initially only applicable to members of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

- Leaders the Anglo-Indian community, Scheduled Classes, and Scheduled Tribes were granted legislative quotas of seats under Article 334 of the Indian Constitution from 1950 to 1960 i.e. for ten years.
- The period of reservation was increased by subsequent acts;
  - ➤ 45th CAA 1980 Extended seats up to 26th January 1990,
  - ► 62nd CAA Extension of Reservation of seats up to 26th January 2000,
  - ➤ 79th CAA Extended the Reservation of seats up to 26th January 2010, and
  - ➤ 95th CAA Extended the Reservation of seats up to 26th January 2020.

## **About 104<sup>TH</sup> Amendment of the Constitution:**

- Article 334 of the Constitution provided for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), and a special representation of the Anglo-Indian community by nomination in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for 10 years.
  - The term Anglo Indian is related to a person who is an Indian native but whose father or any other male progenitors in the male line are or were of European descent.
  - It originates from the East India company's policy of **encouragement of local marriages**.
- The 104th Amendment also introduced a freeze on the delimitation of constituencies.
- This freeze effectively means that the number of seats allocated to each state and union territory for SCs and STs remained unchanged until the year 2031.
- After the five-judge bench started hearing the plea to examine the validity of the Constitution (104th Amendment) Act. 2019 on November 2022.

**Delimitation** is the process of **redrawing constituency boundaries** based on population changes.

### **Recent move:**

- Article 334 was amended to extend the period of reservation in the legislature for SCs and Scheduled Tribes from seventy to eighty years i.e. for ten years till 26th January 2030.
- Special representation and provision for Anglo-Indian reservation in Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies were deleted.



## WEEKLY MAINS

## **About the argument of Petitioners:**

- It was extended after every 10 years by a constitutional amendment.
- The constitutional amendments repeatedly extending periods of reservation violated the basic structure of the Constitution.

## The Central government's say:

- The amendment aimed to continue affirmative action and representation for SCs and STs in India's political institutions.
- It recognizes the historical disadvantages and underrepresentation faced by these marginalized communities and seeks to address these issues through reserved seats.



## LOK SABHA IS AGEING

## Context:

The Lok Sabha, India's Lower House of Parliament, is experiencing an ageing trend despite the rising youth population, leading to implications for governance and representation in the world's largest democracy.

### **About Lok Sabha**

- The Lok Sabha is composed of representatives of people chosen by direct election on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage.
- The Constitution of India allows for a maximum of 550 members in the House, with 530 members representing the States and 20 representing the Union Territories.
- ♦ At present, the Lok Sabha has **543 seats** filled by elected representatives.
- The term of the Lok Sabha, unless dissolved, is five years from the date appointed for its first meeting.
- However, while a proclamation of emergency is in operation, this period may be extended by Parliament by law for a period not exceeding one year at a time and not extending in any case, beyond a period of six months after the proclamation has ceased to operate

## What's 'trending' in Lok Sabha?

## **Dwindling Youth Representation**

In a country where around 66% of the population is below 35 years of age, the declining number of young parliamentarians in the Lok Sabha is a matter of concern.

- The trend is starkly evident when comparing the First Lok Sabha's 82 young MPs to the current 17th Lok Sabha's mere 21.
- This decline comes despite an increase in the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha from 499 to 545 over the years.

## **Impact on Average Age and Representation**

- As young MPs dwindle, the average age of Lok Sabha members has steadily risen from 46.5 years in the First Lok Sabha (1952-57) to 55 years in the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2023).
- While experience and wisdom are invaluable, an ageing Parliament might find it challenging to resonate with the aspirations and concerns of India's youthful population.
- ♦ It raises questions about whether the institution remains in touch with the evolving needs and aspirations of the nation's youth.

## **Gender Disparity Persists**

- The demographic transition is not the only challenge. Gender disparity in the Lok Sabha remains a persistent issue.
- Despite a rising number of women candidates and voters, the representation of women in the Lok Sabha remains low.
- The highest-ever count of 78 women MPs in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections still accounts for only 14.36% of the total members, far from the envisioned 33% representation as proposed in the women's reservation Bill.
- The lack of gender diversity affects the quality of debate and decision-making, impacting the inclusive character of India's democracy.

## No Deputy Speaker in the 17th Lok Sabha

- Another unique aspect of the 17th Lok Sabha is the absence of a Deputy Speaker.
- This is the first time in Independent India's history that the Lok Sabha has not had a Deputy Speaker.
- The role of the Deputy Speaker is crucial for the smooth functioning of Parliament, and its absence raises questions about the efficacy of parliamentary proceedings.

## **Changing Dynamics of Parliamentary Sittings**

- ♦ The number of Lok Sabha sittings has also witnessed fluctuations over the years.
- ♦ In 1956, the Lok Sabha held a record 151 sittings, but since 1974, it has not surpassed the 100-day threshold in a year.
- The Covid-19 pandemic further reduced the sittings to a mere 33 days in 2020. This change in dynamics



might have implications for the legislative output and effectiveness of Parliament.

### **Conclusion**

♦ India's Lok Sabha is undergoing significant demographic and structural changes. While experience and wisdom are valuable, the need for youth and gender diversity in Parliament is essential for fostering a dynamic and inclusive democracy. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensure that India's Parliament remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of its diverse population.



## **RBI LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE** PROGRAM TO REVOLUTIONIZE CREDIT ACCESS FOR MSMES

Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has embarked a comprehensive program focused on evaluating the feasibility of a 'Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit.'

## **About Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit:**

- ♦ The initiative seeks to streamline and enhance credit delivery by financial institutions, ultimately contributing to **greater financial inclusion** in India.
- ♦ **Objective**: The primary goal of this public tech platform is to simplify the credit appraisal process, making it more accessible and efficient for both lenders and borrowers.
- Working:
  - ➤ Developed under the aegis of the **Reserve** Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), the Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit is set to become an end-to-end digital solution with an open architecture, open application programming interfaces (APIs), and standardized protocols that all banks can seamlessly connect to in a "Plug and Play" model.

## Significance:

- ▶ By consolidating all the necessary information in one place, this initiative aims to eliminate friction in the credit access journey for MSMEs.
- The RBI's commitment to facilitating financial inclusion aligns with the broader goals of the Indian government and the central bank to support the growth and development of MSMEs, which are crucial drivers of the country's economic prosperity.

### What is Frictionless Credit?

- Frictionless credit is a borrowing approach that seeks to streamline the lending process for consumers.
- Unlike the traditional credit systems, where individuals need to go through extensive paperwork, credit checks and lengthy approval procedures, frictionless credit promises a smoother and faster experience.

## What are the advantages of the platform?

- ♦ Simplification- It simplifies the integration of vital financial data through open Application Program Interface.
- ♦ Scalability- It ensures that credit or other financial instruments are extended to a larger set of borrowers with good credit history.
  - ▶ World Bank pointed out that improved access to information provides the basis for fact-based and quick credit assessments.
- ♦ Productive investment- The borrowers too would benefit by the resulting lower cost of accessing capital, which would translate into productive investment spending.
- **♦ Cost effective** This platform reduces the multiple visits to bank to avail formal credit and costs associated with it.
  - ➤ RBI survey indicated that processing of farm loans took 2 to 4 weeks and costs about 6% of the loan's total value.
- **♦ Improves Efficiency-** It centralizes potential borrowers information on a unified platform streamlines processes.
- ♦ Seamless- The participation of banks, NBFCs, fintech firms, and start-ups in this platform aligns with the dedication to seamless credit and payment solutions.
- ♦ Foster innovation- The 'plug and play' model encourages innovation, driving the lending sector towards greater accessibility, cost reduction and efficiency.

## Similar Initiatives:

- ♦ EASE Reform: It was launched in January 2018 jointly by the government and PSBs.
  - ▶ It was commissioned through Indian Banks' Association and authored by Boston Consulting Group.
  - ▶ It aims to foster new-age reforms in PSBs to improve profitability, asset quality, customer service and digital capabilities.

The **EASE 1.0 report** showed significant improvement in PSB performance in resolution of **Non-Performing Assets** (NPAs) transparently.



## INDIA'S BASMATI IS REAPING THE REWARDS OF RESEARCH

Context:

While many scientific research projects may not have immediate tangible results, there are notable success stories like the significant increase in basmati rice exports from India, largely attributed to the work of scientists at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in New Delhi.

## The Basmati Revolution (the First Revolution):

Traditional Basmati: Until the late 1980s, Indian basmati rice varieties were tall, prone to lodging, and had low yields (e.g., Taraori and Dehraduni).



- PB-1 Breakthrough (1989): Pusa Basmati-1 (PB-1), developed by IARI scientists, revolutionized basmati with shorter plants, resistance to lodging, and higher yields.
- ♦ **Yield Revolution:** PB-1 doubled India's basmati exports, contributing significantly to the industry.

## **Important Facts:**

- India is the largest exporter of rice globally. India ranked second for the consumption of rice globally.
- In 2022, the export volume of basmati rice from India amounted to over three billion metric tons globally.
- Basmati is a distinctive type of aromatic long-grain rice. There are about 34 varieties of basmati rice grown in India.
  - Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh make up the main states where this variety of rice is grown.

## The PB-1121 Phenomenon (the Second Revolution):

- PB-1121 Introduction (2003): Pusa Basmati-1121 (PB-1121), although with slightly lower yields, featured extraordinarily long grain length upon cooking.
- KRBL's Innovation: Companies like KRBL Ltd. capitalized on PB-1121's unique grain, creating the 'India Gate Classic' brand and boosting exports.
- Export Surge: PB-1121 propelled basmati rice exports, with over 70% of the share attributed to this variety.

## The Arrival of PB-1509 and Disease Resistance (the Third Revolution)

- PB-1509 Introduction (2013): Pusa Basmati-1509 (PB-1509) offered comparable yields to PB-1 but matured faster, allowing multiple cropping.
- Disease Resistance: IARI scientists focused on preserving yield gains by incorporating diseaseresistant genes in basmati varieties.
- New Resistant Varieties: In 2021, IARI released Pusa Basmati-1885 and Pusa Basmati-1847, equipped with in-built resistance against diseases, reducing the need for chemical pesticides.

## What are concerns associated with Basmati rice in India?

- Lack of Minimum Support Price (MSP): Basmati paddy doesn't have a minimum support price (MSP), making farmers reliant on market prices, which can be volatile.
- Reliance on Export Market: Most of India's basmati rice is exported, leaving farmers vulnerable to fluctuations in international markets and government policies, such as export restrictions.
- Market and Policy Risks: Recent export restrictions, like the minimum price requirement of 1,200 per tonne dollars, highlight the potential risks associated with basmati farming, affecting farmers' income and livelihoods.

## **Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI):**

- The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) is India's largest and foremost Institute in the field of research and higher education and training in agricultural sciences.
- It has served the cause of science and society with distinction through first rate research, generation of appropriate technologies and development of human resources.

- The administrative control of the Institute is vested with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), which is an autonomous organization established under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- The Institute was originally established by the Government of India in 1905 at the village Pusa in north Bihar.
- After a devastating earthquake in 1934, it was shifted to New Delhi in 1936.

### **Conclusion:**

The transformation of basmati rice from traditional strains to internationally acclaimed varieties reflects the power of scientific research and agricultural innovation in India.



## **DELAY TO ACHIEVE SDGS**

Context:

As per the World Meteorological Organsiation (WMO), the world is far from achieving its climate targets as the Sustainable Development targets (SDGs) deadline of 2030 approaches as extreme weather events threaten its achievement.

## **About WMO's warning:**

- Weather-, climate- and water-related sciences can advance aims such as food and water security, clean energy, better health, sustainable oceans and resilient cities.
- ♦ There is a direct link between these sciences and eight SDGs which include —
  - ➤ SDG (Zero Hunger),
  - ► SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing),
  - SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation),
  - SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)
  - SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities),
  - ➤ SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and
  - ➤ SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).
- Climate change has been fueling disease outbreaks, WMO says that integrating epidemiology and climate information helps understand and anticipate those diseases sensitive to climate.
- Over 50 per cent of countries do not have multihazard early warning systems (MHEWSs).

## **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the **Global Goals**, are a set of 17 interconnected and ambitious goals adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

These goals were designed to address a wide range of global challenges and promote a better, more sustainable future for all by the year 2030. The SDGs cover various dimensions of sustainable development, including economic, social, and environmental aspects.

- No Poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Good Health and Well-Being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
- Decent Work and Economic Growth: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
- Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.
- Reduced Inequality: Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Climate Action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Life Below Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Life on Land: Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

- **WEEKLY**
- ♦ Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- ♦ Partnerships for the Goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.



## **GLOBAL IMPACT OF HIGH BP:** WHO REPORT

Context: Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) has released it's first-ever report on the global impact of high blood pressure.

Hypertension is the most important risk factor for death and disability in India, according to a paper in The Lancet, regional health (South-east Asia), published late last year.

## **Highlights of the Report:**

♦ The WHO report states that hypertension affects **one** 

- in three adults worldwide. This common, deadly condition leads to stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney damage and many other health problems.
- ♦ Approximately four out of every five people with hypertension are not adequately treated, but if countries can scale up coverage, 76 million deaths could be averted between 2023 and 2050.
- The number of people living with hypertension (blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or higher or taking medication for hypertension) doubled between 1990 and 2019, from 650 million to 1.3 billion.
- Nearly half of people with hypertension globally are currently unaware of their condition.
- ♦ More than three-quarters of adults with hypertension live in low- and middle-income countries.
- ♦ The world organisation states that lifestyle changes such as eating a healthier diet, quitting tobacco and being more active can help lower blood pressure.

The economic benefits of improved hypertension treatment programmes outweigh the costs by about 18 to 1.

### Hypertension diagnosis, treatment and control In percentage of total population **Diagnosis Treatment Effective treatment** Region Hypertension coverage coverage coverage African 36% 43% 27% 12% The Americas 35% 70% 60% 36% 14% South-East Asia 32% 39% 30% European 37% 66% 53% 26% Eastern 38% 49% 39% 15% Mediterranean Western Pacific 28% 54% 41% 18% 33% 54% Global 42% 21%

## What is Hypertension?

- ♦ Hypertension (high blood pressure) is when the pressure in your blood vessels is too high (140/90 mmHg or higher).
- It is common but can be serious if not treated.
- ♦ People with high blood pressure may not feel symptoms. The only way to know is to get your blood pressure checked.
- Blood pressure is written as two numbers;

- ▶ The first (systolic) number represents the pressure in blood vessels when the heart contracts or beats.
- The **second (diastolic) number** represents the pressure in the vessels when the heart rests between beats.
- ♦ Hypertension is diagnosed if, when it is measured on two different days, the systolic blood pressure readings on both days is ≥140 mmHg and/or the diastolic blood pressure readings on both days is ≥90 mmHg.

- Things that increase the risk of having high blood pressure include:
  - ▶ older age
  - genetics
  - being overweight or obese
  - not being physically active
  - high-salt diet
  - drinking too much alcohol

## **Key facts:**

- An estimated 1.28 billion adults aged 30–79 years worldwide have hypertension, most (two-thirds) living in low- and middle-income countries
- ♦ An estimated 46% of adults with hypertension are unaware that they have the condition.
- Less than half of adults (42%) with hypertension are diagnosed and treated.
- Approximately 1 in 5 adults (21%) with hypertension have it under control.
- Hypertension is a major cause of premature death worldwide.
- One of the global targets for non-communicable diseases is to reduce the prevalence of hypertension by 33% between 2010 and 2030.

### **Government Initiatives**

- Hypertension Control Initiative Programme: It is a large-scale hypertension intervention under the National Health Mission and has been recognised for its positive work done within the country's existing primary healthcare system.
- Indian Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) is a 5-year initiative involving the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Indian Council of Medical Research, State Governments, and WHO-India.
  - ➤ By December 2021, the **IHCI program** was implemented in 101 districts across 19 states and enrolled more than 20 lakh patients in 13,000+health facilities.
  - ➤ In the 26 initial Phase I districts, **nearly one-fifth** (22%) of the estimated total number of people with hypertension in the district were enrolled.



## TAKING A GIANT LEAP FOR A NEW ETHICS IN OUTER SPACE

Context:

After the success of space mission like Chandrayaan-3 by India, the other countries are also trying to reach out the places unexplored in outer space, especially on moon like what we did with Antarctica. Hence, it raises question on human political instinct to remain first and its ethics.

## About the Human Interface with Ethical Values:

- Human Instinct for Exploration: There is a human instinct for exploration and the desire to claim territories before others, highlighting its political significance.
- Race to the South Pole: As previously we saw the historical race to the South Pole in the early 20th century between British naval officer Robert Scott and Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen.
- Territorial Claims in Antarctica: Presently, several countries, including Norway and Britain, claimed territories in Antarctica after these explorations. Additionally, it questions the purpose of these claims on an inhospitable continent.

## What are the challenges?

The International Geophysical Year (IGY) in 1958 has led to concerns about Cold War rivalry and the need for regulation in Antarctica.

The **Antarctica Treaty** has prohibited nuclear testing, military operations, economic exploitation, and further territorial claims. Currently, **54 parties**, including India, are part of the Treaty.

Challenges in Maintaining Ecological Integrity: It raises questions about whether the benefits of scientific research justify the ecological footprint on the continent.

### **Need for Ethical Standards**

- Exploration of Outer Space: It highlights the race to explore the moon, with India's Chandrayaan-3 being one of the missions.
- The Moon Agreement: It is the time to overview the Moon Agreement, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, which emphasizes peaceful use of the moon, the common heritage of mankind, and the need for international regulation of resource exploitation.
- Crafting a New Ethical Framework: There is a need for a new ethical framework for human activity in outer space, aligning with the moral responsibility to protect outer space from militarization and debris.

### **Ethical Values associated:**

**Ethical Values and Concepts Related to Human Instinct to Remain First and Outer Space Exploitation:** 

Common Heritage of Mankind: The concept of the "common heritage of mankind" is an ethical principle that suggests that outer space and celestial bodies should be considered the shared inheritance of all humanity.



## WEEKLY MAINS

- ➤ It emphasizes that the benefits and resources of outer space should be used for the collective good of humanity, rather than being claimed and exploited by individual nations or entities.
- Environmental Ethics: Outer space exploration raises concerns about the potential environmental impact on celestial bodies and space debris.
  - Ethical considerations call for responsible and sustainable exploration practices that minimize harm to the natural environment of outer space and celestial bodies.
- Non-Militarization: Ethical values promote the non-militarization of outer space, advocating for the peaceful use of space and the prevention of an arms race beyond Earth.
  - ➤ This principle aims to maintain the stability and security of space for the benefit of all.
- ♦ Global Cooperation: Ethical concepts emphasize

- the importance of international collaboration and cooperation in outer space activities.
- ➤ Space-faring nations should work together to ensure the responsible use of outer space and to address shared challenges, such as space debris management and asteroid impact mitigation.
- Intergenerational Equity: Ethical considerations extend to future generations and advocate for the responsible use of outer space resources to ensure that benefits are not exhausted at the expense of future inhabitants of Earth or space. This concept promotes long-term sustainability in space exploration and resource utilization.

## **Conclusion**

As India has always been to safeguard the national and international interest either at Antarctica or on moon and it can play a significant role in policy for all to maintain balance.





## GSSCORE

**An Institute for Civil Services** 

**IAS** 2024

## IAS 2024-25

## **GS FOUNDATION**

Mains eum Prelims

1 YEAR & 2 YEAR PROGRAMME



Only Outcome Matters!

# GS MAINS CLASSES (BASIC TO ADVANCE)

**IAS** 2024



The Ultimate Mains Programme

- **⊗** Everything *for* GS MAINS *in* 7 Months
- **⊘** Complete Coverage of GS PAPER 1,2,3,4 & Essay
- **⊘** Answer Writing + Test Series *with* Personalized Mentoring
- 1B, Second Floor, Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110005 (Beside Karol Bagh Metro Station Gate No. 8)

**8448496262** 

iasscore.in

## Section B [SPECIALS]

## **Topic**

Women's Reservation Bill gets approval



## WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL GETS APPROVAL

Context: Recently, the Lok Sabha has passed Women's Reservation Bill (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) during the Special session of Parliament.

The Bill was the Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill, being passed with 454 members voting in favour and two against it.

## **Background:**

- The Women's Reservation Bill's (the 81st Constitution Amendment Bill) tumultuous legislative history started 27 years ago, in September 1996, when it was tabled in Parliament by the H. D. Deve Gowdaled administration.
- Later on the Bill was again introduced as the Constitution (One Hundred and Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2008.
- But it was never passed by both the houses of the Parliament till now.

## **Countries with women's quotas in Parliament:**

- Women's representation in government is low not just in India, but globally. A quota in government has been approved in 107 nations, including Australia, Germany, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and Sweden.
- Rwanda, Cuba, Mexico, New Zealand, and the UAE have the greatest female participation rates in their lower houses, with 50 per cent or more. However, women account for less than 33 per cent of the population in 134 of 185 countries. In addition, 91 countries have less than 25 per cent female involvement. India has approximately 15 per cent.
- As of June 2023, India ranked 148th out of 193 countries in terms of the percentage of elected women representatives in national legislatures.
- Whereas the global average for "lower chamber or unicameral" is 25.8 per cent, India sits at 14.4 per cent, with 78 out of 543 Lok Sabha representatives elected in 2019 being women, the greatest number to date.
- The Indian parliament is bicameral, with female MPs constituting 11.6 per cent of the upper house, or Rajya Sabha.

## Highlights of the Bill:

The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, formally known as The Constitution (One Hundred and Twentyeighth Amendment) Bill 2023, aims to reserve 33 per cent seats for women in Parliament and legislative Assemblies.

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023, seeks to introduce three new articles and one new clause in the Constitution.
  - ➤ New clause in 239AA: Seats shall be reserved for women in the Delhi Legislative Assembly, 1/3rd of the seats reserved for SCs shall be reserved for women, 1/3rd of total number of seats to be filled by direct elections shall be reserved for women through law determined by parliament
  - ➤ New Article 330A: Reservation for women in Lok Sabha 1/3rd of seats reserved for SCs and STs shall be reserved for women, 1/3rd of total seats to be filled by direct elections to the Lok Sabha shall be reserved for women
  - ➤ New Article 332A: Reserved seats for women in every state Legislative Assembly, 1/3rd of seats reserved for SCs and STs shall be reserved for women, 1/3rd of total seats to be filled by direct elections to the LA shall be reserved for women
  - ➤ New article 334A: Reservation shall come into effect after the **delimitation** is undertaken after the relevant figures for the first census have been published. Rotation of seats for women shall take effect after each subsequent exercise of delimitation.



## What is the status of Women's Reservations in India?

- Gujarat In its 182-member parliament, just 8% of the candidates were women.
- Himachal Pradesh Where women make up one in every two voters, 67 males have been elected and only one woman.
- National average The proportion of women in state legislatures nationwide is still at 8%.

## 

Rankings – According to a survey by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, India is ranked 144th out of 193 nations in terms of the representation of women in parliament.

## What is Delimitation?

- Delimitation is the process through which boundaries of parliamentary or Assembly constituencies are drawn.
- As per the Constitution, the number of seats allocated to each state in the Lower House of Parliament is dependent on its population. Hence, the populous state of Uttar Pradesh sends more representatives to Lok Sabha than any other state.
- However, the Constitution calls for the reallocation of seats after every Census. In fact, the last such exercise was carried out after the 1971 Census and according to the Constitution 84th Amendment) Act, 2002 there is a freeze on readjustment of constituencies till the first Census after 2026.
- ♦ If the Centre wishes to redraw the constituencies sooner, Article 82 will have to be amended – a move that the southern states are against.

## **Arguments against the Bill:**

Reservation of seats in Parliament restricts choice of voters to women candidates. Therefore, some experts have suggested alternate methods such as

- reservation in political parties and dual member constituencies.
- Rotation of reserved constituencies in every election may reduce the incentive for an MP to work for his constituency as he may be ineligible to seek reelection from that constituency.
- The report examining the 1996 women's reservation Bill recommended that reservation be provided for women of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) once the Constitution was amended to allow for reservation for OBCs.
- It also recommended that reservation be extended to the Rajya Sabha and the Legislative Councils. Neither of these recommendations has been incorporated in the Bill.

### **Benefits:**

The reservation will act as an Affirmative action which is needed to help women: Recent Panchayats research suggests that reservation empowers women and allocates resources.

## Conclusion

India has a sizable female population, which represents a large reservoir of potential that, if unlocked, may propel the nation forward. The inclusions of women will kick-start democracy by giving the vast majority of people a voice in how their lives should be run.









# MP

## MAINS MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

through

## DAILY ANSWER WRITING + MOCKS





## **COURSE FEE**

₹ 15,000 (+GST)

- Comprehensive Programme for Daily Answer Writing Practice
   Mock Test for Mains 2023
- Assessment through 42 Tests
  - 34 Topical Tests (5 Questions)
  - 8 Mock Tests
- Mentorship before test and after copy evaluation
- Copy evaluation @ 48 Hrs.
- Flexible schedule of tests as per your preparation plan

## Section C [PRELIMS]

To Attempt -

Weekly Current Affairs Test, Visit

## www.iasscore.in

- **Sindhudurg Fort**
- cs 'The Sacred Ensembles' of the Hoysalas
- santiniketan inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List
- **68** Bima Sugam platform
- os PM Vishwakarma Scheme
- প্তে Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thittam
- og Parliament's new home
- **OS** Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)
- The CEC and Other EC (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023
- Unified portal for agri-statistics (UPAg)
- RNA recovery to resurrect extinct 'Tasmanian tiger'
- Long-necked dicraeosaurid dinosaur
- Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP)
- World Alzheimer's Day



## SINDHUDURG FORT

Context:

In line to celebrate Navy Day 2023, the government is planning to get it held at the iconic Sindhudurg Fort off the Maharashtra coast, built by Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the 17th century.

India celebrates Navy Day on **December 4** to commemorate the Indian Navy's attack on the **Karachi harbour** during the **1971 war against Pakistan**.

## **About Sindhudurg Fort:**

- The Sindhudurg Fort was built in the 1668, built by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.
- This sea fort is considered a masterpiece in military defense.



- Its main objective was to counter the rising influence of foreign (English, Dutch, French and Portuguese) merchants and to curb the rise of Siddhis of Janjira.
- ♦ It is Located in Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra.
- Sindhudurg fort is located on a small island surrounded by the Arabian Sea near the shore of Malvan.
- The fort is spread across 48 acres.
- ♦ It was constructed using locally available **laterite** stone.
- It is a remarkable example of the Maratha military architecture of the 17th century. The fort's construction technique, called the "Tekdi technique," is unique and impressive.
- The fort is also an excellent example of Maratha art and architecture, with intricate carvings and sculptures that reflect the Maratha art style of the 17th century.

- The fort has witnessed several battles, including the Battle of Sindhudurg. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's naval power symbol.
- There are three temples on the fort namely Jari Mari Temple, Shri Bhavani Temple and Shri Shiv Rajeshwar Temple.
- ♦ It took **100 architects** and manpower of 3000 to complete the construction of the fort in 1667.

### **Important Facts:**

- The Malvan Marine Sanctuary is a coastal conservation area situated in the state of Maharashtra, India. The sanctuary is known for its rich marine biodiversity and diverse habitats.
- Notably, the sanctuary includes the historic Sindhudurg Fort, a monumental structure constructed by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. This fort adds cultural and historical significance to the conservation area.

## Strategic significance:

- ▶ Built to defend the **Konkan coast** against foreign invasions.
- A naval base for Maratha Empire to control the Arabian Sea.
- ➤ The fort played a crucial role in the Maratha Empire's naval strategy, as it allowed them to control the sea and defend against attacks by foreign powers.
- ➤ Well-planned fortification to protect against enemy ships.

## **Battle of Sindhudurg:**

- In 1713, the fort was besieged by the British under the command of Colonel Robert Cowan, but it withstood the attack and the British forces retreated.
- The fort was also attacked by the Portuguese forces in 1737, but they were repelled by the Maratha forces.
- ♦ The British captured it in **1765.**



## 'THE SACRED ENSEMBLES' OF THE HOYSALAS

Context:

Recently, the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas, which includes three temples in Karnataka, has been inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage List.

### **About the recent nominations:**

At the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the UNESCO has released a tentative list of sites.

## 

- ♦ The Hoysala Temples will be India's 42nd UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan, the university town in West Bengal, was also included as a world heritage site.







## **The Hoysala Temples:**

The Hoysala Temples, built in the 12th and 13 centuries by the Hoysala kings, are dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu.

- ♦ The three temples include;
  - ➤ The Chennakeshava temple, the main temple in the complex at Belur (Hassan district), located at the centre of the traditional settlement
  - ➤ The Hoysaleswara Temple on the banks of Dwarasamudra tank in Halebidu (Hassan district), and
  - ➤ **The Keshava Temple** at the centre of Somanathapura village (Mysore district).

Previously, two other groups of monuments of **Karnataka at Hampi (1986)** and **Pattadakal (1987)** along with the **Ecological hotspot Western Ghats (2012)** had the coveted status form UNESCO from the State.

The excellence of the sculptural art underpins the artistic achievement of these temple complexes, which represent a significant stage in development of **Hindu architecture**.

## Hoysala Kingdom:

The Hoysala rulers ruled over parts of Southern India from the parts of **Southern India** from the 11th Century to the 14th Century.

Hoysala Empire	Details	
Area of Rule	Karnataka and Kaveri delta in present-day Tamil Nadu.	
Time Period	Between the 10th and the 14thcenturies.	
Preceded by	Western Chalukyas	
Succeeded by	Vijaynagara Empire	
Founder	Nripakama II/Sala	
Most important ruler	Bittaga Vishnuvardhana. Annexed Chola province of Gangawadi.Defeated Chalukya Vikramaditya VI	
Capital	Initially Belur. Later- Halebidu	
Administration	Divided into provinces: Nadu, Vishaya, Kampana and Desha	
Remarkable for	Art, Architecture, and Religion. Hoysala Architecture	
Literature	Kannada and Sanskrit.	
Important Temples	Chennakeshava Temple, Belur; the Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebidu; Chennakesava Temple	
Architecture	Hybrid or vesara style	
<b>Learning Schools</b>	Ghatikas	
Religion	Jainism, Vaishnavism and Lingayatism	
Contemporary	Basava, Madhvacharya and Ramanuja in Karnataka	
Rajaditya	Mathematician who wrote Vyavaharaganita and Lilavati during Vishnuvardhana's reign	
Last Ruler	Veera Ballala III	

## 



## SANTINIKETAN INSCRIBED ON UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Context: Santiniketan, founded in 1901 by the iconic poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore, has earned a coveted spot on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

### **About:**

- Santiniketan Ashram was originally founded by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore (Rabindranath's father) in 1863.
- This is India's 41st World Heritage site and India stands 6th on the World Heritage List.
- Later on Rabindranath he founded the Brahmo Vidyalaya School and later on in the year 1901 he established Santiniketan.
- Shantiniketan was founded on the principles of the ancient Indian Gurukul system, where education

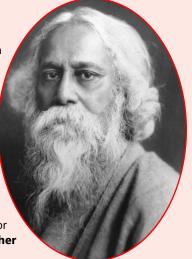
- was provided in a natural setting, fostering a strong connection between students and their environment.
- In 1913, Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize in Literature.



- In 1921, Rabindranath Tagore founded Visva Bharati.
- Visva-Bharati University was later expanded to include a wide range of disciplines, including arts, sciences, and humanities.
- ♦ It became a Central University and an Institution of National Importance in 1951, and is now one of the most prestigious universities in India.

## **About Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)**

- Rabindranath Tagore was the youngest son of **Debendranath Tagore**.
- He was a leader of the **Brahmo Samaj**, which was a new religious sect in nineteenth-century Bengal and which attempted a revival of the ultimate monistic basis of Hinduism as laid down in the Upanishads.
- From time to time he participated in the Indian nationalist movement, though in his own non-sentimental and visionary way; and Gandhi, the political father of modern India, was his devoted friend.
- He was the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913
- Rabindranath Tagore was Knighted by King George V in 1915. However,
   Tagore gave it up after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919.
- Highly prolific, Tagore was also a composer he wrote the national anthems for both India and Bangladesh – as well as an educator, social reformer, philosopher and painter.
- Although Tagore wrote successfully in all literary genres, he was first of all a poet.
  - ➤ Among his fifty and odd volumes of poetry are Manasi (1890), Sonar Tari (1894), Gitanjali (1910), Gitimalya (1914) and Balaka (1916).
  - ▶ **English Poetry:** The English renderings of his poetry, which include The Gardener (1913), Fruit-Gathering (1916), and The Fugitive (1921), do not generally correspond to particular volumes in the original Bengali; and in spite of its title, Gitanjali: Song Offerings (1912), the most acclaimed of them, contains poems from other works besides its namesake.
  - ▶ Major Plays: Raja (1910), Dakghar (1912), Achalayatan (1912), Muktadhara (1922) and Raktakaravi (1926).
  - ➤ **Novels and Stories:** He is the author of several volumes of short stories and a number of novels, among them Gora (1910), Ghare-Baire (1916), and Yogayog (1929)



## CURRENT AFFAIRS WEEKLY

## BIMA SUGAM PLATFORM

Context:

As per the latest update, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to form a steering committee, which will act as the apex decision making body for creation of its ambitious 'Bima Sugam platform'.

## **About the Platform:**

- 'Bima Sugam' will enable individuals to buy a life, health, motor or property insurance policies online.
- ♦ The platform will enable easy access under a single roof for insurance companies, agents, brokers, banks and even aggregators.
- ♦ The platform will act as a centralised database which will assist consumers with all insurance related aueries.
- ♦ It will be a **centralised marketplace** and a one-stopshop for all insurance-related queries, including policy purchase, claim settlement, insurance advice and grievance redressal.

## Significance:

- ♦ The platform will have to demonstrate end-toend digital on-boarding journey for all insurance products without any manual interventions, including customer acquisition and lead management, customer onboarding, application management, documentation, risk management, underwriting process, policy issuance, and customer service management, analytics and MIS and user interface.
- ♦ The platform will have an easy-to-use interface for the online users to easily access the information on the portal, help them in making a decision towards purchase of policy and also support them in servicing of the policy purchased from the platform.

## **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI):**

- ♦ It is a statutory body formed under an **Act** of Parliament, i.e., Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999 (IRDAI Act 1999) for overall supervision and development of the Insurance sector in India.
- ♦ As per Sec. 4 of IRDAI Act, 1999, the composition of the Authority is:
  - Chairman;
  - Five whole-time members;

Four part-time members,

## Entities regulated by IRDAI:

- ▶ Life Insurance Companies - Both public and private sector Companies
- General Insurance Companies - Both and private public sector Companies. Among them, there are some standalone Health Insurance
- 18 Traditional trades to be covered in 1st Instance
- 1. Carpenter (Suthar)
- Armourer
   Blacksmith (Lohar)
- 5. Hammer and Toolkit Maker 6. Locksmith
- 7. Goldsmith (Sonar)
- 8. Potter (Kumhaar) 9. Sculptor (Moortikar, stone carver).
- Stone breaker

  10. Cobbler (Charmkar)/Shoesmith/Footwear
- artisan 11. Mason (Rajmistri)
- 12. Basket/Mat/Broom Maker/Coir Weaver 13. Doll & amp; Toy Maker (Traditional)
- 14. Barber (Naai)
- 15. Garland maker (Malakar) 16. Washerman (Dhobi)
- 17. Tailor (Darzi) 18. Fishing Net Maker

Companies which offer health Insurance policies.

- ➤ Re-Insurance Companies
- ➤ Agency Channel
- > Intermediaries which include the following: **Party** Corporate Agents, Brokers, Third Administrators, Surveyors and Loss Assessors.



## PM VISHWAKARMA SCHEME

Context:

In commemoration of 'Vishwakarma Jayanti', Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme for the benefit of traditional artisans.

### What is PM Vishwakarma's scheme?

- ♦ PM Vishwakarma's scheme has been launched to support the people engaged in traditional crafts.
- **Objective:** The prime focus of the scheme is improving the quality as well as the reach of products and services of artisans and craftspeople and ensuring that they are integrated with the domestic and global value chains.
- ♦ Funding: PM Vishwakarma's scheme has been fully funded by the Union government with an outlay of ₹13,000 crore.
- ♦ Nodal ministry: Ministry of Micro, Small & **Medium Enterprise** is the nodal ministry of the PM Vishwakarma Yojana.
  - > The Ministry of Tribal Affairs would provide active support for implementation of the scheme for the wellbeing of the Vishwakarmas.
- ♦ Under the scheme, the prospective beneficiaries will be registered free of charge through common services centres using the biometric-based PM Vishwakarma portal.

- Coverage: The scheme will provide support to artisans and craftspeople in rural and urban areas across India. Initially, 18 traditional trades will be covered.
  - ➤ These include carpenter (Suthar); boat maker; armourer; blacksmith; hammer and tool kit maker; locksmith; goldsmith; potter (Kumhaar); sculptor, stone breaker; cobbler; mason; basket/mat/broom maker/coir weaver; doll and toy maker (traditional); barber; garland maker; washerman; tailor; and fishing net maker.
- In the first year, five lakh families will be covered and a total of 30 lakh families will be covered over five years from FY24 to FY28.
- Certification: The beneficiaries of the scheme will be provided recognition through a PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card, and skill upgradation involving basic and advanced training.



## KALAIGNAR MAGALIR URIMAI THITTAM

Context:

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has launched the 'Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thittam' (Kalaignar Women's Rights Assistance Scheme), offering Rs.1000 monthly assistance to women in the state.

## About the initiative:

- The state government had months ago announced that the scheme and would be launched on September 15, on the birth anniversary of Annadurai.
- The initiative is recognition of women's hard work, a key objective of the scheme.
- The State government has identified as many as 1.06 crore women as beneficiaries under the plan and the Rs 1,000 assistance is paid to beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer.
- **♦** Significance:
  - ➤ The **Rs. 12,000 payout per annum** would be great support for women, a symbol of development.
  - ➤ It would help them improve their standards of living, lead a life of self-respect and eradicate poverty.

This year will mark as the **115th birth anniversary** of Annadurai.

### Other related initiatives:

♦ Mahila E-Haat: This is an online platform that

- enables women entrepreneurs to showcase and sell their products. While not a direct cash transfer, it supports women's economic empowerment.
- PM SVANidhi Scheme: While not exclusively for women, this scheme provides working capital loans to street vendors, including many women, to restart their businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY): This scheme provides financial assistance to pregnant and lactating women to ensure proper nutrition and health during pregnancy and after childbirth.



## PARLIAMENT'S NEW HOME

Context:

The Parliament proceedings have now been shifted to the new Parliament building.

### **About:**

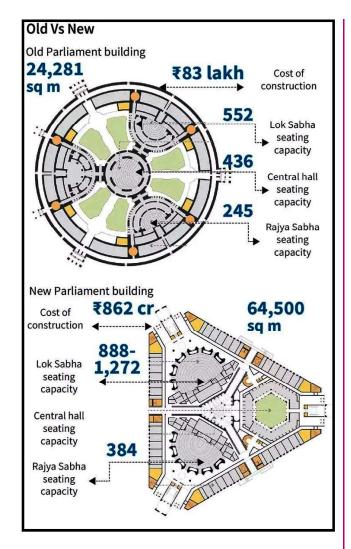
- ♦ The new Parliament building as a reflection of the aspirations of India's vast population of 135 crores.
- Constructed with an estimated expenditure of Rs 970 crore, the newly built four-story structure spans approximately 65,000 square meters and will exhibit an impressive assortment of nearly 5,000 art pieces.

## Notable features of the new Parliament building:

- Optimized Space Utilisation: With a built-up area of approximately 65,000 square meters and a unique triangular design, the building ensures efficient space utilization.
- **♦** Enhanced Capacity:
  - a larger Lok Sabha hall with a capacity of up to 888 seats
  - a Rajya Sabha hall capable of seating up to 384 members
  - ➤ For joint sessions of Parliament, the Lok Sabha may accommodate up to **1,272 seats**
- Symbolic Themes: The Lok Sabha hall is designed around the peacock theme, representing India's national bird, while the Rajya Sabha hall features the lotus theme, symbolizing India's national flower.
- Constitutional Hall: A state-of-the-art Constitutional Hall will position Indian citizens at the core of the democratic process, both symbolically and physically.
- Modern Office Spaces: The building features ultramodern office spaces equipped with the latest communication technology, ensuring security and efficiency.



## Management of the control of the con



- ♦ Advanced Committee Rooms: Large committee rooms are equipped with cutting-edge audio-visual equipment, offering an improved library experience.
- Environmental Sustainability: Designed as a "Platinum-rated Green Building," the new Sansad Bhavan demonstrates India's commitment to environmental sustainability.
- ♦ Cultural Integration: The new Parliament building will serve as a representation of Indian heritage, incorporating the vibrance and diversity of modern India, including cultural and regional arts and crafts.
- Accessibility: It is divyang (specially-abled) friendly, allowing people with disabilities to move around freely within the premises.
- Central Lounge and Courtyard: A Central Lounge will provide members with a space for interaction, complementing the open courtyard which will feature a banyan tree, India's national tree.



## PRADHAN MANTRI MATSYA SAMPADA YOJANA (PMMSY)

Context: In a statement by the Prime Minister, PMMSY has expanded inland fishing even to landlocked States and has made fishing an occupation for many across the country.

## **Background:**

♦ The government has recently announced investment of Rs. 6,000 crore as a sub scheme under the PMMSY, taking total investment into fisheries to more than Rs.38, 500 crore over the last nine years.

## Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY):

- PMMSY was introduced as part of the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' package with an investment of Rs. 20,050 crores, the **highest-ever investment** in this sector.
- The scheme is being implemented in all States and UTs for a period of 5 years from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25.
- ♦ The Government has launched the PMMSY for the development of marine & inland fisheries.
- There are provisions of Ban Period Support to fishermen (during the period fishing is not permitted).
- ♦ The focus will be on Islands, Himalayan States, and North-east & Aspirational Districts.

## Objectives:

- Harness the potential of the fisheries sector in a sustainable, responsible, inclusive and equitable manner
- Enhance fish production and productivity through expansion, intensification, diversification and productive utilisation of land and water
- Modernise and strengthen the value chain including post-harvest management and quality improvement
- Double fishers' and fish farmers' incomes and generate meaningful employment
- Enhance the contribution of the fisheries sector to agricultural Gross Value Added (GVA) and exports
- Ensure social, physical and economic security for fishers and fish farmers
- Build a robust fisheries management and regulatory framework.

## **Key Facts:**

- India stands Third in world in terms of fish production, contributing 8 percent to the global fish production and ranks second in aquaculture production.
- Under PMMSY, overall fish production in the country has shown an increasing trend, registering a fish production of 162.48 lakh tonnes in 2021-22from 141.64 lakh tonnes in 2019-20.
- In 2000-01, inland fish production stood at 28.23 lakh tonne, which rose to 121.21 lakh tonne in 2021-22, marking a remarkable 400% increase.

## **Achievements till now:**

- The PMMSY has helped to expand fisheries to nontraditional areas.
- Almost 20,000 hectares of fresh pond area is being brought under inland aquaculture, and even in landlocked Haryana and Rajasthan, farmers are successfully converting their saline waste lands into wealth lands through aquaculture.
- The PMMSY has empowered fisher women to explore remunerative options and alternative livelihoods, such as ornamental fisheries, pearl culture, and seaweed cultivation.

### **Other Initiatives Related to Fisheries Sector**

- Sagar Parikrama
- Palk Bay Scheme
- Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)
- India is now counted among the world's top three countries in fish and aquaculture production, and is also the biggest shrimp exporter in the world.
- Various fisheries schemes and programs like Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) and Kisan Credit Card (KCC) are committed to resolving the issues faced by the fishing community and facilitating their economic Upliftment.



THE CEC AND OTHER EC (APPOINTMENT, CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND TERM OF OFFICE) BILL, 2023

Context:

The special session of Parliament is going to witness the discussion on a Bill that seeks to regulate the appointment, service conditions, and office terms of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners.

### **About the Bill:**

- ♦ The Bill attempts to alter constitutional provisions that equate ECs with Supreme Court judges.
- ♦ It also seeks to undo the Supreme Court's recent ruling in 'Anoop Baranwal vs. Union of India' Case.

## **♦ Key points:**

- The Bill proposes to revise the salary, allowance, and service conditions of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the two Election Commissioners, to bring it at par with those of a Cabinet Secretary.
- Until now, Election Commissioners were at par with Supreme Court judges in this regard, under the Election Commission Act, of 1991.
- ➤ However, the Bill's passage will result in the 1991 Act's repeal.
- This Bill seeks to constitute a committee of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and a Cabinet Minister nominated by the PM to select members of the Election Commission of India.

## How does the new Bill change the 1991 Act?

- Section 3 of the 1991 Act states that, "There shall be paid to the Chief Election Commissioner [and other Election Commissioners] a salary which is equal to the salary of a Judge of the Supreme Court."
- However, Section 10 of the Bill states that the salary, allowances, and service conditions of the CEC and ECs shall be the same as those of the Cabinet Secretary.

### **Concerns associated:**

- Bureaucratic ambit: This move seeks to bring Election Commissioners under the ambit of the bureaucracy, which in turn could stifle their authority and independence
- Shift tasks and roles: The EC's primary task is that of superintendence, direction, and control of elections, as laid down under Article 324.
  - ► However, this control of elections is likely to shift if the Election Commissioner, who will now be equivalent to the rank of a Cabinet Secretary, tries to discipline a Union Minister for electoral violations
- CJI not a member: The committee formed for election of CEC will not have the Chief Justice of India as a member, contrary to the top court's suggestion in a ruling delivered in March this year.
- Equivalent to Supreme Court Judge vs. Cabinet secretary: The proviso to Article 324 (5) of the Constitution says that a CEC can only be removed in a manner similar to that of a SC judge.

The reason behind the EC's independence and equivalence to SC judges was so that it could freely and fairly decide cases involving the government, the Prime Minister, and Ministers.



## UNIFIED PORTAL FOR AGRI-STATISTICS (UPAG)

Context: Recently, the government launched a unified portal for agristatistics (UPAg) that will empower stakeholders to access credible and objective data for taking informed

decisions.

#### **About:**

- Developed by: The UPAg, developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, is a crucial component of digital public infrastructure for agriculture.
- ♦ **Objective**: The portal aims to address the data related governance challenges such as lack of standardised and verified data, which make it difficult for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders to make informed decisions.



## The UPAg portal will have key features such as;

- Data standardization,
- Data analyses,
- Granular production estimates,
- Commodity profile reports,
- Plug and play.

#### Functions:

- ▶ The portal will standardise data on prices, production, area, yield, and trade, making it accessible in one location, eliminating the need to compile data from multiple sources.
- It will perform advanced analytics, offering insights such as production trends, trade correlations, and consumption patterns, aiding policymakers in making informed decisions.

- ➤ It will perform advanced analytics, offering insights such as production trends, trade correlations, and consumption patterns, aiding policymakers in making informed decisions.
- The portal will generate granular production estimates with increased frequency, enhancing the government's ability to respond to agricultural crises swiftly.

#### **♦** Significance:

- > This platform, designed to streamline and enhance data management in the agricultural domain, marks a significant step towards a more efficient and responsive agricultural policy framework.
- The portal should ensure data credibility.
- This initiative aligns with the principles of e-governance, bringing smartness, transparency, and agility to India's agriculture sector.



## RNA RECOVERY TO RESURRECT **EXTINCT 'TASMANIAN TIGER'**

Context:

In a groundbreaking achievement, researchers have announced that they successfully recovered RNA, from preserved Tasmanian tiger skin and muscle specimens dating back to 1891 stored in a museum in Stockholm.

## About the study:

This study marks the first time RNA, which is less stable than DNA, has been retrieved from an extinct species.

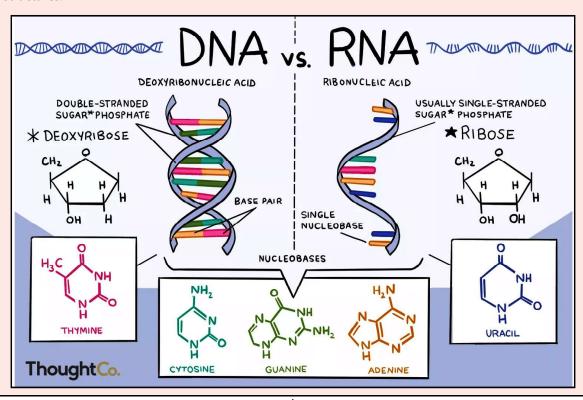


♦ **Significance:** This research could have significant impact to recreate the species and moreover, the ability to recover RNA from ancient viruses may aid in understanding viruses.

#### What are DNA and RNA?

Nucleic acids, **deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)** and **Ribonucleic acid (RNA)**, carry genetic information which is read in cells to make the **RNA and proteins** by which living things function.

- **DNA**: DNA is a molecule that carries the genetic instructions necessary for the growth, development, functioning, and reproduction of all known living organisms, from simple bacteria to complex humans.
- DNA was discovered in 1869 by a Swiss biochemist, Friedrich Miescher.
  - ▶ Humans have a **diploid genome**, inheriting one set of chromosomes from each parent.
  - ➤ DNA has a unique double helix structure composed of four nucleotide bases: adenine (A), thymine (T), cytosine (C), and guanine (G).
- RNA: Chemically RNA is similar to DNA; it is a chain of similar monomers.
  - ➤ The building blocks are nucleotides containing the **5-carbon sugar ribose**, a phosphate and a nitrogenous base.
  - > RNA contains four bases adenine, guanine, cytosine and uracil.
- DNA vs. RNA:
- RNA is more labile (easily broken down) than DNA and most RNA molecules do not form stable secondary structures.



## The Tasmanian tiger:

- Tasmanian Tiger (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*), the only animal in the Thylacinidae family to survive in modern times, was a marsupial mammal that raises young ones in a pouch.
- The animal went extinct in the 1930s and was native to the island of Tasmania, where it had lived for around 2 million years.
- Its DNA also has a lot in common with the kangaroo.
- Even though the species earned its nickname Tasmanian tiger because of the stripes along its back,

- it was a **slow-paced carnivorous** that usually hunted alone or in pairs at night.
- The sharply clawed animal had a dog-like head and ate kangaroos, other marsupials, small rodents, and birds.
- Once widespread in the grass and woodlands of continental Australia extending north to New Guinea and south to Tasmania, the animal's fate changed after the European Colonisation of Australia.
- The animals were reported to have eaten poultry of farmers, and were killed following official authorisation.

## Management of the control of the con



## LONG-NECKED DICRAEOSAURID DINOSAUR

Context:

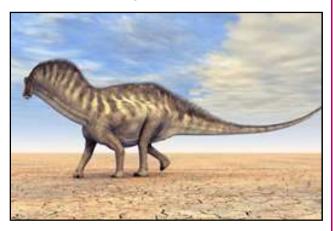
Scientists from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee and the Geological Survey of India (GSI) have discovered the oldest fossil remains of a plant-eating dinosaur in Raiasthan's Thar Desert.

♦ The study of fossil remains stated that the **first-ever** dicraeosaurid dinosaurs (Sauropods) found in India existed in the Jaisalmer region.

## **Key findings:**

India was home to few Sauropods like **Kotasaurus** and Barapasaurus.

- ♦ The Sauropod Dinosaurs' fossile found belongs to the family 'Dicraeosauridae' and from the superfamily 'Diplodocoidea.'
- ♦ The rocks in which it was found are considered to be around 167 million years old.
- ♦ The scientists named the dinosaur Tharosaurus indicus, with Tharo deriving from the Thar desert; saurus from the Greek 'sauros', or lizard; and indicus from its Indian origin.



- ♦ These fossils belong to Early Jurassic and the Late Cretaceous period and very few have from the Middle or Late Jurassic period, which would be about 160-180 million years ago.
- ♦ According to the studies, the dinosaurs can grow more than a **hundred feet**. There are many sauropod groups that are even longer than the blue whale.
- ♦ Considering the fact that we already have more primitive sauropods in India and now the oldest diplodocoid, it is highly likely that India was the site of radiation of these diplodocoid dinosaurs to other parts of the world.

## Significance of the finding:

- ♦ The scientists reasoned that these diplodocoid sauropods could have originated in India during the Middle Jurassic period and used the land connections at the time to migrate to Madagascar, Africa, and South America.
- ♦ After that they could have made their way to **North** America and the rest of the world.
- ♦ That along with the fact that archaic sauropod fossils from during the start of the Jurassic period suggests that this diplodocoid group of sauropods could have originated in India.
- The findings of the study indicate that India was also a major centre of dinosaur evolution.

## **About Sauropod dinosaurs**

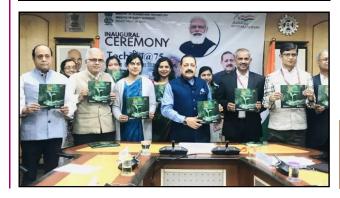
- ♦ Sauropods first appeared on the earth during the Jurassic period, about 200 million years ago.
- They were one of the most dominant clades of dinosaurs, surviving until the late Cretaceous period 65 million years ago, when the dinosaurs went extinct.

India was part of a group of continents in the southern hemisphere with Africa, South America, Madagascar, and Antarctica, together called Gondwanaland.



## RASHTRIYA VIGYAN PURASKAR (RVP)

Context: As per the latest update, awards related to Science are going to be consolidated from nearly 300 into centrally-administered awards under the name of 'Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar'.



## About the update:

- Announced on: The awards will be announced annually on May 11 i.e. National Technology Day, and will be awarded on National Space Day, August 23
- Components: The RVP will comprise;
  - > Three Vigyan Ratna awards,
  - > 25 Vigyan Shri,
  - > 25 Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB), and
  - ➤ Three Vigyan Team awards
- Categorization of awards: These prizes will be awarded annually for physics, chemistry, biological sciences, mathematics and computer science, earth science, medicine, engineering science, agricultural science, environmental science, technology and innovation, atomic energy, space science and technology, and a 13th category, simply called 'Others'.
- The new awards will also be open to persons of Indian origin (PIOs), though a maximum of one such may be awarded the Vigyan Ratna, while three PIOs each can be selected for the Vigyan Shri and the VY-SSB.
  - However, PIOs will not be eligible for the Vigyan Team awards.

## Candidate selection process:

- ➤ The **Vigyan Ratna** awards shall be for "lifetime contributions along with excellence made in any field of science",
- ➤ **The Vigyan Shri** for "distinguished contribution to any field", and
- ➤ **The SSB** for "exceptional contribution by young scientists".
- The team awards shall be for three or more researchers who have made an "exceptional contribution as a team".
- Age Limits: There are no age limits for any prizes except the SSB, for which recipients must be 45 years or younger.
- Prize heads:
  - There will be no such prize money announced for the candidates under these awards.



## WORLD ALZHEIMER'S DAY

Context: Every year on September 21, World Alzheimer's Day is celebrated to raise awareness about the disease.

The **Dementia in India report 2020** estimates that there are 5.3 million people over the age of 60 years living with dementia in India, with the prevalence projected to increase to 14 million by 2050.

#### **About the Disease:**

- It is a neurological disorder which causes brain cells to degenerate and die. This leads to loss of memory, problems with words in speaking or writing, poor judgment, changes in mood and personality, confusion with time or place, etc.
- At the first stage, these symptoms are mild but they become more severe with time.
- Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia among older adults.
- Alzheimer's disease is thought to be caused by the abnormal build-up of proteins in and around brain cells. One of the proteins involved is called amyloid, deposits of which form plaques around brain cells and the other protein is called tau.

**Tau is a protein** that when it occurs in tangled formations in the **brain of Alzheimer patients**, disrupts the ability of neurons to communicate with one another in the brain.

- Alzheimer's is an incurable disease, as the death of brain cells cannot be reversed.
- Women have a higher risk of having Alzheimer's disease than men.

#### **Treatment:**

There is currently **no known cure** for Alzheimer's disease. Treatment

Treatment addresses several areas:



- Helping people maintain brain health.
- Managing behavioral symptoms.
- Slowing or delaying symptoms of the disease.

## **Recent Update:**

 Researchers have discovered a drug named Lecanemab that reduces cognitive decline in patients with early Alzheimer's, making it one of the first neuroprotective treatments for the disease.



# Section D [QUIK BYTES]

- Paryushan Parv
- **G** Earthquake light
- **GS** Hurricane Lee
- International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML)
- **UKUSA** agreement
- **Arunachal launches Aadhaar-linked birth registration**
- ്യ 'Kisan Rin Portal
- Rubber Board to increase area under rubber in Northeast
- RBI's Financial Inclusion index (FI-Index)
- **3** Bharatkosh e-wallet
- **S** Rising water vapour in atmosphere
- **World Ozone Day**
- Army to induct Dhanush guns by 2026
- **COBRA** commandos of CRPF in Kashmir
- **68** Biohacking
- G Formation of water on the moon
- Inverse Vaccine (IV)

## [LOCATION IN NEWS]

- **CS** Triton Island
- **68** Isle of Rum

## [SPECIES IN NEWS]

- **Ghost orchid**
- of Indian peacock softshell turtle

## Paryushan Parv



This year, Paryushan Parva is going to be celebrated from September 12, 2023, and will end on September 20, 2023.

#### **About the festival:**

- Paryushana, also known as Paryushan Parva, is one of the most important religious festivals celebrated by Jains.
- It is an important period of spiritual reflection, fasting and self-discipline for followers of Jainism.
- The festival usually lasts eight to ten days, depending on the Jain sect and tradition, and takes place in the month of Bhadrapada (August or September in the Gregorian calendar) of the Jain calendar.

## Earthquake light



In the recent earthquake hitted morocco has experienced a strange phenomenon which is now called as 'Earthquake light'.

#### **About:**

- The occurrence of light bursts associated with earthquakes has been documented historically for centuries.
- These light bursts can range in length from quick flashes to minute-long fireballs, and they can appear high or low in the sky and appear in a variety of hues.
- Earthquakes can be accompanied by a number of visual phenomena, such as unusual lighting.
- The United States Geological Survey refers to earthquake lights as sheet lightning, balls of light, streamers, and steady glow.

#### **Cause of occurrence:**

- The phenomena as stating that strained rocks, such as basalts and gabbros, a type of course, volcanic rock, might discharge charge when activated by seismic waves.
- These charges have the potential to move towards the surface, combine to form a "plasma-like state," and produce electrical discharges in the atmosphere, according to the researchers.

## **Hurricane Lee**

The National Geodetic Survey of the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has started releasing aerial images that show the extent of damage caused by the Atlantic tropical 'storm Lee'.

#### **About:**

• Lee started as a tropical depression in the central Atlantic Ocean on September 5, 2023.

## WILLIAM SHORT NEWS





- It intensified into a Category 5 storm with a wind speed of 160 miles per hour (mph).
- The storm swept over Nova Scotia in Canada and Maine in the US after making landfall on September 16, 2023, bringing ferocious winds and heavy rainfall.

#### Classification of Hurricanes:

- Category 1 (Wind Speed: 74-95 mph or 119-153 km/h): Hurricanes in this category are considered
  - They can cause minimal damage to structures, trees, and power lines. Storm surges may result in some coastal flooding.
- Category 2 (Wind Speed: 96-110 mph or 154-177 km/h): Category 2 hurricanes are moderately strong and can cause more significant damage to buildings, roofs, and trees.
- Category 3 (Wind Speed: 111-129 mph or 178-208 **km/h):** These are classified as major hurricanes.
  - They have the potential to cause extensive damage to homes, buildings, and infrastructure. Coastal flooding and storm surges can be severe.
- Category 4 (Wind Speed: 130-156 mph or 209-251 km/h): Category 4 hurricanes are extremely dangerous.
  - They can cause catastrophic damage, including the destruction of well-built homes, significant power outages, and severe coastal flooding from storm surges.
- Category 5 (Wind Speed: 157 mph or higher or 252 km/h or higher): Category 5 hurricanes are the most powerful and destructive.
- They can lead to total devastation, including the destruction of buildings, widespread power outages, and life-threatening storm surges with massive coastal flooding.

## **International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML)**



India has become the 13th country authorised to certify 'measuring and weighing instruments' based on globally accepted standards of the Paris-based International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML)

#### About:

- The OIML stands for International Organisation of Legal Metrology.
- OIML Established in 1955 and headquartered in Paris, the OIML is an international standard-setting body.
- It develops model regulations, standards and related documents for use by legal metrology authorities and industry.

www.iasscore.in

- It plays a crucial role in **harmonising national laws** and regulations on the performance of measuring instruments like clinical thermometers, alcohol breath analysers, radar speed measuring instruments, ship tanks found at ports, and petrol dispensing units.
- This move is expected to help the Indian economy in several ways, including increase in exports, and earning of foreign exchange.

## **UKUSA** agreement



Canada's accusation of India with respect to its role in the assassination of a Khalistani leader has received support from the **Five Eyes intelligence alliance** named '**UKUSA'**.

#### **About:**

- The Five Eyes is an intelligence alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, formed in 1946.
- The alliance is based on a series of bilateral agreements on surveillance and intelligence-sharing.
- These arrangements are commonly known as the United Kingdom-United States Communication Intelligence Act (UKUSA) agreement.

## Arunachal launches Aadhaar-linked birth registration



Arunachal Pradesh became the **second state** in the Northeast after Nagaland to launch **Aadhaar-linked birth registration.** 

#### **About:**

- It would help in birth registration-based Aadhaar enrolment for children up to the age of 5.
- Aim: To ensure successful implementation of the initiative, so that no child is deprived of the benefits of any social welfare schemes.
- A child would be provided with a blue colored 'Baal Aadhaar', which would be visibly distinguishable from other Aadhaar cards.
- Nodal Agency: The Directorate of Economics and Statistics, the registrar for birth and death in the state, is the nodal department for Aadhaar related activities.

## **'Kisan Rin Portal**

Recently, the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** launched 'Kisan Rin Portal', focusing on **agriculture credit and crop insurance**.

#### **About:**

• The 'Kisan Rin Portal' to help farmers avail subsidised loans under the **Kisan Credit Card (KCC).** 

## MANAGEMENT NEWS MANAGEMENT



- The 'Kisan Rin Portal' is focused on agri-credit and crop insurance, with its primary purpose being to transform access to credit services provided through the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme.
- It offers a comprehensive view of farmer data, loan disbursement details, interest subvention claims, and efficient agriculture credit management.
- The KRP is poised to transform access to credit services provided through the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme.
- It offers a comprehensive view of farmer data, loan disbursement details, interest subvention claims, and efficient agriculture credit management.

## Rubber Board to increase area under rubber in Northeast



The Rubber Board, jointly with the Central the **Automotive** government and Manufacturers' Association, is implementing a project to expand the area under natural rubber in the Northeastern States.

#### **About Rubber Board:**

- It is a statutory organization.
- It is constituted under Section (4) of the **Rubber Act**. 1947 and functions under the administrative control of Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Functions:** 
  - Undertaking, assisting or encouraging scientific, technological and economic research.
  - Training students in improved methods of planting, cultivation, manuring and spraying.
  - Improving the marketing of rubber.
- Head Office is in Kottayam, Kerala.

Tripura has become 2nd largest producer of natural rubber in the country, after Kerala, accounting for about 9% of the total production of India. Tripura also has the **second largest rubber** growing area in the country, after Kerala.

## RBI's Financial Inclusion index (FI-Index)

The RBI's composite Financial Inclusion index (FI-Index) has increased to 60.1 in March 2023, indicating growth across all criteria.

## About:

- The FI-Index measures the level of financial inclusion across the country
- It comprises three broad parameters
  - ➤ Access (35 per cent)



- ➤ Usage (45 per cent)
- Quality (20 per cent)
- Essentially, it tracks how well the financial services have been extended to the unbanked population of the country.
- The index ranges between **0 and 100**, with 0 meaning complete financial exclusion and 100 meaning complete financial inclusion.
- The index covers banking, investment, insurance, postal and pension sectors, tracking their delivery and usage amongst the population.

## Bharatkosh e-wallet

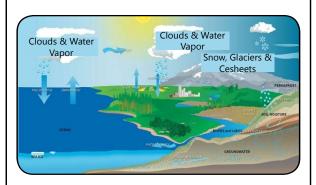


With an aim to ensure timely **certification of aircraft** and **crew**, the government has rolled out an **e-wallet** payment option on a pilot basis on its **non-tax** receipt portal, Bharatkosh.

#### **About:**

- The Bharatkosh is the initiative of Office of Controller General of Accounts, Ministry of Finance, and Government of India to provide one stop services to deposit any fees/fine/other money into the Government Account.
- It converges all the Civil Ministries/Departments of Government of India.
- It aims to provide 24X7 year round electronic services to deposit the money into Government Account using internet based payment technologies to the users at the door step through the web based portal.
- It thus leverages the e-Governance commitment of the Government to provide e-efficient, e-effective, e-excellent government anywhere anytime.

## Rising water vapour in atmosphere



Rising water vapour in the atmosphere is amplifying warming and making extreme weather worse.

#### **About:**

- Water vapour (aqueous vapor) is the gas phase of water. It is one state of the water cycle within the hydrosphere.
- **Production method:** evaporation of liquid water or from the sublimation of ice.
- It is a greenhouse gas, and the most abundant one on Earth.
- Duration: When compared to other greenhouse gases (ranging from years to centuries), water vapour stays in the atmosphere for a much shorter period of time.
- **Impact on climate:** When water vapor increases in stratosphere, climate change may accelerate.



40

## MANAGEMENT NEWS MANAGEMENT

**WEEKLY** 

This rise in water vapor can also slow down the recovery of the ozone layer, the protective **blanket** that shields us from the Sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.

**Stratosphere** is a super-dry region of our atmosphere. It's positioned 15-50 km above the Earth's surface.

## **World Ozone Day**



World Ozone Day is celebrated every year on **September 16** to preserve the ozone layer that protects the Earth from the direct impact of the ultraviolet rays of the Sun.

#### **About:**

- World Ozone Day aims to make people aware of the ODS situation and how further deterioration can be stopped.
- The day is celebrated to commemorate the Montreal Protocol
- It is an agreement related to the environment regulating the production as well as consumption of around 100 man-made chemicals that cause depletion in the ozone layer.
- The agreement was signed in 1987 and in 1992 the UN General Assembly declared that **September 16** would be celebrated as World Ozone Day.
- Theme 2023: "Montreal Protocol: Fixing the Ozone Layer and Reducing Climate Change."

#### **About Ozone:**

- The ozone layer is a thin layer made of gas that protects our planet from the Sun's harmful rays.
- But due to industrial and other types of pollution holes have been created in this ozone layer.
- It has directly impacted the temperature on Earth leading to a global warming situation.
- Depletion in the ozone layer was first detected in 1970 and it was found that the depletion has been caused because of the release of ozone-depleting substances or ODS in the atmosphere.

## Army to induct Dhanush guns by 2026



The Army which has ordered 114 Dhanush artillery guns, and has one regiment operational already, is expecting to receive all the guns by 2026.

#### About:

- Dhanush is a 155 mm, 45-calibre towed artillery gun with a range of 36 km, and it has demonstrated a range of 38 km with specialised ammunition.
- It is an upgrade of the existing 155 mm, **39-calibre Bofors FH 77** gun.

## **CoBRA** commandos of CRPF in Kashmir



The CRPF's elite **Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA)** unit has been deployed in Kashmir for the first time.

#### About

- The Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) was first formed in 2009 under the CPRF.
- The primary objective behind deploying CoBRA teams in Kashmir is to expose them to **different terrains and landscapes for familiarisation**.
- Known as jungle warriors, CoBRA personnel are trained to cover 72 kilometres of terrain in a single day.
- They have been used to fight the Naxal insurgency.
- Their motto is 'victory for gallant in war'.

## Significance of the move:

 The decision to station CoBRA teams in Kashmir is part of a larger government strategy, with plans in the pipeline regarding their eventual deployment and induction in the Valley.

## **Biohacking**

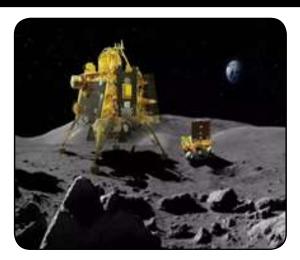


Biohacking has been in focus lately due to its significant contribution in the evolving landscape of human enhancement.

#### What is Biohacking?

- Biohacking is a term used to describe do-it-yourself biology.
- It involves people making incremental changes to their bodies, diet, and lifestyle to improve their health and well-being.
- Also known as human enhancement, biohacking ranges from efforts to improve brain function to faster weight loss.
- Some types of biohacks are relatively safe to try at home, while others may pose health risks and produce varying results.

## Formation of water on the moon

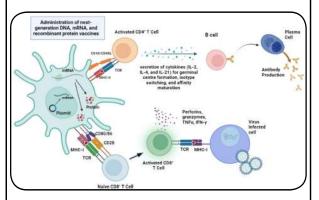


Analysis of data from **Chandrayaan-1** found that high-energy electrons from the Earth may be forming water on the Moon.

#### **About:**

- Electrons in Earth's plasma sheet are contributing to weathering process that aids the formation of water on the lunar body.
- Also, Solar winds, which are composed of high energy particles such as protons, bombard the lunar surface.
- It is thought to be one of the primary ways in which water has been formed on the Moon.
- This discovery can help understanding moon's formation and evolution, and to providing water resources for future human exploration.

## **Inverse Vaccine (IV)**



Researchers developed an **Inverse Vaccine** against autoimmune diseases in which the immune system attacks **healthy tissue e.g.**, **psoriatic disease**, **etc.** 

#### **About:**

#### Mechanism:

- ➤ It makes the immune system forget a specific molecule by using a special property of the livernaturally marks certain molecules as not harmful to the body.
- ➤ Vaccine combines two things: an antigen (a molecule that the immune system attacks) and a molecule that looks like a part of an old cell.
- Liver recognition of old cell parts as "friends" tricks the immune system, and does not attack antigens

## **LOCATION IN NEWS**

## **Triton Island**



China is reportedly constructing an airstrip on Triton Island in the South China Sea, an area disputed by **Taiwan and Vietnam.** 

#### **About:**

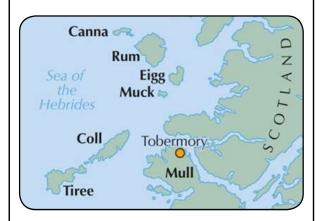
- Satellite images indicate the nearly 2,000-foot-long airstrip could accommodate turboprop aircraft and drones, raising questions about its intended purpose.
- While the exact timeline of construction remains unclear, satellite imagery suggests the project began recently.
- Triton Island, part of the Paracel group, has seen previous tensions as China vies for control over the region.
- China's militarization efforts extend to the Spratly group as well, with built-up artificial islands containing airstrips and military facilities.
- The construction of the airstrip adds to concerns over China's expansive territorial claims in the South China Sea.

## **Isle of Rum**

The quest to **explore Mars** has been an ambitious and collaborative effort **involving space agencies** from across the globe.



## 



#### **About:**

- As part of the joint NASA and European Space Agency (ESA) Mars Sample Return Campaign, the Isle of Rum has been chosen as the sole UK site for rock sampling.
- This selection marks a significant milestone in mankind's endeavour to understand the Red Planet and its geological history.
- The collection of rocks from Rum holds invaluable clues about Mars' past and its environmental conditions.

## **SPECIES IN NEWS**

## **Ghost orchid**



Environmental groups have filed a lawsuit before the federal government **to list a rare orchid**, found mainly in Florida, as an endangered species.

## About the species:

- **Epipogium aphyllum**, the ghost orchid is a **hardy myco-heterotrophic orchid** lacking chlorophyll.
- It is famous for its unpredictable appearance; in many localities it has been seen just once.
- It is found in beech, oak, pine and spruce forests on base-rich soils.
- It is a rare and critically endangered plant in habitat, and is believed to be extinct throughout much of its former range.
- They grow from an underground, burrowing stem which lacks chlorophyll and possesses ephemeral leaves that are small scales.
- The plants only emerge above ground to flower, especially during very wet summers in Western Europe.

## Indian peacock softshell turtle

A turtle rescued in Howrah and was identified as an **Indian peacock softshell**, an endangered species.

#### **About the species:**

- Scientific Name: Nilssonia hurum.
- They have a large head, downturned snout with low and oval carapace of dark olive green to nearly black, sometimes with a yellow rim.



#### 



- The head and limbs are olive green; the forehead has dark reticulations and large yellow or orange patches or spots, especially behind the eyes and across the snout.
- Males possess relatively longer and thicker tails than females.

#### **Habitat:**

- This species is confined to India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- In India, it is widespread in the northern and central parts of the Indian subcontinent.
- These are found in rivers, streams, lakes and ponds with mud or sand bottoms.

#### **Conservation Status:**

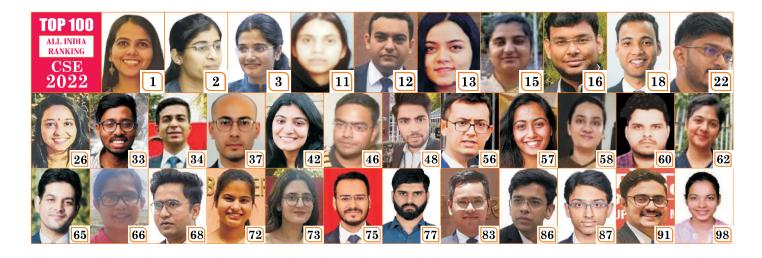
- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I
- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
- CITES: Appendix I











## **SUCCESS IS A PRACTICE WE DO!**

