CURRENT AFFAIRS WEEKLY

MAINS

GS-I
- JANJATIYA GAURAV DIWAS – REMEMBERING TRIBAL FREEDOM FIGHTERS

GS-II
- ADDRESSING CONFLICTS, PEACE, & ORDER IN INTERNATIONAL ORDER
- CONNECTING PEOPLE AND DEEPENING TIES: INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS
- EU'S ROLE IN INDO-PACIFIC
- INCREASE IN DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY BUT MANY ARE STILL LEFT OUT
- KARNATAKA OBJECTS TO VIOLATION OF WATER TRIBUNAL AWARDS
- PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT ON GOVERNANCE IN THE STATE OF DELHI

GS-III
- INDIA TO INCREASE THE INSTALLED CAPACITY OF RENEWABLES TO 500GW BY 2030
- FTAS TO HELP PROVIDE MORE MARKET ACCESS TO INDIAN GOODS
- WINTER AIR POLLUTION AND STUBBLE BURNING IN NORTH INDIA
- INCREASING SPACE JUNK & ITS REGULATION
- LEFT-WING EXTREMISM: GADCHIROLLI ENCOUNTER A BLOW TO MAOIST

GS-IV
- ETHICS OF A LEADER

PRELIMS

ART & CULTURE
- Pochampally is one of the best tourism villages: UNWTO

HISTORY
- Devasahayam Pillai, first India to be a 'saint'
- Puri Heritage Corridor Project

POLITY & GOVERNANCE
- Courts can't dictate how to conduct temple rituals: SC
- Extension of tenures for CBI, ED directors
- Sexual intent is key to POCSO Act: SC
- No consensus on limiting the Speaker's powers

ECONOMY
- Ground realities of Kisan Credit Card (KCC)
- Regulation of Cryptocurrency

ENVIRONMENT
- Kaiser-i-Hind Butterfly declared state butterfly of Arunachal Pradesh

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— 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

SECTION: A
(MAINS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

JANJATIYA GAURAV DIWAS – REMEMBERING TRIBAL FREEDOM FIGHTERS

CONTEXT:

- **In a recent development, Union Cabinet has approved 15th November as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas to remember the contributions of India's tribal freedom fighters for the country.**

- **15th November was chosen as it is the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda who is revered as 'Bhagwan' by tribal communities across the country.**

Who was Birsa Munda?

- Birsa Munda was born in 1875. He belonged to the **Munda tribe** in the **Chota Nagpur Plateau** area.

- He converted to Christianity to join the **German Mission school**. However, he later decided to renounce Christianity and drop out of the School.

- **Birsait Faith**: He created a new religion called 'Birsait', which worshipped **only one god**.

    - Given his growing influence in the tribal community, Birsait soon became the popular religion among the Mundas and Oraons. He was also given the nickname '**Father of the Earth.**

- **Influence on Birsa Munda**: During the 1880s, Birsa closely witnessed the '**Sardari Larai movement'** in the region, which demanded the restoration of tribal rights through non-violent methods like sending petitions to the Raj. However, the oppressive colonial regime paid no heed to these demands.

Munda Tribe

- The Mundas (means "headman of a village") are one of the aboriginal peoples found in the Chota Nagpur region of eastern India.

- The tribe has lent its name to the Munda branch of the **Austro-Asiatic language family.**

- Sometimes Munda is used to designate the many tribes of the region (e.g., Munda, Santal, Ho) that speak **Munda languages** and share common spiritual and cultural values.

- These tribes are also sometimes called **Kolarian.**

- The name Munda was originally applied to the group by outsiders. The tribe's own name for itself is **Hor-on.**

- The Mundas are a people of considerable antiquity, some scholars identifying them with the Mundas mentioned in the epic *Mahabharata.*

About Munda Rebellion

- Munda Rebellion was led by **Birsa Munda.**

- It was a revolt against the **colonial masters and exploitative dikus(outsiders)** and was aimed at establishing **Munda Raj or Munda rule** in this region.

- The revolt later came to be known as **The Ulgulan or "the Great Tumult".**

- **Reason for Munda Revolt**:

    - In 1874, the British replaced the *Khuntkari system* of Munda tribals with the *Zamindari system.*

    - It created the classes of zamindars (landlords) and ryots (tenants).

    - It also intensified the forced labor (vethbigari) in the forested tribal areas and made tribals depend on money lenders for money.

- **Impact of the Munda Revolt:**

    - The movement compelled the British to take cognizance of the plight and exploitation of tribals and bring in the **Chhota Nagpur Tenancy Act of 1908** for their protection.

    - This Act restricted the **transfer of tribal land to non-tribals** giving Adivasis a huge relief and becoming landmark legislation for the protection of tribal rights.

Assessing the role of tribals in India's Independence

- The Janjatis and their leaders rose in revolt against the colonial forces even before the freedom struggle of 1857.

- Across India, following tribals kept up sustained and ferocious attacks on the British-

    - **East India:** Santhals, Kol, Ho, Pahadia, Munda, Oraon, Chero, Lepcha, Bhutia, and the Bhuyan tribes

    - **Northeast India:** Khasi, Naga, Ahom, Meamaria, Abor, Nyishi, Jaintia, Garo, Mizo, Singhpo, Kuki and Lushai

➤ **South India:** Padyagars, Kurichya, Beda, Gonds and Great Andamanese in the south

➤ **Central India:** Halba, Kol, Muriya, Koi

➤ **West India:** Dang Bhil, Mair, Naika, Koli, Mina and Dubla

◉ These movements threw up inspirational leaders.

◉ **Important leaders:** Among them were Tilka Majhi, Tikendrajit Singh, Veer Surendra Sai, Telanga Kharia, Veer Narayan Singh, Sidhu, Kanu Murmu, Rupchand Konwar, and Laxman Naik.

◉ **Significant female Tribal figures:** Rani Gaidinliu, Phulo, Jhano Murmu, Helen Lepcha, and Putali Maya Tamang.

How Janjatiya Gaurav Divas would be celebrated?

◉ To mark this day, the Indian government launched a week-long celebration to commemorate 75 years of the history of tribal people.

➤ **Beginning:** November 15, 2021

➤ **Conclusion:** November 22, 2021

◉ Central and State governments organized several activities as a part of the celebration.

◉ The theme of each activity showcased the achievements of tribals in the Indian Freedom Struggle.

◉ The government also undertook several initiatives in health, education, skill development, livelihood, and infrastructure.

What is the significance of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas?

◉ It commemorated tribal freedom fighters.

◉ It is aimed to make the coming generations aware of sacrifices made by tribal freedom fighters during India's independence movement.

◉ It would acknowledge the cultural heritage and glorious history of tribal communities.

◉ **CONCLUSION**

The Janjatiya Gaurav Divas **will be celebrated every year** to recognize the efforts of the tribals in the preservation of cultural heritage and promotion of Indian values of national pride, valor, and hospitality.

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ADDRESSING CONFLICTS, PEACE, AND ORDER IN INTERNATIONAL ORDER

CONTEXT:

- The world of today consists of nearly 200 states, which are also known as countries. They are similar in many ways. Each enjoys independence, with a government to administer an army to protect the country against a foreign invader.

- Conflict, peace, and security are some of the enduring concerns of the Peace Research Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Nowadays, they have become integrated into the dominant disciplines of international relations (IR) and political science and now are also part of most of the social science disciplines.

What is the meaning of world order?

- 'Order' indicates a condition in which everything is in its correct place. It also refers to respect for and enforcement of rules.

- Day-to-day activities would be normal and peaceful if an order exists. In world affairs, order **brings a certain method** in the way one country conducts its affairs with another state.

- The method can be noticed in the form of a **set of rules and principles**, which are commonly accepted and respected by governments.

- It means that one country should not interfere in the internal affairs of another state, that force should not be used or even threatened in bilateral relations, that prisoners of wars and refugees should be treated humanely, etc.

Are states equal in their size and strength?

- Though the states are supposedly equal in a formal sense, there are gross inequalities among them. And some of these inequalities have been recognized in the form **of veto power c**onferred on five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

- Countries often compete for resources and influence, they suspect each other's intentions and ambitions, and they quarrel about borders, trade, and several other issues.

- Right now a dozen **wars are going on** in counties of Asia, Africa, and Europe causing death to millions and destruction of valuable property.

- Moreover, problems arise not just between states but also within those states. Many states are fighting civil wars.

- Sri Lanka is a good example of countries fighting a civil war. Linked to this aspect are the spread of terrorism, which causes fear among common people through indiscriminate violence and inhumane killings.

What was the 'bipolar order' during World Order?

- Europe remained the theatre of world affairs up to the Second World War. European countries maintained peace by forming alliances to ensure that no single country (like France, Great Britain, Germany) could dominate the rest. The system so prevailed was known as the balance of power.

- The **Second World War** ended with the defeat of Germany, Japan, and Italy in the hands of the alliance comprising mainly Great Britain, Soviet Russia, and the United States of America. In the last stages of the war, the United States produced and dropped nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

- The United States with its economic wealth and military strength, no doubt, made a matchless contribution to the victory in the War. It was felt that the strengths and leadership of the United States would be needed to maintain peace in the post-War world, too.

- Soon after the Second World War, the erstwhile allies, viz. the United States and the Soviet Union developed differences about working together for the peace and stability of Europe. There were **political and ideological reasons** for these differences.

- The United States practiced and preached **democracy and free-market** enterprise as the desirable model of governance. On the other hand, the Soviet Union believed in and sought to spread the merits of governance by a single (communist) party and of a **state-controlled economy.**

- These two leading countries of rival camps were clubbed under the exclusive, new category of **"super powers"**.

What are 'super powers'?

- The term "super powers" is distinct from the term "great powers". Whereas the world identified only

two countries, viz. the erstwhile Soviet Union and the United States as the super powers.

- The super powers individually **possessed military capabilities and economic resources** far superior to other countries in the rest of the world.

- **With nuclear and other destructive weapons** in their possession, they were able to influence events in many parts of the world and the policies of many other countries.

Was there any positive effect of the bipolar world order?

- There were also some positive effects of the bipolar world order. Foremost, **movements for independence from European colonial rule** gained great momentum in Africa and Asia, as both Cold War blocs feverishly encouraged the trend to gain the goodwill of the native people.

- New independent countries did not want to join NATO and hence they launched the **"Non-Aligned Movement"** which tirelessly advocated world peace, nuclear disarmament, and economic advancement of the less developed countries. (India played a leadership role in this effort.)

Which country suffered defeat in the Cold war?

- The fall of the Berlin Wall and the unification of the two Germanys set in motion a series of stunning developments in Europe. Mobs in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and other countries in Eastern Europe rose against socialist dictatorships.

- The Soviet Union broke up into Russian Federation and 14 other Republics in 1991. All these new states abandoned socialism and embraced the Western ideology of democracy and a free-market economy. It was regarded as a grand victory for the United States.

- The US became the single remaining super power with the **fall of socialism and the break-up of the Soviet Union**. To illustrate the domination of the United States, it may suffice to cite just one area, arms exports.

Did the emergence of the unipolar world help the functioning of the United Nations?

- The United States has **no challenger** in claiming the top slot. The erstwhile enemy, the Soviet Union, is now an ally, a partner of the United States in matters of arms control, international security, settlement of regional conflicts, trade, and investment.

- The new power realities are aptly brought to bear in the functioning of the United Nations – a body designed to work for democratic and just world order. The United Nations began playing an **"activist" role in restoring peace and security.**

- **Transparency and democratic functioning** of the UN suffered. The role of the United Nations during the first Gulf War to vacate the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the early 1990s stands out as the best example of the new trend.

Did the unipolar era spell stability in the world order?

- Regrettably, peace and stability in the world do not accompany unipolarity. An important feature of the post-Cold War times is **the multiplicity of challenges** to the nation-state.

- **For example**- Regimes in many countries are fighting a civil war against one or more rebel groups, and as a consequence state machinery has ceased to function or even exist in these unfortunate countries. **Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone**, Somalia are among the victims of this kind of instability.

Security- Multidimensional Aspect

- In short, these aspects of instability point to the need to look at security in a new way. The scope of security has expanded; it includes not only the absence of foreign aggression but also internal stability.

- Security does not just mean building up a strong military force to protect the state; it has to ensure the economic, social, environmental well-being of people.

What is the role of the UN? How does the UN maintain international peace and security?

- The United Nations was created in 1945, following the devastation of the Second World War, with one central mission: **the maintenance of international peace and security**.

- The UN accomplishes this by working to prevent conflict, helping parties in conflict make peace, deploying peacekeepers, and creating the conditions to allow peace to hold and flourish.

- The main function of the United Nations is **to preserve international peace and security**. UN Charter provides for the pacific settlement of disputes, through the intervention of the Security Council, by means such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and judicial decisions.

Different steps are undertaken by the UN:-

◉ **Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation-**The most effective way to diminish human suffering and the massive economic costs of conflicts and their aftermath is to prevent conflicts in the first place. The UN plays an important role in conflict prevention, using diplomacy and mediation.

◉ **Peacekeeping-** Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security but **also to facilitate political processes, protect civilians**, assist in disarmament, support constitutional processes, and the organization of elections.

◉ **Countering Terrorism –** To coordinate the global fight against terrorism. In September 2006, UN member states adopted the **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy**.

◉ **Disarmament-** To advance international peace and security through the pursuit of the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

◉ CONCLUSION

◉ The notions of conflict, peace, and security had undergone a sea change over the decades and the need is to usher in **a more humane concept of peace and security**, where individual rights and liberty are safeguarded and socio-economic inequalities are reduced.

◉ It will only ensure the various facets of human security—that is, social security, economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, political security, and community security.

◉ Only then, **people-centric human security** will be embedded both in theory, that is, security discourses as well as in practice.

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CONNECTING PEOPLE AND DEEPENING TIES: INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS

CONTEXT:

- The recent Korean drama Squid Games has broken all Netflix records and left its audience in awe. While all the drama actors are earning praises for their impactful performance, a Korea-based Indian actor, Anupam Tripathi, is gaining a little extra affection from the fans due to his portrayal of an innocent and soft-spoken Pakistani migrant worker, Ali, in the drama.

- The success of Squid Games and the casting of Anupam Tripathi have brought India and South Korea closer. Both India and South Korea stand to gain strategically and economically from the deepening of people-to-people ties.

⊚ BACKGROUND

- India-Republic of Korea (RoK) relations have made rapid strides in recent years.

- While it may have taken New Delhi and Seoul many decades to reinvigorate their relationship, the two are today in the midst of a multidimensional and transformative tie.

> **Historical Connection**
>
> - According to **"SamgukYusa"** or **"The Heritage History of the Three Kingdoms"** written in the 13th century, a Princess from **Ayodhya (Suriratna)** came to Korea, married **King Kim-Suro**, and became Queen **Hur Hwang-ok** in the year 48 AD.
>
> - Korean Buddhist **Monk Hyecho (or Hong Jiao)** visited India from 723 to 729 AD and wrote the travelogue **"Pilgrimage to the five kingdoms of India"** which gives a vivid account of Indian culture, politics & society.
>
> - Nobel Laureate **Rabindranath Tagore** also composed a short but evocative poem – **'Lamp of the East'** - in 1929 about Korea's glorious past and its promising bright future. He wrote:
>
>   *"In the golden age of Asia Korea was one of its lamp bearers,*
>   *And that lamp is waiting to be lit once again For the illumination of the East."*

- Thus, it becomes important to assess the present state of the relationship shared by both nations.

⊚ ANALYSIS

Where is South Korea focused (historically)?

- For most of its history, South Korea has kept its diplomacy focused predominately on major powers around the Korean Peninsula.

- China, Japan, Russia, and the United States have an outsized impact on South Korea given their proximity, global economic and strategic influence, and integral role in South Korea's most pressing foreign policy and security challenges, like inter-Korean peace.

Why did South Korea start shifting its focus towards India?

- Owing to U.S.-China frictions intensifying, South Korea is increasingly concerned about being entangled in great power competition.

- To lessen these vulnerabilities, Seoul is looking to diversify its economic and strategic partnerships in the region by strengthening ties with India and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) under South Korea's New Southern Policy (NSP).

- The policy's goal is to elevate ties with India and Southeast Asia to the same level as South Korea's relationships with China, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

> **India-Republic of Korea (RoK) bilateral relationship**
>
> - **1962-1973:** Bilateral consular relations were established in 1962 which was upgraded to Ambassador-level in 1973.
>
>   ➤ In course of time, RoK's open market policies and the New Southern Policy found resonance with India's economic liberalization, 'Look East Policy' as well as "Act East Policy".
>
> - India played an important and positive role in Korean affairs after Korea's independence in 1945.

- **Mr. K P S Menon** of India was the Chairman of the **9-member UN Commission** set up in 1947 to hold elections in Korea.
- During the **Korean War (1950-53),** both the warring sides accepted a resolution sponsored by India, and the ceasefire was declared on 27 July 1953.
- **Lt. General K.S. Thimayya of India**, served as the chairman of the **Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission [NNRC]**, after the armistice and contributed to resolving the humanitarian issues arising out of the War, which won appreciation from all quarters.

Why India is a natural partner for South Korea?

- India, along with ASEAN members is a natural partner for South Korea for a few reasons.
- **Trade partners:** South Korea already has strong ties to these countries, particularly in the economic realm.
  - ASEAN collectively has been South Korea's second-largest trading partner since 2017, and Vietnam alone accounts for nearly 9 percent of South Korea's exports.
  - Though South Korea's a trade and investment in India has been relatively stagnant in recent years, India is still South Korea's seventh-largest export market, and the relationship has huge potential.
- **Destination for South Korea's companies**: As South Korean companies look to move manufacturing outside of China due to the increased risk of doing business there, the low labor costs, proximity, and friendly foreign investment policies of countries like Vietnam and India make them good destinations for South Korean investments in manufacturing.

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):

- Korea and India signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in Seoul on 7 August 2009 and was operationalized with effect from 1 January 2010.
- CEPA is Korea's first free trade agreement with a member of the BRICS nations.

Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement:

- The revised Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement was signed during the State visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Seoul on 18 May 2015

Korean Companies in India

- Among Korean companies that have invested in India, Hyundai Motor Group, Samsung Electronics, and LG Group have been the leaders.

- **Similar concerns about China:** These countries also share similar concerns about Chinese influence in the region and a desire to mitigate the uncertainties and risks posed by great power competition.

How is the new Southern Policy strengthening these ties?

- The policy has three pillars:
  - peace (meaning political and strategic cooperation)
  - prosperity (meaning economic cooperation)
  - people (meaning socio-cultural cooperation)

How do people-to-people strengthen the relationship?

- **Better cultural understanding:** People-to-people ties help build a cultural understanding.
  - In 2011, the **ICC** was established in Seoul to "showcase India's rich cultural heritage and promote cultural exchanges" between India and South Korea. Located just across the Embassy of India, ICC organizes **'International Day of Yoga', 'Tagore Jayanti', 'Gandhi Jayanti'**, festivals of India, etc., to promote Indian culture in South Korea.
- **Sustaining relationship:** People-to-people connections built through cultural understanding help sustain relations between two countries.
- **Better for business flourishing:** The increased cultural exchanges between South Korea and India have developed a feasible environment for businesses to flourish.
- **Strong relationship:** A cultural affiliation based on a people-to-people connection acts as a glue to bind the relationship and prevents it from cracking.

How leader's policies are aiding the strong relationship?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's **Act East Policy (AEP)** and President Moon Jae-in's **New Southern Policy (NSP)** are giving primacy to the acceleration of RoK's economic and strategic relations with India—both have led to a convergence of interests and energies between the two countries.
- This has had a visible impact on the widening

of bilateral trade and commerce, apart from the alignment of their strategic interests in the Northeast Asian region.

What about 'QUAD' and South Korea's regional diplomacy?

- South Korea's approach to the **minilateral Quadrilateral Security Dialogue** (commonly called the **Quad**) has been similar to its approach to the **free-and-open Indo-Pacific narrative**—work with partners practically while avoiding open endorsement of their regional strategies.

- The Quad members—Australia, India, Japan, and the United States—have been careful not to explicitly call out China in Quad summits.

- As the Quad has continued to develop and define its priorities, South Korea has shown willingness to cooperate through parallel initiatives, or in some cases to do so directly.

- Though South Korea is not a member of the Quad, it was a part of the **Quad Plus meetings** in March 2020, where it participated in talks on the pandemic response.

Which areas require cooperation?

- Both nations can think of expanding cooperation in the following areas:

- **Country-to-country engagement** (party to party level cooperation/institutionalising democratic assistance)

- **Cooperation with like-minded countries in Asia** to build capacities, technical/financial support on promoting and strengthening democratic governance

- **Cooperation on fighting global issues/ challenges**: climate change, freedom of navigation, internet governance, and outer space

- **Economic order**: Sustainable development goals (SDGs), trade agreements, and connectivity norms

- **Creation of a Security Order** (i.e., Quad) to secure a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific

- **Aid:** line of credit

- **More openness** to think tanks/NGOs/networks of scholars/activists to create a critical mass

- **Cooperation at the level of NGOs and think tanks** – to build networks of think tanks and research organizations

⊙ CONCLUSION

At present, there is massive scope to expand ties between India and South Korea and make it a special relationship in Asia. However, what is required to do so is political will and new imagination in diverse areas such as cultural relations, building on people-to-people contacts, harnessing democracy and liberal values, and cementing civilizational connections. These, in turn, will depend on the strength of the bilateral economic and political relations.

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EU'S ROLE IN INDO-PACIFIC

CONTEXT:

- Recently, the European Union (EU) released the 'EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific,' a document outlining a cooperation plan with the Indo-Pacific. The strategy defines the region as extending from the east coast of Africa to the Pacific Island States.

- Moreover with the speedy development of the Quad comprising Australia, Japan, India, and the U.S. and the emergence of AUKUS comprising Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. including other alignments raise the question: where does Europe stand about this churning?

⊙ BACKGROUND

- The economic, demographic, and political weight of the Indo-Pacific region is expanding, from the east coast of Africa to the Pacific island states.

- The world's centre of gravity is moving towards the Indo-Pacific, both in geo-economic and geo-political terms. The futures of the EU and the Indo-Pacific are interlinked.

- The EU and the Indo-Pacific are highly interconnected, with many shared interests and solid ties, from trade and investments to research and innovation, as well as sustainable development, climate change, biodiversity protection, and security.

⊙ ANALYSIS

Why is the need for EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific?

- The Indo-Pacific region is increasingly becoming strategically important for the EU.

- The region's growing economic, demographic, and political weight makes it a key player in shaping the international order and in addressing global challenges.

- The EU is already the top investor, the leading development cooperation partner, and one of the biggest trading partners in the Indo-Pacific region.

- Together, the Indo-Pacific and Europe hold over 70% of the global trade in goods and services, as well as over 60% of foreign direct investment flows.

- However, current dynamics in the Indo-Pacific have given rise to intense geopolitical competition adding to increasing tensions on trade and supply chains as well as in technological, political, and security areas.

These are the reasons why the EU has decided to step up its strategic engagement with the Indo-Pacific region.

What are the main elements of the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy?

- The basic message is that the EU will deepen its engagement with partners in the Indo-Pacific to respond to emerging dynamics that are affecting regional stability. The EU's approach is designed to foster a rules-based international order, a level playing field, as well as an open and fair environment for trade and investment, tackling climate change, and supporting connectivity with the EU.

- In this context, there are **seven priority areas** for EU action:

  ➤ Sustainable and inclusive prosperity

  ➤ Green transition

  ➤ Ocean governance

  ➤ Digital governance and partnerships

  ➤ Connectivity

  ➤ Security and defense

  ➤ Human security

What actions will the EU take in the area of security and defense?

- **Regional security:** The EU will promote open and rules-based regional security architecture, including secure sea lines of communication, capacity-building, and enhanced naval presence by the EU Member States in the Indo-Pacific.

- **Protection of freedom of navigation:** Furthermore, the EU will seek to conduct more joint exercises and port calls with Indo-Pacific partners, including multilateral exercises, to fight piracy and protect freedom of navigation in the region.

- **Effective collaboration with partners:** The EU will intensify its dialogues with partners on security and defense, including counter-terrorism and cybersecurity.

  ➤ The EU will also support Indo-Pacific partners' capacity to ensure maritime security.

  ➤ It will also strengthen capacity-building for partners to tackle cybercrime.

Is the EU Indo-Pacific strategy directed against China?

- EU claims that its approach to the region is one of cooperation, not confrontation.

- The renewed commitment to the region is inclusive of all partners wishing to cooperate with the EU.

- It will adapt this for cooperation according to specific areas where partner countries share principles, values, or mutual interests.

- The EU will also pursue its multifaceted engagement with China, engaging bilaterally to promote solutions to common challenges, cooperating on issues of common interest, and encouraging China to play its part in a peaceful and thriving Indo-Pacific region.

Will human rights be part of the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy?

- The EU will remain a consistent **defender of human rights and democracy** and continue to use all tools at its disposal: political and human rights dialogues and consultations, trade preferences, and the mainstreaming of human rights considerations in all EU policies and programs.

- It will continue to use its restrictive measures (sanctions) regime against individuals, entities, and bodies responsible for, involved in, or associated with serious human rights violations and abuses worldwide.

Immediate course of action for EU

The implementation of the EU strategy will include several actions, in particular:

- Concluding **Partnership and Cooperation Agreements** (PCA) with Malaysia and Thailand; starting PCA negotiations with the Maldives, and bringing the EU's upcoming Partnership Agreement with the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) to full fruition.

- Engaging with Indo-Pacific partners to build more resilient and sustainable global **value chains** by diversifying trade and economic relations, and by developing technical standards and regulations that are in line with shared values and principles.

- Completing EU **trade negotiations** with Australia, Indonesia, and New Zealand and resuming trade negotiations, and starting investment negotiations with **India** including completing an Economic Partnership Agreement with the East Africa Community.

- Concluding **Green Alliances** and Partnerships with willing and ambitious Indo-Pacific partners to fight against climate change and environmental degradation.

- Strengthening **ocean governance** in the region, including increasing the EU's support for Indo-Pacific countries' fisheries management and control systems, the fight against Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and the implementation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements.

- Expanding the network of **digital partnerships** with Indo-Pacific partners, as well as exploring the possibility of new Digital Partnership Agreements.

- Strengthen cooperation on **research and innovation** under 'Horizon Europe' and explore the association to this program of eligible like-minded Indo-Pacific partners such as Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, and Singapore.

- Stepping up implementation of the **Connectivity Partnerships** with Japan and India and supporting partners in establishing an appropriate regulatory environment and facilitating the mobilization of the necessary funding to improve connectivity on the ground between Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

- Exploring ways to ensure enhanced **naval deployments** by the EU Member States to help protect the sea lanes of communication and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific while boosting Indo-Pacific partners' capacity to ensure **maritime security**.

- Reinforcing support to healthcare systems and pandemic preparedness for the least-developed countries in the Indo-Pacific region, enhancing collaborative research on communicable diseases in the context of the Horizon Europe research.

Way forward for EU

- **Support France:** The EU's security and defense capabilities are quite limited, as compared to the U.S. and China. To obviate an imbalance in favor of economic links, the EU will need to give adequate space and support to France which has sizeable assets and linkages with the Indo-Pacific.

- **Coordination with the UK:** EU also must forge strategic coordination with the U.K. as the latter prepares to expand its role in Asia as part of its 'Global Britain' strategy.

- **Leverage economic power:** As a major economic power, the EU has an excellent chance of success in its trade negotiations with Australia, Indonesia, and New Zealand and economic partnership agreement with the East African Community; and in forging fisheries agreements and green alliances.

- **Enhanced relations with partners:** To achieve all this and more, the EU must increase its readiness to share its financial resources and new technologies with partners.

- **Internally coordinated approach:** Many states view China as a great economic opportunity, but others are acutely conscious of the full contours of the China challenge.

- **Focus on regional groupings (Quad, AUKUS):** Russia next door is the more traditional threat. It is increasingly on China's side. Hence, the EU should find it easy to cooperate with the Quad. AUKUS, endeavors by a part of the western alliance to bolster naval and technological facilities to deal with China should be welcome.

Way forward for India

- **Close partnership:** India's pivotal position in the region necessitates a **closer India-EU partnership.**

- **Trade agreements:** Early conclusion of an ambitious and **comprehensive trade agreement** and a standalone investment protection agreement will be major steps.

- **Effective cooperation:** Cooperation in Industry 4.0 technologies is desirable.

- **Upgrading ties:** Consolidating and upgrading defense ties with France, Germany, and the U.K. should also remain a significant priority.

◉ CONCLUSION

- The European Union can create a vantage position for itself in the Indo-Pacific by being more candid with itself, more assertive with China, and more cooperative with India.

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INCREASE IN DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY BUT MANY ARE STILL LEFT OUT

CONTEXT:

Recently, it has been found that Internet connectivity has shot up over the last year, with most new users attributing their new connections to the covid-19 pandemic and shutdowns. However, a nationwide lockdown survey found that remote work, education, and healthcare are still not equally available to all, even those with digital access.

⊙ BACKGROUND:

- ⊚ A recent national survey has revealed that internet usage had more than doubled in the past four years.

- ⊚ Among the aged 15-65 population, 49 percent said they had used the internet, compared to only 19 percent of the aged 15-65 population claiming the same in late 2017.

- ⊚ LIRNEasia, an Asia Pacific think tank focussed on digital policy, tied up with the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, to take part in a global study funded by Canada's International Development Centre to assess the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 by analyzing access to services, with a focus on digital technologies in healthcare, education, and work.

⊙ ANALYSIS:

How did Covid-19 impact digital connectivity in the context of healthcare, education, and work?

- ⊚ **Healthcare:** Recently, Connected health, also known as Technology-enabled Care (TEC), involves the convergence of health technology, digital media, and mobile devices. This technology has enabled cost-effective solutions at a time when the demands on health and social care services continue to increase.

- ⊚ **Education:** Connecting schools and utilizing them as a hub for learning and community activities can significantly enhance young peoples' skills, especially in remote areas. During the lockdown period, most schools and colleges shifted their classes online. This helped in continuous learning as well as timely completion of the syllabus

- ⊚ **Work:** The rising wave of the **COVID-19 outbreak in India** has forced the corporate world in the country **to opt for 'work from home' widely. It helped IT sector industries mostly however other manufacturing as well as hospitality suffered from economic loss. It caused the lower payment of salaries &perks to employees.**

What did the study find about the pandemic's impact on Internet access and use?

- ⊚ It was found in a survey that 47% of the population are Internet users, a significant jump from the 19% who were identified as Internet users in late 2017. An extrapolation of respondents would indicate that 34 crore people in the country were already online before 2020.

- ⊚ Men are still using the Internet more than women and there is a 37% gender gap among users, although this is half of the 57% present four years ago. Similarly, the rural-urban gap has dropped from 48% in 2017 to just 20% now as more rural residents come online.

- ⊚ However, the biggest divide is **Education.** Among those with a college education, 89% are Internet users, compared to 60% of those who completed secondary school.

Did increased digital connectivity help in access to remote education?

- ⊚ The survey found that 80% of school-age children in the country had no access to remote education at all during the 18 months that schools were shut in lockdown. Even though 64% of households with school-aged children had Internet connections.

- ⊚ Less than a third of children in such homes were able to leverage connectivity into classes of any sort, mostly because of the lack of larger screen devices as well as a lack of preparedness among schools.

- ⊚ The situation was significantly worse among those from lower socio-economic classes, or where the head of the household had lower education levels.

- ⊚ Nationwide, 38% of households reported that at least one child had dropped out of school completely due to Covid-19.

How did digital access impact work patterns?

- ⊚ Only 10% of those employed during the lockdowns were able to work from home. Those

in finance, insurance, information technology, and communications fields formed the biggest chunk of those who were able to do remote work during the lockdowns.

- About 43% also reported that remote work meant they were forced to undertake more tasks and work longer hours than usual.

- A significant minority of those engaged in remote work ran into device and connectivity challenges. About 27% reported that they were forced to share devices with another household member, while 16% reported that the available devices were unsuitable for work and another 16% faced poor network quality.

How did Internet access or lack of it affect healthcare during the pandemic?

- About 15% of the sampled respondents said they required healthcare access for non-COVID relate purposes during the most severe national and state lockdown.

- Telemedicine and online doctor consultation surged during these times, but only 38% reported that they were able to access such services.

- About medical information on Covid-19 symptoms and treatments, about 40% of respondents depended on television channels for advice as to their most trusted source, well above the quarter of respondents who depended on face-to-face interactions with the doctor.

What can be done to build an inclusive digital future?

- Oriented around seven building blocks – access, use, innovation, trust, jobs, society, and market openness – the framework brings together the policies that governments must consider to shape a common digital future that improves lives and boosts economic growth and well-being.

- Digital literacy-Digital literacy needs special attention at the school/college level. The National Digital Literacy Mission should focus on introducing digital literacy at the primary school level in all government schools for basic content and higher classes and colleges for advanced content.

- Language-State governments should pay particular attention to content creation in the Indian regional languages, particularly those related to government services. Natural language processing (NLP) in Indian languages needs to be promoted.

- Role of regulators-Regulators should minimize entry barriers by reforming licensing, taxation, spectrum allocation norms. TRAI can consider putting in place a credible system. This system will track call drops, weak signals, and outages. It ensures the quality and reliability of telecom services.

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KARNATAKA OBJECTS TO VIOLATION OF WATER TRIBUNAL AWARDS

CONTEXT:

Karnataka's State Government asserted the state's rights on inter-state rivers such as Cauvery, river linking initiatives, and related projects during the Southern Zonal Council meet in Tirupati.

⊙ BACKGROUND

- Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, two of India's most industrious states, have fought for decades over the Cauvery river.

- It is a highly emotional and sensitive subject to people on both sides of the border.

- **Points made by Karnataka**

- Karnataka should get its rightful share in Cauvery, Krishna, and Pennar river.

- By citing the Polavarm project, a feature of which is the interlinking of Godavari and Krishna rivers, Karnataka said its 'rightful share' should be ensured through avenues like substitution as river Krishna flows to a large extent in Karnataka and similarly, Cauvery originated and flowed across the state.

- It also demanded that no statutory clearances be given to large-scale permanent projects, planned for utilizing surplus waters in violations of Water Tribunal Awards.

⊙ ANALYSIS

Why water resources are becoming major moot points?

Today, water resources are becoming one of the major moot points among several areas, communities, and countries. The reasons behind this are:

- physical and economic water scarcity
- unsustainable management and development practices related to water use
- global food trade
- damage caused to the ecology from human behavior (mining activities, industrial activities)

Thus, water disputes take place and its governance comes on the scene.

What is the need for the interlinking of rivers?

- Northern and eastern India frequently experience floods, while western and southern India has droughts and ILR could rectify that to an extent.

- **Flood & drought management:** Problems related to flood control, irrigation, limiting droughts, and boosting farm output—can be sorted out by linking the country's rivers.
  - ➤ Around 35 per cent of the country, which receives an annual rainfall of 750mm-1125 mm, is drought-prone
  - ➤ About 33 per cent, which gets an annual rainfall of less than 750mm are chronically drought-prone.

- **Effective utilization of surface water:** ILR will increase India's utilizable surface water by 25 percent. Currently, only a quarter of the Brahmputra's renewable water resources are utilizable within the basin.

- Over 70 percent of India's water is available to only 36 percent of its land area.

- By 2030, India's water supply is expected to meet only half of its demand.

What are the reasons for Interstate Disputes over Sharing of River Water?

- **Ill Distribution of Resources (**water; minerals etc.): It increases the dependency of one state on the other for their requirements which leads to conflict between two states.

- **Regional Economic Disparity:** Such economic disparity can be observed in India, thus, sharing their resources with other states sometimes leads to a conflict of interest.
  - ➤ **For example** states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka contribute around 70% of the country's GDP.

- **Demographic Disparity:** It leads to disparity in population demands.

> **Constitutional provisions related to 'Water'**
>
> - In the Indian Constitution, water is a 'State subject' as per entry 17 of the State List. Thus states are empowered to enact legislation on water.
>   - ➤ **Entry 17** of the State List deals with water i.e. water supply, irrigation, canal, drainage, embankments, water storage, and water power.

Centre's say in Water

- **Entry 56** of the **Union List** gives power to the Union Government for the regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys to the extent declared by Parliament to be expedient in the public interest.

- Inter-state disputes require the involvement of the Union government for a federal solution at two levels:

  - between the states involved
  - between the Centre and the states

Inter-State Water Disputes

- **Article 262** in the constitution empowers the President to establish Inter-State water Disputes Tribunal being and also states.

- Under this provision an **Inter-State Water Dispute Act, 1956, and River Boards Act, 1956** was created.

Jurisdiction of SC

- Article 262 (1) bars the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

- But matters are still being taken thereon legal, jurisdictional, environmental, and constitutional issues.

Related Legislations:

- **River Board Act, 1956:**

  - The regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys were to be entrusted to various River Boards when this Act was adopted in 1956.

  - The River Boards were designed to advise the central government on development opportunities, coordinate activities, and resolve disputes.

  - The objective of the Board is to advise on the inter-state basin to prepare development schemes and to prevent the emergence of conflicts.

  - The Indian government has been unable to constitute a River Board since the Act was enacted, almost sixty years ago.

- **Inter-State Water Dispute Act, 1956:**

  - The **Interstate River Water Disputes Act, 1956 (IRWD Act)** is an act under **Article 262** of the Constitution.

  - It aims to resolve the water disputes that would arise in the use, control, and distribution of an interstate river or river valley.

- IRWD Act applies only to interstate rivers/river valleys.

- Under the Act, a state government may request the central government to refer an inter-state river dispute to a Tribunal for adjudication.

- **Creation of Tribunal:**

  - The Tribunal must give its decision within three years, which may be extended by two years.

  - Under the Act, if the matter is again referred to the Tribunal by a state for further consideration, the Tribunal must submit its report to the central government within one year.

  - This decision has the same force as that of an order of the Supreme Court.

- **Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019**

  - The Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was introduced in July 2019.

  - It amends the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.

  - The Bill provides the following:

    - **Disputes Resolution Committee:** When a state puts in a request regarding any water dispute, the central government will set up a Disputes Resolution Committee (DRC), to resolve the dispute amicably.

    - **Tribunal:** The central government will set up an Inter-State River Water Disputes Tribunal, for the adjudication of water disputes.

Water Disputes Tribunals

Tribunal	States Concerned
Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal	Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa
Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal – I	Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka,
Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal	Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra
Ravi & Beas Water Tribunal	Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan
Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal	Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry

Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal -II	Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana
Vansadhara Water Disputes Tribunal	Andhra Pradesh, Odisha
Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal	Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra
Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal	Chhattisgarh, Odisha

What are the challenges in interstate water disputes?

Interstate (River) Water Disputes (ISWDs) are a continuing challenge to federal water governance in India. Major issues are:

- Increasing water scarcity
- Rapid rise in urban and rural demands for freshwater
- Constitutional, historico-geographical, and institutional ambiguities
- Contentious political federalism
- Conflicting perceptions of property rights
- Flawed economic instruments for food security
- Lack of an integrated ecosystems approach
- Prevalence of reductionist hydrology for water resource development

Additional Facts

- Five Zonal Councils were set up in 1957 under Section 15-22 of the States Re-organization Act, 1956.
- The home minister is the chairman of each of these five Zonal Councils and the chief minister of the host state (to be chosen by rotation every year) is the vice-chairman.
- Two more ministers from each state are nominated as members by the governor.

- The Zonal Councils provide a forum for resolving disputes and irritants between Centre and states and among the states in the zone.
- **Range of issues:** The Councils discuss a broad range of issues which include boundary-related disputes, security, infrastructure-related matters like road, transport, industries, water, and power, matters about forests and environment, housing, education, food security, tourism, and transport.

What measures are required?

- **More focus on mediating the issue:** Mediation is a flexible and informal process and draws upon the multidisciplinary perspectives of the mediators. Efforts should be made to resolve the dispute between states using mediation.

- **Arbitration and negotiation:** There is a need to look at arbitration and negotiation as methods of conflict resolution.

- **More participatory approach:** The Tribunal should be a multidisciplinary body, presided over by a Judge. It should follow a more participatory and conciliatory approach.

- **Avoidance of political opportunism:** Disputes must be resolved by dialogue and talks and political opportunism must be avoided.

- **Effective role of concerned councils:** The issue can be resolved by discussing the dispute in Inter-State Council. Inter-State Council can play a useful role in facilitating dialogue and discussion towards resolving conflicts.

◉ CONCLUSION

In India, there are many inter-State rivers. The regulation and development of the waters of these rivers and river valleys continues to be a source of inter-State friction. However, effective coordination and participatory approach can reduce this friction among states and lead to a healthy functioning for the welfare of all.

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PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT ON GOVERNANCE IN THE STATE OF DELHI

CONTEXT:

◌ **After witnessing a brief slowdown following the advent of the pandemic last year, there is allegedly a rise in corruption in Delhi Government's departments to get the work done.**

◌ **Governments are playing a bigger role in the economy and this increases opportunities for corruption.**

How does Covid-19 affect economic governance in Delhi?

◉ First, state government around the world is playing a bigger role in the economy to combat the pandemic and provide economic lifelines to people and firms. This expanded role is crucial but it also increases opportunities for corruption.

  ➤ To help ensure the money and measures are helping the people who need it most, the state government needs timely and transparent reporting, ex-post audits and accountability procedures, and close cooperation with civil society and the private sector.

◉ Second, as public finances worsen, countries need to prevent tax evasion and the waste and loss of funds caused by corruption in public spending.

◉ Third, crises test people's trust in government and institutions, and ethical behavior becomes more salient when medical services are in such high demand. Evidence of corruption could undermine a country's ability to respond effectively to the crisis, deepening the economic impact, and threatening a loss of political and social cohesion.

What are the long-term reforms which are required beyond the crisis?

◉ A joint effort with civil society and the private sector.

◉ It also involves political will and the assiduous implementation of reforms over months and years.

◉ Improve governance in areas such as tax administration, expenditure oversight, fiscal transparency, financial sector oversight, and anti-corruption institutions.

◉ Complete overhaul of the network of primary health centers, which is the base of our public healthcare system.

What steps the government can take to prevent the menace of corruption?

● **Demand greater accountability**

  ➤ Following the maxim "we get the government we deserve", we need to unite citizens to press for greater accountability and effectiveness from government institutions. This has already started as civil society organizations are building coalitions to hold the government to account and defend government whistleblowers.

● **Commit to transparency**

  ➤ Business leaders must also commit to fair dealing and must exhibit transparency and accountability

  ➤ Businesses should join civil society's call for greater accountability from governments because they too must live with the consequences should governments fail.

What are the consequences of corruption?

◉ It degrades the social and moral fabric of the society, erodes the credibility of the government, and leads to exploitation and violation of fundamental rights of the poor and marginalized by the state. For instance, diversion of PDS ration deprives the poor violates their right to food.

◉ It hampers ease of doing business. As the recently released Global Competitiveness Index has pointed out "The private sector still considers corruption to be the most problematic factor for doing business in India".

◉ The rising inequality due to poor outcomes of the welfare schemes such as ICDS, NRHM (scams have been unearthed in many states like UP), NREGA, etc. is another result of the leakages and diversion of the resources to ghost beneficiaries.

◉ Corruption in the tax administration leads to high tax evasion generating black money – an offspring and food of corruption. According to various estimates, the size of a parallel economy in India is as much as 50% of GDP

◉ As many CAG reports which were instrumental in unearthing major scams like 2G and coal mines have pointed out, the state bears huge losses due to nepotism and corruption – money that could have been used in the social sector or infrastructure creation.

- Corruption increases the cost of production which ultimately has to be borne by the consumer. In the project execution such as roads and bridges, it leads to the adoption of poor quality of material claiming the lives of many due to the collapse of the system.

- Illegal lobbying has led to elite bias in state policies. For instance, tertiary healthcare and higher education receive more political and policy attention than primary health and education

- Various researches have pointed out a direct correlation between corruption, poor quality of public services, and criminalization of politics.

Lokpal and Lokayukta

- **The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013** provided for the establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for the States.

  ► The Bill was passed in 2013 in both the Houses of Parliament and came into force on 16th January 2014.

- These institutions are **statutory bodies** without any constitutional status.

- They perform the function of an **"ombudsman"** and inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters.

- The term Lokpal and Lokayukta were coined by Dr. L. M. Singhvi.

- **Composition:**

  ► Lokpal is a **multi-member body** that consists of one chairperson and a maximum of 8 members.

  ► Out of the maximum eight members, half to be judicial members and a minimum of 50% of the Members will be from SC/ ST/ OBC/ Minorities and women.

  ► The Chairperson of the Lokpal should be either the former Chief Justice of India or the former Judge of Supreme Court or an eminent person with impeccable integrity and outstanding ability.

- The **term of office** for Lokpal Chairman and Members is 5 years or till the age of 70 years.

- **Jurisdiction of Lokpal** includes Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of Parliament, Groups A, B, C, and D officers and officials of Central Government.

  ► However, the jurisdiction of the Lokpal included the Prime Minister except on allegations of corruption relating to international relations, security, the public order, atomic energy, and space.

  ► The Lokpal does not have jurisdiction over Ministers and MPs in the

Way Forward

- **Strengthen oversight institutions** to ensure resources reach those most in need. Anti-corruption authorities and oversight institutions must have sufficient funds, resources , and independence to perform their duties.

- **Publish relevant data and guarantee access to information** to ensure the public receives easy, accessible, timely, and meaningful information.

- All agencies should cooperate to eradicate corruption. **Preventive corruption measures** must be appreciated and adopted as **"Prevention is better than cure".**

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INDIA TO INCREASE THE INSTALLED CAPACITY OF RENEWABLES TO 500GW BY 2030

CONTEXT:

At the recently concluded COP26 summit in Glasgow, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India would increase the installed capacity of renewables to 500GW by 2030.

⊙ BACKGROUND

- While the government's earlier plan was to ramp up renewable capacity of 450 GW, another 50 GW has been added to the target.

- India, until now, has been able to achieve only a fourth of this target.

> **Renewable Energy**
>
> - Renewable energy is energy derived from natural resources (sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves, biomass, and thermal energy) that replenish themselves in less than a human lifetime without depleting the planet's resources.
>   - ➤ available in one form or another nearly everywhere
>   - ➤ virtually inexhaustible
>   - ➤ emits no or low greenhouse gases (better for climate)
>   - ➤ emits no or low air pollutants (better for health)
>   - ➤ Low cost
>   - ➤ Makes the energy system resilient
>   - ➤ Accessible to all
> - **Fossil Fuels:** Today, the world still heavily relies on fossil fuels (oil, coal, and natural gas) and even continues subsidizing them. They are responsible for:
>   - ➤ pollution
>   - ➤ causing climate-damaging greenhouse gases
>   - ➤ releasing health-endangering particles
>   - ➤ available in finite quantities only

⊙ ANALYSIS

Indian renewable energy sector

- The Indian renewable energy sector is the fourth most attractive renewable energy market in the world.

- **Renewable power installed capacity:** India was ranked fourth in wind power, fifth in solar power, and fourth in renewable power installed capacity, as of 2020.

- Installed renewable power generation capacity has gained pace over the past few years, posting a CAGR of 17.33% between FY16-20.

- With the increased support of the Government and improved economics, the sector has become attractive from an investor's perspective.

- As India looks to meet its energy demand on its own, which is expected to reach 15,820 TWh by 2040, renewable energy is set to play an important role.

- As of August 2021, India had 100.68 GW of renewable energy capacity, and represents 25.2% of the overall installed power capacity, providing a great opportunity for the expansion of green data centers.

Commitment to become a 'net-zero nation'

- India has committed to becoming a net-zero nation, that is it will offset its emission impacting the climate, by 2070.

- The coal phase down will mean a developing country like India will have its resources like coal to meet energy requirements without putting a timeline to end usage of the fossil fuel.

- This phase down will give a breather to recently commissioned coal-based plants that may have a life cycle of another 20-30 years.

- At present, India has a 200 GW electricity generation capacity based on coal.

What does India need to do for the new target?

- The country had already installed **39% of this target**, but the new target is ambitious. India had 154 GW of non-fossil-fuel-based generation capacity.

- So in the nine years until 2030, India will have to add about **38 GW** a year to its installed capacity to meet the 500-GW target.

- This in turn is a significant problem because the Indian government's program to build such projects

in the northern states, especially in Uttarakhand of late, has been antidemocratic, ecologically damaging, and unsustainable in the long run.

◉ As such, experts in the country have characterized these projects as an anti-scientific quest for (electric) power at the cost of the ability of the people, the land, and the wildlife around these projects being able to withstand climate shocks.

What about the coal sector?

◉ Since coal has to play a role of primary fuel for power generation in the country for the time being, till renewable source fully caters to our energy demand, the **Ministry of Coal** in line with the **commitment** has already moved forward with a **comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan.**

◉ Action has already started for its speedy implementation.

◉ Emphasis is to put a major thrust on sustainable development in coal mining, taking care of its environmental and social impact.

◉ **Important measures include:**

➤ **Bio-reclamation of mined-out land** has already been taken up on a big scale by all coal companies through a massive tree plantation drive to help in having carbon sink potential to the tune of more than one lakh tonne per annum.

➤ **First-mile connectivity (FMC)** is a major initiative by coal companies to minimize environmental pollution, where coal is being transported through a conveyor belt from coal handling plants to the silo for loading

➤ **Surface coal gasification** projects have been planned for syngas production to be used further either for the production of methanol/ethanol, urea, or petrochemicals.

➤ **Extraction of sand from overburden (OB) dump** for use in construction is another unique initiative for sustainable development.

How this new target is different from the previous set target?

◉ The 500 GW is a version of the target set by Modi at the **2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York** when he announced that India would aim to install **450 GW of renewable energy electricity generation capacity by 2030.**

◉ But there are two crucial differences between the **New York summit** and **COP26 announcements.**

➤ First, the New York announcement wasn't part of India's commitment under the Paris Agreement.

➤ Second, it was worded as "renewable electricity

generation capacity" as opposed to "non-fossil-fuel generation capacity".

◉ This means the target India has now committed to under the Paris Agreement includes large hydroelectric projects.

Major issues faced by India

◉ The country grapples with the intertwined issues of

➤ air pollution

➤ water scarcity

➤ energy security

➤ energy access

➤ affordability

◉ **Regulation of renewable energy sector**

● **Concerned organization**

➤ **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE),** is the nodal unit for all matters relating to Renewable Energy.

➤ **India Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA),** is a public limited company established in 1987 to promote, develop and extend financial assistance for RE and energy efficiency/conservation projects.

● **Important initiatives taken by Government**

Some initiatives by the Government of India to boost India's renewable energy sector are as follows:

◉ **Encourage consumers:** In August 2021, the government proposed new rules for the purchase and consumption of green energy to encourage large-scale energy consumers to leverage renewable energy sources for regular operations.

◉ **Rooftop Solar Programme Phase II:** To encourage rooftop solar (RTS) throughout the country, notably in rural regions, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy plans to undertake Rooftop Solar Programme Phase II, which aims to install an RTS capacity of 4,000 MW in the residential sector by 2022 with a provision of subsidy.

◉ **India Renewables Dashboard:** The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) and CEEW's Centre for Energy Finance (CEEW-CEF) jointly launched the India Renewables Dashboard that provides detailed operational information on renewable energy (RE) projects in India.

◉ **Draft National Electricity Policy (NEP) 2021:** The Ministry of Power (MoP) released the draft National Electricity Policy (NEP).

◉ **Gram Ujala:** India introduced Gram Ujala, an ambitious program to include the world's cheapest

LED bulbs in rural areas for Rs. 10 (US$ 0.14), advancing its climate change policy and bolstering its self-reliance credentials.

◉ **Green Energy Corridor Scheme:** In the Union Budget 2021-22, Ministry for New and Renewable Energy was allocated Rs. 5,753 crore (US$ 788.45 million) and Rs. 300 crore (US$ 41.12 million) for the '**Green Energy Corridor**' scheme.

◉ **Encouraging domestic production:** To encourage domestic production, customs duty on solar inverters has been increased from 5% to 20%, and on solar lanterns from 5% to 15%.

◉ **Measures by Indian Railways:** Indian Railways is taking increased efforts through sustained energy efficient measures and maximum use of clean fuel to cut down emission levels by 33% by 2030.

◎ CONCLUSION

The energy sector is set to undergo a drastic transformation across the globe and the future belongs to renewable energy. This is going to be a collective effort. It is now hoped that this transition will be inclusive and equitable so that no one is left behind.

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FTAS TO HELP PROVIDE MORE MARKET ACCESS TO INDIAN GOODS

CONTEXT:

As per a recent update, talks for free trade agreements (FTAs) are going on with Australia, UAE, GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), European Union, Israel, and the UK.

⊙ BACKGROUND

- The Indian economy has been witnessing a bounce back in every sphere, and the country is well on track to achieve historical highs in goods and services exports.

- India is on course to achieve $400 billion of merchandise exports in the current financial year ending March.

- If at this stage, FTAs get finalized with major countries, India would be in a favorable position.

⊙ ANALYSIS

What is Free Trade Agreement (FTA)?

- An FTA obligates signatory countries — bilaterally or multilaterally — to a set of '**mutually agreed conditions**' about trade in goods and services among them.

- Terms can include
  - ➤ tariff levels
  - ➤ removal of measures and provisions that act as trade barriers

- Under a free trade agreement, two trading partners reduce or eliminate customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded between them.

- **Significance of FTAs**
  - ➤ FTAs are an important tool to enhance trade and investment.
  - ➤ Strategically, FTAs have helped India compete at a global level and enhance its growth.
  - ➤ They liberalize norms to enhance trade in services and boost investments.

What is India's engagement in FTAs?

- India currently has FTAs with five countries bilaterally and 18 countries multilaterally — 11 member-countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and seven of the South Asia Free Trade Agreement.

- Four more are under discussion; these include bilateral deals with Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates and a multilateral arrangement with the European Union, which has 27 members.

> **Major FTAs**
> - India-ASEAN Trade in Goods
> - South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA)
> - Indo Malaysia CECA (IMCECA)
> - India Singapore CECA (ISCECA)
> - Japan India CEPA (JICECA)

FTA between India and US

- The US has 14 trade agreements with 20 countries, including a bilateral trade agreement with China.

- India and the United States have plenty of trade issues that can, theoretically, be resolved by an FTA.

- Even if Indian and the US were to agree today, an FTA will still take years to be signed and then some more years — perhaps even 10 to 15 — to be operationalized.

What is India's approach towards FTAs?

- **Reciprocal and equitable access to markets:** India is looking at reciprocal and equitable access to foreign markets through free trade agreements, which the country is negotiating with its trading partners.

- **Balanced opportunity for all sectors:** A few old FTAs of India which were not balanced have led to an increase in trade deficit with those nations. Therefore, India is now going through careful stakeholder engagement (to negotiate an FTA) and making sure that

  - ➤ MSMEs, the dairy industry, farmers, and domestic production capacities get more opportunities.

  - ➤ Employment-oriented sectors like textiles, footwear, and pharma get good market access.

➤ Services sector professionals to get good opportunities in the foreign markets through two way communication with Indian stakeholders

Challenges

◉ **Less focused arenas:** Despite having strong pharma, IT, ITeS, and education sectors, the agriculture and industrial sectors, especially MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises), are still fragile when compared to those in countries with which India is negotiating FTAs.

◉ **Continuous changes in the global economy:** Though India's approach towards expanding existing FTAs is on the right track, the country is currently faced with the challenge of rebalancing its trade strategies because of some significant changes occurring in the global economic environment.

◉ **Smaller foreign markets:** However, since some market sizes are smaller, the impact of various FTAs shows that India has underperformed, with imports always being more than exports.

◉ **Impact of domestic manufacturers:** In certain cases, domestic manufacturers were the worst affected as FTA made imports cheaper.

◉ **Other issues are:**

➤ Complex rules of origin

➤ lack of information on FTAs

➤ higher compliance costs

➤ administrative delays

What measures are required?

◉ **Trade enhancement plus protection of domestic sector:** The government has to focus on two areas when negotiating on FTAs — enhancing trade and protecting the domestic sector.

◉ **Minimizing compliance cost:** The focus should also be on minimizing the compliance costs involved in getting benefits under FTAs. India needs to eliminate or reduce the hurdles exporters face and ensure that FTAs focus on ease of doing business and expanding trade opportunities for exporters.

◉ **Careful dealing:** As the results of existing FTAs are not that noteworthy, India should be careful while negotiating the clauses.

The road ahead

◉ Currently, India's economic conversation with the world needs a reboot and it can be brought by shifting its approach to bear in some of its crucial FTAs negotiations.

◉ It is now likely that India would work through balanced, fair, and equitable FTAs so that both sides benefit and jobs are created in India, and business opportunities are available for our small, medium, and micro-industry.

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WINTER AIR POLLUTION AND STUBBLE BURNING IN NORTH INDIA

CONTEXT:

Every year, the residents of India's capital region and surrounding areas experience hazardous levels of air pollution at the beginning of winter. Smoke from stubble burning in the adjoining farmland areas of the states of Haryana and Punjab, as well as fumes from vehicles and industry, enshroud the city as lower temperatures and slower-moving winds trap pollutants in the air.

Who is responsible for the pollution?

- Contributing to nearly 30 percent of winter air pollution in Delhi, stubble burning across the nearby states of Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh is attributed as one of the major factors for the existence and amplification of air pollution in the region during the winter period.

- Farm fires have been an easy way to get rid of paddy stubble quickly and at a low cost for several years.

- The paddy straw and stalks have **high silica content** and are not used to feed livestock. The easiest, but the least productive, way to get rid of it is to set it on fire.

What other reasons are responsible?

- **Dust and vehicular pollution**: Dust and vehicular pollution are the two biggest causes of dipping air quality in Delhi in winters. Dry cold weather means dust is prevalent in the entire region, which does not see many rainy days between October and June.

- **Geography:** Disadvantaged geographic location and regional meteorology with windy and dusty conditions during summer contributes greatly to Delhi's air pollution. **Low relative humidity** further increases particle re-suspension.

- **Overpopulation:** Over-population only adds up to the various types of pollution, whether it is air pollution or noise pollution.

- **Stagnant winds:** Due to winter conditions, dust particles and pollutants in the air become unable to move. Stagnant winds lock these pollutants in the air and affect weather conditions, resulting in smog.

- **Large-scale construction is another culprit.**

- **Industrial pollution and garbage dumps** increase air pollution and building-up smog in the air.

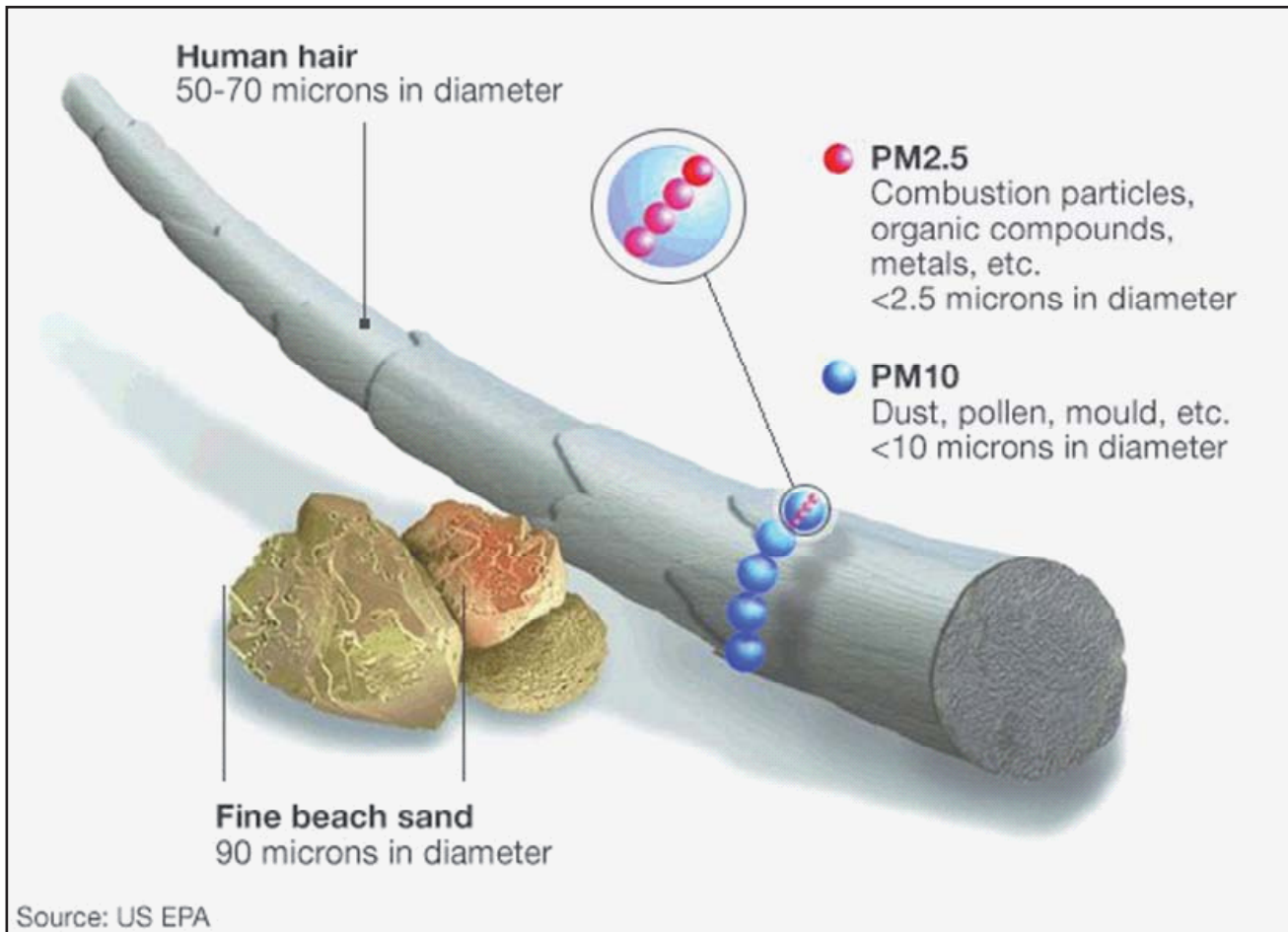- **Crackers (banned):** Crackers contributed to smog's build-up.

Winter inversion

- **Summer:** In summer, the air in the **planetary boundary layer** (the lowest part of the atmosphere) is warmer and lighter and rises upwards more easily.
    - This carries pollutants away from the ground and mixes them with cleaner air in the upper layers of the atmosphere in a process called 'vertical mixing'.

- **Winters:** During winters the planetary boundary layer is **thinner** as the cooler air near the earth's surface is dense.
    - The cooler air is trapped under the warm air above that forms a kind of atmospheric 'lid'. This phenomenon is called **winter inversion**.
    - Since the vertical mixing of air happens only within this layer, the pollutants released lack enough space to disperse in the atmosphere.

Note: The effects of inversion are stronger at night, which is why air quality levels drop overnight. (This is why experts ask people to refrain from early morning walks)

How bad is air pollution in Delhi?

- Atmospheric levels of harmful small particles which can be inhaled - known as **PM2.5** - are currently far above international guidelines set by the **World Health Organization (WHO).**

- The toxic soup over north India is composed of several types of pollutants such as **sulfur dioxide (SO2), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), PM2.5, PM10, and Ozone**.

- The most harmful ones are PM2.5 and NO2.
    - **NO2 (sources):** Emission by vehicles and power plants
    - **PM2.5 (source):** industries, vehicles, power plants, crop and garbage burning, and diesel generators

- **Health Impacts:** The health impact of these pollutants can range from

Human hair
50-70 microns in diameter

PM2.5
Combustion particles,
organic compounds,
metals, etc.
<2.5 microns in diameter

PM10
Dust, pollen, mould, etc.
<10 microns in diameter

Fine beach sand
90 microns in diameter

Source: US EPA

- ➤ asthma
- ➤ cancer
- ➤ strokes
- ➤ Alzheimer's disease

WHO's limits for air pollution

- ◉ The World Health Organization has cut its recommended limits for air pollution, for the first time since 2005. The new recommendations target pollutants including particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, both of which are found in fossil fuel emissions.

- ◉ **NO2:** The new limit for nitrogen dioxide (NO2), mainly produced by diesel engines, is now 75% lower.

- ◉ **PM 2.5:** Under the new guidelines, the WHO halved the recommended limit for the average annual PM2.5 level from 10 micrograms per cubic meter to 5.

- ◉ **PM 10:** It also lowered the recommended limit for PM10 from 20 micrograms to 15.

- ◉ These guidelines are **not legally binding.**

WHO's 2005 guideline

- 2005 WHO Air quality guidelines offer global guidance on thresholds and limits for key air pollutants that pose health risks.
- The Guidelines indicate that by reducing particulate matter (PM10) pollution from 70 to 20 micrograms per cubic meter (μg/m), we can cut air pollution-related deaths by around 15%.

Government initiatives to safeguard the environment

- ◉ **Graded Response Action Plan:** Delhi launched a 'Graded Response Action Plan' under directions from the Supreme Court.

- ◉ **NCAP:** Launched in 2019, the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) aimed at a long-term, time-bound, national-level strategy to tackle the air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner with targets to achieve a 20 percent to 30 percent reduction in particulate matter concentrations by 2024, keeping 2017 as the base year.

⦾ **Green Skill Development program:** Launched in 2017 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change under PM Narendra Modi, the Green Skill Development program aims to introduce innovative skills among the youth working in the environment and forest sector.

⦾ **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act (CAMPA):** One of the most robust legal acts aiming to hold those, who exploit natural resources and forests for the development of industries, responsible. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act was introduced in 2016.

⦾ **Namami Gange program:** In 2014, PM Narendra Modi, considering the environmental value of the river Ganga, launched the Namami Gange program. The Centre allocated a total of Rs 20,000 crore to conserve and rejuvenate the river.

⦾ **Nagar Van Scheme:** Nagar Van Scheme was launched on the occasion of World Environment Day in 2020 (5th June). It aims to develop 200 Urban Forests across the country in the next five years.

Environmental Management in India

⦾ The Indian Parliament has enacted several laws to protect and improve the environment.

  ➤ Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

  ➤ Water (prevention and control of pollution) Act, 1974

  ➤ The forest (Conservation) Act, 1989

  ➤ The air (prevention and control of pollution) Act,1981

⦾ The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

⦾ In addition the Constitution (forty-two amendments) of the Act, 1976 included two important provisions namely.

  ➤ Article 48-A

  ➤ Article 51A (g)

Right to a clean environment

● The **UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** has recognized access to a clean and healthy environment as a 'fundamental right' in Geneva, Switzerland.

● The right to a clean environment was centered on the **Stockholm Declaration of 1972**.

● The Declaration emphasizes the "right to life, liberty and security of person, and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

● Fifty years later, the declaration has been legally recognized.

⦿ **CONCLUSION:**

The situation needs better coordination between states, and afterward, city and regional-level pollution control plans need to be drawn up. Not only Delhi, but other states also need to get more serious and not treat high levels of pollution as a normal part of winter.

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INCREASING SPACE JUNK & ITS REGULATION

CONTEXT:

Since the beginning of the space age in 1957, tonnes of rockets, spacecraft, and instruments have been launched into space. Initially, there was no plan for what to do with them at the end of their lives. Since then, numbers have continued to increase and explosions and collisions in space have created hundreds of thousands of shards of dangerous debris.

What is Space Junk?

◉ Space debris is the thousands of fragments from old rocket parts or disintegrated satellites that litter space - principally in Earth's orbit.

◉ There are more than 23,000 pieces of debris larger than 10cm (4in) and the US Space Surveillance Network tracks most of them, according to Nasa's Orbital Debris Programme Office (ODPO).

◉ Most of that debris is zipping around within 1,250 miles of the Earth's surface, along with more than 2,000 artificial satellites, as well as the International Space Station.

Reasons for increasing junks

◉ The biggest contributor to the current space debris problem is explosions in orbit, caused by left-over energy – fuel and batteries – onboard spacecraft and rockets.

How much is India responsible for?

◉ India still produces much less space junk than the top three polluters: Russia, the US, and China, according to ODPO data.

◉ Indian-made space debris, however, is on the rise - from 117 pieces in 2018 to 163 in 2019.

What is being done to tackle space debris?

◉ Earth's orbit is becoming more congested, with thousands of satellites in operation and more launches planned, increasing the likelihood of a collision.

◉ But there is no regulation against these anti-satellite tests.

◉ Several countries, and some private companies, are testing new ways to mitigate space debris, ranging from harpoons, giant magnets, and nets.
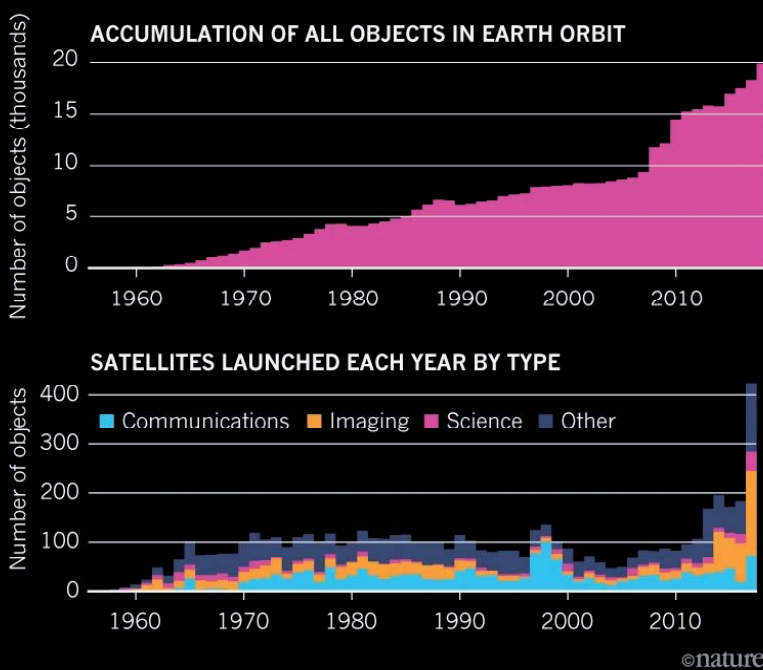
◉ And in 2025, the European Space Agency will launch the first space mission to remove debris from Earth's orbit.

◉ But Nasa says cleaning up the space environment remains a "technical and economic challenge".

What are the current space regulations?

◉ Space law emerged soon after Sputnik 1 was launched into outer space in 1957.

◉ Several legally binding international instruments (treaties) governing the use of outer space for peaceful purposes have been adopted within the framework of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS), with the 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OST) at its core.

TRAFFIC IN ORBIT
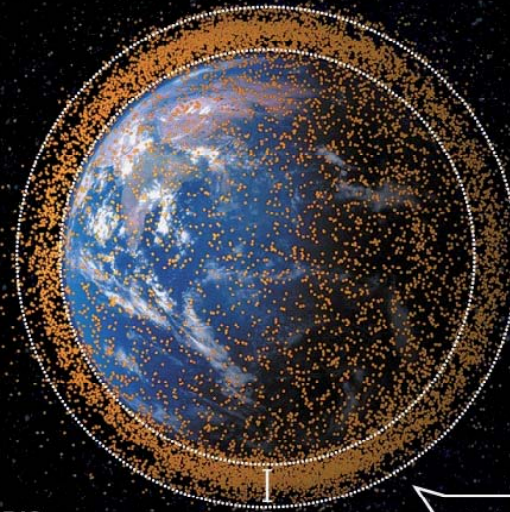The space-junk problem is growing quickly: more than 1,800 new objects joined the crowded skies in 2017.

ACCUMULATION OF ALL OBJECTS IN EARTH ORBIT

SATELLITES LAUNCHED EACH YEAR BY TYPE
■ Communications ■ Imaging ■ Science ■ Other

©nature

BUSY SKIES

There are currently more than 20,000 objects in orbit around Earth, according to catalogues that track operational satellites, dead ones and other human-made debris, such as pieces from rockets.
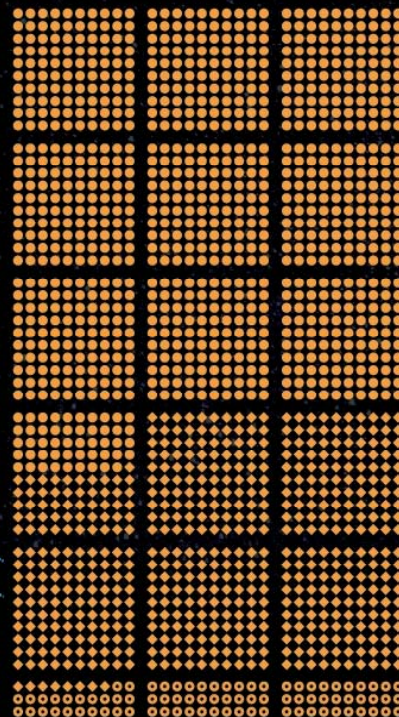
A visualization by NASA depicts the traffic of objects in orbits around Earth.

TYPE OF DEBRIS
● = 10 × Payload related
◆ = 10 × Rocket related
○ = 10 × Unknown

LOW EARTH ORBIT (LEO):
altitudes up to 2,000 kilometres
Not all objects in this count are confined to low Earth orbit. Some pass through LEO and travel farther from the planet.
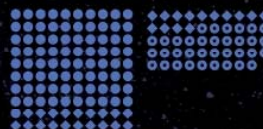
15,900 objects

MEDIUM EARTH ORBIT (MEO)
altitudes between 2,000 and 35,000 km

OTHER ORBITS
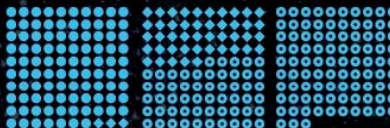Includes medium Earth orbits

1,488 objects

GEOSTATIONARY ORBIT (GEO)
altitudes around 35,000 km
Used for some communications and weather satellites. This count includes objects that pass through GEO orbits.
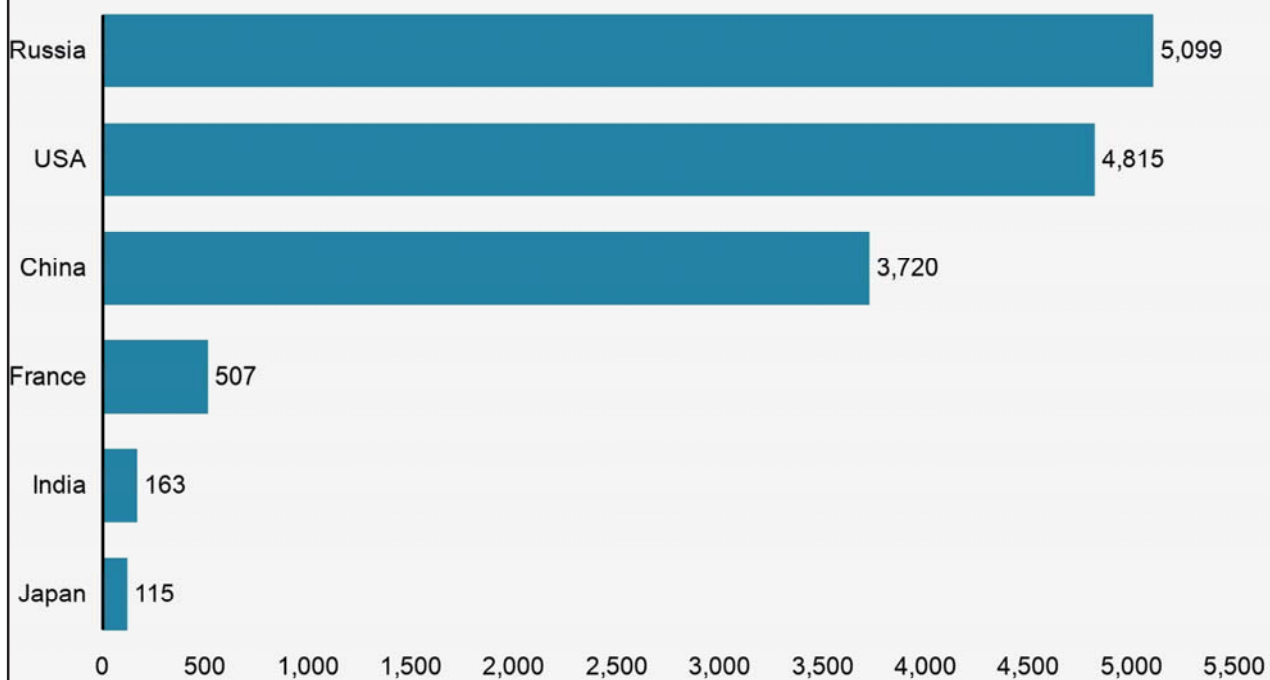
2,931 objects

©nature

Top sources of space debris

Number of rocket bodies and pieces of debris as of October 2019

Country	Number
Russia	5,099
USA	4,815
China	3,720
France	507
India	163
Japan	115

Source: Orbital Debris Quarterly News, Nasa

BBC

UNCOPUOS (1958):

- The UNCOPUOS was established in 1958 as an ad hoc committee of the UN (later made permanent in 1959) with the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)as its secretariat.

- UNCOPUOS oversees the implementation of five UN treaties related to outer space activities, namely,

  ➤ Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies of 1967 (Outer Space Treaty)

  ➤ Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts

  ➤ the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space of 1968 (Rescue Agreement),

  ➤ Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects of 1972 (Liability Convention),

  ➤ Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space of 1976 (Registration Convention)

  ➤ the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies of 1979 (Moon Treaty)

- It also oversees other related international agreements like the

- Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Under Water (NTB) of 1963

- the Brussels Convention Relating to the Distribution of Programme–Carrying Signals Transmitted by Satellite (BRS) of 1979

Outer Space Treaty

- The OST contains the basic rules that define the behavior of States in conducting activities in outer space and has resulted in more than sixty years of peaceful cooperation in space that benefits humankind as a whole.

- The Treaty declares outer space "the province of mankind".

  ➤ This means that its exploration and use shall benefit all countries, be without discrimination, and ensure free access to planets and other celestial bodies.

What is the present scenario of space security?

- Space security issues have potentially serious consequences. The consequences of either a deliberate or even an accidental conflict in space are too horrible to contemplate.

- A day without the utility provided by outer space is difficult to even conceive and yet the actions

of states might lead the world in that direction sooner than later.

◉ Unless states take measures to restrain some kinds of activities in space, access to space will not be safe, secure, or guaranteed.

◉ Because of the highly competitive and contested nature of major power relations today, even peaceful applications and technological developments such as On-Orbit Satellite Servicing or technologies to tackle space debris are viewed with much suspicion.

◉ There are also more specific space security threats – the return of anti-satellite (ASAT) testing, and cyber and electronic warfare in space, for example.

◉ Any satellite service disruption or damage will have a wide-ranging impact, one that cannot be contained to the security or economic sectors alone, and one that cannot be limited geographically either given the significant global dependence on space.

◉ Space is truly a global commons.

What are the major threats to space?

Space security threats are growing. The major threats to the space are as follow:

◉ increasing cyber threats to space assets (through hacking and other satellite interference)

◉ heightened collision probability due to congestion

◉ the proliferation of space debris

◉ entry of new players merely to ensure deterrence

◉ visible early trends of weaponization of space

◉ Space is becoming more accessible

◉ the threat of overwhelming radiofrequency waves spectrum by large satellite constellations

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LEFT-WING EXTREMISM: GADCHIROLLI ENCOUNTER A BLOW TO MAOIST

CONTEXT:

The Gadchiroli encounter in which 26 members of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist), including key fugitives, were 'neutralized' was a severe blow to the Naxals' urban and jungle networks in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

⊙ BACKGROUND

- The activities of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, building cadre strength, allegedly conducting weapons training, and always having an ear to the ground were major reasons for this encounter by security forces.

- The Naxal insurgency in India originated in a **1967** uprising in **Naxalbari** (West Bengal) under the leadership of **Charu Majumdar**, by the **Communist Party of India (Marxist).**

- They are the group of people who believe in the far-left radical communist's political theory derived from the teachings of the Chinese political leader **Mao Zedong.**

- LWE organizations are the groups **that try to bring change through violent revolution.** They are against democratic institutions and **use violence to subvert the democratic processes** at the ground level.

⊙ ANALYSIS

What is Left- Wing Extremism?

- Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) is recognized as one of the most serious and biggest internal security threats, not only to India's internal security but indeed to the very basic values of the democratic, pluralistic political order enshrined in our Constitution.

- LWE organizations are the groups that try to bring **change through violent revolution**. They are against democratic institutions and use violence to subvert the democratic processes at the ground level**.**

- These groups **prevent the developmental processes** in the least developed regions of the country & try to misguide the people by keeping them ignorant of current happenings.

- Traditionally, during the early years of the movement, they handled weapons like bows and arrows, and country-made firearms, but now, they possess sophisticated weapons including rocket launchers and AK rifles.

What are the Left-wing affected states in India?

- As many as nine Indian states are bearing the brunt of Naxalism.

- Of these, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh are the worst-affected while Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal are partially affected.

- Andhra Pradesh and Bihar remain the hotbed of PWG and MCC operations.

- The ultra-leftist groups active in Bihar are – The most dreaded 'Maoist Communist Centre', CPI (ML) Liberation, CPI (ML) Peoples War, Mazdoor Kisan Sangram Samiti, CPI(ML) Janashakti, CPI(ML) Towards New Democracy, and small groups like Santosh Rana group, Shantipal group, KanuSanyal group, and Jeetender group.

- The People's War Group, formed by Kondapalli Seetharamaiah (KS) on April 22, 1980, is the most dominant Naxalite force in Andhra Pradesh.

What are the major causes behind the sustenance of Left Wing Extremism in India?

- **Tribal discontent**: The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 deprives tribals of the authority to use forest produce.

  ▶ Further, there has been a huge displacement of the tribal population in the Naxalism-affected states due to development projects, mining operations, and other reasons.

  ▶ It is apprehended that the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Amendment Bill,2021 will bring more misery to the tribals.

- **Gullible Targets**: A huge chunk of the tribal population lives below the poverty line. They are also devoid of basic education and health facilities. Thus, Maoists are easily able to persuade them by offering to take up monetary incentives and a better future.

- **Absence of strong technical intelligence**: There

is poor technical intelligence when it comes to tackling Naxalism. For instance, some villages are not yet connected properly with any communication network which hinders action against Naxalites.

- **No Follow-Up from the administration**: It is seen that even after the police take hold of a region, the administration fails to provide essential services to the people of that region.

- **Police Atrocities**: The tribals are sometimes harassed by the security forces in the mistaken belief that they may be Maoists. Such instances create hatred against security forces and boost recruitment in Maoist camps.

- **Ideological Boost**: Mao was able to oust the Chinese government and establish communism in China. To date, Communists are ruling the country, which gives a strong ideological boost to Maoist movements across the world.

- **Support from other actors**: They are connected to various internal and external insurgent groups that provide them weapons, shelter, and finance. For instance, as per a few reports, CPI Maoists may have links with foreign Maoist organizations in the Philippines, Turkey, etc.

What are the impacts of rising Left-Wing Extremism in India?

- **Hampering Democracy**: They threaten the locals before the conduct of elections and prevent them from voting. It violates the principle of participative democracy.
  - ➤ They resort to violence through their guerrilla tactics and attempt to set up their government in the local villages.

- **Infrastructural Damage**: They destroy the roads, transport system, and government resources. Thereby they create hindrance in governance and last-mile connectivity.

- **Illegal Activities**: They resort to extortion, abduction of important personalities like Politicians, bureaucrats, police, etc. They are also engaged in drug trafficking cartels.

- **Undermines Credibility of Government**: The survival of LWE shows a failure of governance thereby eroding the faith of masses in governance set up and impacting the unity of the nation.

- **Isolating Tribal Villages**: These extremist movements have disconnected several tribal villages from the national mainstream.

- **Security threats**: Extremism causes threats to the security of the nation and assets of the country. It threatens the unity and diversity of the nation. Radicalization of youth poses a threat to internal security. It has impacted the development of the affected region leading to many people still living in poverty.

Steps taken to contain Left Wing Extremism in India

- A dedicated left-wing extremism division was established in 2006 under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It aimed to effectively address the LWE insurgency holistically.

- **CPI (Maoist) Party is designated as a terrorist organization** under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. This gives the forces greater power and autonomy to deal with Maoists.

- A **National Policy and Action Plan** to address the LWE problem has been put in place that envisages a multi-pronged strategy involving
  - ➤ **Security-related measures** – Providing Central Armed Police Forces battalions, training, funds for modernization of State police forces, equipment & arms, sharing of intelligence, etc.
  - ➤ **Developmental interventions** – construction of roads, strengthening of communications network, installation of mobile towers, improving the network of banks, post offices, health and education facilities, etc.

- **Operation 'SAMADHAN'** is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)'s initiative to deal with the Naxal problem. The acronym SAMADHAN stands for Smart leadership, Aggressive strategy, Motivation and training, Actionable Intelligence, Dashboard Based KPIs (key performance indicators) and KRAs (key result areas), harnessing technology, action plan for each theater, and No access to financing.

What is the Counter-Insurgency (COIN) Strategy of India?

- India began using the COIN strategy with its first full-blown insurgency in **Nagaland** in the 1950s.

- **People-centric approach**: One strategy says that given the Maoist insurgency posturing itself as a "people's war", the mandate is for a people-centric approach of "winning hearts and minds" that is built on the notions of competitive state-building to address economic and governance deficiencies.

- **Enemy-centric approach**: The other strategy argues that an enemy-centric approach predicated on kinetic operations is best suited for the Maoist insurgency, where the fear of the population seceding from India is remote.
  - ➤ Most of the states have raised special forces on the lines of Greyhounds, and are being given rigorous training in "counter-guerrilla" tactics and jungle warfare
  - ➤ Greyhounds: It was raised in 1989 as an elite anti-naxal force.

- **Mixed strategy**: But the Andhra government based its COIN strategy on a judicious mix of the enemy-centric and population-centric approaches.

- The successes achieved by the Greyhounds, Andhra's elite special forces, could only be consolidated through the robust implementation of short-gestation-period developmental works in the Maoist-affected rural areas.

- Moreover, the erstwhile state is also the first state to have a comprehensive surrender-cum-rehabilitation policy.

- **Surrender and rehabilitation policies**: After the 2014 guidelines of the central government were brought out, many states have crafted attractive surrender and rehabilitation policies.

  - ➤ A surrender and rehabilitation policy only works when there is sustained military pressure on the Maoists.

Red Corridor

- The Red Corridor is the region in the central, eastern, and southern parts of India that experience severe Naxalite–Maoist insurgency.

- The districts affected by this and part of the Corridor are among the poorest in India.

- Most of the region has a high tribal population. The region is also marked by severe caste and economic disparities.

- Roughly, the Corridor stretches from the Indian border with Nepal and extends to the northern fringes of Tamil Nadu.

- The region also has a significantly lower literacy rate compared to the national average.

Issues in Government Measures:

- **Intelligence inputs:** The traditional method of gathering intelligence through police receivers placed on hills is not delivering optimum results. The recent April attack exposed this lacuna as Maoists deliberately gave false information over it.

- **Large troop operations:** It is believed that larger forces give better protection but the recent attack exposed their vulnerability. The 1000 personnel movement wasn't able to maneuver secretly and hence exposed themselves to the Maoists.

- **Existence of Trust Deficit:** The common masses don't trust the forces/administrative authorities due to varied cultures and external appearance. This automatically reduces the impact of tribal-friendly measures.

- **Lacunas in protecting state informers:** The people who give information to security forces are often tortured and killed by Maoists. The state has not done enough to protect them.

- **Approach in Tackling:** More emphasis is placed on looking at LWE as a security problem. However, in reality, it is more of a socio-economic and political issue.

- **Lack of Conviction:** Some local politicians covertly support the conduct of Naxals that impairs the intensity of anti LWE operations.

Suggestions to tackle Left Wing Extremism

- Firstly, the government of India and the Maoists should try to **sign Peace agreements** that would be a win-win situation for all. In this regard, learnings from **Mizo Accord** can be taken that have delivered desired results.

- Secondly, **Ensure all-around development of the Naxal-affected** areas. It would involve strengthening the rights of local communities, improving governance, and augmenting public perception management.

- Thirdly, **employ more local people in the administrative process** which can act as a bridge to curtail the trust deficit. Further **support of civil society** can be taken for awarding tribals.

- Eg- A peace march was organized in March 2021 where about 150 tribals from Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Telangana participated under the slogan of **'Bastarmaangehinsa se Azadi'**.

- Fourthly, the **forces should be used in small groups** for maintaining greater efficiency. For instance, one of the most successful operations (the Greyhounds) involved the use of small teams that operate on solid human intelligence.

- Fifthly**, policy measures** that **provide indirect benefits** should be implemented with due care. For instance, effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act can ensure better control of local communities over Minor Forest Produce. This can reduce their attraction towards LWE.

◉ CONCLUSION

- Though the **number of incidents of LWE violence has come down** in the recent past, continued efforts and focus are needed in eliminating such groups.

- **Innovative measures are required** to be employed in **preventing IED (Improvised Explosive Device) related incidents** which have caused significant casualties in recent years.

- States should **rationalize their surrender policy** to bring innocent individuals caught in the trap of LWE into the mainstream.

ETHICS OF A LEADER

CONTEXT:

- Recently, India's Prime Minister urged the people to take part in e-auction of the gifts received by him, so that, money received after auction is used for welfare schemes/girl education etc. At the same time, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was recently accused of selling gifts he received including a watch worth $1 million.

- This brings us to the topic- "ethics in leadership".

Who is a leader?

- A leader is a person who spearheads an organization/task to lead it towards the intended direction.

- However, he/she is someone who does more than just lead people.

- He/she have to be driven by the right motivation and make a positive impact on not just the organization but also the people around them.

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way."- **John C Maxwell**

Why ethics is an important element for a leader?

An ethical leader plays a transformational and charismatic role in an organization.

- **Loyalty from the followers**- When leaders are fair and just, followers develop an inherent trust in the leader, establishing a culture of loyalty and respect.

  - **For example**- Bhagat Singh through his ethical leadership develop a band of trusted revolutionaries willing to lay their lives for their nation as well as their leader.

- **Higher motivation**- When people know that the government is operating ethically and for the benefit of the greater good, they will want to do their part to further the cause of the entire nation.

  - **For example**- Role of **Nelson Mandela** in bringing about reconciliation among the blacks and whites despite the decades of animosity.

- **Higher morale**- Ethical leadership raises the morale of the people when the chips are down. People know the cause they are behind and can trust the leader. Ethical leadership is like a deep-rooted tree. When the roots are solid, the stress and tensions of daily business are like the wind on a stable tree. People usually feel the roots and know if they can rely on them and feel confident, or if they will have to keep their guard up.

  - **For example- Gandhiji** through his satyagraha prepared people for the hardship that they had to endure at the hands of the British.

- **Earning respect from society and communities**- Nations that are led by ethical leaders set a good example for others, and are respected and valued as a result. This became evident when the third world looked up to India for leadership during the cold war era. India under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru duly obliged through a Non-aligned movement.

- **Increased sense of belonging**- When the values of a leader and individual values are aligned and ethical principles are adopted, everyone's general well-being increases. This leads to a positive atmosphere, which reinforces and fosters ethical behaviors, creating a virtuous loop where everyone will feel at home and in the right condition to give their best.

What are the qualities of an ethical leader?

Ethical leadership is not just having an understanding of the right values, or having a strong character that leads by example. An ethical leader not only has high values and the determination to succeed but also understands the importance of building a strong framework that allows others to follow the examples set so that everyone benefits. Ethical leadership is about striving for the same goal and embodying the same purpose, values, and vision.

An effective and ethical leader has the following traits/characteristics:

- **Justice**- He/she must be fair and just. An ethical leader must treat everyone equally. He should be free from personal bias. Differential treatment must be fair, clear, and built on morality only.

- **Integrity**- It is the characteristic of being honest and having strong moral and ethical principles. A leader of integrity abides by the values of the organization, commands respect amongst his team as well as prevents deviance from the values even in trying circumstances.

- **Dignity and respectfulness**: He/she respect others. An ethical leader does not use one's followers as a medium to achieve his personal goals. He respects their feelings, decision, and values. Respecting the followers implies listening effectively to them, being compassionate to them, as well as being

liberal in hearing opposing viewpoints. In short, he/she treats the followers in a manner that authenticates their values and beliefs.

- **Alignment of organization's values and personal values**- Organisational values and the personal values of the leader are usually aligned to avoid conflict of interest in the working of the organization. This exchange between leader and organization is dynamic and allows for the improvement of both.

- **Commitment to goals and values**- A leader is committed to his/her goal in letter and spirit. For him/her, it is not just the goal that matters but staying true to the values to reach that goal matters just as much. In this way, they not only earn the respect of the people but also instill that same hardworking energy among everyone.

- **Community building**- An ethical leader develops community. He/she considers the goal of the organization as well as that of his teammates, aligning to help them both. In this way, he/she creates a community with unifying values and goals. He/she works harder for achieving the goals of this entire community.

Learning from Chanakya's on ethics in leadership

- While Chanakya is often misunderstood as a proponent of getting things done by hook or crook, he greatly emphasizes on the leader to be ethical.

- In his treatise "**Arthashastra**", he has underlined the **importance of ethics for a leader**.

- According to him, an ideal leader is not just a king but a combination of a king and a saint. This is very similar to the concept of "philosopher-king" as stated by **Plato.**

- According to Chanakya, a leader,

  ➤ **like a king**, is active, dynamic, taking decisions related to governance affecting a large population

  ➤ **like a rishi,** he is a philosopher, wise, knowledgeable, and can connect to the masses and take right decisions

- According to Chanakya, the king must control his passions like lust (Kaama), Anger (Krodha), Greed (Lohha), and Attachment (Moha). He must fight ceaselessly Shatru-Shadvarga, the six enemies of the king: sex, anger, greed, vanity, haughtiness, and overjoyed.

- According to Chanakya, a king of unrighteous character and vicious habits fails, through these weaknesses or otherwise, to protect people's welfare and he would fall prey either to the fury of his subjects or that of his enemies.

Conclusion

- It is often said, Character of an institution is reflected in its leader. But the vice versa hold just as 'true'. A leader's character is just as well reflected in the direction that organization he/she takes.

- The sharp contrast witnessed above in the ethics of two leaders- PM Modi and PM Imran Khan, reflects in the difference in fortunes of the two countries. For the values to run through the organization, they must begin right from the very top. Thus ethics must begin at the top of every organization and in this regard, it is the leader of the organization who must lead by his ethics.

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SECTION: B
(PRELIMS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

POCHAMPALLY IS ONE OF THE BEST TOURISM VILLAGES: UNWTO

⊙ **CONTEXT:**   Recently, Pochampally village in Telangana was selected as one of the Best Tourism Villages by United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

About Pochampally village

- Pochampally, **50 Kms from Hyderabad,** is a town in Telangana and is often referred to as the **Silk City of India** for the **exquisite sarees** that are woven through a **unique style called Ikat.**

  ⊙ **Pochampally's unique weaving styles and patterns** received special focus through the Prime Minister's mantra of **Vocal 4 Local** as a part of **Atmanirbhar Bharat.**

- **This style, Pochampally Ikat,** received a **Geographical Indicator (GI Status) in 2004.**

  ⊙ Pochampally is also known as **Bhoodan Pochampally** to commemorate the **Bhoodan Movement** that was launched by **Acharya Vinobha Bhave** from this village on **18th April 1951.**

- The Ministry of Tourism recommended three villages **Kongthong in Meghalaya, Ladhpura Khas, Madhya Pradesh, and Pochampally in Telangana** for the UNWTO Best Tourism Village entry from India.

- However, **Pochampally** was awarded as one of the **best Tourism Villages by UNWTO.**

Ikat style

- Ikat is a Malaysian, Indonesian word that means "**Tie and Dye".**

- Ikat involves the process of wrapping (or tying) and dyeing sections of bundled yarn to a predetermined color pattern before they are woven.

- The dye penetrates exposed sections while the wrapped section remains undyed.

- This pattern formed by the yarn in this process is woven into fabric.

United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

- It is the United Nations Specialised Agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism.

- It was established in 1975

- Headquarter: Madrid, Spain.

- UNWTO encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts.

DEVASAHAYAM PILLAI, FIRST INDIA TO BE A 'SAINT'

⊙ **CONTEXT:**   Devasahayam Pillai, an 18th-century Hindu convert to Christianity, would be the first Indian layman (a non-ordained member of the Church) to be made a saint.

Who was Devasahayam Pillai?

- He was born on **23rd April 1712 i**n the village of **Nattalam in Tamil Nadu's Kanyakumari District.**

- Known as **Nilakanda Pillai** before embracing Christianity, he grew up in an upper-caste family of temple priests.

- He went on to serve in the court of Travancore's Maharaja Marthanda Varma. It was here that he met a Dutch naval commander, who taught him about the Catholic faith.

- He became a Catholic in 1745. Pillai took the Christian name **Lazarus** but later came to be known as **Devasahayam (God's help).**

- Lazarus means "God is my help".

- He then faced the wrath of the Travancore state, which was against his conversion.

- He faced harsh persecution and imprisonment during the 18th century when he decided to convert to Christianity.

- On 14th January 1752, just seven years after he became a Catholic, Devasahayam was shot dead in the Aralvaimozhy forest.

  - Since then, he has widely been considered a martyr by the Catholic community in South India.

  - His body is at **Saint Francis Xavier Cathedral** in the **Diocese of Kottar (Tamil Nadu).**

- The Church is of the view that his preaching of equality of all people despite caste differences eventually led to his martyrdom.

Approval of sainthood

- Devasahayam Pillai was first approved for sainthood in February 2020 for "enduring increasing hardships" after he decided to embrace **Christianity.**

- Now, he is going to be the first Indian layman to be declared a saint.

- He is to be declared a saint by the **Vatican** in May 2022.

PURI HERITAGE CORRIDOR PROJECT

⊙ **CONTEXT:**   **The Odisha Government is expected to soon lay the foundation stone of the much-awaited Puri heritage corridor, which is being developed for Rs 800 crore.**

About Puri heritage corridor

- Conceived in 2016, the Puri Heritage Corridor Project was unveiled in December 2019 to transform the holy town of **Puri** into an international place of heritage.

- The project includes redeveloping major portions of the holy town and in the vicinity of the Jagannath temple for visitors and tourists.

- The project will include:

  - **Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA)** building redevelopment

  - a 600-capacity Srimandir reception center

  - Jagannath cultural center including Raghunandan library, integrated command, and control center, Badadanda heritage streetscape, Srimandir amenities improvement, Sri Setu, Jagannath Ballav pilgrim center, multilevel car parking, municipal market development, Swargadwar development, Pramod Udyan, Gurukulam, Mahodadhi market, beachfront development, Puri lake, Musa river revival plan, Atharnala and housing for sevayats.

⊙ The project is a part of the **Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture (ABADHA) scheme** for developing Puri as a world-class heritage city.

Lord Jagannath Temple

- The Jagannath Temple of Puri is an important Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Jagannath (a form of Vishnu), located on the eastern coast of India, in the state of Odisha.

- It is believed to have been constructed in the **12th century** by **King Anatavarman Chodaganga Deva** of the **Eastern Ganga Dynasty.**

    ⊙ **Anantavarma Chodagangadeva i**s also known for building the Sun temple of Konark and Puri is considered as the cultural capital of Odisha.

- Jagannath Puri temple is called **'Yamanika Tirtha'** where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of **'Yama', the god of death,** has been nullified due to the presence of **Lord Jagannath.**

- This temple was called the **"White Pagoda"** and is a part of **Char Dham pilgrimages**

    ⊙ **Badrinath**

    ⊙ **Dwaraka**

    ⊙ **Puri**

    ⊙ **Rameswaram**

- There are four gates to the temple-

    ⊙ Eastern **'Singhdwara'** which is the main gate with **two crouching lions**

    ⊙ Southern '**Ashwadwara'**

    ⊙ Western **'Vyaghra Dwara'**

    ⊙ Northern **'Hastidwara'**

- There is a carving of each form at each gate.

- In front of the entrance stands the **Aruna stambha or sun pillar,** which was originally at the **Sun Temple in Konark.**

Annual Rath Yatra

The temple is famous for its **annual Rath Yatra, or chariot festival.**

- Images of all the three deities **Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Lordess Subhadra** are ceremoniously brought out of the inner sanctum (Garbhagriha) from the chief temple in Jagannath Puri.

- They are placed in a chariot which is then pulled by volunteers from Jagannath puri temple to Gundicha Temple.

- For this festival, special chariots are built each year.

Other Important Monuments in Odisha
- Lingaraj Temple
- Konark Sun Temple (UNESCO World Heritage Site)
- Udaygiri and Khandagiri Caves
- Tara Tarini Temple

COURTS CAN'T DICTATE HOW TO CONDUCT TEMPLE RITUALS: SC

⊙ **CONTEXT:**   The Supreme Court disallowed a plea filed by a self-proclaimed devotee of Lord Balaji to ensure that all rituals were conducted properly at the Tirupati temple. The court said that constitutional courts cannot dictate rituals and practices in temples or interfere with their day-to-day functioning or affairs.

About the Supreme Court of India

- As the highest court in India, the Supreme Court's judgments are binding on all other courts in the country.

- It serves both as the final court of appeals and final interpreter of the Constitution.

- Owing to these vast powers, many have labeled it among the most powerful courts in the world. Its authority stems from the Constitution of India.

What types of cases does it hear?

- The Supreme Court has jurisdiction (the authority to hear) over a wide range of cases. Its jurisdiction is generally classified into

  ⊙ Original

  ⊙ Appellate

  ⊙ Advisory

■ Original Jurisdiction

  ⊙ Its exclusive original jurisdiction extends to any dispute between the:

   ➤ Government of India and one or more States

   ➤ between the Government of India and any State

   ➤ States on one side and one or more States on the other

   ➤ between two or more States

  ⊙ **Fundamental Rights:** In addition, Article 32 of the Constitution gives an extensive original jurisdiction to the Supreme Court regarding enforcement of Fundamental Rights.

   ➤ It is empowered to issue directions, orders, or writs, including writs like habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto, and certiorari to enforce them.

■ Appellate Jurisdiction

  ⊙ The appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court can be invoked by a certificate granted by the High Court concerned under **Article 132(1), 133(1) or 134** of the Constitution in respect of any judgment, decree, or final order of a High Court in both civil and criminal cases, involving substantial questions of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution.

■ Advisory Jurisdiction

  ⊙ The Supreme Court has special advisory jurisdiction in matters which may specifically be referred to it by the President of India under Article 143 of the Constitution.

Recent observations made by the court

- The bench said that the top court can ask the temple management about irregularities alleged in its secular activities such as finances etc.

- But the court cannot lay down religious practices or decide which one is right or wrong.

- Questions pertaining to rituals will be decided by "pandits and scholars as per customs and established practices.

- The courts examine limited issues such as problems on the administrative side, arrangements for visitors, or any other such violations.

What is temple (legally)?

- A temple is a place of religious worship or meant for a religious purpose.

- A temple is not "an establishment" under the **Shops and Establishments Act.**

Constitutional Provisions relating to Right of Religion

- "Religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands".

- **Article 25:** Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion.

- **Article 26:** Freedom to manage religious affairs.

- **Article 27:** Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion.

- **Article 28:** Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions.

EXTENSION OF TENURES FOR CBI, ED DIRECTORS

⊙ **CONTEXT:**   **The Government of India has brought two ordinances to extend the tenure of Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) directors up to 5 years.**

The Current Tenure

- Currently, the director of CBI and ED has been appointed for two-year tenure in office by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) Act, 2003.

- While they cannot be removed (with some exceptions) before their tenure ends, an extension can be given by the government.

- Before 1997, the tenure of the CBI directors was not fixed and they could be removed by the government in any manner.

- However, the Supreme Court in the **Vineet Narain judgment** fixed tenure of a minimum of two years for the CBI director to allow the officer to work with independence.

Current method of appointment

- ■ **CBI Chief**

  - ◉ The procedure for the appointment of the CBI chief is laid down in the **Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946.**

◉ Section 4A of the Act says that any director of a special police force or establishment, including the CBI chief, is to be appointed by the central government, which has to go by the recommendation in that regard of a committee comprising the Prime Minister as its chairperson, along with the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha or the leader of the single-largest Opposition party in the Lower House along with the Chief Justice of India or any judge of the Supreme Court nominated by him.

■ ED Chief

◉ The appointment of the ED chief is governed by the **Central Vigilance Commission Act of 2003.**

◉ Article 25 of the Act lays down that the Centre shall appoint the ED Director on the recommendation of a panel that will have the Central Vigilance Commissioner as its chairperson and includes vigilance commissioners as its members along with the Union home secretary, the secretary of the central Ministry of Personnel, and the revenue secretary.

Key-highlights of the changes

- **Amendments in DSPE Act:** The change in tenure of the CBI Director was done by amending the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.

- **Amendments in CVC Act:** The change to the tenure of the ED Director was brought in by amending the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.

Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI)

- The CBI is the premier investigating agency in India. CBI was formed through a resolution of the Government of India in 1963.
  - ➤ CBI is not a statutory body and derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India
- **Mandate:** to investigate several economic crimes, special crimes, cases of corruption, and other cases.
  - ➤ To investigate cases of cheating and embezzlement and social crime, particularly of hoarding, black-marketing, and profiteering in essential commodities, having all-India and inter-state ramifications.
- **Parent Ministry**: Initially it was under the ministry of home affairs and later transferred to the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
  - ➤ Presently, it works as an attached office of the Ministry of Personnel.
  - ➤ CBI works under the supervision of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) in matters about the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

Enforcement Directorate

- Directorate of Enforcement is a specialized financial investigation agency under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.
- On 1st May 1956, an 'Enforcement Unit' was formed, in the Department of Economic Affairs, for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947.
  - ➤ In the year 1957, this Unit was renamed as 'Enforcement Directorate'.
- ED enforces the following laws:
  - ➤ Foreign Exchange Management Act,1999 (FEMA)
  - ➤ Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)

SEXUAL INTENT IS KEY TO POCSO ACT: SC

⊙ **CONTEXT:** The Supreme Court quashed a Bombay High Court decision to acquit a man charged with assault under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) solely because he groped the child over her clothes without "skin-to-skin" contact.

SC Judgment

- It specified that **'touch' in section 7 POCSO act covers both direct and indirect touch** as otherwise, the act would legitimize an entire range of unacceptable behavior which undermines a child's dignity and autonomy.

- The act of touching the sexual part of the body or any other act involving physical contact, if done with '**sexual intent' would amount to 'sexual assault'** within the meaning of **section 7 of the POCSO Act.**

Features of the POCSO Act

- **Definition:** "Children" according to the Act are individuals aged **below 18 years.** The Act is **gender-neutral.**

- **Types:** Different forms of sexual abuse including but not limited to **sexual harassment, pornography, penetrative & non-penetrative assault** are defined in the Act.

- **Child-friendly process:** The investigation process should be child-friendly and the case should be disposed of within one year from the date of reporting.

- **Special Court:** The Act provides for the establishment of **Special Courts** for the trial of such offenses and matters related to them.

- **Implementing Agency:** The **National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** and **State Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCRs)** monitor the Act's implementation.

  ⊙ Both are **statutory bodies.**

NO CONSENSUS ON LIMITING THE SPEAKER'S POWERS

⊙ **CONTEXT:**
- **The All-India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) ended recently with the delegates failing to reach a consensus on whether the Speaker's powers under the Anti-Defection Law should be limited.**

- **The All-India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) is being held in Shimla.**

Key-highlights

- Amid increasing instances of disruptions of the **house proceedings**, a resolution stating that there should be no disruptions during **Question Hour and the President's and Governor's address to the House** was adopted during the meeting.

- The Speaker also called for drastic changes to the functioning of Standing Committees, including changes to their rules. He suggested that the **presiding officers should hold annual evaluations** of the committee working to make them more accountable.

- **The Lok Sabha Speaker** also suggested that the tradition of **Zero Hour** should be started in all State legislatures to give members the chance to **raise urgent matters about their constituencies.**

- Though the report on **reviewing the anti-defection law** was placed before the

delegates, they failed to reach a consensus on whether the Speaker's powers under the anti-defection law should be limited.

● The report was prepared by the committee formed in **2019** to examine the role of the **Speaker in cases of disqualification on grounds of defection.**

Anti-defection law

● **In 1985 the Tenth Schedule,** popularly known as the **anti-defection law,** was added to the Constitution by the **52nd Amendment Act.**

● Any question regarding disqualification arising out of defection is to be decided by the **presiding officer of the House.**

● The purpose of the Amendment was to bring stability to governments by **deterring MPs and MLAs from changing their political parties** on whose ticket they were elected.

● The **penalty for shifting political loyalties** is the loss of **parliamentary membership and a bar on becoming a minister.**

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  ➤ CBI is not a statutory body and derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.

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  ➤ CBI works under the supervision of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) in matters about the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

The Office of the Speaker

● The Office of the Speaker occupies a pivotal position in our parliamentary democracy.

● He/She is looked upon as the true guardian of the traditions of parliamentary democracy.

● He/She symbolizes the dignity and power of the House over which he/she is presiding.

● Speaker holds Office from the date of his/her election till immediately before the first meeting of the Lok Sabha after the dissolution of the one to which he/she was elected.

● He/She is eligible for re-election.

GROUND REALITIES OF KISAN CREDIT CARD (KCC)

⊙ **CONTEXT:**   **A recent study in the state of Rajasthan (the state that makes use of the second highest variety of Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)) has highlighted**

how the agriculture sector, together with Kisan Credit Cards (KCC), has confronted lots of challenges recently.
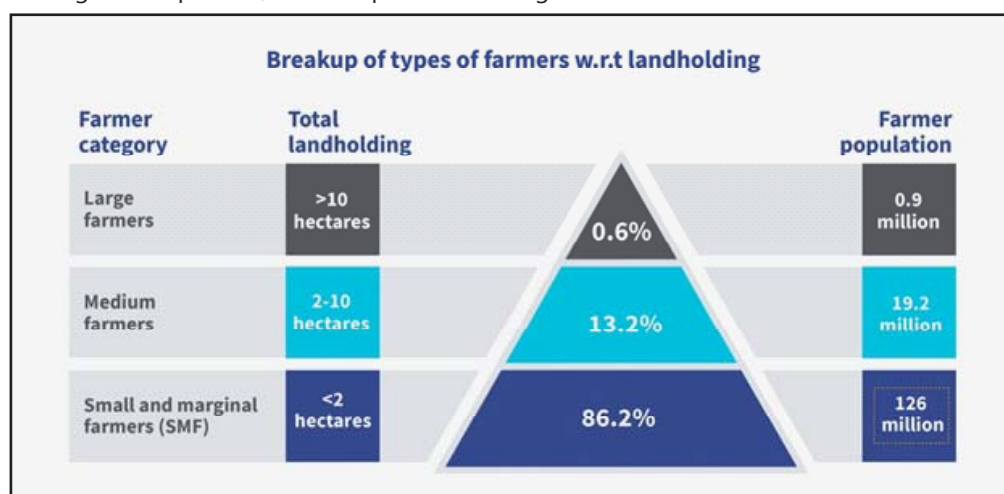
What is Kisan Credit Card (KCC)?

- The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme was introduced in 1998.
- Under the scheme, Kisan Credit Cards are issued to farmers based on their holdings for uniform adoption by the banks so that farmers may use them to readily purchase agriculture inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc., and draw cash for their production needs.
- **Objective:** The scheme aims to fulfill the needs as indicated below:
  - To provide adequate and timely credit support from the banking system under a single window with flexible and simplified procedure
  - To meet the short term credit requirements for the cultivation of crops
  - Post-harvest expenses
  - Produce marketing loan
  - Consumption requirements of farmer household
  - Working capital for maintenance of farm assets and activities allied to agriculture
  - Investment credit requirement for agriculture and allied activities

What about Bank loans?

- Agricultural credit disbursed by banks increased by 27% from 2016-17 to 2018-19 as a result of mandated **priority sector lending (PSL) policies** of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- However, the coverage is still not satisfying.
- In India, the RBI mandates banks that are unable to attain their PSL target to either purchase priority sector loans from other banks or contribute to the **Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF).**

What are the challenges faced by the sector?

- **Small Holdings:** In India, the bigger chunk is of small holdings of land, thus leaving a negative impact on, both output and earnings/incomes.

Breakup of types of farmers w.r.t landholding

Farmer category	Total landholding		Farmer population
Large farmers	>10 hectares	0.6%	0.9 million
Medium farmers	2-10 hectares	13.2%	19.2 million
Small and marginal farmers (SMF)	<2 hectares	86.2%	126 million

- **Low Productivity:** With a larger number of small and marginal farmers (86 percent), there have been the persisting problems of low productivity.
- **Lower rate of participation:** The participation rate in agriculture is on the decline as the agricultural sector has not been growing enough.

- **Lack of finance:** Lack of sufficient resources to buy or lease more land or invest in farm infrastructure such as irrigation, power, farm machinery.
- **Prevalence of Informal Loans:** Moneylenders providing farm loans at a higher rate exploit the farmers, which further pushes them to big distress.
- **Unfair market regulation:** Farmers are not getting fair prices of their produce due to the monopoly of the big traders as they bar farmers from selling directly to consumers.
- **Climatic Variability:** Indian agriculture is rain-fed, thus, delayed monsoon impacts the agricultural output. Due to his, most of the farmers get trapped under the agricultural loan.
- **Others:** Farmers face different sorts of challenges including floods, barren, natural calamities, insects attack, weather changes, scarcity of money, and whatnot.

REGULATION OF CRYPTOCURRENCY

◉ **CONTEXT:**   **Amid a global surge in cryptocurrencies, the Union Finance Ministry has stated that it will make a decision on a state-issued cryptocurrency soon but ban all private cryptocurrencies.**

What is Cryptocurrency?

- Cryptocurrency can be understood as decentralized digital money, based on blockchain technology.
- Simply put, cryptocurrency is a medium of exchange that is digital, encrypted, and decentralized.
- Some of the peculiar features of this currency are:
- Transfer of funds between two parties becomes more relaxed with a negligible processing fee.
- Makes use of blockchain technology to secure and encrypt transactions, whose database is highly secure and unalterable.
- Outside the ambit of governments and central banks of countries.

Regulation of cryptocurrency

- Unlike the U.S. Dollar or the Euro, there is no central authority that manages and maintains the value of a cryptocurrency.
- Instead, these tasks are broadly distributed among a cryptocurrency's users via the internet.
- Bitcoin was the first cryptocurrency, first outlined in principle by Satoshi Nakamoto in a 2008 paper titled "Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System."

> **Blockchain**
> - A blockchain is an open, distributed ledger that records transactions in code.
> - In practice, it's a little like a checkbook that's distributed across countless computers around the world.
> - Transactions are recorded in "blocks" that are then linked together on a "chain" of previous cryptocurrency transactions.

Pros and cons of cryptocurrency

■ **Positive points**

- ◉ Bypassing fees and having privacy

- ◉ Good investment opportunity

- ◉ Less chance of hyperinflation

- ■ **Negative Points**

  - ◉ Extreme volatile

  - ◉ Uncertainty

  - ◉ Security issue

  - ◉ Taxable profits

  - ◉ Less mobility of money

The concept of the digital rupee in India

About 100 million Indians own cryptocurrencies, according to a recent study. Top crypto exchanges serving the Indian market:

- WazirX

- CoinDCX

- CoinSwitch Kuber

- ZebPay

- UnoCoin

- **Legality:** At the moment, no legislature covers cryptocurrencies in India. But this doesn't mean that owning cryptocurrencies is illegal.

Important cryptocurrencies

There are more than 14,000 cryptos in existence, and there are more being created every day. The more well-known, established cryptos, are as given below:

- **Bitcoin:** Bitcoin was the first cryptocurrency and was created by Satoshi Nakamoto in 2009.

- **Ethereum:** It is a software platform built on blockchain technology. Ether was launched in 2015 as the digital currency of the Ethereum network.

- **Dogecoin:** Dogecoin was started in 2013.

- **Binance Coin:** It is a token issued by Binance exchange, one of the world's largest cryptocurrency exchanges by trading volume.

- **Cardano:** Created by one of Ethereum's co-creators the Cardano network and the associated crypto — called ADA — launched in 2017.

- **Litecoin:** Litecoin is an altcoin that was developed based on Bitcoin's open-source code but with several changes, like speeding the time it takes to mine new coins.

KAISER-I-HIND BUTTERFLY DECLARED STATE BUTTERFLY OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

⊙ **CONTEXT:**
Recently, Arunachal Pradesh has approved the large, brightly coloured Kaiser-i-Hind as its State butterfly.

Important facts about the species

- **Scientific Name-** Teinopalpus imperialis
- **Kaiser-i-Hind (**meaning **Emperor of India)** is a very rare and elusive swallowtail butterfly.
  - **Swallowtail butterfly** is any of a group of butterflies in the family **Papilionidae (order Lepidoptera).**
- The species is found at **medium and higher elevations.** It flies high in the canopy of broad-leaved temperate **evergreen forests.**
  - **The temperate evergreen forests** are found in the **Eastern and Western Himalayas.**
- This butterfly with a **90-120 mm wingspan** is found in six states (West Bengal, Meghalaya, Assam, Sikkim, and Manipur) along the Eastern Himalayas at elevations from **6,000-10,000 feet** in well-wooded terrain.
  - Its presence indicates the existence of a **good forest ecosystem and protection.**

> **Pakke Tiger Reserve 2047 Declaration**
> - Arunachal Pradesh adopted the **Pakke Tiger Reserve 2047 Declaration on Climate Change-Resilient and Responsive Arunachal Pradesh.**
> - The declaration is aimed at lowering emissions and achieving sustainable development.

- The butterfly also flutters in **Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, and southern China.**

> **Protection Status**
> - International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN): Near Threatened
> - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora(CITES): Appendix II
> - Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule II

Other butterflies in. the news

- **Malabar Banded Peacock or the Buddha Mayoori** was recently declared the **'State Butterfly' of Kerala** will have a dedicated **butterfly park in Kochi.**
- **Tamil Nadu** has also recently declared **Tamil Yeoman (Cirrochroa Thais)** as its **state butterfly** to symbolize its **rich natural and cultural heritage.**
- Other states to have **state butterflies** are:
  - Maharashtra (Blue Mormon)
  - Uttarakhand (Common peacock)
  - **Karnataka (Southern birdwings)**

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