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Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)

Context:

- The United States is coming up with a new initiative termed as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) which has been presented at a virtual meet in Tokyo.

What are the areas of interest?

1. Trade
2. Supply chain resiliency
3. Clean energy and decarbonisation
4. Taxes and anti-corruption measures

About:

- This initiative mainly comprises of all the Quad countries and also seven out of ten ASEAN countries and New Zealand.
- The grouping has gained significance as the countries put together put upto 40 percent of the global GDP.
- India has signaled that it is willing to work with the grouping which will be a significant forum in the region.

What is the nature of the initiative?

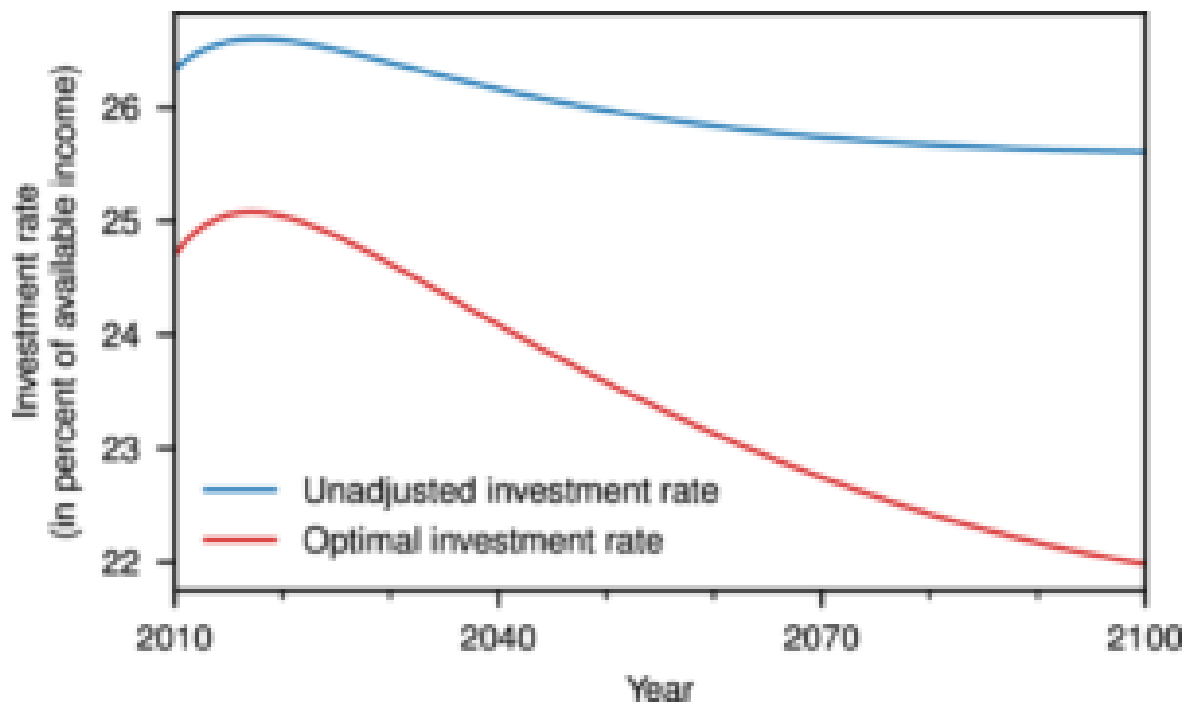
Way Forward:

- Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity is viewed as an initiative to boost the manufacturing sector of the United States.
- India along with other South East Asian nations can engage with the grouping to enhance its trade.

Investment Incentive Agreement

Context:

- The Government of India and the Government of the United States of America have signed an Investment Incentive Agreement (IIA) recently at Tokyo, Japan.



About:

- The Investment Incentive Agreement agreed between the governments of India and the United States of America in 1997 has been superseded by this IIA.
- Since the earlier IIA was signed in 1997, significant developments have occurred, including the creation of a new agency called DFC, a development finance agency of the United States government, as a successor agency to the erstwhile Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), following the enactment of recent US legislation, the BUILD Act 2018.

- To stay up with the DFC's increased investment support programmes, such as loan, equity, investment guaranty, investment insurance or reinsurance, feasibility studies for possible projects, and awards, an IIA was signed.
- The agreement is required by law for DFC to continue providing investment assistance in India.
- DFC or its predecessor organisations have been active in India since 1974, providing \$5.8 billion in investment support, with \$2.9 billion remaining unpaid.
- DFC is considering proposals totaling \$4 billion for providing investment support in India.
- DFC has supported development by investing in areas such as COVID-19 vaccine production, healthcare finance, renewable energy, SME financing, financial inclusion, and infrastructure.
- The signing of the IIA is projected to result in more investment support from DFC in India, which will aid India's development.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Context:

- Under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM), the Ministry of Culture held inaugural ceremony to commemorate the year long celebration of the 250th Birth Anniversary of Raja Ram Mohan Roy recently in Kolkata.

About:

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the earliest social reformers in the country, he was given the title "Raja" by the Mughal Emperor Akbar II.
- He is called as the father of Modern India's Renaissance.
- He was one of the prominent voices against child marriages and Sati system, two of which were the most evil practices prevalent in India at that time.
- In his early years in 1814 Raja Ram Mohan Roy started the Atmiya Sabha which propagated the idea of monotheism present in Vedanta and also to campaign against idolatry, caste rigidities, and other social evils.
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the first persons to estimate the amount that was being drained by the East India Company.

- In 1828, Raja Ram Mohan Roy setup the Brahmo Sabha which later became Brahmo Samaj, was a socio religious movement to fight against the social evils.

The Split:

- The sabha functioned very actively with regular prayers, meditation and reading of the scriptures.
- It preached against priesthood, rituals and sacrifices.
- It is the first intellectual reform movement in India.
- Later in 1866 it was split into two, namely Brahmo Samaj of India and Adi Brahmo Samaj.
- Brahmo Samaj of India was led by Keshub Chandra Sen and Adi Brahmo Samaj by Debendranath Tagore.

Way Forward:

- India-U.S. bilateral relations have developed into a “global strategic partnership”, based on shared democratic values and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues.
- This agreement can play a further boost to leverage the partnership between the two countries.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

Context:

- In 2016, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code was passed to tackle the mounting bad debts and to favour the creditor during the resolution process. While the IBC's performance has been relatively better than the other recovery mechanisms, it suffers from similar systemic issues.

Background:

- When a company becomes bankrupt, it stops making loan payments, and the creditor tries to collect the debt in various ways.

The recovery procedure is necessary for two reasons: first, to recover the highest amount feasible from the defaulter, and second, to do it as quickly as possible so that the funds can be used to issue new credit.

- The former recovery systems, such as SARFAESI, Lok Adalats, and Debt Recovery Tribunals, had issues with claim recovery and excessive delays in resolving problematic assets.



India's FDI Inflow

Context:

- India has recorded highest ever annual FDI inflow of USD 83.57 billion in the Financial Year 2021-22. In 2014-2015, FDI inflow in India stood at mere 45.15 USD billion as compared to the highest ever annual FDI inflow of USD 83.57 billion reported during the financial year 2021-22.



What is the difference between FDI & FPI?

- The fundamental difference between Foreign direct investment and Foreign Portfolio Investment is that in the former the company or a firm or an individual invests in a country on their businesses and in the portfolio investment, the investments are made

in securities or other financial assets.

- Usually FDI is more preferred compared to portfolio investment because the former is less volatile.
- But an advantage of FPI is that, it can be made by even small investors whereas FDI is usually done by large investors.
- One more basic difference is that the FDI investors acquire more control over the day to day operations compared to FPI.

About India's FDI Inflow:

- Foreign Direct Investment has been constantly increasing annually whereas there has been heavy selling of FPIs in recent times.
- The total FDI for the fiscal year 2022 stood at \$83.6 billion compared to \$ 82 billion in the previous year.
- The FDI inflow for the year 2022 was majorly made into services and manufacturing sector.
- India's overall FDI put together stands at whopping \$570 billion as of 2022.
- The increasing FDI inflow indicates that India is in a good position in the long term as an investment destination.
- India has a huge potential in different sectors namely IT, Finance, Automobiles, Pharmaceuticals, telecommunication, etc..

Way Forward:

- FPIs have been withdrawing in recent times and along with it inflation which is sparked amidst the crisis in Ukraine has posed several challenges to economies around the world.
- India's forex reserves which has stood at around \$642 billion has come down to around \$570 billion now.
- So, India needs to be cautious in taking any policy decisions which might affect international investments.

Aurangzeb's Tomb

Context:

- Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's tomb in Maharashtra's Aurangabad was on Thursday, 19 May, closed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for five days.



What is the issue?

- It all started when a disagreement erupted in Varanasi over the Gyanvapi mosque, which was built on the ruins of the Vishwanath temple, a majestic 16th century Hindu sanctuary destroyed in 1669 on Aurangzeb's orders.
- His name is now trending on social media, with thousands of scathing allusions, and his name has been invoked by India's current Hindu nationalist government.
- Apart from this the right wing Hindu parties in Maharashtra have been challenging the existence of the tomb in Maharashtra.

About:

- Aurangzeb, known as the "last effective Mughal emperor," controlled India for nearly 50 years, from 1658 to 1707, yet historians have never been fond of him.
- To begin with, he ascended to the kingdom by imprisoning his father and assassinating his older brother.
- And he did poorly in comparison to other Mughal rulers: his great-grandfather Akbar was renowned as a benign secular ruler, his grandfather Jahangir was recognised for his love of art and architecture, and his father Shah Jahan was known as the great romantic who constructed the Taj Mahal.

- However, Aurangzeb, the sixth emperor and a devout Muslim, was portrayed as a vicious tyrant who enforced harsh Sharia regulations and reinstated the discriminating jizya tax.

The Tomb:

- The Tomb of Aurangzeb, the last Mughal emperor, is located in Khuldabad, Maharashtra, India. In contrast to other Mughal tombs, which are enormous works of Mughal architecture, notably the Taj Mahal, Aurangzeb is buried in an unmarked grave at the compound of Sheikh Zainuddin's dargah or shrine.
- He was buried near the dargah of Sheikh Zainuddin, a sufi who was also his "spiritual and religious teacher," as he requested.

GST Council

Context:

- The Supreme Court on Thursday, in a judgment championing the importance of "cooperative federalism" for the well-being of democracy, held that Union and State legislatures have "equal, simultaneous and unique powers" to make laws on Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the recommendations of the GST Council are not binding on them.

What next?

FOR BUSINESSES

- Goods importers get some relief as they are no longer liable to pay GST on ocean freight charges; could seek refunds for past payments

FOR THE CENTRE AND STATES

- Finance Ministry believes SC order only reiterates the spirit in which the GST Council is functioning
- All but one decision of the Council has been reached by consensus so far
- The Council may be summoned soon to discuss SC verdict's implications

An administrative body created by the Constitution cannot have an overriding right on the legislature
TARUN BAJAJ, Revenue Secretary

The Centre had been arbitrarily imposing its decisions on States... We hope the verdict would pave the way for States to protect rights
K.N. BALASOPAL, Kerala Finance Minister

About the GST Council:

- The 101st amendment added a new Article 279-A to the Indian Constitution. This article gave the President the authority to appoint a GST Council through executive order.

- As a result, the President signed an order in 2016 establishing the Council. The Council's Secretariat is based in New Delhi. The Union Revenue Secretary serves as the Council's ex-officio Secretary.
- The Council will be directed in its functions by the need for a unified GST structure and the establishment of a unified national market for goods and services.
- The Council makes its decisions at its meetings. The quorum for conducting a meeting is one-half of the Council's total membership.
- The Council must make every decision with a majority of not less than three-fourths of the weighted votes of the members present and voting at the meeting.

What is the Supreme Court's stand?

- Supreme Court is of the opinion that, any recommendations made by the council is not binding on the states.
- The court emphasised that the Union and the States are treated as "equal units" under Article 246A of the Constitution (which allows the States the ability to adopt GST regulations).
- It gives the Union and the States the power to implement GST legislation at the same time.

Way Forward:

- The Supreme Court's verdict has again turned the states against the Union government.
- The federal system is a means to accommodate the needs of a pluralistic society in a democratic manner. Democracy and federalism are inter-dependent.

Puri Heritage Corridor Project

Context:

The ambitious Puri heritage corridor project of the recent affidavit filed by the Archaeological Survey of India in the Orissa High Court has further intensified the debate around the project.

About:

- Puri Heritage Corridor Project, which was conceived in 2016, was unveiled in December 2019 to transform the town into a worldwide heritage destination.
- For visitors and tourists, the project include redeveloping key areas of the town and the area around the temple.
- In February 2020, the state assembly unanimously passed a resolution to begin the project's first phase of work, which is anticipated to cost Rs 800 crore.

- The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) then accepted the project's architectural design plan, which is expected to cost Rs 3,200 crore.
- In total, 22 separate projects will be implemented in stages.



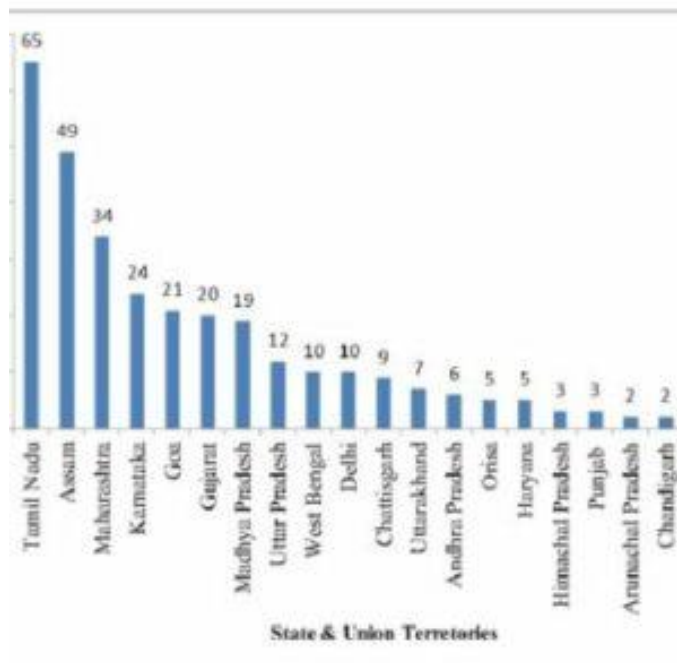
What is the issue?

- The ASI is the curator of the 12th century shrine, which is a centrally protected monument.
- Construction operations inside a 100 metre radius of a monument's perimeter are prohibited by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act.
- Construction can only take place with the National Monuments Authority's permission (NMA). Under the requirements of the AMSAR Act, NMA, a body under the Union Ministry of Culture, was established for the protection and preservation of monuments and sites through management of the banned and regulated area around centrally protected monuments.
- One of the NMA's roles is to evaluate granting permits to applicants for construction-related activities in the restricted and regulated areas.
- NMA guidelines suggest that a heritage impact assessment study is a must for developmental work around any monument of archaeological importance with a built-up area of over 5,000 square metre.
- The Jagannath temple is spread over 43,301.36 sq metre.
- On September 4, 2021, the NMA granted the state government a No Objection Certificate (NOC) allowing the construction of a cloakroom, a shelter pavilion, three toilets, an electrical room, and a pavement within the forbidden 75-meter zone for the heritage project.
- The NOC is based on the fact that public amenities do not fall under the AMASR Act's definition of construction, and that NMA has no objections provided the project is carried out under ASI's supervision.
- The ASI, on the other hand, has not granted any such NOC.

National Green Tribunal (NGT)

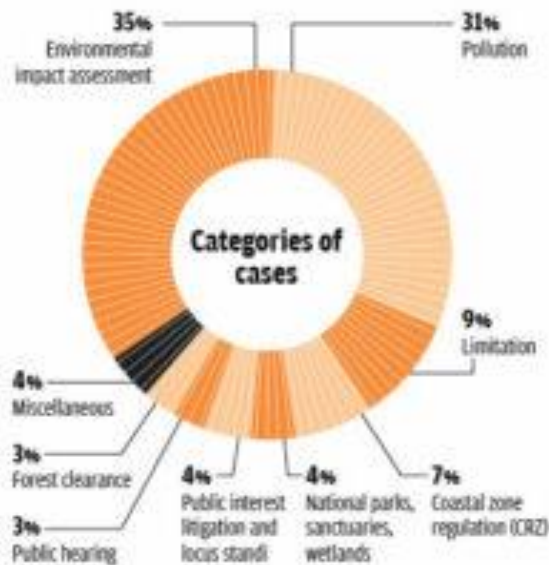
Context:

- Supreme Court has held in a judgment recently that NGT is a “unique” institution established for enforcement of environmental rights protected under the Right to Life and the Parliament has not excessively delegate power to the Centre by authorising it to establish the National Green Tribunal.

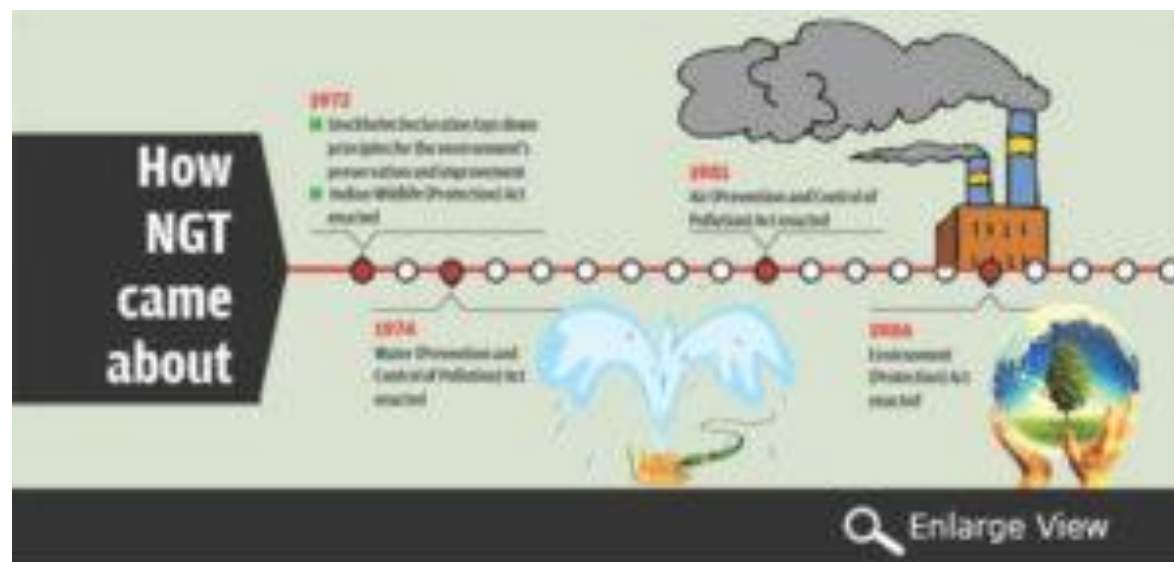


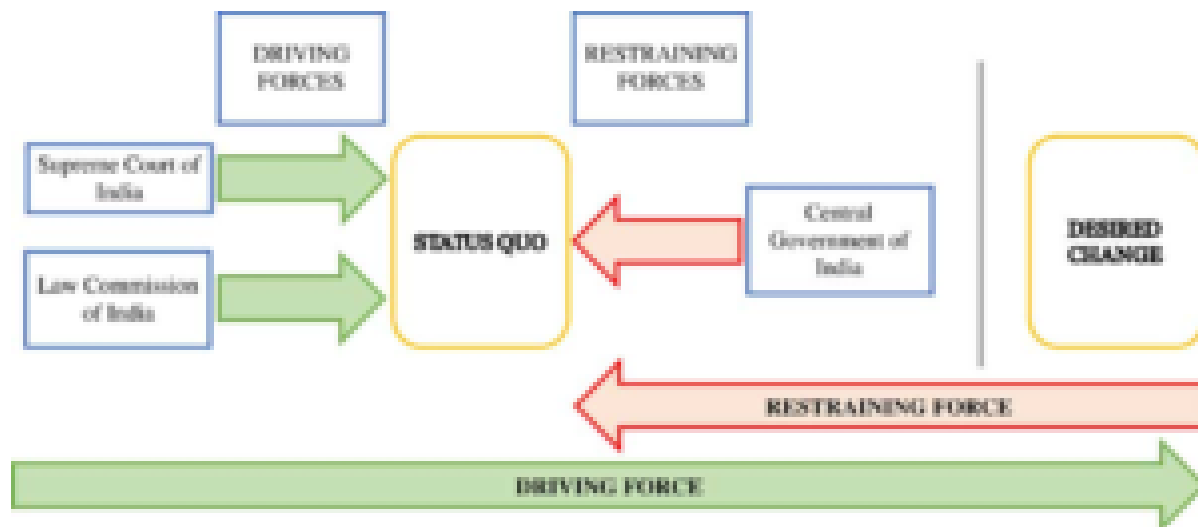
Types of cases NGT handles

Two-thirds of cases handled by NGT relate to environmental impact assessments and pollution



Source: National Green Tribunal





About NGT:

- It is a specialised body established under the National Green Tribunal Act (2010) for the effective and timely resolution of matters involving environmental protection and forest and other natural resource conservation.
- India became the third country in the world, after Australia and New Zealand, to establish a specialised environmental tribunal, and the first developing country to do so with the founding of the NGT.
- The NGT is required to decide on petitions or appeals within six months of their filing.
- The Tribunal is not bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure 1908, but shall be guided by principles of 'natural justice'.

Composition:

- The Chairperson, Judicial Members, and Expert Members make up the Tribunal. They are appointed for a five-year term and are not eligible for reappointment.
- The Central Government, in collaboration with the Chief Justice of India, appoints the Chairperson (CJI).
- The Union government will appoint a Selection Committee to appoint the Judicial and Expert Members.
- The tribunal must have at least 10 and no more than 20 full-time judicial and expert members.

Challenges:

- The NGT does not have jurisdiction over the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 or the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006. This limits the NGT's authority and, at times, makes it difficult for it to function, as the fundamental issue of forest rights is inextricably related to the environment.

- Under Article 226 (authority of High Courts to issue certain writs), the NGT's judgements are being contested in various High Courts, with several claiming that a High Court has superiority over the NGT.

The State of Inequality in India

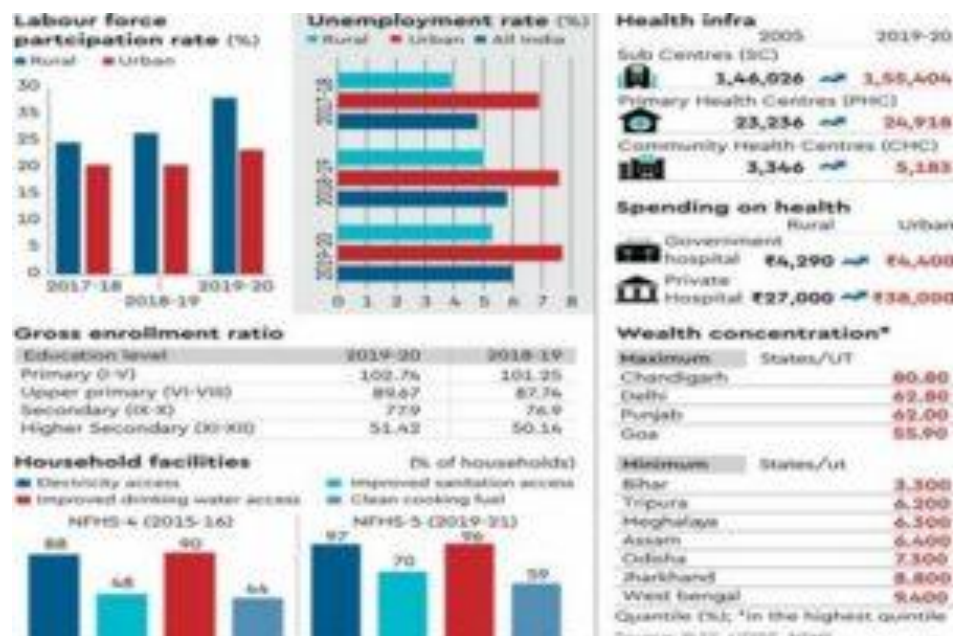
Report

Context:

- The State of Inequality in India Report was released today by Dr Bibek Debroy, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).
- The report has been written by the Institute for Competitiveness and presents a holistic analysis of the depth and nature of inequality in India.

About the report:

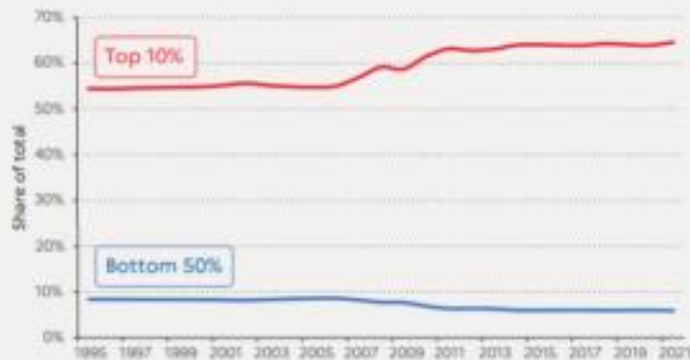
- The report looks at five main factors that determine the nature and experience of inequality. It is divided into two parts: Economic Facets and Socio-Economic Manifestations.
- Income distribution and labour market dynamics, as well as health, education, and household characteristics, are among them.
- Each chapter is dedicated to explaining the current state of affairs, areas of concern, successes and failures in terms of infrastructural capacity, and finally, the effect on inequality, using data from various rounds of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), National Family and Health Survey (NFHS), and UDISE+.
- UDISE+ : Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) initiated in 2012-13 integrating DISE for elementary and secondary education is one of the largest Management Information Systems on School Education covering more than 1.5 million schools, more than 9.6 million teachers and more than 264 million children.
- UDISE+ is an updated and improved version of UDISE. The entire system is now online and has been collecting data in real-time since 2018-19.



Status of Wealth, Health & Education:

- The paper goes beyond wealth projections, which only provide a partial view, to emphasise income distribution forecasts for the years 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20.
- The paper emphasises that wealth concentration as a measure of inequality does not disclose changes in household purchasing power, and instead focuses for the first time on income distribution to understand capital movement.
- There has been significant progress in increasing health infrastructure capacity, with a particular focus on rural areas. In 2005, there were 1,72,608 total health centres in India; by 2020, there would be 1,85,505.
- According to the report, education and household conditions have improved enormously due to targeted efforts through several social protection schemes, especially in the area of water availability and sanitation that have increased the standard of living.

Figure 2: Wealth distribution in India



Interpretation: In 2021, the wealthiest 10% of the population own 65% of total household wealth. Household wealth is the sum of all financial assets (e.g. stock, bonds) and non-financial assets (e.g. housing), net of debts.

Ethanol Blending

Context:

- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved amendments to the National Policy on Biofuels, 2018, to advance the date by which fuel companies have to increase the percentage of ethanol in petrol to 20%, from 2030 to 2025.
- The policy of introducing 20% ethanol will take effect from April 1, 2023.

Alternative in Sight

Ethanol produced from sugarcane is the only source for petrol blending

Ethanol becomes scarce for alcohol & chemicals manufacturing

Liquor cos say there is an ethanol demand & supply mismatch

Sugar lobby is gaining from the rise in ethanol prices

What has oil ministry proposed?

To use ethanol produced from biomass & non-edible plants for blending purpose

Ethanol Blending Programme - 2013-14

Petrol sold by oil firms **2,417 CRORE LITRES**

Required ethanol for about 5% blending **115 CRORE LITRES**

Actual purchases by oil firms **31.5 CRORE LITRES**

Ethanol blending achieved **1.37%**

Source: Oil Ministry

What are the benefits?

- By blending 20% ethanol by 2025, the country would be saving around 30,000 crores in foreign exchange per year.
- This would also result in increased energy security.
- By blending ethanol we could also lower the carbon emissions resulting into better air quality.
- Apart from this, this would bring a boost to the farmers income as the damaged food grains can be used efficiently.
- Overall India would be in a self-sufficient position in terms of energy security.

Challenges:

- Transport of Ethanol from surplus to deficit states incurs additional movement and also burns fossil fuel.
20% ethanol blending would also require changes in the working of engines which would finally increase the cost of the auto mobile.
- This is not the case in 10% ethanol blending which does not require any major changes in the engine.
A major challenge would be in the sustainability in the agricultural sector because increased ethanol blending will lead to increased production of water intensive crops.
- And also there are chances that this may lead to a threat to the food security as the food grains might be diverted to blending.

Direct costs	Direct benefits
Grain or sugar-cane feedstock	Sale of ethanol
Electricity and water use	Major national agricultural industry
Transport, processing, fermentation and distillation	Cogeneration of electricity
Distribution and supply	Sale of coproducts
Tax subsidy or exemption	Technological development
Indirect costs	Indirect benefits
Land degradation	Reduced emissions of 'green house' gases
Increased acetaldehyde pollution	Reduced pollution by CO and NO _x
Foreign currency payments and interest	Rural employment and social stability
Military protection of gasoline supplies	Renewable resource
	Reduction in fossil-fuel use
	Reduced dependency on imported oil

FOOD OR FUEL?

Nearly a billion people will go hungry tonight, yet this year the U.S. will turn nearly 5 billion bushels of corn into ethanol. That's enough food to feed 412 million people for an entire year.



Way Forward:

- In the wake of this new policy the demand for ethanol would increase substantially in the country.
Currently India produces about 4.25 billion liters of ethanol from both molasses-based distilleries and grain based distilleries.
- This demand must be met without harming the sustainability in agriculture and also the food security.

Provisions Under Article 142

Context:

- Recently A G Perarivalan who was convicted in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case has been released and this has brought back Article 142 into picture.

What does the article say?

- Article 142 of the Constitution of India provides a special and extraordinary power to the Supreme Court to do complete justice to the litigants who have suffered traversed illegality or injustice in the proceedings.
- The constitution provides this power to the Supreme Court to extend its jurisdiction throughout the territory of India and pass such orders.

History:

- The framers of the constitution gave utmost importance to this article and felt it was necessary to secure justice to the citizens who were in the disadvantaged position in the judicial system.
- They felt that natural justice is above the law and Supreme Court has been given this power which is above the law considering that it issues orders which are just.
- Therefore Supreme Court is given with unlimited powers in order to deliver justice.



When has this been invoked?

- The Supreme Court has invoked this article earlier in some high profile cases such as 1989 Union Carbide case and the 2019 Ayodhya Ram Mandir verdict.
- In the Union Carbide case the Supreme court used its extraordinary powers to get the US-based Union Carbide Corporation to pay \$470 million to the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

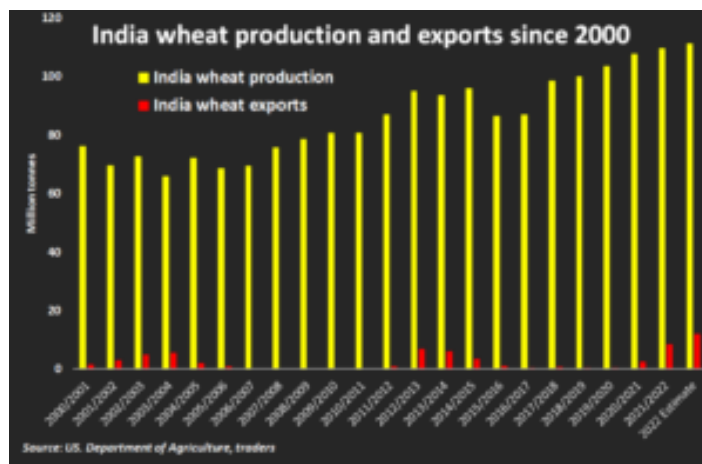
Wheat Exports of India

Context:

- As Russia and Ukraine, the largest exporters of wheat were at war, India has been looking forward to fill this gap by boosting its own exports.
- But on May 13, the government effectively banned the export of wheat.

Background:

- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Department of Commerce had issued such order on export of wheat but it has given some relaxation to export those commodities that were booked before the date of the order was issued.
- Amidst the war between Russia and Ukraine, the demand for Indian wheat has increased in the overseas.
- Wheat production in India is also expected to be lower than the estimated 111 lakh metric tonnes.
- However there are apprehensions among the food security campaigners, they argue that internal consumption should be given top priority.



Why ban on exports?

- The government's estimates of wheat production has been reduced from 111 metric tonne to 105 MT.
- Apart from this the procurement has substantially decreased to 18 MT which was 36.7 MT last year.
- So, it was felt that lesser production and along with it lesser procurement may affect internal consumption.
- Also the prices have been fluctuating due to inflation, the wholesale inflation has been somewhere around 14% and the retail inflation has been around 9.59%.
- Considering these two factors, the government has decided to ban export of wheat.

Why the production has declined?

- The extreme weather condition prevailing in Northern India has led to the decline in the output.
- The extreme heat which prevailed has led to this drastic decline in the total production in India.

Statehood Day of Sikkim

Context:

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has greeted the people of Sikkim on their Statehood Day.

History:

- On May 16, 1975, Sikkim became the 22nd state of India.
- Three years after India's independence, in 1950, Sikkim and the Republic of India signed a pact. The former's status as a 'protectorate' state within the Union of India was preserved under the agreement.
- A protectorate state is a small country that is guarded by a larger, sovereign country. The smaller country controls policies such as foreign affairs, defence, and communications, while the larger country controls domestic affairs.
- By the 1970s, Sikkim's governing Chogyals had become increasingly unpopular, prompting calls for the former kingdom's unification with India.
- The Chogyals demanded a referendum in September 1974. The Indian Army entered Sikkim in April of the following year, following a plea by the state's Prime Minister.
- In the subsequent referendum, 97.5 percent of participants voted in favour of joining India, with only 2.45 percent voting against it.
- Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, the then-President of India, signed a constitutional amendment on May 15, 1975, and Sikkim became India's 22nd state the next day; the Chogyal's office was also dissolved.

About:

- Sikkim is a state in India's northeast. In the north and northeast, it shares boundaries with China's Tibet Autonomous Region, Bhutan in the east, Nepal's Province No. 1 in the west, and West Bengal in the south. Sikkim is also near to the Bangladesh-bound Siliguri Corridor.
- Sikkim is the smallest and least populous of the Indian states. Sikkim is known for its biodiversity, which includes alpine and subtropical temperatures, as well as being home to Kangchenjunga, India's highest peak and the third highest on the planet. Gangtok is the capital and largest city in Sikkim.
- The Khangchendzonga National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, covers over 35% of the state.

INS GHARIAL

Context:

- As part of ongoing deployment of Indian Naval Ship Gharial in South West Indian Ocean, under Mission SAGAR IX, the Ship called at Port Victoria, Seychelles from 11 to 14 May 22.

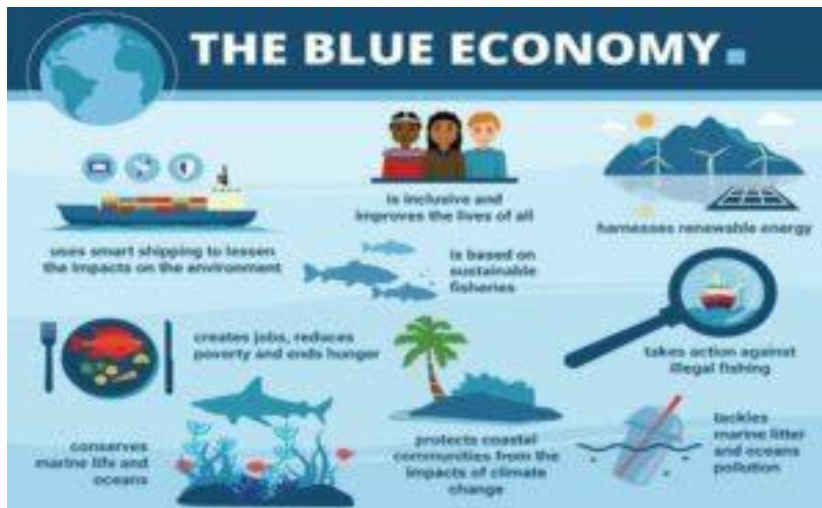
About INS Gharial:

- INS Gharial is a Magar-class amphibious warfare vessel of the Indian Navy.



About SAGAR:

- SAGAR which stands for Security and Growth for All in the Region, is India's maritime cooperation policy or ideology in the Indian Ocean region.
- SAGAR aims to set India apart from other regionally active big powers' leadership styles and to reassure littoral governments as India's maritime influence rises.
- SAGAR's vision of India is "consultative, democratic, and egalitarian."



Significance:

- Through this programme, India can benefit from the Blue Economy.
- A blue economy offers a way to address the country's socioeconomic difficulties. Furthermore, connectivity with its neighbours can be improved.
- Regional issues like disasters and piracy can be addressed.
- Through the implementation of the SAGAR initiative, a more integrated approach and cooperative future will be conceivable.
- China has been pushing its influence in the Indian Ocean region through the 21st Century Maritime Silk Route.
- This is a double-edged blade because the String of Pearls strategy has both commercial and military ramifications. With this in mind, the SAGAR vision is critical in combating such problems.

Char Dham Yatra

Context:

- Since the beginning of the Char Dham Yatra of this year which started on May 3, around twenty three pilgrims have lost their lives on their pilgrimage.
- Mainly due to cardiac related issues like heart attack, hypertension and other comorbidities, a majority of them are above sixty years of age.

About the Yatra:

- The Char Dham mentioned in the above context is also referred to as chota chardham, which includes Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath.
 - 1) Yamunotri – This Shrine is dedicated to River Yamuna.
 - 2) Gangotri – This shrine is dedicated to goddess Ganges.
 - 3) Kedarnath – This temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva in the form of Kedar.
 - 4) Badrinath – This temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu in the form of Badrinath.
- The Char Dham means the four dhams is a set of four pilgrimage sites which is very auspicious in the Hindu belief.
- In the Hindu sect, it is believed that a person visiting all the four sites will attain Moksha (Salvation)



The four dhams as described by Adi Shankaracharya includes:

1. Badrinath – located on the banks of the river Alkananda in Uttarkhand, the town lies between the Nar and Narayan mountain ranges
2. Dwarka – located in the confluence of the river Gomti merging into Arabian sea in the state of Gujarat.
3. Puri – located in the state of Odisha, here the deity is Krishna, who is worshipped as Jagannatha
4. Rameswaram – located in Tamil Nadu where lord shiva is worshipped.



Issues associated:

- The four holy sites located in Uttarkhand are located on high altitudes in the Himalayas.
- The pilgrims who visit these sites are prone to sudden low temperatures, low humidity, low air pressure, low oxygen levels and increased ultraviolet radiation.
- Due to limited public transport facilities many pilgrims choose to walk who are prone to above mentioned threats.
- The air at the ground level comprises different molecules with nitrogen 78% and oxygen 21% .
- With increase in the altitude number of oxygen molecules in a given volume of air changes.
- At higher altitudes the partial pressure of oxygen changes and the oxygen molecules are further put apart because of less air pressure.
- This leads to less amount of oxygen molecules in the same amount of air we breathe.

Sagittarius A

Context:

Recently, the first photograph of a supermassive blackhole was revealed by the astronomers of the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT).



About Sagittarius A:

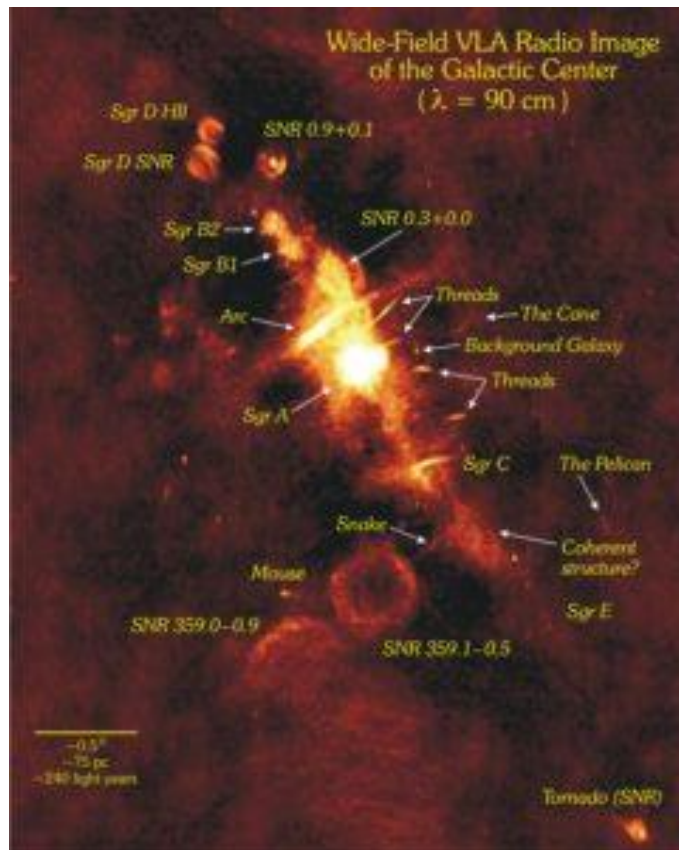
This supermassive blackhole named Sagittarius A, is twenty six thousand light years from the Earth and situated at the centre of the Milky Way Galaxy.

A black hole is a place located in the space where gravity pulls so much that even light cannot escape out of it.

The reason for the strength of the gravity is because the matter has been squeezed into a tiny space.

Black holes are formed when the stars collapse or at the verge of dying.

Black holes are invisible because the light cannot escape out of it and they can be tracked only with the help of spatial telescopes



About the Event Horizon Telescope:

The Event Horizon Telescope is an international collaboration with a goal to directly observe the immediate environment of a black hole.

EHT is a large telescope array consisting of a global network of radio telescopes. The first image of a black hole M87 at the center of the galaxy Messier 87 was published by EHT in 2019.



What is escape velocity ?

Escape velocity is the minimum speed required for an object to escape from the gravitational influence of a primary body.

Finland Joining NATO Alliance

Context:

- A country with long time of war neutrality has decided to join a military alliance, this stand of Finland is significant in terms of international political order.

What is Russia's response?

- Kremlin has reacted bitterly by stating that this move is seen by Russia as a threat and warned of a possible retaliation.

Background:

- Finland has always stayed away from the power tussle and had always maintained cordial relations with both west and Russia.
- The Finns idea of neutrality has come to an end after the Russian invasion over Ukraine.
- The President stated that the country's membership in the alliance will strengthen its

security.

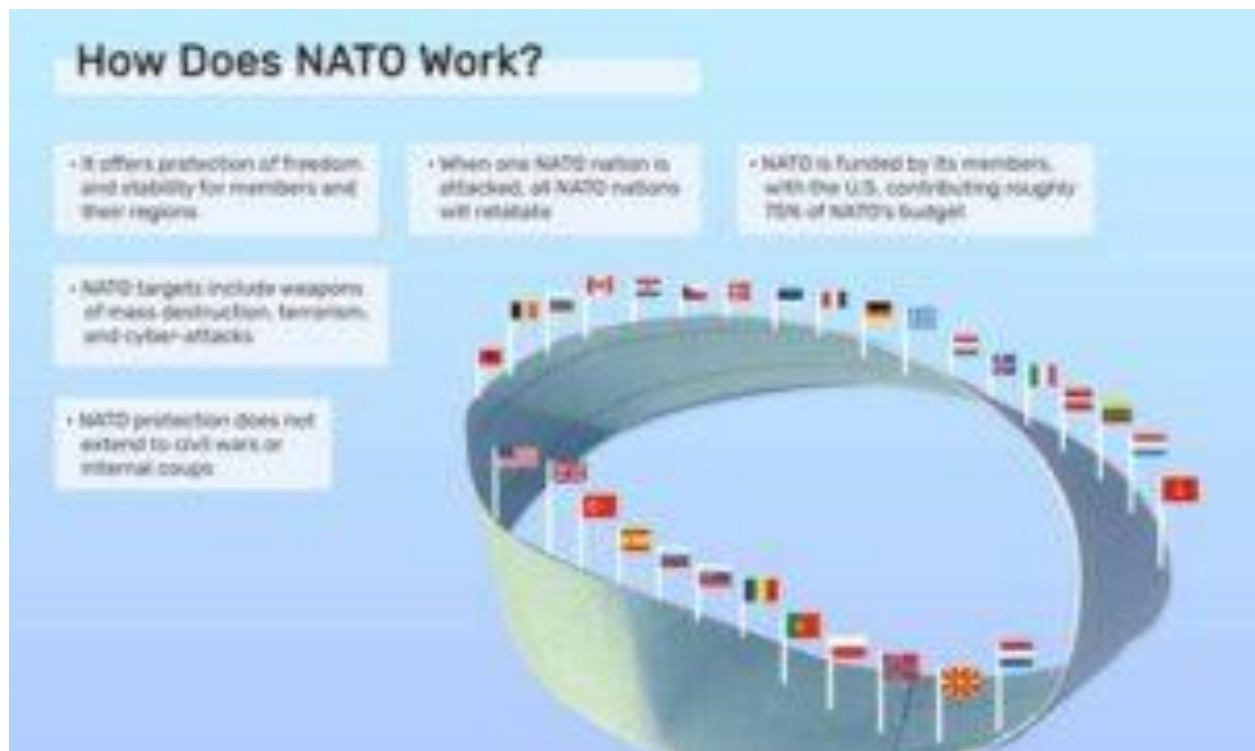
- The public poll regarding the joining of Finland to the alliance has received about 75% of votes which used to be around 25% before the Russian invasion over Ukraine.

History:

- In 1939 Finland had lost over ten percent of its territory to Russia when Russia had invaded Finland.
- But still the country had decided to remain non-aligned in the cold war era but the apprehensions began after the Russian annexation of Crimea.

Implications:

- Sweden, another bordering country of Finland is also likely to follow Finland in joining the alliance.
- If Finland joins, Sweden will be the only Nordic non-member of NATO.



Language Policy in India

Context:

- The Governor of Tamil Nadu has recently asserted that the Central government did not impose Hindi or any other language on Tamil Nadu at the 37th convocation of Bharathiar University.

What are the Constitutional Provisions regarding language?

- Article 29 The Article states that any section of the citizens who have a “distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.”
- Article 343 – it is to be Hindi in Devnagri script would be the official language of the Union of India, it also states that English will continue to be used as an official language for 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution.
- Even after the prescribed 15 years, the parliament through legislations can provide for use of English Language.
- The Official Language Act of 1963 provides for continued use of English without prescribing any time limit.



What are the provisions for the state?

- The constitution provides for legislature of a state to adopt any one or more languages in use in the state or Hindi as the official language of that state.
- Until that English is to continue as official language of that state.
- The act also lays down that English should be used for the purposes of communication b/w the Union and the non- Hindi states.

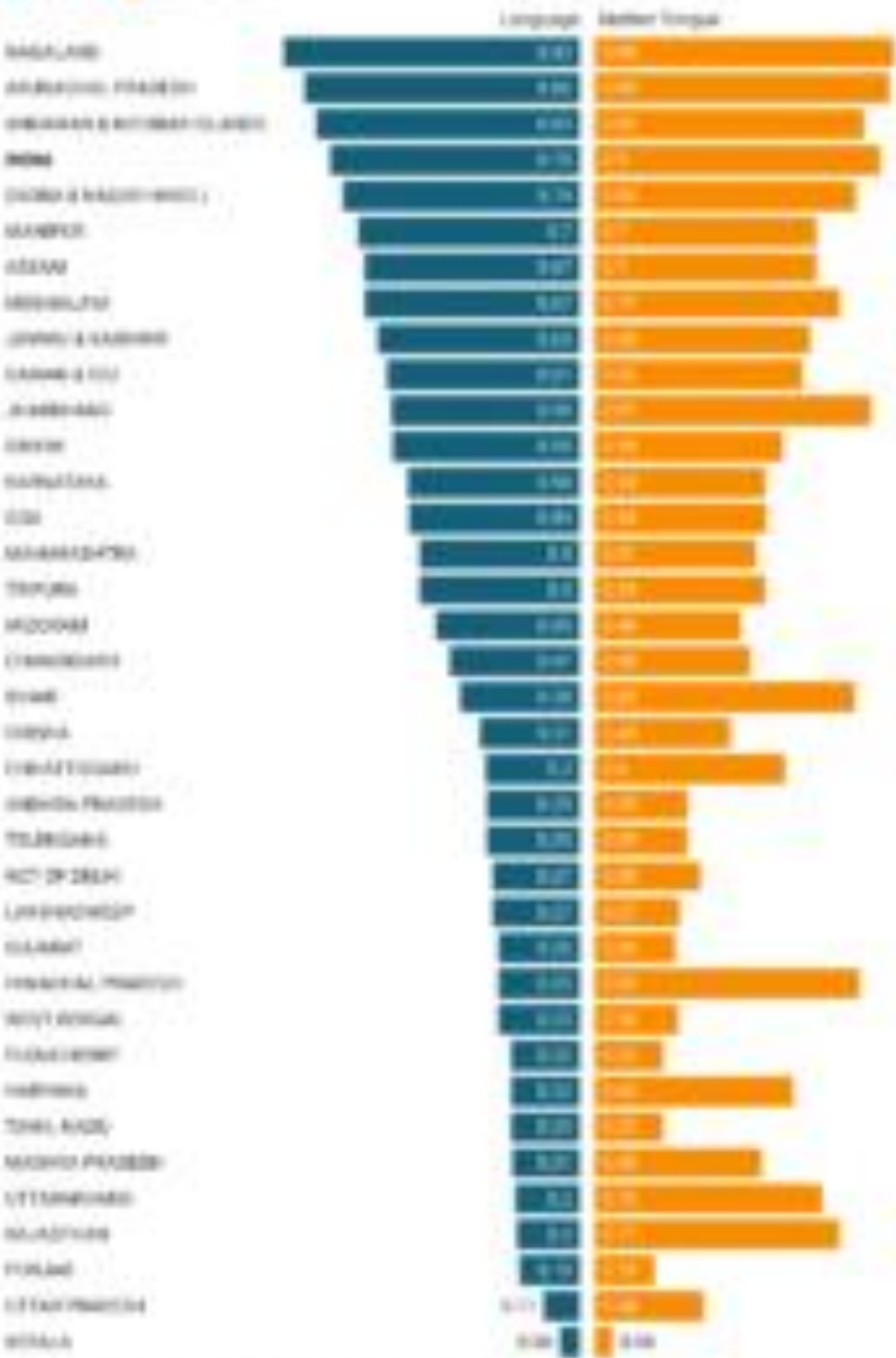
What are the provisions for the Judiciary?

- Article 348 (1) of the Constitution of India provides that all proceedings in the Supreme Court and in every High court shall be in English Language until Parliament by law otherwise provides.
- Under Article 348 (2), the Governor of the State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of the Hindi language or any other language used for any official purpose of the State, in the proceedings of the High Court having its principal seat in that State provided that decrees, judgments or orders passed by such High Courts shall be in English.

Language and Mother Tongue Diversity of India

Greenberg's Linguistic Diversity Index

Language Mother Tongue



Source: Greenberg, Joseph. "Greenberg's Linguistic Diversity Index: Language and Mother Tongue".

What does the constitution say about the Development of Hindi Language?

- The constitution imposes a duty upon the centre to promote the spread and development of the Hindi Language so that it may become the lingua franca of the composite culture of India.

Mission Amrit sarovar

Context:

- With a view to conserve water for the future, the Prime Minister launched a new Mission on Amrit Sarovar on 24th April 2022

What is the mission about?

- The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as a part of celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. In total, it would lead to creation of 50,000 water bodies of a size of about an Acre or more.

About:

- This mission was launched with a whole-of-government approach, involving six ministries and departments: the Department of Rural Development, the Department of Land Resources, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, the Department of Water Resources, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and the Ministry of Forest, Environment, and Climate Changes.
- Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N) has also been brought on board as a technical partner for the mission.
- The Mission works through States and Districts, emphasising several initiatives such as the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, XV Finance Commission Grants, PMKSY sub-schemes such as Watershed Development Component and Har Khet Ko Pani, as well as State-specific schemes.
- It should also be noted that the Mission encourages citizens and non-governmental organisations to contribute to these efforts.

Other Aspects:

- Mission Amrit Sarovar is scheduled to be completed by August 15, 2023. Around 50,000 Amrit Sarovars could be built in the country. Each Amrit Sarovar will cover around 1 acre and have a water storage capacity of 10,000 cubic metres.
- The fundamental focus is on people's participation in the Mission. At all stages, local liberation fighters, their families, Martyrs' families, Padma Awardees, and inhabitants of the area where an Amrit Sarovar is to be built would be involved. Every 15th of August, a National Flag Raising Ceremony will be held at each Amrit Sarovar location.

National Technology Day

Context:

- The National Technology day is celebrated every year on 11 March to mark the anniversary of the Pokhran nuclear tests of 1998.
- The tests were initiated on 11 May 1998, under the assigned code name Operation Shakti, with the detonation of one fusion and two fission bombs.

What is the theme?

- The theme for the day this year is 'Integrated Approach in Science & Technology for Sustainable Future'
- On this day, the Technology Development Board (TDB) seeks applications for the national awards for the commercialization of technologies. Reportedly, the awards are under three categories – National Awards, MSME awards, and Startup awards.

About the Pokhran Tests:

- The Pokhran-II tests were a series of five nuclear bomb test explosions conducted by India at the Indian Army's Pokhran Test Range in May 1998.
- It was the second instance of nuclear testing conducted by India; the first test, code-named Smiling Buddha, was conducted in May 1974.
- The tests were initiated on 11 May 1998, under the assigned code name Operation Shakti, with the detonation of one fusion and two fission bombs.
- The advanced detonators, implosion, and high-voltage trigger systems were designed, tested, and manufactured by three DRDO laboratories.
- Weaponization, systems engineering, aerodynamics, safety interlocks, and flight trials were all under their control.



Significance for India:

- With a nuclear powered state in the border and facing territorial aggression since 1962, this tests played a huge role.
- The test also made the world to look at India in a different manner, as a rising power among the nations.

Pulitzer Prize

Context:

- A team of four Indian photographers from Reuters news agency – slain photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, Adnan Abidi, Sanna Irshad Mattoo and Amit Dave – have won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for feature photography for their coverage of the Covid 19 crisis in India.

About:

- The prizes were established in 1904, as part of Pulitzer's will, which included a provision for the foundation of the Pulitzer Prizes as an incentive to greatness.
- Pulitzer only mentioned four journalism awards, four letters and drama honours, one education award, and five trip scholarships.

- Pulitzer left a \$2 million endowment to Columbia University in his will, with one-fourth of the money to be “used to awards or scholarships for the encouragement of public service, public morals, American literature, and the progress of education.”

Indians who have won the award:

- Indian-American journalist Gobind Behari Lal, a member of the Ghadar Party in America, was the first Indian to receive the Pulitzer Prize for journalism in 1937.
- He shared the award for reporting with four others for their coverage of science at Harvard University’s tercentenary. In 1969, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan for his postgraduate work at the University of California, Berkeley.
- In 2003, Mumbai-born Geeta Anand was part of a Wall Street Journal team that won a Pulitzer Prize for corporate corruption reporting, and in 2016, Indian-American Sanghamitra Kalita, then managing editor of the Los Angeles Times, and her team won the Pulitzer in the Breaking News Reporting category for their coverage of the San Bernardino shooting in California in 2015.

Protected Mobility Vehicles

Context:

- The Army has floated a Request for Information to purchase Protected Mobility Vehicles (PMV) for high-altitude areas and for deserts and plains.

About:

- The PMV is essentially an armoured personnel carrier on wheels. It protects the personnel inside the truck from mine bursts and small-arms attacks.
- The soldiers aboard these vehicles could be members of any quick response squad travelling to a combat zone or patrolling parties heading to border areas. They could also be part of a reconnaissance team working behind enemy lines or in front of own forces’ lines of fire.

Specifications:

- Ballistic protection is required, as well as the ability to shield the vehicle from grenade and mine blasts. It should have a top speed of 90 kilometres per hour on the road and 40 kilometres per hour in cross-country terrain. In high-altitude settings, they should be able to work in temperatures ranging from 40 degrees Celsius to minus 15 degrees Celsius.
- A weapon mount for a 7.62 mm Light Machine Gun (LMG) and a turret with 360-degree rotation for an LMG are required for the vehicles. It must also have 11 firing ports, five on each side of the vehicle (starboard and port) and one in the back. The PMV must be able to cross water.



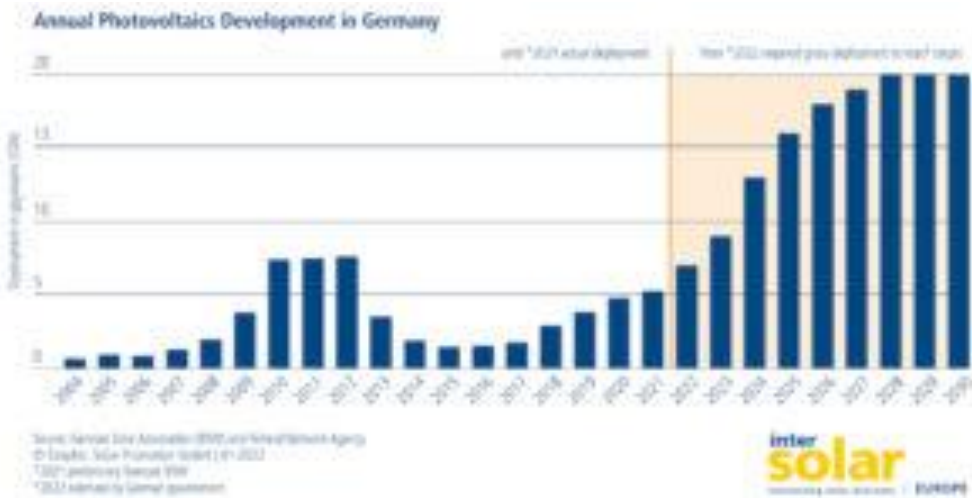
Status in India:

- India has the capability of producing PMVs.
- In April this year, the Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) handed over the first of such Infantry Protected Mobility Vehicles (IPMVs) to the then Chief of Army Staff, Gen MM Naravane.
- The TASL is now the first private sector company in the country to produce such wheeled armoured personnel carriers and has developed the IPMV in collaboration with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Intersolar Europe 2022

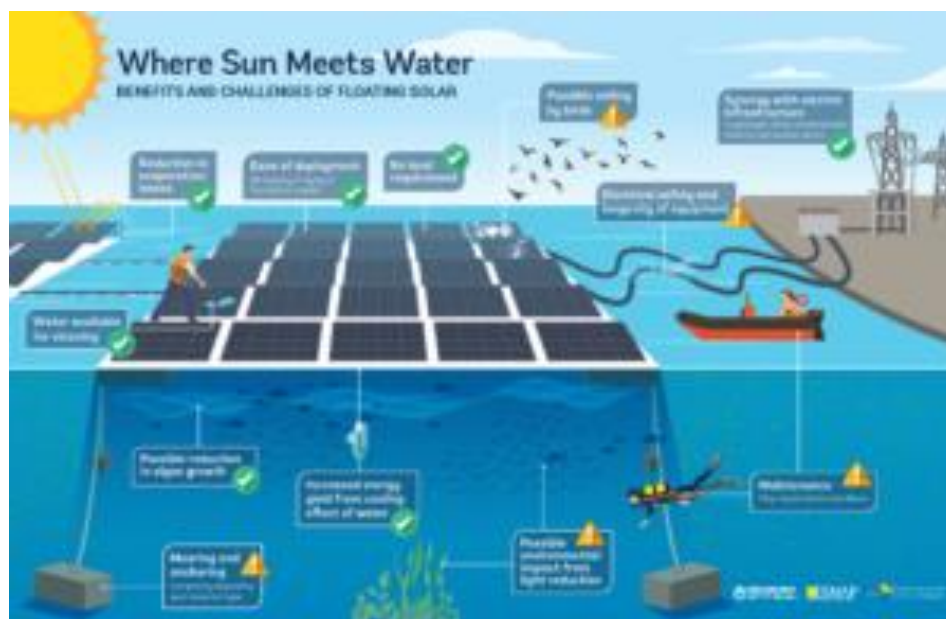
Context:

- Union Minister of State for Ministry of New and Renewable Energy Shri Bhagwant Khuba will leave for Munich, Germany tomorrow to attend Intersolar Europe 2022 to be held from 11th May to 13th May 2022.



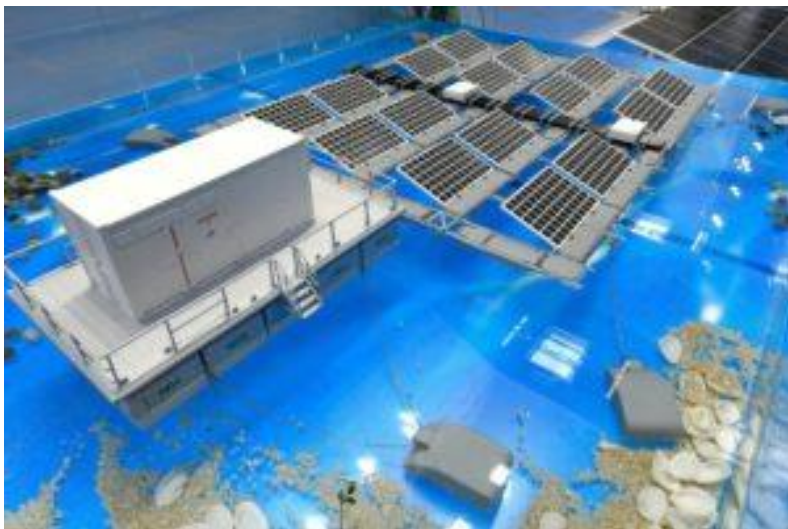
About Intersolar:

- Intersolar is the world's largest solar industry and partner show series. It brings together individuals and businesses from all over the world with the goal of boosting the use of solar energy in our energy supply.
- Intersolar has the unique ability to bring together participants of the solar business from all over the world, thanks to its more than 30 years of expertise.
- Munich, So Paulo, Long Beach, Gandhinagar, Dubai, and Mexico City all host Intersolar fairs and conferences.
- Intersolar Summits, which take place in emerging and developing markets around the world, supplement these global gatherings.



Significance:

- The event will be attended by more than 20,000 people including ministers and secretaries from various nations.
- Major multinational companies of the Renewable Energy sector like ABB, Siemens, Ercon, 3S Swiss Solar Solutions, Meyer Burger Technologies AG, BayWa r.e. GmbH, Engie, Enel, and Wacker are likely to be represented through their CEOs at the event.



Status in India:

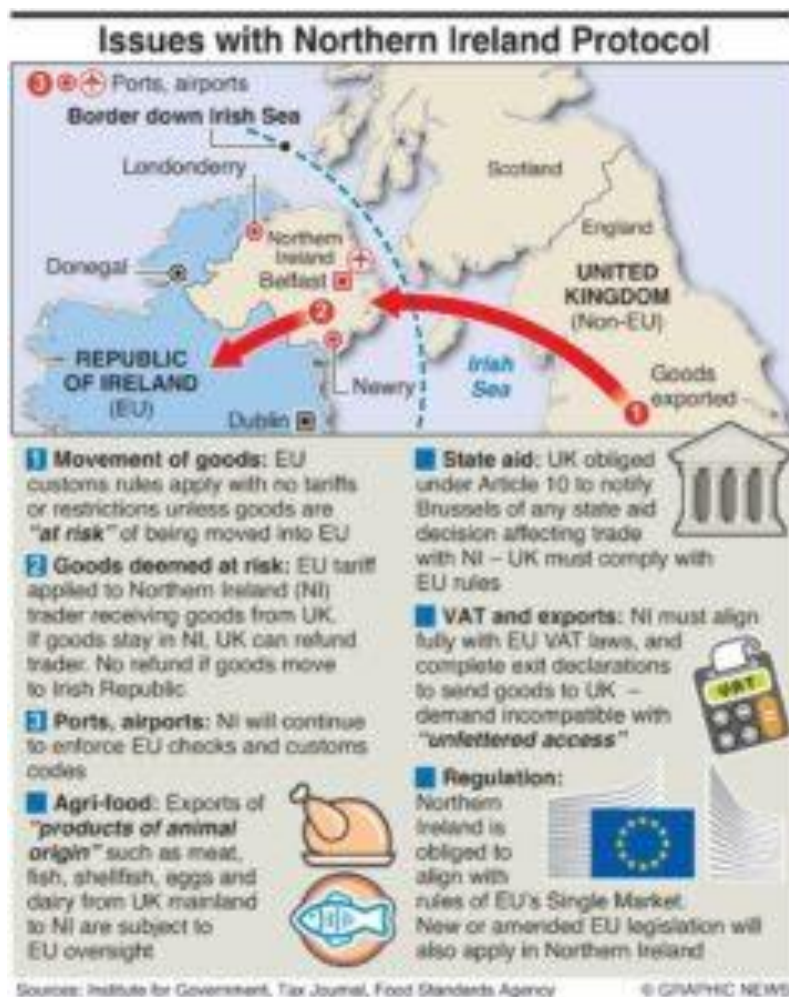
- India has already made significant progress. It has already met 40% of its power capacity from non-fossil fuels, over nine years ahead of schedule, and the amount of solar and wind in India's energy mix has increased dramatically.

- Solar power plants are less expensive to build than coal plants thanks to technology advancements, consistent state support, and a thriving private sector. India is gaining more renewable electricity capacity than any other large nation, with new capacity expected to treble by 2026.
- The country is also a major producer of modern bioenergy and has ambitious plans to expand its use across the economy.

Northern Ireland Protocol

Context:

- Ireland's Foreign Minister on Wednesday said the U.K. risked a breach of international law if it scraps the trade rules it signed with the EU for Northern Ireland.
- The UK government has hinted that it may pull out of a deal made with the European Union over post-Brexit trade arrangements for Northern Ireland.

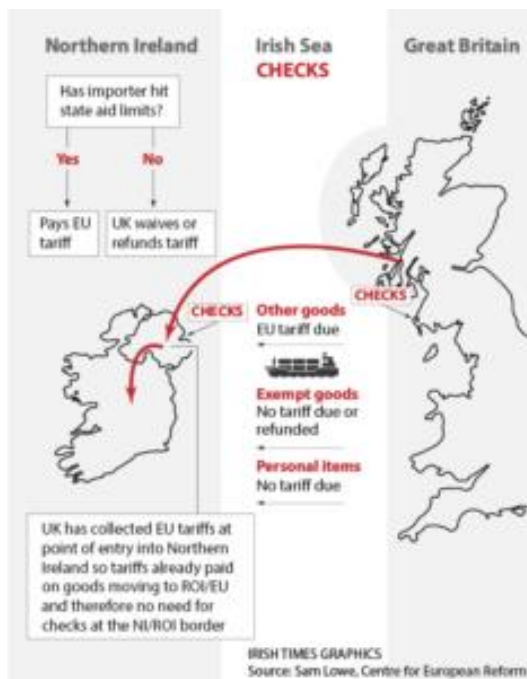


Background:

- The Northern Ireland Protocol was included in the United Kingdom's Brexit Withdrawal Agreement with the European Union. Checks on products entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK are necessary under its rules.
- Since its implementation at the start of 2021, the protocol has caused friction not only between the UK and the EU, but also among unionists in Northern Ireland, who see it as a threat to their status within the UK.
- After the United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union in 2016, Northern Ireland required special arrangements. This is due to the fact that it is the only part of the UK with a land border with an EU country – Ireland.

What's in the protocol?

- The convention stipulated that all inspections and document checks would take place between Northern Ireland and Great Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) rather than on the road over the Irish border.
- Northern Ireland ports would conduct checks on British products to ensure compliance with EU regulations.
- Furthermore, Northern Ireland would continue to adhere to EU product standards (which are part of the EU's single market rules).



Why opposition?

- Unionist parties reject the convention, claiming that building a border across the Irish Sea would jeopardise Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom.

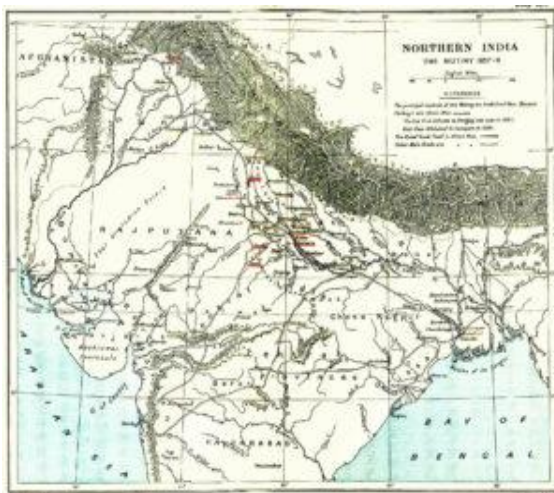
- The United Kingdom wants a number of changes, including the elimination of border inspections and paperwork between the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, as well as ensuring that goods sold in Northern Ireland must only fulfil British standards and not EU regulations.



Revolt of 1857

Context:

- The skeletons of 282 Indian soldiers who participated in the country's First War of Independence in 1857 were found during the excavation near Amritsar.



Background:

- The revolt of 1857 marked the formal start of the fight for independence from British colonial control.
- The British East India Company's rule came to an end during this battle of independence.

Reason:

- The introduction of the 'Enfield' rifle was the immediate factor. Before inserting the cartridge into the pistol, it had to be chewed off.
- The cartridge was lubricated with either pig or cow fat, according to Indian sepoys. This was in violation of Hindu and Muslim beliefs. As a result, they resisted using the 'Enfield' weapon.
- The soldiers were enraged at the British, therefore this was a flashpoint. This was thought to be the immediate cause of the 1857 rebellion.



Religious & Social Causes:

- Racism, or racial discrimination, was thought to be a major cause of the 1857 insurrection, in which Indians were exploited and prohibited from interacting with Europeans.
- Whites began intervening in Indians' religious and cultural concerns, as well as torturing them.



Political:

- The British expansion had resulted in the proliferation of unfair policies, resulting in the loss of power of the Nawabs and Zamindars residing throughout India.
- The introduction of unfair policies such as the policy of trade and commerce, the policy of indirect subordination (subsidiary alliance), the policy of war and annexation, the policy of direct subordination (doctrine of lapse), and the policy of misgovernance (through which Awadh was annexed) hampered the interests of the rulers of the native states greatly, and they became victims of British expansionism one by one.
- As a result, those monarchs who had lost their nations to the British were naturally anti-British and sided with them during the revolution.



Pardoning Power of President & Governor

Context:

- A claim by the Centre that the President, and not the Tamil Nadu Governor, has “exclusive power” to decide on the plea for pardon by the Rajiv Gandhi assassination convict A.G. Perarivalan drew flak from the Supreme Court on Wednesday before it reserved the case for judgment.

Pardoning Power of the President:

Article 72: President shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence.

- Pardon– It completely absolves the offender from all sentences and punishment and disqualifications.
- Commutation– Commutation means exchange of one thing for another. In simple words to replace the punishment with less severe punishment. For example for Rigorous imprisonment-simple imprisonment.
- Reprieve– It is the temporary suspension of a sentence especially a death sentence.
- Respite– Respite means awarding a lesser punishment on some special grounds. Example- the Pregnancy of women offender.
- Remissions- It is the reduction of the amount of sentence without changing its character, for example, a sentence of 1 year may be remitted to 6 months.

How is it different from the pardoning powers of the Governor?

- Court Martial: The power of the President to grant pardon extends in cases where the punishment or sentence is by a Court Martial but Article 161 does not provide any such power to the Governor.
- Death sentence: The President can grant pardon in all cases where the sentence given is the sentence of death but the pardoning power of the Governor does not extend to death sentence cases.

POWER OF PARDON

ARTICLE 72 the President to grant pardons and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in all cases where the punishment is by a Court Martial or the punishment is for an offence against a law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the Union extends or in the case of death sentence.

ARTICLE 161 a Governor can grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or

commute the sentence of a person convicted of an offence against any law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the State extends.

- The exercise of power by President and governors under Article 72 and Article 161 respectively can be challenged before a constitutional court on the ground of arbitrariness, non-application of mind, mala fide and non-consideration of relevant material.

Limitations:

- The President cannot exercise his power of pardon independent of the government.
- In several cases, the SC has ruled that the President has to act on the advice of the Council of Ministers while deciding mercy pleas.

Government's Stand on Sedition Law:

Context:

- The Union Government has held that, A 1962 Constitution Bench judgment of the Supreme Court, which upheld the validity of the sedition law, "must be treated as a binding precedent" that has withstood the test of time.



What does the law say (IPC 124A)?

- “Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the government established by law in shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine.”

Background:

- For far too long, the sedition legislation has been a source of contention. Governments are frequently chastised for using Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to prosecute vociferous critics of their policies.
- As a result, this Section is viewed as a restriction on people’s freedom of expression, and it falls short of Article 19’s limits on justifiable restrictions on freedom of speech.
- Since the colonial British overlords enacted the statute in the 1860s, it has been the subject of heated discussion.
- Several prominent liberation fighters, including Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, were charged with sedition.

Why is it required?

- The law prohibits anti-national, separatist, and terrorist elements from disrupting public order, inciting violence, and inciting hatred.
- It contributes to the stability of an elected administration that may otherwise be deposed through illegal and violent means.
- It is comparable to contempt of court. The executive branch includes the elected government. As a result, government contempt can be checked.

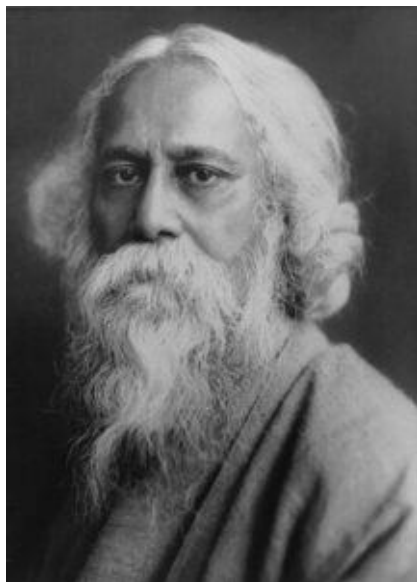
Why opposition to the law?

- Because the seeds of sedition law were established during colonial times, it is frequently portrayed as a harsh regulation that can be utilised to curtail constitutionally given freedom of speech and expression.
- It is detrimental to constructive criticism. Views that differ from those of the government are not always seditious, as the Supreme Court has stated. As a result, sedition laws have the potential to demotivate legitimate criticism.
- The Sedition Act was repealed in the United Kingdom in 2009, thus India should be done with it as well.
- The IPC and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act 2019 both feature provisions that can be used to punish anyone who disrupt public order.

Rabindranath Tagore

Context:

- Recently Rabindranath Tagore Jayanti was celebrated all round the world and also his name is making rounds due to many reasons.



About:

- Rabindra Nath Tagore was a renowned poet, composer and social reformer who wore many hats noted for his Bengali poetry, short tales, song composition, playwriting, essay writing, and painting.
- In his twenties, he published many collections of poetry, including Manasi. Gitanjali introduced his later religious poetry to the West (1912).
- He also composed over 2,000 songs, which were well-received by Bengalis of all social strata.
- Jana Gana Mana' our National anthem being one of the major contributions of his to the country. The verses are taken from his song, 'Bharoto Bhagya Bidhata.'
- Originally written in Bengali comprising of 5 stanzas, it was first published in Tatwabodhini Patrika, in 1905.
- He travelled the world advocating and spreading Indian culture globally and vice versa.
- He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, first person from outside of Europe to receive the prize.
- In protest over the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, he renounced the knighthood he had acquired in 1915.
- He established Vishva-Bharati University in Bengal as an experimental school where he attempted to combine Eastern and Western ideologies (1921).
- In the late 1920s, when he was in his 60s, Tagore took up painting and produced works that won him a place among India's foremost contemporary artists.

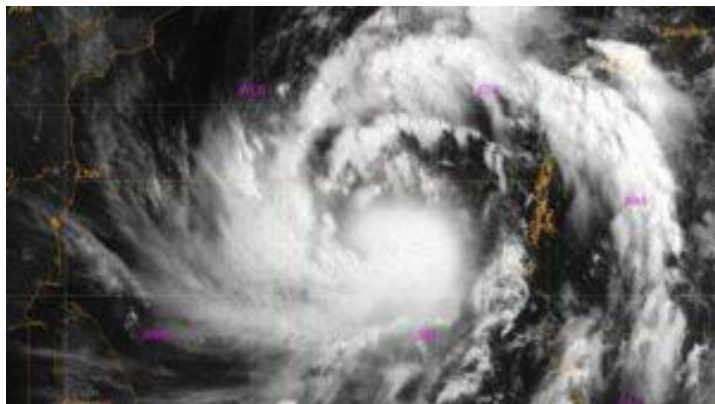
Life:

- The son of the religious reformer Debendranath Tagore, he early began to write verses, and, after incomplete studies in England in the late 1870s, he returned to India.
- There he published several books of poetry in the 1880s and completed *Manasi* (1890), a collection that marks the maturing of his genius. It contains some of his best-known poems, including many in verse forms new to Bengali, as well as some social and political satire that was critical of his fellow Bengalis.
- In 1901 Tagore founded an experimental school in rural West Bengal at Shantiniketan ("Abode of Peace"), where he sought to blend the best in the Indian and Western traditions.
- He settled permanently at the school, which became Visva-Bharati University in 1921.

Cyclone Asani

Context:

- Severe cyclonic storm Asani packing gale-force winds up to 120 kmph which is moving towards the east coast bringing along heavy rain, is likely to recurve in a north-northeastward direction on reaching near the shore and weaken gradually into a cyclonic storm.



How are the cyclones named?

- Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand formed the WMO/ESCAP (World Meteorological Organization/United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) group in 2000 to begin naming cyclones in the region.
- The WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) finalised the list after each country submitted comments.
- In 2018, the WMO/ESCAP welcomed five new members: Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
- Tropical cyclones in the Atlantic and Southern Hemisphere (Indian Ocean and South Pacific) are given names in alphabetical order, with women and men's names alternated. In the year 2000, nations in the northern Indian Ocean adopted a new system for naming tropical cyclones.

About:

- Tropical cyclones are strong storms that form over tropical waters and then travel inland, wreaking havoc with violent winds, heavy rainfall, and storm surges.
- Tropical cyclones are one of the world's most destructive natural disasters.
- Tropical cyclones form over warm tropical oceans and intensify.

The following are favourable conditions for tropical storm creation and intensification:

- A large area of sea surface with a temperature above 27° C.
- Large sea surface with temperature higher than 27° C.
- Presence of the Coriolis force.
- Small variations in the vertical wind speed.
- A pre-existing weak low- pressure area or low-level-cyclonic circulation.
- Upper divergence above the sea level system.

Delhi's Startup Policy

Context:

- To encourage people to start businesses in Delhi by fostering a supportive environment. The government hopes to make Delhi the “world’s startup capital.”

About:

- The government will assemble a task group of 20 individuals to help aspiring entrepreneurs in establishing their enterprises and to decide on startup registration applications.
- Chartered accountants, lawyers, government officials, academics, and trade representatives will make up the task committee.
- Education, healthcare, tourism and hospitality, transportation & logistics, automotive, e-governance, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), Internet of Things (IoT), Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), fintech, e-waste management, robotics & automation, green technology, bio-pharma & medical devices, and information technology are among the key focus areas (IT).



WHAT IS RECOGNISED AS A STARTUP

- Shall be registered no more than 5 years before the date of application
- Registered as private limited company, partnership firm or a limited liability partnership
- Has annual turnover not exceeding ₹5 crore for any preceding financial year
- Entity not formed by splitting up or restructuring of an existing business
- Working towards innovation, development or improvement of products/processes/services, or a scalable business model with high potential of employment generation or wealth creation

INCORPORATED OR REGISTERED IN DELHI

Start-up Evaluation Committee, with members of government and private sector, to evaluate and approve applications for entrepreneur, startup and incubator recognition

FOCUS AREAS UNDER NEW POLICY

- Renewable energy, clean-tech artificial intelligence and robotics
- Automation and technical innovation
- Cyber security
- Big data education
- Solid waste management
- Urban infrastructure planning and environment
- Industrial revolution 4.0 technologies
- Creative ideas pertaining to agriculture, e-commerce, healthcare, logistics, transportation, rural innovation, e-governance

Other Aspects:

- Startups will receive financial aid from the government in the form of collateral-free loans, rent payments, and employee salaries.
- For example, the government will cover up to half of the cost of a starting office's rent.
- In colleges, the government decided to introduce entrepreneurship classes and the "business blasters" programme.
- Students at Delhi government-run institutes will also be given 1-2 years off to grow their firms before returning to finish their degree.

G20

Context:

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has asked people to participate in Logo Design Contest for India's forthcoming G20 Presidency.

About:

- The G20 is a global strategic platform that brings together the world's biggest industrialised and emerging economies.
- The G20 has a critical role in ensuring global economic growth and prosperity in the future.
- The G20 countries together account for more than 80% of global GDP, 75% of international trade, and 60% of the world's population.
- The G20 began in 1999 as a meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors, and has since grown into a yearly summit of heads of state and government.
- Additionally, during the year, Sherpa meetings (charged with carrying out talks and forging consensus among Leaders), working groups, and special events are held.

Who are the members?

- Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.

G20 members



About India's Presidency:

- From December 1, 2022, until November 30, 2023, India will occupy the G20 presidency, culminating in the G20 Summit in India next year.
- The decision has been made to establish the secretariat and other structures.
- The G20 Secretariat will handle all aspects of India's presidency of the intergovernmental forum, which includes 19 countries and the European Union, including knowledge, content, technical, media, security, and logistical issues (EU).
- The presidency of the G20 rotates every year among its members, with the country that holds the presidency working together with its predecessor and successor, also known as Troika, to ensure the continuity of the agenda. Currently Italy, Indonesia, and India are the Troika countries.

Front-Running

Context:

- Axis Asset Management Company, which manages assets worth Rs 259,818 crore, suspended two fund managers recently for various irregularities, including front-running the AMC's transactions on their personal accounts.

What is Front Running?

- In India, front-running is defined as the purchase of a stock based on advance non-public information about a significant transaction that will affect the price of the stock.
- Before executing the MFs' order, some fund managers buy the same shares in their personal accounts.
- When mutual funds buy in large volumes, the stock price is predicted to rise.
- Because a person who engages in front running expects securities price fluctuations based on non-public information, Sebi has classified it as a type of market manipulation and insider trading. Sbi has already investigated and sanctioned a number of fund companies and fund managers for front-running.
- According to market sources, front-running has been very common in mutual fund houses and foreign portfolio investors.



What is a mutual fund?

- Mutual fund is a mechanism for pooling the resources by issuing units to the investors and investing funds in securities in accordance with objectives as disclosed in offer document.
- Investments in securities are spread across a wide cross-section of industries and sectors and thus the risk is reduced.
- A mutual fund assists in the accumulation of funds for investment reasons, which stimulates the economy's industries.
- It invests the public's tiny savings and channelizes them into the economy.
- The Securities and Exchange Board of India is a statutory agency that regulates mutual funds and India's capital market. It was created in 1992.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

Context:

- The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation has released the quarterly bulletin (Oct-Dec, 2021) of the Periodic Labour Force Survey.

When and why was it introduced?

- The data regarding the labour force is vital for any economy, considering the importance of the availability of the data the National Statistical Office in April 2017 launched the Periodic Labour Force Survey.

What are the objectives behind it?

The main objective behind bringing in PLFS is to analyse the indicators which are very significant, there are some key indicators to analyse the employment and unemployment status, they are:

- a. Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR): LFPR is defined as the percentage of persons in labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.
- b. Worker Population Ratio (WPR): WPR is defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population.
- c. Unemployment Rate (UR): UR is defined as the percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.
- d. Current Weekly Status (CWS): The activity status determined on the basis of a reference period of last 7 days preceding the date of survey is known as the current weekly status (CWS) of the person.

About NSO:

- The National Sample Survey Office functioned under the Ministry of Statistics of the Union government, later the Indian government passed the order to merge the NSSO with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) to form the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- The NSO will be headed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI).

PM MITRA

Context:

- A National Conference on PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel Park (PM MITRA) Parks Scheme was organized by Ministry of Textiles on 4th May, 2022.



About:

- PM MITRA Park will be built by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) that will be jointly owned by the federal and state governments and will operate under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.
- Each MITRA Park will contain an incubation centre, a common processing house, a common effluent treatment plant, as well as other textile-related facilities including design and testing centres.
- The project provides Rs 500 crore in development capital support for each greenfield MITRA park and up to Rs 200 crore for each brownfield park for the building of shared infrastructure.
- A greenfield project is one that must be started from scratch, whereas a brownfield project is one that has already been completed.

Significance of the sector:

- Textiles and garments are a labor-intensive industry in India, employing 45 million people, second only to agriculture in terms of employment.
- It provides 2.3 percent to India's GDP, 7% to industrial output, 12% to export revenues,

and employs more than 21% of the country's workforce.

- India is the world's sixth largest producer of technical textiles, with a 6% global share, and the world's largest producer of cotton and jute.
- India is also the world's second largest producer of silk, and it produces 95 percent of the world's handwoven cloth.



Way Forward:

- PM MITRA Park will offer the opportunity to create an Integrated Textiles Value Chain right from spinning, weaving, processing/dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing etc. at one location and will reduce logistics cost of Industry.
- This is a great initiative which will give a huge boost to the labour intensive sector.

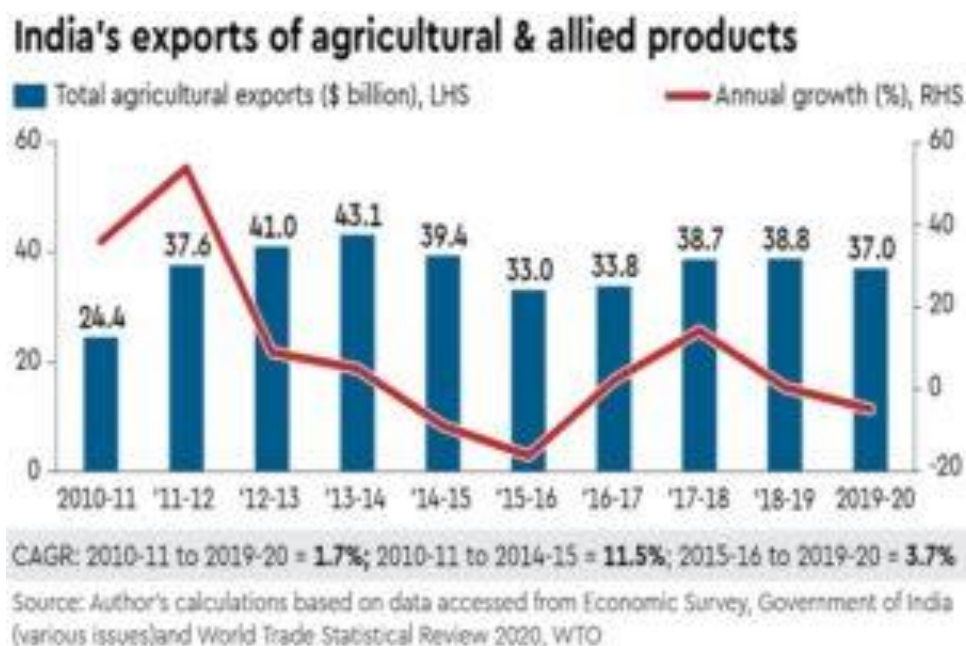
APEDA

Context:

- In a move aimed at providing a global platform for millet products, the Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) launched a variety of millet products for all age groups at affordable prices ranging from Rs 5 to Rs 15 at the AAHAR food fair, which is Asia's biggest B2B international food and hospitality fair.

About APEDA:

- The Government of India formed the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985.
- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is in charge of it. The Authority's headquarters is located in New Delhi.
- APEDA offers a full range of export services and connects Indian exporters with the worldwide market. It also offers referral services and makes recommendations for potential joint venture partners.
- It has established a presence in practically all of India's agri-potential states, providing services to the agri-exporting sector.
- The United States, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and Nepal are the top importers of Indian food.



What are the latest products?

- All the millet products launched by APEDA are gluten-free, 100% natural and patented.
- The launched products are cream biscuits, salt biscuits, milk biscuits, ragi peanut butter, jowar peanut butter, jowar upma, pongal, khichadi and millet malts (jowar, ragi, bajra).
- APEDA also launched a variety of "Millet in Minutes" products under the category of Ready-to-Eat (RTE) such as Upma, Pongal, Khichadi, Noodles, Biryani, etc, which is a breakthrough in the food sector as it's the first RTE millet product in the market to cater fast-paced world at their convenience in a healthy way.

Semicon India 2022

Context:

- The SemiconIndia 2022, a 3 day conference was held where multiple number of agreements/pacts have been announced to realise the vision to turn India into a thriving semiconductor hub.

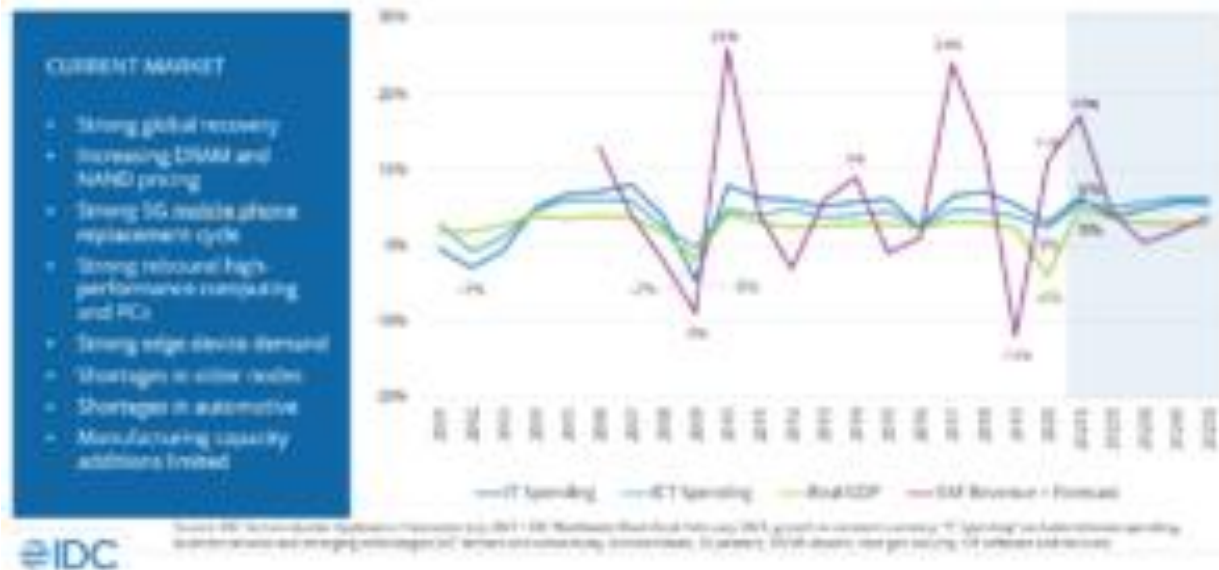
Worldwide Semiconductor Revenues

Year-to-Year Percent Change



2021 Semiconductor Market Overview

Global GDP vs Semiconductor Market Growth



About:

- Semiconductors are materials which have a conductivity between conductors and insulators. They can be pure elements, silicon or germanium or compounds; gallium, arsenide or cadmium selenide.
- The pandemic-driven effort to bring large portions of daily economic and vital activity online, or at the very least digitally empower them, has highlighted the importance of chip-powered computers and smartphones in people's life.
- The pandemic and ensuing worldwide lockdowns prompted the closure of critical chip-making facilities in countries such as Japan, South Korea, China, and the United States.
- Its scarcity has cascading repercussions, as the first one builds pent-up demand, which then leads to the second famine.

India Semiconductor Mission:

- Digital India Corporation's ISM is a specialised and self-contained business segment.
- The mission's goal is to create a thriving semiconductor and display ecosystem so that India may become a global leader in electronics manufacture and design.
- It has the authority to negotiate with applicants for the semiconductor and display fab schemes.
- It also has the authority to choose the proper technology mix, node generation, applications, and capacity, among other things.
- The programme was created in order to attract major investments in the production of AMOLED-based display panels or TFT LCDs.

Torrefied Biomass Pellets

Context:

- Through its R&D wing, NETRA, NTPC intends to provide a platform to Indian startups to enable them to develop advanced technology for producing torrefied biomass pellets that are well-suited for decentralized small-scale users.

What are Biomass pellets?

- Biomass pellets are a type of biomass fuel that is very popular. These pellets are mostly made from agricultural biomass, wood wastes, forestry residues, commercial grasses, etc.
- These pellets not only help in saving the cost of storage and transportation, but the biomass pellets also help in facilitating cost-effective handling.

Current Status in India

- India produces 230 MMTA of biomass, which is either squandered or burned. Biomass co-firing in power plants has shown to be a crucial method for dealing with this problem and lowering carbon emissions.
- Biomass co-firing in coal-fired power plants was pioneered by NTPC. Since implementing co-firing, NTPC has been working to boost the entire Biomass sector value chain in a variety of ways.
- Many NTPC units have already begun the required biomass pellet co-firing with coal. For a number of plants, long-term procurement has also begun.
- Until far, the emphasis has primarily been on non-torrefied biomass pellets.
- Torrefied biomass pellet production, on the other hand, should be prioritised for bulk biomass consumption since torrefied biomass pellets have a higher energy density and properties similar to coal.
- Furthermore, torrefied biomass pellets will save transportation expenses on average. Currently, torrefied pellet technology is still in its early stages of development.
- The Union Ministry of Power established the National Mission for the Use of Biomass in Thermal Power Plants (Mission SAMARTH), which mandates 5-10% biomass co-firing in all coal-fired thermal power plants across the country.
- Biomass co-firing in power plants was also included in the Union Budget Speech for 2022 as a key technique for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and generating money for farmers.

India's Pharma Exports

Context:

- Indian pharma exports witnessed a growth of 103% since 2013-14, from Rs. 90,415 Crores in 2013-14 to Rs. 1,83,422 Crores in 2021-22.
- The exports achieved in 2021-22 is the Pharma Sector's best export performance ever.

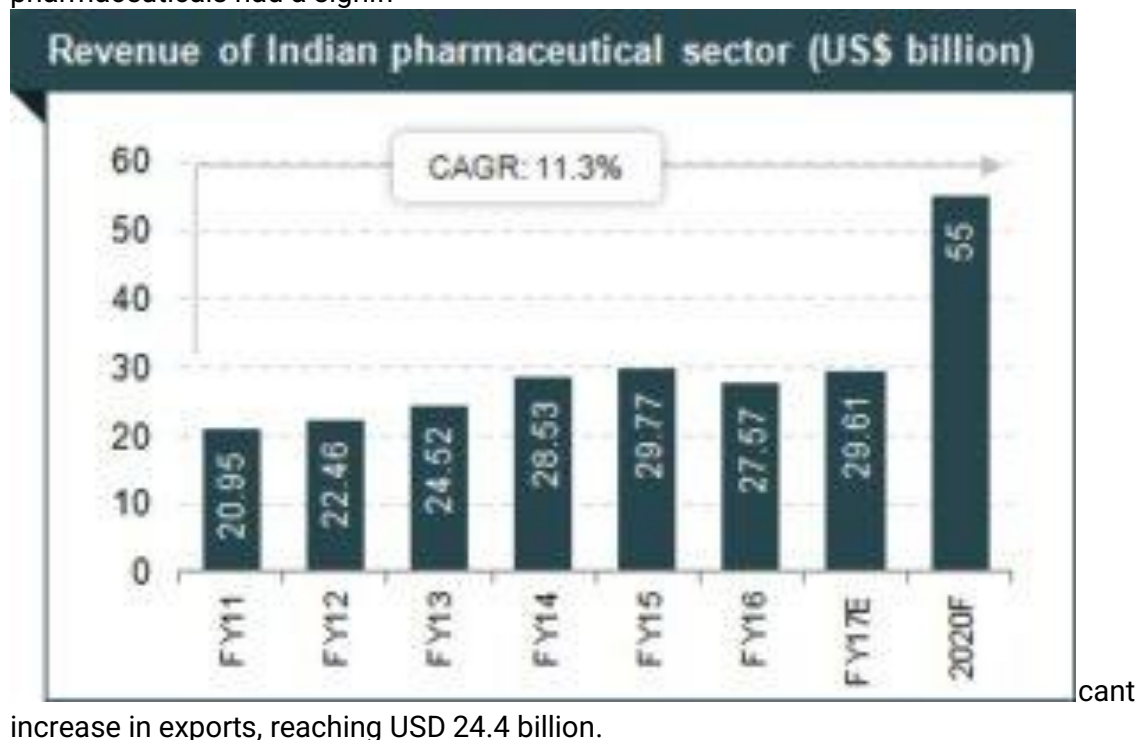


Background:

- In the worldwide pharmaceuticals sector, the Indian pharmaceuticals industry is a major player.
- India is the world's third-largest producer by volume and the fourteenth-largest producer by value.
- The country is the world's largest provider of generic medications, accounting for 20% of worldwide supply by volume, and the world's leading vaccine manufacturer.
- Outside of the United States, India boasts the biggest number of US-FDA approved pharma plants, with over 3,000 pharma businesses and a robust network of over 10,500 manufacturing facilities, as well as a highly skilled workforce.

About India's exports and market share:

- Pharmaceuticals and pharmaceuticals account for 5.92 percent of our global exports.
- Formulations and biologicals continue to contribute for the majority of our overall exports, accounting for 73.31 percent, followed by bulk medicines and drug intermediates, which accounted for USD 4437.64 million in exports.
- The United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Russia, and Nigeria are India's top five pharmaceutical export destinations.
- It's also worth noting that about 55% of our pharmaceutical exports go to highly regulated markets. The prescription market in the United States and Europe is dominated by Indian pharmaceutical companies.
- India has the most FDA-approved plants outside of the United States.
- Even in the year 2020-21, despite the COVID crisis, Indian medications and pharmaceuticals had a signifi



Indian-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

Context:

- The historic India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which was signed between the two nations on 18 February 2022, officially entered into force.

Background:

- Close cultural and civilizational affinities, regular high-level political exchanges, and strong people-to-people links preserve and develop India-UAE bilateral relations, which are deep-rooted and historical.
- During the Prime Minister of India's visit to the UAE in 2015, the India-UAE comprehensive strategic partnership was launched.
- The UAE is a significant supplier of energy for India and a vital partner in the development of strategic petroleum reserves, as well as the upstream and downstream petroleum industries.
- The CEPA between India and the United Arab Emirates will strengthen the two nations' strong, close, and strategic relationships by creating new job opportunities, raising living standards, and improving the general welfare of their peoples.

About:

- Gems & Jewellery sector contributes a substantial portion of India's exports to the UAE and is a sector that is expected to benefit significantly from the tariff concessions obtained for Indian products under the India-UAE CEPA.
- Overall, India will benefit from preferential market access provided by the UAE on over 97 % of its tariff lines which account for 99% of Indian exports to the UAE in value terms particularly from labour-intensive sectors such as Gems and Jewellery, Textiles, leather, footwear, sports goods, plastics, furniture, agricultural and wood products, engineering products, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and Automobiles.
- As regards trade in services, Indian service providers will have enhanced access to around 111 sub-sectors from the 11 broad service sectors.
- CEPA is expected to increase the total value of bilateral trade in goods to over US\$100 billion and trade in services to over US\$ 15 billion within five years.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)

Context:

- Comparing outstanding loan amounts with the value realised may not be a 'reasonable indicator' to assess the bankruptcy law's effectiveness, said Reserve Bank Deputy Governor M. Rajeshwar Rao, while seeking to address concerns over deep haircuts that banks had taken in some of the insolvency resolutions plans.

About IBC:

- India's bankruptcy law, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC), intends to consolidate the existing framework by adopting a single insolvency and bankruptcy law.
- It establishes clearer and faster insolvency procedures to assist creditors, such as banks, in recovering debts and avoiding bad loans, which are a major drag on the economy.
- When a debtor defaults on a payment, creditors seize ownership of the debtor's assets and have 180 days to settle the insolvency.
- To ensure that the resolution process runs smoothly, the Code grants debtors immunity from creditors' resolution claims during this time.
- The Code also brings together provisions from existing legislation to create a single venue for debtors and creditors of all types to address insolvency.

Challenges in Transition towards Electric Vehicles

Context:

- Recently, an 80-year-old man died at his home in Telangana's Nizamabad district after the battery of an electric scooter exploded while being charged, there are many such incidents which have occurred recently.
- After the enquiry, the Ministry of Road Transport intends to issue guidelines for EVs, including tests for compliance with safety norms.



Why the transition is required?

- Concerns about climate change have prompted international attempts to electrify the transportation sector. Parallel to this, the cost of Li-ion (Lithium-ion) battery technology has plummeted by an order of magnitude in the last decade.
- The globe has taken notice of this moment, with governments providing incentives to speed up the shift and private sector preparing to seize market share.

About the Li-ion battery:

- The anode, which is typically graphite; the cathode, which is typically based on a nickel, cobalt, or manganese-based oxide; and the electrolyte, which is typically a lithium salt in an inorganic solvent.
- Manufacturing a battery is a complicated process that involves making anode and cathode sheets and arranging them into a sandwich structure separated by a thin separator.

- Separators, which are roughly 15 microns thick about a fifth of the thickness of a human hair play a key role in preventing shorting between the anode and cathode.
- Accidental shorting of the electrodes is a known cause of fires in Li-ion cells.

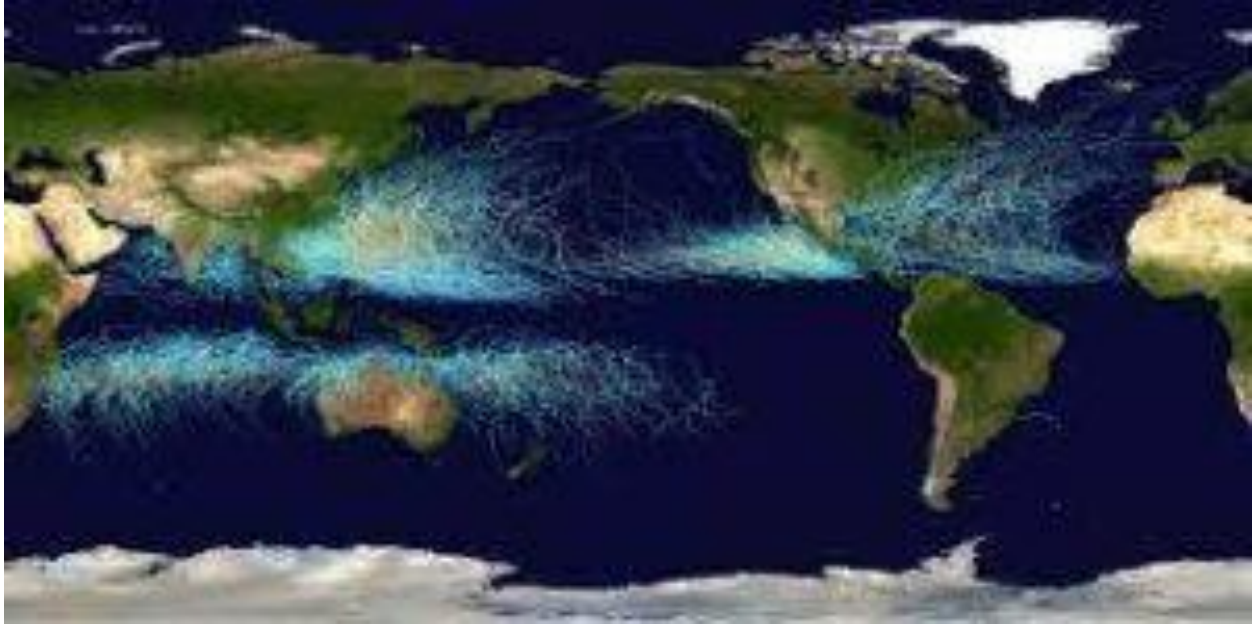
Reasons for the fires:

- Battery fires, like other fires, start when three elements of the “fire triangle” collide: heat, oxygen, and fuel.
- The internal temperature of the battery can rise if an undesirable event occurs, such as a short circuit, because the anode and cathode discharge their energy through the short.
- As a result, a sequence of reactions in the battery components, particularly the cathode, might occur, releasing heat and oxygen in an uncontrolled manner.
- Such events also cause the sealed battery to break, exposing the components to the outside air and the second part of the fire triangle, oxygen.
- The liquid electrolyte, which is combustible and serves as a fuel, completes the triangle.

Widespread Heatwave

Context:

- India is facing an unusually long series of heatwaves that began in the end of March and scorched north India for most of April.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said April was the hottest in northwest India in 122 years. It has also been an unusually hot April with temperatures touching above 40°C in large parts of Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.



What is a Heatwave?

- The heat wave is considered when the maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40°C for Plains and at least 30°C for Hilly regions.
- If the normal maximum temperature of a station is less than or equal to 40°C, then an increase of 5°C to 6°C from the normal temperature is considered to be heat wave condition.
- Further, an increase of 7°C or more from the normal temperature is considered as severe heat wave condition.
- If the normal maximum temperature of a station is more than 40°C, then an increase of 4°C to 5°C from the normal temperature is considered to be heat wave condition. Further, an increase of 6°C or more is considered as severe heat wave condition.
- Additionally, if the actual maximum temperature remains 45°C or more irrespective of normal maximum temperature, a heat wave is declared.

Impact of Climate Change:

- Because of the heat-trapping effects of global warming, climate extremes such as heatwaves are predicted to become more common.
- Extreme rainfall events, as well as extended rainless periods, are projected, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's predictions.
- The lack of rainfall in the northern portions of the country is the main cause of the sweltering heat.
- Normally, times of extreme heat are interspersed by brief bouts of rain, but this was not the case in March and April.
- Ironically, April witnessed the most intense rainfall since 2018, however it was centred in the south and north-eastern parts of the country.

Climate Change – Its Impact on New Infections

Context:

- According to a new study, Climate change will result in thousands of new viruses spread among animal species by 2070 and that is likely to increase the risk of emerging infectious diseases jumping from animals to humans.

About:

- This is especially true for Africa and Asia, areas where fatal diseases such as the flu, HIV, ebola, and COVID-19 have transmitted from humans to animals or vice versa in recent decades.
- If the world warms by 2°C, which new research suggests is possible, over 3,000 animal species might travel and spread viruses during the next 50 years.
- The researchers have discovered that cross-species viral transmission occurs over 4,000 times in mammals alone.
- This study did not include birds or marine animals. According to the researchers, while not all viruses will transmit to people or become pandemic on the magnitude of the coronavirus, the number of cross-species viruses raises the likelihood of human infection.

The One Health Approach:

One Health is an approach that recognizes that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment.

Examples of zoonotic diseases:

- Rabies
- Anthrax
- Brucellosis
- Lyme disease
- Ringworm

- Ebola
- One zoonotic diseases, antibiotic resistance, food safety and security, vector-borne diseases, environmental contamination, and other health hazards that affect people, animals, and the environment are just a few of the difficulties that people, animals, and the environment face.

FEMA

Context:

- The Enforcement Directorate has seized ₹5,551.27 crore from Xiaomi Technology India Private Ltd. under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), in connection with the alleged illegal remittances made by the company.



About FEMA:

- The Foreign Exchange Management Act of 1999 (FEMA) was enacted by Parliament. It was signed into law on December 29, 1999.
- This new Act is in line with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) guidelines. It is a set of laws that permits the Reserve Bank of India to adopt regulations and allows the

Government of India to pass rules on foreign exchange in accordance with India's foreign trade strategy.

- The Foreign Exchange Regulation Act was replaced by FEMA (FERA).

Features:

- It grants the Central Government the authority to control the flow of money to and from those living outside the country.
- Without FEMA's consent, all financial transactions involving foreign securities or exchange are prohibited. "Authorised Persons" must be involved in all transactions.
- The Government of India has the authority to prohibit an authorised individual from conducting foreign exchange transactions within the current account in the public interest.
- Allows RBI to impose limits on capital account transactions, even if they are carried out by an authorised individual.