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NEWS JUICE MONTHLY

1st July to 31st July, 2022

Summary of The Hindu & The Indian Express along with News
Background



POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Sub Categorization of OBCs

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity

Basic Information

- ▶ Commission to Examine Sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
- ▶ Justice G Rohini, former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court
- ▶ Constituted on October 2, 2017
- ▶ 10 extensions so far

Why Sub-Categorisation?

- ▶ 27% Reservation in government jobs and Educational institutions
- ▶ Over 2600 communities in Central List
- ▶ Skewed Representation
- ▶ Data of 5 years analyzed in 2018 by Commission
- ▶ 97% → 25%
- ▶ 24.95% → 10 Communities

Challenge

- ▶ Absence of data for the population of various communities to compare with their representation in jobs and admissions to educational institutions.

Bharat New Car Assessment Program (Bharat-NCAP)

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

What is the Plan?

- ▶ Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari approved a Draft GSR (general statutory rules) Notification
- ▶ Introduce the Bharat New Car Assessment Program (Bharat-NCAP)
- ▶ Objectives
 - Enhance Safety
 - Consumer Confidence
 - Enhance export worthiness of vehicles

Proposed New Car Assessment Program

- ▶ Information about safety during vehicle crash on common criteria and procedures- Globally reliant information
- ▶ Different from country specific motor standards- assess only road worthiness of vehicles
- ▶ NCAP rating not mandatory condition for international sales
- ▶ Global NCAP- Standardised platform establishing cooperation and coordination among NCAPs internationally
- ▶ Regional NCAP- take into account local conditions

Proposed Evaluation

- ▶ Voluntary
- ▶ One to Five Stars
- ▶ Parameters
 - Adult Occupant Protection
 - Child Occupant Protection
 - Safety Assist Technologies

Twitter's petition on Section 69A of the IT Act

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II, Polity & Governance

Law Provisions permitting blocking of content

- ▶ Section 69A of the IT Act empowers the government to restrict access to any content in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of the country, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states or for public order.
- ▶ All directions to restrict information or content in circulation must be recorded in writing.
- ▶ Social media intermediaries failing to comply with the regulations are liable to be monetarily penalised along with an imprisonment term which may extend up to seven years.

Procedures for executing the provisions of IT act

- Given under Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009
- Government-designated officer along with an examination committee assess the content in question within 48 hours of receiving the takedown request
- Opportunity to the author or originator of the content to provide clarifications
- Recommendations are then sent to the Secretary of the Dept of Information Technology for approval to forward a request to the social media intermediary for takedown request.
- During Emergency, the clarification can be sought after the content has been blocked, but within 48 hours. Blocking can be revoked after due examination.
- Strict confidentiality be maintained on all requests and actions taken thereof

Twitter's petition on Section 69A of the IT Act

Twitter has filed Petition in Court

▶ Between February 2, 2021 and February 28 this year, Twitter received directions to block 1,474 accounts and 175 tweets in India. Among these, Twitter has challenged blocking 39 URLs in its latest petition to Karnataka High Court. Several of these URLs had journalistic or political content.

▶ Arguments by Twitter

1. Absence of a case-specific rationale for blocking content and accounts

Government has been merely reproducing the words of Section 69A, as reasons for blocking URLs and accounts, not giving the reasons why restrictions were necessary.

2. The originators of the content are not given the hearing, as mandated by rules.

3. Directions require blocking of accounts, not the specific content.

National Emblem, crown of India's new Parliament

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II, Polity & Governance

National Emblem on New Parliament

- ▶ National emblem has been casted at the top of the of the new Parliament Central Foyer (Entrance Hall)
- ▶ 6.5-metre-high
- ▶ Made of bronze
- ▶ 9,500 kg.
- ▶ Supporting structure of steel weighing around 6,500 kg has been constructed to support the Emblem.

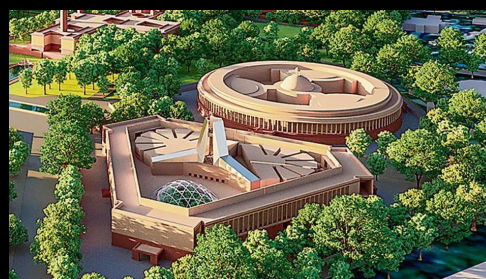


New Parliament Building interiors

- ▶ Six granite statues
- ▶ Four galleries each for the two Houses of Parliament
- ▶ Three ceremonial foyers
- ▶ Three India galleries
- ▶ One Constitution gallery
- ▶ Each wall in the building will have a dominant theme — dedicated, for instance, to the contribution of tribal leaders, or to showcasing the contribution of women.

New Parliament Building details

- ▶ Triangular in shape
- ▶ Adjacent to existing Parliament complex
- ▶ 888 seats in the Lok Sabha chamber and 384 seats in the Rajya Sabha chamber
- ▶ Unlike the present Parliament building, there is no Central Hall
- ▶ Lok Sabha chamber will be able to house 1,272 members in case of a joint session
- ▶ Open-sky area of 2,000 sq metre for a banyan tree
- ▶ Chief architect Bimal Patel



Existing Parliament

- ▶ Designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker
- ▶ Responsible for the planning and construction of New Delhi
- ▶ Inaugurated on January 18, 1927, by then Governor General of India Lord Irwin

Cost of the Project

- ▶ Awarded to Tata Projects for Rs 971 crore
- ▶ Increase in cost to 1200 crore
- ▶ Part of the Central Vista Project, which also includes a joint central secretariat, revamp of the Rajpath, a new Prime Minister's residence, a new Prime Minister's Office, and a new Vice-President's enclave



The bail law and Supreme Court call for reform

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II, Polity & Governance

Present Law on Bail

- ▶ Meaning- Temporary release of a prisoner in exchange for security
- ▶ CrPC does not define the word bail but only categories offences under the Indian Penal Code as 'bailable' and 'non-bailable'.
- ▶ The CrPC empowers magistrates to grant bail for bailable offences as a matter of right. This would involve release on furnishing a bail bond, with or without surety.
- ▶ Non-bailable offences are cognisable, which enables the police officer to arrest without a warrant. In such cases, a magistrate would determine if the accused is fit to be released on bail.

Cognizable offenses are those under which a police officer can arrest without an arrest warrant.

those offenses which are serious in nature.
Example- Murder, Rape, Dowry Death,

a Police Officer can investigate without the Magistrate's permission.

Non-Cognizable offenses are those under which a police officer cannot arrest without a warrant.

which are not much serious in nature.
Example- Cheating, Forgery, Defamation.

in order to start the investigation, it is important for the police officer to obtain the permission from the Magistrate.

The bail law and Supreme Court call for reform

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II

Need for Reforms

- ▶ **Two-thirds detentions** under jails are undertrials and cases take long time period to end.
- ▶ **Colonial Mindset-** Indiscriminate arrests are made by police and Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) was first drafted in 1882 and continues to be in use with amendments from time to time. Magistrates ignore the rule of "bail, not jail".

Reforms Suggested

A two-judge Bench issued certain clarifications to an older judgment delivered in July 2021 on bail reform (**Satender Kumar Antil vs CBI**). Thus, Bail reforms have been suggested in form of guidelines:

1. **Separate law for bail:** The court underlined that the CrPC, despite amendments since Independence, largely retains its original structure as drafted by a colonial power over its subjects. The court's solution on this is the framing of a separate law that deals with the grant of bail.

The SC Bench called on the Government to consider framing a special legislation on the lines of law in the United Kingdom. The **Bail Act of the United Kingdom, 1976**, prescribes the **procedure for granting bail**. The law also has provisions for ensuring **legal aid** for defendants. The Act recognises a "general right" to be granted bail.

The bail law and Supreme Court call for reform

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II

Reforms Suggested

2. **Indiscriminate Arrests:** The court noted that the culture of too many arrests, especially for **non-cognisable offences**, is unwarranted. It emphasised that even for **cognisable offences**, **arrest is not mandatory and must be "necessitated"**. Such necessity is to prevent the committing of any further offense, for a proper investigation, and to prevent him/her from either disappearing or tampering with the evidence.
3. **BAIL APPLICATION:** There **need not** be any insistence of a bail application. The Supreme Court held magistrates must routinely consider granting bail, without insisting on a separate bail application.
4. **DIRECTION TO STATES:** The SC also directed all state governments and Union Territories to facilitate standing orders to **comply with the orders and avoid indiscriminate arrests**.

Draft of the Drugs, Medical Devices and Cosmetics Bill, 2022



Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

About the Draft

▶ Union Health Ministry released a draft of The Drugs, Medical Devices and Cosmetics Bill, 2022 to replace the existing The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and several sets of Rules

▶ Covers primarily three aspects:

- E-pharmacies
- Clinical trials or investigations
- Regulation of medical devices

Online Pharmacies- Need for Regulation

1. **Application of law**- No provisions to regulate online pharmacies exist in the 1940 law or any of the Rules. Online pharmacies are currently working completely outside the law.

2. **License**- Most of these websites have perhaps a licence for a physical shop or storage unit. Sometimes the websites don't have any licences at all, and they instead tie up with pharmacies. In case of a violation, drug inspectors do not know under which provision of the law or Rule they can proceed against the websites.

Also, drug inspectors often find that the licences these websites hold are from another state, over which they have no jurisdiction.

3. **Medicine without Prescription**- One can get any medicine you want from these websites without a prescription. Once an order is placed, they have in-house doctors who just write a prescription to be uploaded to their database.

Online Pharmacies- Provisions in Draft bill

▶ The draft Bill states: "No person shall himself or by any other person on his behalf sell, or stock or exhibit or offer for sale, or distribute, any drug by online mode except under and in accordance with a licence or permission issued in such manner as may be prescribed."

▶ It also states that the central government can formulate Rules to regulate aspects of the industry for which the old law has no provisions.

Clinical Trials and investigations: Draft Bill Provisions

▶ Provisions for compensation to participants or their legal heirs for injury or death suffered in clinical trials and investigations for drugs and medical devices

▶ Onus of providing medical management for any injury arising due to the trial on the investigators.

▶ New provision for imprisonment, and fine amounting to double the compensation amount if the compensation is not paid.

▶ Prohibits clinical trials or clinical investigations of drugs and medical devices without permission from the central licensing authority.

▶ The draft provides for debarring the investigators and sponsors of a trial or investigation if the laid-down provisions are not followed.

▶ If the draft Bill becomes law, these provisions will be part of it, and will not be restricted to just clinical trial Rules.



Medical Devices- Provisions in Draft bill

- ▶ The Draft bill defines **medical devices** as **diagnostic equipment, their software, implants, devices for assistance with disabilities, life support, instruments used for disinfection, and reagents or kits.**
- ▶ The **1940 Act** has **medical devices** as **one of four categories of "drugs"**. This draft bill seeks to make **medical devices** a **separate entity**.
- ▶ Draft Bill provides for creating a **Medical Devices Technical Advisory Board** on the lines of the existing **drugs technical advisory board**, with people who have technical knowledge of the engineering of these devices, and members of the industry.. This board will take decisions on **regulating medical devices**.
- ▶ Drawing on the existing law on drugs, the draft Bill defines provisions for **imprisonment or fines for "adulterated" or "spurious" medical devices**. The draft states that a medical device will be considered to be **adulterated** if it is rusted, corroded, filthy, putrid, or decomposed, packed or stored in unsanitary conditions, contains harmful or toxic substances, or has any component or software removed making it unsafe.
- ▶ The draft Bill deems a medical device to be **spurious** if it carries the label of a fictitious company or is purported to be of a manufacturer that has not manufactured it.

What is the Flag Code and how has it been changed recently?

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

About Flag Code

- ▶ The **use, display and hoisting of the National Flag** in the country is guided by an overarching set of instructions called the '**Flag Code of India 2002**'.
- ▶ The **Flag Code of India** took effect on **January 26, 2002**.
- ▶ As per **Clause 2.1** of the Flag Code of India, there shall be **no restriction on the display of the National Flag** by members of the **general public, private organizations, educational institutions etc. consistent with the dignity and honour of the National Flag**.

Recent Amendment

- Amended vide **Order dated December 30, 2021**
- National Flag made of **polyester or machine made flag** have also been allowed by new amendment.
- As per the amended flag code, the National Flag shall be made of **hand-spun, hand-woven or machine-made cotton/polyester/wool/silk/khadi bunting**.
- The amended flag code will **facilitate the availability of flags** on such a large scale and also make them **affordable** for the general public.
- The government will soon launch '**Har Ghar Tiranga**'– a nationwide campaign to encourage people to hoist the Tricolour at their homes to mark the 75th Independence Day. According to officials in the Ministry of Culture, the plan is to reach out to more than 20 crore homes across the country by August 15, the **75th Independence Day**.

Criticism of amendment

- ▶ Amendment to the flag code will break the association between the Tricolour, the Independence movement and khadi.
- ▶ Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said: "By allowing the import of Tricolour made of polyester, an arrangement has been made for 'China-made Tricolour in every home' — the very China that is encroaching on our land."
- ▶ Protest has been called by the Karnataka Khadi Gramudyog Samyukta Sangha (KKGSS) — a unit that spins the fabric used to make the National Flag because of a fall in its sales.

Karnataka Khadi Gramudyog Samyukta Sangha

- ▶ The Khadi and Village Industries Commission certified KKGSS as the sole manufacturer and supplier of the Tricolour to the entire country.
- ▶ It became the manufacturing centre for the National Flag in 2006, after being receiving accredited with ISI certification and an authorisation to sell the National Flag throughout the country.

Unparliamentary words

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

Why in news?

- ▶ Lok Sabha secretariat released a 50-page compilation of words deemed unfit for use in Parliament.
- ▶ The new list has words and phrases disallowed not only in the Indian Parliament, but also in various state assemblies, as well as some parliaments of other countries.
- ▶ It includes words that have been expunged from the records in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha over the last few years.

Rules related to Unparliamentary Words

- Article 105(2) of the Constitution lays down that "no Member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in Parliament or any committee thereof.
- However, MPs do not enjoy the freedom to say whatever they want inside the House. Whatever an MP says is subject to the discipline of the Rules of Parliament, the "good sense" of Members, and the control of proceedings by the Presiding officer of the house.
- Rule 380 ("Expunction") of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha says: "If the Speaker is of opinion that words have been used in debate which are defamatory or indecent or unparliamentary or undignified, the Speaker may, while exercising discretion order that such words be expunged from the proceedings of the House."
- Rule 381 says: "The portion of the proceedings of the House so expunged shall be marked by asterisks and an explanatory footnote shall be inserted in the proceedings as follows: 'Expunged as ordered by the Chair.'"

Unparliamentary words

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

Who identifies?

- ▶ The Presiding Officers — Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairperson of Rajya Sabha — have the job of keeping such words out of Parliament's records.
- ▶ There are phrases and words, literally in thousands, both in English and in Indian languages, that are considered "unparliamentary".
- ▶ The presiding officers regularly publish the list of unparliamentary words and expressions. The last such book was published in 2009.
- ▶ The State legislatures are also guided by the same compilations.

Foreign Trips Clearance required by Centre

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

Why in News?

- Centre has **delayed the clearance** to Delhi Chief Minister's Arvind Kejriwal trip to Singapore, where he has been invited to attend a World Cities Summit scheduled during July 31- August 3.
- In October 2019, the Centre had **not given** him approval to attend another conference in Denmark, which he eventually addressed through videoconferencing.
- Had happened earlier also during previous governments

Chief Ministries and other Ministers

- ▶ **UTs- Chief Ministries and other Ministers**
 - **Political Clearance** – This clearance is given by **Ministry of External Affairs**. It is considered the most importance clearance. If this clearance is not obtained, other ministries and departments do not approve the application.
 - The decision is taken based on multiple factors such as the **nature of the event**, the **level of participation** from other countries, the **kind of invitation** that has been extended, and also India's relations with the host country.
 - **FCRA Clearance** – This clearance is given by Home Ministry. If the **foreign trip involves the hospitality of organizations other than those of the UN**, FCRA clearance is required.
- ▶ **States- Chief Ministries and other Ministers**
 - Political Clearance
 - FCRA Clearance
 - Department of Economic Affairs Clearance

Foreign Trips Clearance required by Centre

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

Union Officials

- ☐ **Union Ministers**
 - Political Clearance
 - Clearance from PM
 - For both personal and official travel
- ☐ **Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Member**
 - Presiding Officers of their house
 - Only for official travel
- ☐ **Government Employees**
 - Political Clearance
 - Clearance from Ministry Concerned
 - For Both Personal or Official Travel

Judges- SC and HC

- CJ
- Department of Justice
- Home Ministry if FCRA issue is involved
- Only for Official travel

National Institutional Ranking Framework

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

NIRF

- NIRF) is a methodology adopted by the **Ministry of Education**, Government of India, to rank institutions of **higher education** in India.
- The first set of rankings were released in **2016**. In 2022, 7th edition of rankings were released.
- **MoE; formerly the Ministry of Human Resource Development from 1985 to 2020)**
- In 1985, Rajiv Gandhi government changed its name to Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and with the public announcement of newly drafted "National Education Policy 2020" by the Narendra Modi government, Ministry of Human Resource Development was renamed back to Ministry of Education.

Ranking Criteria

- ▶ Depending on their areas of operation, institutions have been ranked under **11 different categories** – overall, university, colleges, engineering, management, pharmacy, law, medical, architecture, dental and research.
- ▶ The Framework uses several **parameters** for ranking purposes like resources, research, and stakeholder perception. These parameters have been grouped into **five clusters** and these clusters were **assigned certain weightages**. The weightages depend on the type of institution.

National Institutional Ranking Framework



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

Classification

- Two Categories of institutions based on autonomy:
 - - Category A institutions: These are institutions of national importance set up by Acts of Parliament, State Universities, Deemed-to-be Universities, Private Universities and other autonomous institutions.
 - - Category B institutions: These are institutions affiliated to a University and do not enjoy full academic autonomy
- Institutions are also classified into Specialised and those offering Multi-disciplinary courses.

National Institutional Ranking Framework



Engineering, management, pharmacy and architecture institutions

Parameters	Category A institutions	Category B institutions
Teaching, learning and resources (TLR)	0.30	0.30
Research, professional practice and collaborative performance (RPC)	0.30	0.20
Graduation outcome (GO)	0.15	0.25
Outreach and inclusivity (OI)	0.15	0.15
Perception (PR)	0.10	0.10

Overall and colleges

Parameters	Overall	Colleges
Teaching, learning and resources (TLR)	0.30	0.40
Research, productivity, impact and IPR (RPII)	0.30	0.15
Graduation outcome (GO)	0.20	0.25
Outreach and inclusivity (OI)	0.10	0.10
Perception (PR)	0.10	0.10

Droupadi Murmu

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper I and II, Indian Heritage & Culture & Polity

Important facts

- **First Adivasi** and **second woman**
- **Santhal family** in Uparbeda in Odisha's backward **Mayurbhanj district**
- Graduation- Ramadevi Women's College, now the **Ramadevi Women's University** in Bhubaneswar.

Political Career

- ▶ 1997 – Nagar Panchayat Elections
- ▶ Two terms in the **Odisha Assembly** in 2000 and 2004
- ▶ Served as a **Minister** from 2000 to 2004 in Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's BJD-BJP coalition government.
- ▶ She held the portfolio of Commerce and Transport and, subsequently, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry in the state government.
- ▶ In 2009, she contested the Lok Sabha election from Mayurbhanj constituency, but lost as the BJD and BJP severed ties.
- ▶ Sworn in as the **first woman Governor of Jharkhand in 2015**.

Droupadi Murmu

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper I and II

Tribal Leader

- Raised Adivasi issues frequently
- Called for the translation of literature on Adivasi languages and culture.
- Also served as vice-president of the BJP's Scheduled Tribes Morcha.
- In November 2016, the BJP government of the state led by Chief Minister Raghuraj Das passed amendments to two centuries-old land laws — the Chhotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Act — that would have ensured easy transfer of land for industrial use.

Murmu returned the Bills in June 2017, and asked the government to clarify how the amendments would benefit tribals.

Election of President

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity and Governance

4 Elements

- Electoral College
- Indirectly elected
- Proportional representation
- Single transferable vote

Electoral College

- ▶ Eligible to Vote for the election of President
- ▶ Consists of
 - Elected Members of Parliament
 - Elected members of Legislative Assembly of States
 - Elected members of Legislative assemblies of Two UTs namely Delhi and Puducherry
- ▶ Elected, not Nominated
- ▶ Jammu & Kashmir

Election of President



Proportional Representation

Representation to States

- ▶ Basis of Population
- ▶ 1971 Census figures
- ▶ Representation of a State (or UT) = Population of a state (or a UT) (1971 census) $\times \frac{1}{1000}$
- ▶ Value of vote of elected each MLA of a State (or UT) = $\frac{\text{Population}}{\text{Number of Elected MLAs}} \times \frac{1}{1000}$
- ▶ Haryana MLA = $\frac{1,00,36,808}{90} \times \frac{1}{1000} = 111.52 = 112$ (Round off)
- ▶ UP = 208
- ▶ Sikkim = 7
- ▶ Total Value of Vote of 4033 MLAs (2022 Election) = 5,43,231
- ▶ J&K MLAs Value in 2017 elections = 6,264

Representation to Centre

- ▶ Value of vote of elected MPs = Value of vote of elected MLAs of States and UTs
- ▶ Value of vote of an elected MP = $\frac{\text{Value of vote of elected MLAs}}{\text{Number of elected MPs}} = \frac{5,43,231}{543+233 (776)} = 700.04 = 700$
- ▶ Total Value of Votes of MPs = $700 \times 776 = 5,43,200$
- ▶ Total Value of Votes = $5,43,231 + 5,43,200 = 10,86,431$

Election of President



Single Transferable Vote

- ▶ **50% Majority** required for Winning elections
- ▶ Voter can indicate **as many preferences** as there are candidates
- ▶ In the first round of counting only first preference votes are taken into consideration. If a candidate secures more than 50% of the votes, then he or she is declared elected.
- ▶ If **no candidate** is able to obtain **majority** in the first round of counting, the **candidate who gets the least number of first preference votes get eliminated and his balance of votes is distributed** among rest of the candidates according to second preference of votes.
- ▶ Again counting of votes is undertaken.

Election of President

Single Transferable Vote

	A	B	C	D	E	Total	New Total after eliminating Z
X							
Y							
Z							

Election of President



NEET Opposition by few States

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity and Governance

Introduction of NEET

- National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) was introduced in 2016 as common entrance test for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate medical degree courses.
- NEET was introduced with a stated objective of ensuring inter-se merit in medical admissions and to avoid multiple entrance tests conducted by different agencies, governments and deemed universities.

State Governments' Opposition

- ▶ **Opposition by States** such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana
- ▶ **Grounds**
 - **Threat to State autonomy**- Only States and not the Centre have legislative competence to conduct examinations for MBBS and BDS courses.
 - **Overshadows students efforts in higher secondary education**
 - **Promotes Costly Coaching** – Study by TN shows 99% students who cleared received coaching
 - Compromises learning of **non-core subjects**
 - Cases of **impersonation rackets**
 - **Regional language medium students**

SC Ruling on abortion by unmarried women

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity and Governance

SC ruling

- Recently, Supreme Court of India allowed an **unmarried woman** to end her pregnancy at **24 weeks**.
- The top court said if a medical board assessed that the pregnancy could be terminated **without any harm to the mother**, then she could go ahead and have an abortion.
- **Plea by woman**
 - She had had a **consensual relationship** with her partner, but he had **refused to marry** her after she discovered her pregnancy at about 22 weeks.
 - Being unmarried and raising a child carries a stigma in society and therefore she would like to terminate her pregnancy.

Delhi High Court ruling

- ▶ **Delhi High Court turned down** her plea to allow her to have a medical termination of her pregnancy
- ▶ The Delhi High Court had taken the view that she was **unmarried** and since the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act allowed **only married women to terminate the pregnancy after 20 weeks**, she would not be eligible to get an abortion.
- ▶ The Delhi High Court suggested she give birth to the child and offer up the child for adoption.

SC Ruling on abortion by unmarried women

SC view

- SC Bench said the MTP Act which was **amended in 2021** has the **word partner** instead of husband, exhibiting the intention of the law of the land to not confine it to only marital relationships.
- The judges said that the petitioner cannot be denied the benefit of the law, on the ground that she was unmarried, and that doing so would be contrary to the 'object and spirit' of the legislation.
- The bench also directed the director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to set up a medical board of two doctors to examine the woman (as per the provisions of the MTP Act) to determine if it was safe and not a risk to the life of the mother to terminate the pregnancy. If it is their opinion that it is safe to do so, then AIIMS can conduct the procedure on her.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act

- ▶ As per the MTP Act, **all women** are allowed to get a medical termination of pregnancy **before 20 weeks**. But only certain categories of women are allowed to have an abortion **between 20 and 24 weeks** — **survivors of rape, minors, and a married woman whose relationship status has altered during this period**.
- ▶ The Supreme Court's expansion of the law to **include unmarried women** as part of the MTP Act has given women in similar circumstances an option now to access healthcare services without having to travel the long legal route to the top court every time.

Indian Sports Bodies under Scrutiny

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II, Polity & Governance

Governance in Sports

- **Specialised Sports bodies** to carry out sports administration in **autonomous manner**
- Elections
- **Sports Code, or National Sports Development Code**
- Introduced in **2011 by the Central government**
- **good governance practices** in the management of sports at the national level without interfering in the autonomy of the national sports bodies
- Many sports federations had become personal fiefdoms of certain individuals— many of them politicians — as they continued to remain in power for long periods
- The National Sports Code **laid down restrictions regarding age and tenure**.

Violation of Sports Code

- The respective federations can be put under a **(Committee of Administrators) CoA**.
- **All India Football Federation (AIFF)**
- The Supreme Court had appointed a three-member CoA led by former Supreme Court judge to run the AIFF, whose president Praful Patel had to resign. .
- President for more than 12 years
- **Hockey India**
- Delhi High Court observed that the Sports Code was violated by Hockey India and a CoA was formed for Hockey administration in India
- **Table Tennis Federation of India**
- **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)**

Indian Sports Bodies under Scrutiny

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II, Polity & Governance

Punishment fear from Int Bodies

- Threat of Suspensions by International Bodies
- **FIFA to AIFF**
 - Elections, cannot be under CoA
 - Amendments
- **International Hockey Federation (FIH) to Hockey India**
 - Elections, cannot be under CoA
- **International Olympic Committee (IOC) to Indian Olympic Association (IOA)**
 - Delay in Elections

Suspension of MPs in Parliament

Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

What has happened?

- Initially 19, now 20, MPs have been suspended from Rajya Sabha for a week “**unruly behaviour**”.
- **General Principle**
 - The general principle is that it is the role and duty of the **Presiding Officer** — Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairman of Rajya Sabha — to maintain order so that the House can function smoothly.
 - In order to ensure that proceedings are conducted in the proper manner, the Speaker/ Chairman is empowered to force a Member to withdraw from the House.

Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business

- **Rule 373** – Speaker on **disorderly conduct** may **direct a Member** to withdraw immediately from the House, and any Member so ordered to withdraw shall **remain absent during the remainder of the day's sitting**.
 - **Rule 374** – Speaker may move **motion against suspension of member who disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business thereof** for a period not exceeding the **remainder of the session**.
- The House may, by **another motion**, **terminate the suspension**.

Suspension of MPs in Parliament

Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

Rajya Sabha Rules

- Like the Speaker in Lok Sabha, the Chairman of Rajya Sabha is empowered under **Rule Number 255** of its Rule Book to “direct any Member whose conduct is in his opinion grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately” from the House.
- Under **Rule 256**, the Chairman may “name a Member who **disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the Council by persistently and wilfully obstructing**” business. In such a situation, the House may adopt a **motion** suspending the Member from the service of the House for a period **not exceeding the remainder of the session**.
- The House may, by another motion, terminate the suspension.

Kangaroo Courts

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance

Kangaroo Courts

- Chief Justice of India N V Ramana said that “**kangaroo courts**” run by the media are causing harm to the health of the democracy.
- Oxford Dictionary defines it as “an **unofficial court held by a group of people** in order to **try someone regarded**, especially **without good evidence**, as **guilty of a crime or misdemeanour**”.
- In a less literal sense, it is used to refer to proceedings or activities where a **judgement** is made in a manner that is **unfair, biased, and lacks legitimacy**.
- Why the word ‘kangaroo’ is used is not clear.

SC Verdict on Prevention of Money Laundering Act Core Provisions



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II & III

PMLA, 2002

- The objective of the act is to prevent money laundering and provide for punishment and confiscation of property derived from money laundering.
- Money laundering is a process of concealing the source of money usually earned through illegal activities or is otherwise black money. In other words, illegal money is introduced into the financial system and made to appear as if it is earned from a legal source.

Salient Features of PMLA

1. The act provides punishment for indulging in money laundering or facilitating money laundering with rigorous imprisonment from 3 to 7 years and a fine without any upper limit.
2. The property acquired through money laundering shall be confiscated by the Government of India.
3. The order of the executive agency under the act can be challenged before an appellate tribunal and the order of appellate tribunal can further be challenged before a High Court.

SC Verdict on Prevention of Money Laundering Act Core Provisions



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II & III

PMLA Provisions considered strict

1. Statement recorded by an officer is admissible as evidence in court. Such powers are not available to the police under the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).
2. The Director, ED, can pass orders to provisionally attach property belonging to an accused (not guilty) if she/he is convinced that this has been purchased with the proceeds of a crime under a scheduled offense.
3. Burden of proof is on the accused to explain the source of acquired money.

Enforcement Directorate

1. The Directorate General of Economic Enforcement is responsible for enforcing and fighting economic crime in India.
2. It is a part of the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.
3. It comprises officers of the Indian Revenue Service, Indian Police Service, and the Indian Administrative Service.
4. It was set up in 1956 to deal with foreign exchange violations under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947.
5. Presently, the prime objective of the Enforcement Directorate is the enforcement of two key acts of the Government of India: the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) 1999 and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) 2002.

SC Verdict on Prevention of Money Laundering Act Core Provisions



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II & III

Supreme Court Judgement in 2017

1. The Supreme Court struck down a stringent provision of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 that **denied bail to an accused unless the court was convinced that he was not guilty.**
2. The apex court also ordered a fresh trial in all cases where bail under such provisions had been denied to the accused. Those accused under PMLA rarely got bail, practically serving the imprisonment without being proven guilty in courts.

Supreme Court Verdict in 2022

1. The Supreme Court **upheld the core provisions** made to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), which gives the government and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) virtually unbridled powers.
2. According to Supreme Court, **Money laundering is an offence against the sovereignty and integrity of the country. It is no less a heinous offence than the offence of terrorism.**

SC Verdict on Prevention of Money Laundering Act Core Provisions



On ED's power under PMLA

An upshot of the judgment by the Supreme Court on the validity of certain provisions under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act

- The offence of money laundering is as heinous an offence as terrorism
- Section 3 (definition of money laundering), Section 24 (reverse burden of proof), and Section 5 (attachment of property) to stay
- Stringency in granting bail under the Act is legal and not arbitrary
- It is not mandatory to give an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) in every case as it was not an FIR
- The statements made to ED are considered admissible
- Provision of attachment of property of accused as proceeds of crime 'balances' the interests of the accused and the State
- The question of enactment of PMLA amendments through the Money Bill route is to be decided by a larger Bench



Why the govt plans to scrap the decades-old Coffee Act



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II

Why in news?

- The **Coffee Act, 1942** was first introduced during World War II, in order to **protect the struggling Indian coffee industry** from the economic downturn caused by the war.
- The government is now trying to **replace** the law because it claims that many of the **provisions have become redundant** and are too restrictive.
- The government has also proposed to **repeal the decades old laws on tea, spices and rubber**, and introduce new legislations in order to **increase the ease of doing business and promote the development of these sectors**.

Origin of the Coffee Act, 1942

- In the 1930s, the Indian coffee industry was facing significant problems, such as **large-scale damage by pests and diseases**, and the global economic downturn caused by the **Great Depression**.
- These problems from the 1930s were compounded with the outbreak of **World War II**, as low demands and a loss of foreign markets led to a sharp decline in coffee prices.
- The government formed the **Coffee Board**, through the introduction of the **Coffee Act, 1942**, under the **control of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The Board was tasked with supporting the industry in **marketing, promotion of consumption, finance and research and development**.

Why the govt plans to scrap the decades-old Coffee Act



Pooling System

- **Before India liberalised** its economy in 1991, the Coffee Board **controlled the marketing** of the commodity in its entirety, both in India and abroad.
- The Coffee Act introduced a pooling system, where each **grower** was required to distribute their entire crop to a **surplus pool** managed by the Board, **apart from the small quantities that were allowed for domestic use and seed production**.
- The grower was required to take the harvested and dried coffee to a curing **factory**, where they would receive an advance.
- **Registered private contractors** would clean, sort and grade the quality of coffee on a point system, for which they would **receive a fee from the Coffee Board which would be later deducted from its payment to the grower**.
- The Board then marketed **70%** of the total pool for **export** and **30% for domestic markets**, and sold them in separate auctions.

Changes post Liberalisation

- While the Board continues to be the **chief governmental body to supervise the industry**, it **no longer maintains its monopolistic control** over the marketing of Indian coffee.
- In **1996**, the **pooling system was abolished** and growers were allowed to directly sell to processing firms.
- Now, the Coffee Board plays more of an **advisory role**, and aims at increasing production, promoting further export and supporting the development of the domestic market.

Why the govt plans to scrap the decades-old Coffee Act



Why does the government want to scrap the law?

- Many of its provisions such as Pooling and marketing of commodity have become redundant and are impediments to the coffee trade.
- The government would introduce a simplified version of the Act to suit the present needs of the industry.
- The new legislation is now primarily concerned with promoting the sale and consumption of Indian coffee, including through e-commerce platforms, with fewer government restrictions.
- It also aims at encouraging further economic, scientific and technical research in order to align the Indian coffee industry with “global best practices.”
- While the Coffee Board continues to have limited control over marketing, exporters will still require a certificate from the statutory body.



PRACTICE
QUESTIONS

Ques. Consider the following statements regarding visits of Chief Ministers to foreign nations:

1. A State Chief Minister can visit abroad on a personal trip without taking approval of the Union government.
2. The Political Clearance to a State Chief Minister for official visits abroad is granted by PMO.
3. The FCRA clearance is given by Union Home Ministry.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q. Consider the following statements about the Coffee Board in India?

1. The Board was set up under the Coffee Act, 1942 during the World war II.
2. The Board enjoyed monopoly in the marketing of coffee before the liberalization reforms.
3. Presently, the exports of coffee still require a certificate from the statutory body.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ques. The NIRF Rankings are given on which of the following parameters:

1. Teaching, learning and resources
2. Research
3. Perception
4. Infrastructure

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2, and 3
- (c) 2, 3 and 4
- (d) 1, 2 and 4

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Droupadi Murmu, 15th President of India:

1. She is the first female Scheduled Caste President of the country.
2. She belongs to the Khond tribal community.
3. She has risen from her native village in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q. The Electoral College to elect the President of India consists of:

1. All the members of Lok Sabha
2. All the members of Legislative Assemblies of states
3. All the members of Rajya Sabha

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (d) None of the above

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act:

1. The Act confers permission to only a few special categories of women to get a medical termination of pregnancy before 20 weeks.
2. Pregnancy beyond a period of 20 weeks requires approval of Courts for termination on case to case basis.
3. A minor mother can seek termination of pregnancy upto 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Q. Consider the following statements regarding National Sports Development Code:

1. The National Sports Code was mandated by International Olympic Committee (IOC) to be adopted by Indian Sports bodies.
2. The National Sports is optional for Sports bodies in India.
3. The National Sports Code seeks to democratize the Sports bodies in India.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Q. What is the maximum period of suspension of MP under Lok Sabha and Rajya Rules?

- (a) One Day
- (b) One Week
- (c) One Session
- (d) One Year

Q. Which of the following are the Provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act?

1. Rigorous imprisonment of 7 to 10 years
2. Statement recorded by an officer is admissible as evidence in court
3. Burden of proof is on the accused to explain the source of acquired money
4. Power to pass orders to provisionally attach property belonging to an accused

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3 only

Ques. The Chief Ministers of States and UTs require union clearances to travel abroad. The clearance system gives emphasis to sovereignty at cost of federal system. How? (10 Marks, 150 words)

Q. The American President is chosen through Direct Elections. On the other hand, Indian President is chosen through indirect election. Do you think that Indian President shall also be chosen through direct election of the people to give better expression to our representative democracy?

Q. The introduction of common entrance tests such as NEET and JEE for medical and engineering graduate colleges seeks to promote the national level merit and prevents students from going through burden of multiple entrance tests. However, their introduction is often challenged on grounds of ignoring overall development of children, state autonomy, social and inter-regional justice. (250 words, 15 Marks)

Q. What are Kangaroo Courts? How does their functioning obstruct the path of justice in our country? Explain with help of recent incidents. (150 words)

Q. There is a need to fight economic crimes through strict laws but not at the cost of basic principles of criminal judicial system. Examine the statement in the light of provisions of PMLA, 2002?

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS & BILATERAL RELATIONS

Should the ATP and the WTA merge?

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Present status

- ▶ Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), the governing bodies of men's and women's tennis
- ▶ Seven governing bodies – ATP, WTA, ITF (International Tennis Federation) and the four Grand Slams
- ▶ Billie Jean King founded the WTA in 1973 after failing to persuade the men to create a joint venture.

Need

- ▶ Same set of rules
- ▶ Coordination
- ▶ Interesting tennis events with large fanfare
- ▶ Reduced expenditure on Governing bodies

Shinzo Abe: The legacy of Japan's longest-serving PM

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Issues

As Prime Minister of Japan

- ▶ First time PM in 2006 for a little over a year- Japan's youngest post-World War II prime minister
- ▶ Became Prime Minister again in 2012. Re-elected in 2014 and 2017. Continued till 2020- Japan's longest-serving prime minister
- ▶ Resigned on health reasons

Controversial Defence and Foreign Policy

- ▶ Sought Revision to Post World War II Japanese Constitution to recognise Japanese military
- ▶ Tensions with China and South Korea on nationalist views- visits to Tokyo's Yasukuni shrine, a controversial site linked to Japan's militarism before and during WWII
- ▶ Unable to secure the return of Northern Territories - a chain of disputed islands off the northern prefecture of Hokkaido that are claimed by both Japan and Russia.



Shinzo Abe: The legacy of Japan's longest-serving PM

Abenomics

- ▶ Economic Package to revive Japanese economy
- ▶ Comprehensive economic policy package without compromising on fiscal discipline
- ▶ Criticism
 - Boost to tourism enhanced Covid-19 infection rate
 - Unable to empower women
 - Nepotism
 - Unhealthy work cultures

Death

- ▶ City of Nara
- ▶ Campaigning for a candidate for upper house seat
- ▶ Shot by a gunman, former member of armed forces- said was "dissatisfied with Abe" but that "it has nothing to do with political grudges".



India to become G-20 President in end of year



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Organisations

G-20

- ▶ Formed in 1999 in the backdrop of the financial crisis of the late 1990s that hit East Asia and Southeast Asia in particular
- ▶ Aim was to secure global financial stability by involving middle-income countries
- ▶ 60 per cent of the world's population
- ▶ 80 per cent of global GDP
- ▶ 75 per cent of global trade
- ▶ Prominent members are: Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US, and the EU.
- ▶ Permanent Guest- Spain

Presidency

- ▶ Rotates every year among members
- ▶ 17th G20 Heads of State and Government Summit in November at Bali, Indonesia
- ▶ After Indonesia, India will assume the presidency of G20 from December 2022
- ▶ Each year, the presidency invites guest countries.

Working

- ▶ No permanent secretariat
- ▶ Agenda and work are coordinated by representatives of the G20 countries, known as 'Sherpas'
- ▶ Sherpas work with finance ministers and governors of the central banks
- ▶ Ex-NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant would be the G20 Sherpa after Piyush Goyal
- ▶ First G20 Summit took place in 2008 in Washington DC, US
- ▶ Sherpa meetings (that help in negotiations and building consensus) take place in addition to Summits

Shinzo Abe- Indo-Japan Ties



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Visits to India

- ▶ First visit as PM in 2007- Delivered famous "Confluence of the Two Seas" speech — laying the foundation for his concept of Indo-Pacific.
- ▶ Visited India in January 2014, December 2015, and September 2017
- ▶ No other Prime Minister of Japan has made so many visits to India.
- ▶ First Japanese PM to be Chief Guest at the Republic Day parade in 2014

Key outcomes

- ▶ Indo-Japan nuclear deal – 2016 despite India being non-signatory to NPT.
 - Pact was key to India's deals with US and French nuclear firms, which were either owned by or used Japanese parts
- ▶ Foreign and Defence Ministers' Meeting (2+2 format)
- ▶ Quad rejuvenated in 2017
- ▶ Infrastructure cooperation – 2015 visit of Abe – Decided to introduce Shinkansen technology (bullet train) in India

Elon Musk want to terminate \$44 billion Twitter deal



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II & III, International Issues & Science & Tech.

About the Deal

- ▶ Elon Musk offered to purchase complete equity of Twitter for \$44 Billion.

Musk's arguments on breaking the Deal

- ▶ Twitter was in "material breach" of their agreement and had made "false and misleading" statements during negotiations
- ▶ Prevalence of fake or spam accounts on its platform
- ▶ Twitter had asserted that spam and bot accounts make up less than 5 per cent of its total users. Elon Musk claims such accounts comprise more than 5% of Twitter accounts
- ▶ Twitter fired senior executives and a third of its talent acquisition team, breaching Twitter's obligation to "preserve substantially intact of the material components of its current business organisation."
- ▶ Twitter has said that it plans to pursue legal action to enforce the agreement

Analysis: Why Musk is backing out?

- ▶ Massive fall in Twitter and Tesla share prices due to correction in share markets in the US
- ▶ Question marks around how Musk would finance the \$44 billion deal

Interpol's ICSE initiative on child sex abuse, joined by the CBI



Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Inter. Organisations

Interpol

- ▶ Interpol is the world's largest international police organisation with 195 member countries
- ▶ Headquarters in Lyon, France
- ▶ Each member country hosts an Interpol National Central Bureau and connects their national law enforcement to it
- ▶ In India, the CBI is the nodal agency connected to Interpol National Central Bureau

ICSE database

- ▶ Interpol's International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database use images and video comparison software
- ▶ Detect the details relating to victims, abusers and location of crimes related to child sexual abuse content.
- ▶ Example- Identify locations of markers visible in video content. Markers can be nearby signage, artwork, photos on a wall, etc.
- ▶ India is the 68th country to have access to this database

Child sex abuse in India

- ▶ 24 lakh instances of online child sexual abuse from 2017 to 2020, with 80% victims being girls below the age of 14 years
- ▶ In 2019, the CBI set up a special unit called the 'Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention/Investigation (OCSAE)', for tracking and monitoring posting, circulation and downloads of Child sexual exploitation material online.

2022 edition of the United Nations' World Population Prospects (WPP)

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Inter. Organisations

About World Population Prospects

► Population Division of the UN Dept of Economic & Social Affairs has been publishing the WPP in a biennial cycle since 1951.

Key takeaways of 2022 Edition

► World's population continues to grow, but the pace of growth is slowing down.

- 8 Billion – 15th November, 2022
- 8.5 billion in 2030
- 9.7 billion in 2050
- 10.4 billion in 2100.
- In 2020, the global growth rate fell under 1% per year for the first time since 1950.

► Rates of population growth vary significantly across countries and regions: More than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in just eight countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The 46 least developed countries (LDCs) are among the world's fastest-growing.

2022 edition of the United Nations' World Population Prospects (WPP)

Key takeaways of 2022 Edition

► The population of older persons is increasing both in numbers and as a share of the total: The share of the global population aged 65 years or above is projected to rise from 10% in 2022 to 16% in 2050.

► A sustained drop in fertility has led to an increased concentration of the population at working ages (between 25 and 64 years), creating an opportunity for accelerated economic growth per capita.

► International migration is having important impacts on population trends for some countries: For high-income countries between 2000 and 2020, the contribution of international migration to population growth (net inflow of 80.5 million) exceeded the balance of births over deaths (66.2 million). Over the next few decades, migration will be the sole driver of population growth in high-income countries.

TOP 10 POPULOUS COUNTRIES (POPULATION IN BILLION)

	1990	2022	2050
1	China (1,144)	China (1,426)	India (1,668)
2	India (861)	India (1,412)	China (1,317)
3	US (246)	US (337)	US (375)
4	Indonesia (181)	Indonesia (275)	Nigeria (375)
5	Brazil (149)	Pakistan (234)	Pakistan (366)
6	Russia (148)	Nigeria (216)	Indonesia (317)
7	Japan (123)	Brazil (215)	Brazil (231)
8	Pakistan (114)	Bangladesh (170)	Congo (215)
9	Bangladesh (106)	Russia (145)	Ethiopia (213)
10	Nigeria (94)	Mexico (127)	Bangladesh (204)
11	Mexico (81)	Japan (124)	Mexico (144)
12		Ethiopia (122)	Russia (133)
13			
14			
15			
16		Congo (97)	

India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country in 2023

Source: World Population Prospects 2022, UN Dept of Economic & Social Affairs

India and Global Gender Gap Index

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II, International Relations

About Global Gender Gap Index

- Published by the **World Economic Forum** to measure Gender Equality.
- Examines **four overall areas** of inequality between men and women, namely

- Economic participation and opportunity**—Salary levels, participation rate and access to high-skilled employment.
- Educational attainment**—Access to basic and higher level education
- Political empowerment**—Percentage of women in Parliament, the percentage of women in ministerial positions etc.
- Health and survival**—Life expectancy and sex ratio

On each of the four sub-indices as well as on the overall index the GGG index provides **scores between 0 and 1**, where **1 shows full gender parity** and **0 is complete imparity**.

Global Gender Gap Index for 2022

- The **2022 report** is the **16th** report.
- India has approximately **66.2 crore women**.
- In 2022, India's overall score has improved from 0.625 (in 2021) to **0.629**.
- India has secured **135th** Rank on the index out of 146 Countries.
- Economic Participation and Opportunity – **143rd**
- Educational Attainment – **114th**
- Political Empowerment – **48th**
- Health and Survival - **146th**

South Asia

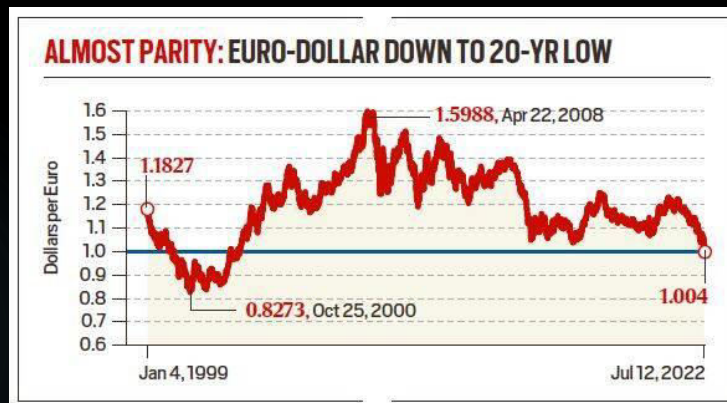
Country	Rank		Score
	Regional	Global	
Bangladesh	1	71	0.714
Nepal	2	96	0.692
Sri Lanka	3	110	0.670
Maldives	4	117	0.648
Bhutan	5	126	0.637
India	6	135	0.629
Iran, Islamic Republic of	7	143	0.576
Pakistan	8	145	0.564
Afghanistan	9	146	0.435

Fall in Value of Euro

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Economics

What has happened?

- ▶ The euro achieved parity with the US dollar. In other words, in terms of the exchange rate, one euro became equal to one US dollar.
- ▶ This is only the second time since 2002 that the euro has fallen this low to a dollar



Fall in Value of Euro

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Economics

Reasons for Fall in value of Euro

► The euro has been weakening against the dollar since the start of 2008. Recently, the fall in value of Euro has been very steep because investors are withdrawing their money from Eurozone and investing in the US.

Withdrawal of investment from Eurozone creates supply of Euros and demand for dollar, leading to fall in value of Euro.

Withdrawal of investment from Eurozone

1. Dependence on Russia for Oil and Gas: During Russia's war on Ukraine, Russia disrupted the oil and gas supplies of European nations. Consequently, the European nations are required to import oil and gas at very high prices. This incident has proven the dependence of Eurozone on Russian oil and gas supplies. This dependence has raised questions in the minds of investors about the viability of future investments in the Eurozone.

2. Monetary Policy response to high inflation: Both the US and Eurozone are witnessing high inflation in present times. However, the response is different by the European Central Bank and the US Federal Reserve.

The ECB hasn't raised rates because raising interest rates would dampen the chances of recovery of Covid hit economy. On the other hand, the US Federal Reserve has raised the interest rates to target the inflation, without caring about the economic growth. High interest rates are incentive for investors to invest in the US.

Fall in Value of Euro

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Economics

Performance of Indian Currency

► The US dollar is gaining against all currencies of the world — be it the euro, or the Japanese yen or the Indian rupee.

Despite its continued weakness, the Indian rupee has shown more **resilience** against the dollar than most other currencies.

The rupee has appreciated against Euro since start of 2022. It was close to 90 at the start and is now close to 80 to a euro.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II, International Organisations

About I2U2

- ▶ I2U2 stands for **India, Israel, the UAE, and the US**
- ▶ First-ever I2U2 **Virtual Summit** on July 14. Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated along with the heads of state of Israel, the UAE, and the US.
- ▶ Also referred to as the '**West Asian Quad**' by Ambassador of the UAE to India
- ▶ During visit of **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to Israel in October 2021**, a meeting of the foreign ministers of the four countries had taken place. At that time, the grouping was called the '**International Forum for Economic Cooperation**'.

Aim of I2U2 grouping

- ▶ Stated aim is to discuss "common areas of **mutual interest**, to strengthen the **economic partnership** in trade and investment in our respective regions and beyond".
- ▶ **Six areas** of cooperation have been identified - joint investments in **water, food security, health, energy, transportation and space**.
- ▶ Mentioned **Role of private sector capital and expertise** in areas of cooperation

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II

President Biden is in Middle East

- ▶ I2U2 Meeting during visit of Biden to middle east- Purpose of Visit is to facilitate integration of Israel to the region.
- ▶ **Abraham Accords**- The Abraham Accords of 2020 had led to Israel formally normalising diplomatic ties with the **UAE, Bahrain and Morocco**, marking an important shift in the stance of West Asian countries on Israel. These Accords were **mediated by the US**.
- ▶ I2U2 will also play a role in the **integration of Israel** into the region.

Rise in Imports from China

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Trade Figures

- ▶ **2022 First Half figures-** Imports are increasing and have risen to **\$57.51 billion**. On the other hand, Exports are sliding downwards. The exports to China for the first half were only **\$9.57 billion**.
- ▶ **2021 Figures-** Two-way trade in 2021 crossed \$100 billion for the first time, reaching **\$125.6 billion**, with India's imports accounting for **\$97.5 billion**.
- ▶ **2020 Trade Levels -** Trade **declined in 2020** on account of the pandemic but is now significantly up from pre-pandemic levels.
- ▶ **Items of Import-** India's biggest imports last year were **electrical and mechanical machinery**; **chemicals** used in industrial production, active **pharmaceutical ingredients** and **auto components**. India had also imported large quantities of **medical supplies during the pandemic**.

Digital Nomad Visa

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Issues

Digital Nomads

- Digital nomads are **remote workers** who usually travel to **different locations**. They often work in coffee shops, co-working spaces, or public libraries, relying on devices with wireless internet capabilities like smart phones and mobile hotspots to do their work wherever they want.
- Around **43% of American employees spent time working remote** last year, and this number will only increase.
- Being a **digital nomad and working a few days at home are two different things**.

Need for Visa

- ▶ Most digital nomads **work remotely under a tourist visa— which is illegal**. So, to provide foreigners with a **legal base** for working while traveling, many countries issue digital nomad visas.
- ▶ These visas are usually **short-term** and do not offer a pathway to citizenship but are an excellent opportunity for nomads and freelancers who want to travel and work remotely.

Requirements

- ▶ Above **18 years of age**.
- ▶ **Specific monthly income** (the amount varies from country to country).
- ▶ You must have a **job** you can do from anywhere in the world.
- ▶ **59 countries** at present currently offer a digital nomad visa including Germany, Norway, Portugal, etc. **India not included** in the list.

Direct Saudi-Israel flights

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Relations

Why in news?

- ▶ Saudi Arabia has opened its airspace to all civilian aircraft on way to Israel and permitted flights coming directly from Israel.
- ▶ US President Joe Biden became the first American President to take a flight from Israel to Jeddah.
- ▶ Latest step in the gradual movement towards the normalising of ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia, and Israel and Gulf countries as a whole.

Why required?

- Flights to Israel from many countries could not fly through Saudi airspace, as the two countries do not have diplomatic ties owing to the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- In 2018, in a rare move, Saudi Arabia had allowed Air India flights from India to Israel to fly through its airspace. In 2020, Israel-United Arab Emirates flights were allowed to fly above Saudi Arabia.
- The change in policy will help aircraft save fuel and cut their carbon footprint, and reduce travel time for passengers.
- Easier passage to Mecca for the Hajj pilgrimage for Israel's Muslims, a minority community in the country.

Direct Saudi-Israel flights

Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Relations

US, Saudi Arabia, Israel

- ▶ Both Saudi Arabia and Israel have been traditional allies of the US, and both also have regional rivalries with Iran, but Saudi-Israeli ties have been strained.
- ▶ The recent move will facilitate a better range of cooperation among the US, Saudi Arabia, and Israel.
- ▶ With the Russia-Ukraine war taking a heavy toll on economies around the world, and given America's tensions and rivalry with China, Washington would like to draw its allies as close together as it can.

Other Measures for integration of Israel

- I2U2- India, Israel, the US and UAE – 14th July, 2022
- Abraham Accords with UAE, Morocco and Bahrain
- September 15th, 2020, leaders from Bahrain, Israel, the United Arab Emirates signed the Abraham Accords. A few months later, on December 10th, Israel and Morocco also signed a normalization agreement.

India-Africa Conclave

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

About Conclave

- CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership was launched in 2005 with the support of India's Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- To encourage the development of private investment from India in African countries.
- Over the years, it has "emerged as one of the largest congregations of senior ministers, policy makers and business leaders from Africa and India, cutting across sectors", and "played a pivotal role in encouraging Indian companies to establish and grow their footprint in Africa"

About Present Conclave

- ▶ 17th edition of the conclave
- ▶ Participation of **Forty high-level ministers from 17 countries**, including Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Niger, Malawi, Mauritius, Sudan, Namibia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone
- ▶ This year's conclave focuses on infrastructure development and trade finance, education and training, agriculture and food processing, consultancy services, and healthcare in addition to other areas where Indian companies have steadily increased their presence over the years in Africa.



India-Africa Conclave

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Economic Ties

- Trade between the African subcontinent and India increased from \$7.2 billion in 2001 to **\$59.9 billion** in 2017, making India the continent's fourth-largest national trading partner.
- Trade with India accounted for more than **6.4 per cent of total African trade** in 2017.
- Many African nations have benefited from India's **Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme** which provides duty free access to 98.2 per cent of India's total tariff lines.
- **Lines of Credit (LoCs)** worth \$12.26 billion have so far been extended to African countries, making them the second-largest recipient of India's concessional loans.

Key Countries

- ▶ **Mauritius** is the first and only African country so far to have a **CECPA (Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement)** with India.
- ▶ **Namibia** in southern Africa is attractive for foreign investment. Over the years, Indian enterprises have invested in energy, healthcare, and agriculture sectors, as well as the business of diamond cutting and polishing, in Namibia. Analysts expect these sectors to grow over the next few years.



CAATSA Waiver



Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

What is CAATSA?

CAATSA—Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act is a US legislation passed in 2017.

- The act imposes sanctions on countries which are involved in trade (such as defence and energy) with Russia, North Korea and Iran.
- The amendment to Section 231 of CAATSA, also called "modified waiver authority" gives powers to the US President to waive sanctions for six months at a time in certain circumstances on a case to case basis.
- The President needs to certify that such waivers do not endanger the ongoing operations and it is in the US's national security interests to grant the waivers.
- It is to be noted that there is no blanket waiver for any nation under the act.

Impact on India

- Cooperation between India and Russia in Defence
 - Import of S-400 Triumf missile systems from Russia and other defence contracts
- Cooperation with Iran
 - India is involved in multiple projects such as the Chabahar port development project
 - Iran's oil reserves are of interest to India.

CAATSA Waiver



Proportional Representation

What's special now

- ▶ Earlier, India was given periodic waivers.
- ▶ Now, The US House of Representatives passed a legislative amendment that exempts India from economic sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), for purchasing the S-400 missile defence system from Russia in 2018.
- ▶ Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna introduced the amendment, urging the Biden administration to provide a waiver to India.

Why Permanent waiver?

- ▶ India has been given waiver due to three-fold case on side of India:
 1. There are no chances that the weapons bought by India would be used against the US.
 2. The US needs India to counter rising China and thus, wants to partner with India in the Indo- Pacific.
 3. India has significantly reduced its dependence on Russian military hardware while increasing defence purchases from the US, and it would be unfair if the US still punished India.

Agreements by Russia and Ukraine with UN and Turkey

Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Grain Export Deal

- Russia and Ukraine signed separate agreements with Turkey and the U.N.
- Clearing the way for exporting millions of tons of desperately needed Ukrainian grain
- As well as Russian grain and fertilizer
- Ending a wartime standoff that had threatened food security around the globe.

Need for Deal

- Ukraine is one of the world's largest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, but Russia's invasion of the country and naval blockade of its ports have halted shipments.
- Some grain is being transported through Europe by rail, road and river, but the prices of vital commodities like wheat and barley have soared during the nearly five-month war.
- Ukraine was expected to export 22 million tons of grain and other agricultural products that have been stuck in Black Sea ports due to the war.

What is the Deal?

- The deal makes provisions for the safe passage of ships.
- It foresees the establishment of a control center in Istanbul, to be staffed by U.N., Turkish, Russian and Ukrainian officials, to run and coordinate the process.
- The control center would undertake inspections that ships don't carry the weapons.

ICJ's latest judgment in the case of genocide against Myanmar

Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Case against Myanmar

- Judges at the ICJ have dismissed preliminary objections by Myanmar to a case alleging that it is responsible for genocide against the Rohingya ethnic minority.
- The decision clears the way for the highly charged case, brought by Gambia, to go ahead at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Case by Gambia

- Gambia filed the case with the world court in November 2019, alleging that Myanmar is breaching the genocide convention.
- The nation argued that both Gambia and Myanmar are parties to the convention and that all signatories have a duty to ensure it is enforced.
- The Gambia, a predominantly Muslim country, is backed by the 57-member Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC).
- Nations such as The Netherlands and Canada are backing Gambia.

Myanmar's Objections

- The case should not be heard because the world court only hears cases between states and the Rohingya complaint was brought by Gambia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.
- Also claimed that Gambia could not bring the case to court as it was not directly linked to the events in Myanmar and that a legal dispute did not exist between the two countries before the case was filed.

ICJ's latest judgment in the case of genocide against Myanmar

Complications

- The ICJ case was complicated by last year's **military coup** in Myanmar.
- The decision to allow the Southeast Asian nation's **military-installed government** to **represent** the country at the February hearings drew sharp criticism.
- A shadow administration known as the **National Unity Government** made up of representatives including elected lawmakers who were prevented from taking their seats by the 2021 military coup had argued that it should be representing Myanmar in court.
- The ICJ's ruling sets the stage for court hearings, airing evidence of atrocities against the Rohingya breaches of the **1948 Genocide Convention**.

About ICJ

- The **International Court of Justice** rules on **disputes between states**. It is not linked to the **International Criminal Court**, also based in The Hague, which **holds individuals accountable** for atrocities.
- Prosecutors at the **ICC** are investigating **crimes committed against the Rohingya who were forced to flee to Bangladesh**.
- The **ruling of the ICJ is binding** on Myanmar, and cannot be appealed.
- However, **no means are available to the court to enforce it**.
- Cases at the ICJ often **drag on for years**.
- The **legal bar for handing out a conviction for genocide is very high**. So far, only three cases of genocide worldwide have been recognised since World War II: Cambodia (the late 1970s), Rwanda (1994), and Bosnia (1995).

Results of Arab Spring

Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Nearly all the countries engulfed by the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings have seen their pro-democracy efforts stall or collapse. **Tunisia** is unique in creating a democracy after ousting its dictator.



TUNISIA

Then

- **Fruit seller** Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire on Dec. 17, 2010 after a local official confiscated his barrow.
- Protests spread from his town, Sidi Bouzid, across the country, turning deadly.
- President Zine el-Abidine **Ben Ali** fled on Jan. 14, 2011, inspiring revolts elsewhere.
- Tunisia held a first democratic election that October.
- A new constitution establishing a parliamentary system was agreed in 2014, and Tunisians choose their lawmakers and president in **free and fair elections, most recently in 2019.**

Now

- The economy, heavily dependent on tourism, was hit particularly hard by **COVID-19.**
- **Economic troubles** caused hardship and disillusionment. Illegal emigration to Europe increased.
- In July 2021, President **Kais Saied froze parliament and sacked the government** – moves his opponents called a **coup** but which were welcomed by those Tunisians who were fed up with political bickering and paralysis.
- A year later, Saied called a **referendum on a new constitution** that strengthened the presidency, capping what his opponents called a march to **one-man rule.** Saied has said freedoms will be protected.

EGYPT

Then

- **President Hosni Mubarak** had been in power since **1981**, but massive anti-government protests, inspired by Tunisia.
- As hundreds of thousands of protesters gathered, Mubarak deployed the military.
- Protests gathered momentum, police were pulled from the streets and the army stood back until Mubarak stepped down – to be tried in August on charges of abusing power and killing demonstrators.
- The once-banned **Muslim Brotherhood won the 2012 election** but a year later the military, encouraged by anti-Brotherhood protests, toppled the new president

Now

- **Army chief Abdel Fattah el-Sisi replaced him as president in 2014.**
- Rights groups documented abuses in a crackdown on dissent and the military faced a long-running insurgency from Islamist militants in Sinai.

YEMEN

Then

- Crowds took to the streets against President Ali Abdullah **Saleh** from Jan. 29, 2011.
- Saleh was hurt in an assassination attempt in June 2011, forcing him to seek treatment in Saudi Arabia.
- Gulf states brokered a transition deal including a “national dialogue” aimed at resolving Yemen’s problems, with Saleh’s old deputy Abd-Rabbu **Mansour Hadi** to be president until elections.

Now

- Iran allied **Houthi rebels** rose in rebellion to control territory through violent means.
- In 2015, after the Houthis seized Sanaa, **Saudi Arabia** and its allies began a military campaign to keep Hadi in power.
- **Ex-president Saleh was killed in a roadside attack in 2017** after switching sides, abandoning the Iran-aligned Houthis for the Saudi-led coalition.
- **A U.N.-backed ceasefire took effect in April, 2022** and Hadi, who had spent years in exile in Saudi Arabia, was replaced by a presidential council.

LIBYA

Then

- Protests broke out in February, 2011, soon turning to armed revolt against **Muammar Gaddafi’s 42-year rule**.
- In March, the United Nations Security Council declared a **no-fly zone** to protect civilians from Gaddafi’s forces and **NATO** started air strikes.
- By August, rebels had seized Tripoli and in October Gaddafi was captured hiding in a drainpipe outside his hometown of Sirte and killed.

Now

- Local militias seized hold of territory and, as chaos took hold, the **country split in 2014** between western and eastern factions. The U.N. helped broker a political agreement in 2015, but in practice the country stayed divided.
- A U.N.-backed election – part of a peace process aimed at knitting Libya back together – was cancelled in December, 2021 for reasons including disputes over the rules.
- In **March 2022**, the Sirte-based parliament appointed a new prime minister but the government based in Tripoli refused to step down, leaving Libya split between **rival administrations**.

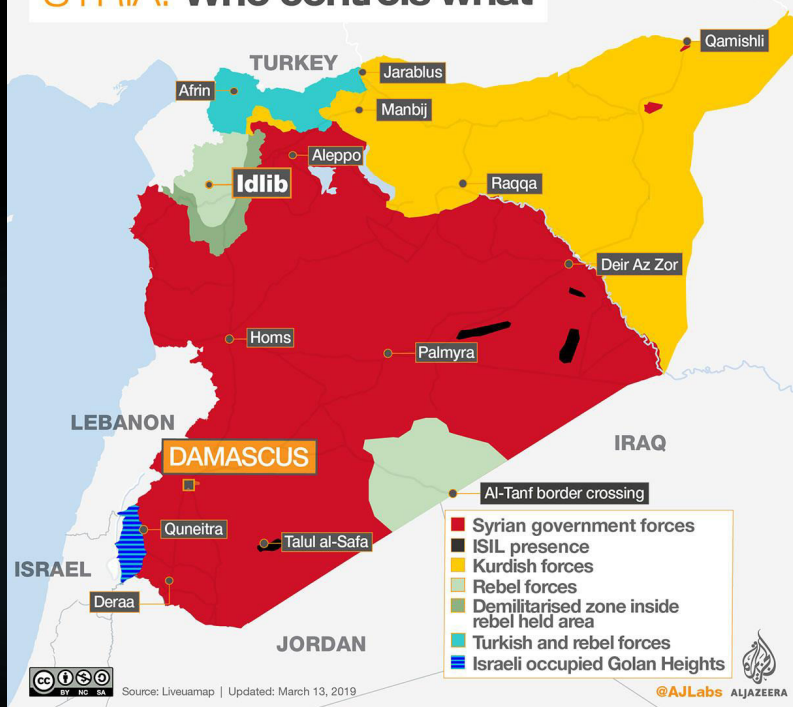
Bahrain

- Large protests
- Monarchy able to suppress with help of Saudi Arabia

Syria

- When the first protests began to spread through Syria in March, 2011, **President Bashar al-Assad** sent in security forces and there was a wave of arrests and shootings.
- Full-blown war erupted. As chaos engulfed the country, the **Islamic State** group in 2014 seized a swathe of territory, drawing a **U.S.-led coalition to back Kurdish fighters** in the northeast.
- Support from **Russia, Iran and Lebanon's Shi'ite Hezbollah movement** helped Assad claw back control over much of the country.
- By the end of the decade, hundreds of thousands were dead and more than half the country's pre-war population was displaced with the country partitioned between **Assad, Turkey-backed rebels** and **Kurdish-led groups**.

SYRIA: Who controls what



The killing of activists in Myanmar

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II, International Relations

What has happened?

- On July 25, Myanmar's junta executed four pro-democracy activists.
- Ko Jimmy who was a 53-year-old veteran of the "88 Movement" student uprising
- Ko Phyto Zeya Thaw, a rapper, hip-hop artist and a member of the NLD party
- They were sentenced to death in January 2022 by the military tribunal for participating in anti-regime activities.
- Since the coup in 2021, the tribunal has sentenced 113 people to death for their role in the armed resistance against the regime.

Military Coup and Response

- Coup
 - ✓ The military (Tatmadaw) seized power from the democratically elected National League of Democracy (NLD) party in February 2021 and detained leaders of NLD.
 - ✓ The junta led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing formed the State Administration Council (SAC).
- Response to Coup
 - ✓ Mass protests, called the 'spring revolution', against the regime began.
 - ✓ A parallel government — the National Unity Government (NUG) — was formed.
 - ✓ It has an armed division known as the People's Defence Force (PDF), which is supported and trained by several armed ethnic groups.
 - However, they have not been able to make a dent against the junta's repressive measures.

Freezing and Seizing of assets

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Relations

Freezing of Assets

- The 27-nation EU has sanctioned more than 1,200 individuals and 100 entities for destabilising Ukraine since Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014.
- Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 this year, the EU blacklisted President Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and oligarchs, among others.
- Those people are now barred from visiting the EU and their assets in the bloc are frozen

Seizing of assets

- These assets could go towards meeting Ukraine's reconstruction needs, which a deputy prime minister of the country estimated at \$700 billion for rebuilding damaged infrastructure alone.
- Western states would first need to seize the assets, which in most EU countries requires a court conviction for a criminal offence.

India's role in UN Peacekeeping Missions over the years

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Org

Why in News?

- Two BSF personnel who were part of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), were among five people killed during a protest in an eastern town.
- A total 175 Indian peacekeepers have so far died while serving with the United Nations. India has lost more peacekeepers than any other UN Member State.
- They were part of MONUSCO. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or MONUSCO, an acronym based on its French name, which was established by the United Nations Security Council.

United Nations Peacekeeping

- ▶ Since 1948, UN Peacekeepers have undertaken 71 Field Missions.
- ▶ There are approximately 81,820 personnel serving on 13 peace operations.
- ▶ A total of 119 countries have contributed military and police personnel to UN peacekeeping.

India's role in UN Peacekeeping Missions over the years

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper II; International Org

India's contribution to UN Peacekeeping

- India has a long history of service in UN Peacekeeping, having contributed more personnel than any other country.
- India's contribution to UN Peacekeeping began with its participation in the UN operation in Korea in the 1950s.
- To date, more than 2,53,000 Indians have served in 49 of the 71 UN Peacekeeping missions established around the world since 1948.
- Currently, there are around 5,500 troops and police from India who have been deployed to UN Peacekeeping missions, the fifth highest amongst troop-contributing countries.

Role of women in Indian Peacekeeping

- ▶ India has been sending women personnel on UN Peacekeeping Missions.
- ▶ In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia.
- ▶ The Formed Police Unit in Liberia provided 24-hour guard duty and conducted night patrols in the capital Monrovia, and helped to build the capacity of the Liberian police.

US CHIPS Bill for boosting semiconductor production



Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Int. Issues

What has happened?

- US House of Representatives passed the **Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Bill**, to provide assistance and subsidies worth **\$280 billion**, particularly focused on its semiconductor industry.
- The industry is facing competition from **China**
- The bill would provide **"\$52 billion in subsidies and additional tax credits"** to companies that manufacture chips in the US.

Why this bill now?

- **Global shortage** of semiconductors or chips led to the recognition that the US needed its own substantial manufacturing.
- The **growing use of devices** like laptops in homes has further increased demand.
- About **75%** of the world's reliance on semiconductors is met by **East Asia**.
- In particular, **Taiwan and South Korea's Samsung** have been at the helm of manufacturing them, but **China has been upping production as well**.

US CHIPS Bill for boosting semiconductor production



Why are these chips so important?

- Made from **materials like silicon** that **"semi-conduct"** electricity, the chips are used in the form of **data-storing memory chips, or logic chips that run programs** and act as the **"brains"** of electronic devices.
- The manufacturing of chips requires a **lot of precision**, as well as **investment**.
- **"Serious imbalance"** in supply and demand globally, leading to a shortfall in the production of electronic goods.

Counter China

- One provision in the **bill prohibits any semiconductor company that receives financial assistance** through the newly passed CHIPS bill, from **supporting the manufacture of advanced chips in China**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q. The CHIPS bill in the US deals with which of the following industries?

- (a) E-Commerce industry
- (b) Semi-conductor industry
- (c) FMCG industry
- (d) Satellite industry

Ques. Recently, there was 17th edition of India-Africa Conclave. This Conclave witnessed participation of Forty high-level ministers from 17 countries. The conclave took place at the initiative of which organizations in India?

- (a) FICCI- RBI
- (b) FICCI-EXIM Bank
- (c) RBI- EXIM Bank
- (d) CII-EXIM Bank

Q. What is CAATSA?

- (a) UN Declaration to deal with threat of nuclear weapons
- (b) The proposed law by Government to prevent excessive carbon emissions by corporates
- (c) US Law to protect its national security interests
- (d) NATO and EU collective sanctions against Russia in the wake of Russian aggression on Ukraine.

Q. Who are the participants in the Grain Export Deals to facilitate export of agricultural commodities through Black Sea?

- (a) Russia, UN, Greece and Turkey
- (b) Ukraine, Russia, UN and Turkey
- (c) US, UN, Ukraine and Turkey
- (d) US, Russia, Ukraine and Turkey

Q. Which country has been recently accused in the World Court of genocide against Rohingyas?

- (a) Bangladesh
- (b) Afghanistan
- (c) Pakistan
- (d) Myanmar

Q. Consider the Arab Spring outcomes in following countries:

1. Egypt – Coalition Government involving Muslim Brotherhood
2. Syria – Civil War
3. Bahrain – Continuation of Monarch
4. Libya – Split among rival administrations

Which of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) One pair
- (b) Two pairs
- (c) Three pairs
- (d) Four Pairs

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Spring Revolution in Myanmar:

1. The objective to the revolution is to suppress the opposition to military rule in Myanmar.
2. The participants of Spring revolution back the unofficial National Unity Government in Myanmar.
3. The participants of Spring revolution oppose the State Administration Council, the current government in charge of Myanmar's affairs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Q. Consider the following statements regarding India's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping operations:

1. India has contributed more personnel than any other country.
2. India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN Peacekeeping Mission.
3. More than 2,00,000 Indians have served in these operations.
4. Presently, India is the largest contributor of troops to UN Peacekeeping operations.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (d) 2, 3 and 4 only

Ques. The difference between Ethical and non-ethical is not on account of form, but on account of substance of the matter. Discuss the statement in the light of any example from modern corporate world event. (GS –IV, 150 words)

ECONOMICS

Sarfaesi Act and GTL

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Economics

Sarfaesi Act

- ▶ Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Sarfaesi) Act of 2002 guards financial institutions against loan defaulters
- ▶ To recover their bad debts, the banks can take control of securities pledged against the loan, manage or sell them to recover dues without court intervention.
- ▶ The law covers all assets, movable or immovable, promised as security to the lender.
- ▶ The law is applicable throughout the country

Need for Such a law

- ▶ Before the enactment of this law, Banks and other financial institutions had to take lengthy court proceedings to get hold of 'Security interests' to recover defaulting loans.

Sarfaesi Act and GTL

Powers of Banks under this law

- ▶ The Act comes into play if a borrower defaults on his or her payments for more than six months.
- ▶ The lender then can send a notice to the borrower to clear the dues within 60 days.
- ▶ In case that doesn't happen, the financial institution has the right to take possession of the secured assets and sell, transfer or manage them.
- ▶ The defaulter, meanwhile, has a recourse to move an appellate authority set up under the law within 30 days of receiving a notice from the lender.

Why in news?

- ▶ IDBI Bank has invoked Sarfaesi Act against telecom infrastructure provider GTL for recovery of dues around 7,250 crores.

RBI nod to allow international trade settlements in rupees means

Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

RBI Nod

- ▶ The Reserve Bank of India announced its decision to allow trade settlements between India and other countries in rupees.
- ▶ Benefits
 - Primarily benefit trading with Russia.
 - Likely to help check dollar outflow and slow rupee depreciation to a 'very limited extent'

How will the model work?

- ▶ To settle trade transactions with any country, banks in India will open Vostro accounts (an account that a correspondent bank holds on behalf of another bank — for example HSBC vostro account is held by SBI in India) of correspondent bank/s of the partner country for trading.
- ▶ Indian importers can pay for their imports in rupee into these accounts. These earnings (from imports) can then be used to pay Indian exporters in Indian rupee.

Present System

- ▶ Exports or imports, transactions are always in a foreign currency (excluding with countries like Nepal and Bhutan).
- ▶ So in case of imports, the Indian company has to pay in a foreign currency (mainly dollars and could also include currencies like pounds, Euro, yen etc.).
- ▶ The Indian company gets paid in foreign currency in case of exports and the company converts that foreign currency to rupee since it needs rupee for its needs, in most of the cases.

Dissolution of Blockchain and Crypto Assets Council (BACC)

Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

About BACC

▶ Blockchain and Crypto Assets Council (BACC), which represents Indian crypto industry players such as CoinSwitch Kuber, WazirX, CoinDCX, etc, was formed to advocate the crypto industry's arguments to regulatory bodies such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Dissolution

▶ Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), the industry body representing top Internet companies and tech platforms, has dissolved BACC set up four years ago to do public advocacy for the cryptocurrency and blockchain sector, citing regulatory uncertainty.

RBI View on Crypto

▶ The RBI has taken a view that private cryptocurrencies threaten the monetary stability of the country. Meanwhile, the RBI has been working towards launching its own digital currency.

Rupee falls to 80/dollar

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

Meaning

- The rupee's exchange rate vis-à-vis the US dollar is essentially the number of rupees one needs to buy a single US dollar.
- Falling Rupee- Depreciating Rupee and Appreciating Dollar

Causes

- ▶ Higher Demand for Dollar vis-a vis Rupee
- ▶ Higher Imports in India- Since the start of 2022, as crude oil and other commodity prices have started rising in the wake of the war in Ukraine.
- ▶ Withdrawal in Investments- Increase in Interest rates by US Federal Reserve on account of high inflation in the US

Implications

- ▶ Promotes Exports
- ▶ Reduces Imports
- ▶ Promotes Investment
- ▶ Makes repayment of loans costlier
- ▶ Currency reduces its value
- ▶ Fall in Forex

Rupee falls to 80/dollar

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

Global Phenomenon

- Dollar has been appreciating against all currencies including the euro and Japanese yen etc
- The rupee has appreciated against several currencies such as the euro.

RBI Intervention

- ▶ Check Depreciation of Rupee
 - Sell Dollars to arrest falling Rupee
 - Alter regulations to encourage people bring dollars in India such as through ECBs
- ▶ Check Appreciation of Rupee
 - Create demand for Dollars by purchasing them
 - Alter regulations and make it difficult for people to bring dollars in India such as through ECBs



Opening of Opium Production and Processing to Private Players

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

History

- India has been growing poppy at least since the 15th century.
- The British East India Company assumed monopoly on the cultivation of poppy and the entire trade was brought under government control by 1873.
- After India gained independence, the cultivation and trade of opium passed on to the Indian government.
- At present, the cultivation and processing of poppy and opium is controlled by the provisions of The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and Rules.

Strong control on Cultivation and Processing

- ▶ Potential for illicit trade and risk of addiction, the cultivation of opium poppy is strictly regulated
- ▶ Sown only in tracts of land notified by the central government in 22 districts in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan
- ▶ Opium Cultivation only with License
- ▶ Entire quantity is then bought by the government and processed in its own factories.



Opening of Opium Production and Processing to Private Players

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

Uses of Opium

- Opium is a natural substance obtained from poppy seeds
- Opium derivatives are used as pain killers. The extracts from opium poppy such as morphine are potent painkillers.
- The opium product codeine is helpful in cough suppression.
- It is used illicitly for smoking, drinking, or even eating as pills.
- The addictive properties of opium is the reason that the cultivation of poppy is highly regulated around the world. Only 12 countries including India allow its cultivation legally for medicinal use.

Processing and Production opened for Private Players

- ▶ The involvement of the private sector might boost the domestic production of various opium derivatives such as morphine and codeine, bring in modern technology, and reduce imports.
- ▶ Despite being one of the few global cultivators of poppy, India still imports these active pharmaceutical ingredients as well as poppy seeds, which is also consumed as a food item in the country.
- ▶ The move is also aimed at offsetting the declining area under cultivation of poppy in India.
- ▶ India has opened up the highly regulated sector of producing and processing opium to private players. Bajaj Healthcare has become the first company to win tenders for producing concentrated poppy straw that is used to derive Opium for medicinal purposes.

Soft-landing and Reverse currency wars

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

The US Economy

- Notwithstanding rapid increases in interest rates by the US central bank, the inflation rate for June came in at 9.1 per cent. This is the highest in 40 years in the US.
- Targeted inflation rate in the US is 2%.

Soft Landing and Hard Landing

- ▶ US Federal Reserve is undertaking tightening of Money supply by increasing interest rates in order to contain soaring inflation.
- ▶ Ideally, the Fed or any central bank doing this would like to bring about monetary tightening in such a manner that slows down the economy but doesn't lead to a recession.
- ▶ When a central bank is successful in slowing down the economy without bringing about a recession, it is called a soft-landing — that is, no one gets hurt. But when the actions of the central bank bring about a recession, it is called a hard-landing.
- ▶ Given the massive gap between the current US inflation rate — over 9% — and the Fed's target inflation rate — 2% — most observers expect that the Fed would have to resort to such aggressive monetary tightening that the US economy will end up having a hard-landing.

Soft-landing and Reverse currency wars

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

Currency War

- US Fed's action of aggressively raising interest rates is leading to large investments into the US.
- This, in turn, has made **the dollar become stronger** than all the other currencies.
- On the face of it, this should make all other countries happier because a relative weakness of their local currency against the dollar makes their **exports more competitive**. For instance, a Chinese or an Indian exporter gets a massive boost.
- In fact, in the past the US has often accused other countries of **manipulating their currency** (and **keeping its weaker** against the dollar) just to enjoy a **trade surplus** against the US. This used to be called the **currency war**.

Reverse Currency War

- Today, every central bank is trying to figure out ways to counter the US Fed and raise interest rates themselves in order to ensure their currency **doesn't lose too much value against the dollar**.
- Why? **Imports are getting costlier and large fall in value of currency**
- Steps taken to appreciate domestic currency are called **Reverse Currency War**.

Bonds, Yields and Inversions

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Economics

Bonds

- Instrument to **borrow money**
- **Governments or Corporates** can issue
- **Government Bonds** known by different names:
 - G-secs -> India
 - Treasury -> USA
 - Gilt -> UK
 - **Minimal risk -> Less return**
- Corporate bonds riskier- Higher return

Bond Yield

- **Rate of Return on bond- Not fixed**
- **Three aspects of bond:**
 - **Face value**
 - **Market Price**
 - **Coupon rate**
- Suppose the face value of a 10-year G-sec is Rs 100, and its coupon payment is Rs 5. Buyers of this bond will give the government Rs 100 (the face value).
In return, the government will pay them Rs 5 (the coupon payment) every year for the next 10 years, and will pay back their Rs 100 at the end of the tenure.

Bond Yields

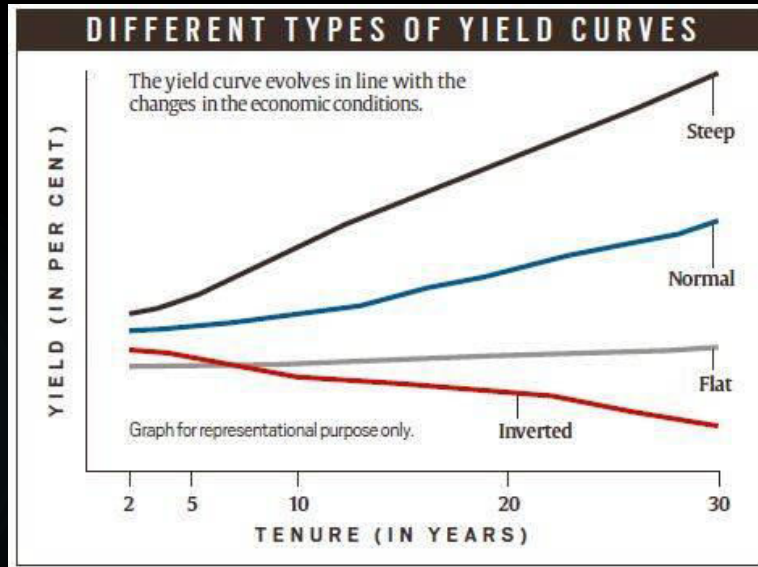
- **Situation 1**
 - ✓ Coupon rate 5%
 - ✓ Face value Rs. 100
 - ✓ Prevailing interest rate (or Expected Return) 4%
- ✓ Market Rate of Bond = ?
- **Situation 2**
 - ✓ Coupon rate 5%
 - ✓ Face value Rs. 100
 - ✓ Prevailing interest rate (or Expected Return) 10%
- ✓ Market Rate of Bond = ?

Bonds, Yields and Inversions

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Economics

Yield Curve

- **Steep**
 - ✓ Very High Growth rate expected; thus higher returns expected
 - ✓ Fall in Market price of bond
- **Normal**
 - ✓ Normal Growth rate expected; thus slightly high returns expected
 - ✓ Slight fall in Market price of bond over its tenure
- **Flat**
 - ✓ No Growth rate; no rise in returns
 - ✓ Face value = Market value
- **Inversion**
 - ✓ Recession or fall in growth expected; fall in returns
 - ✓ Market value of bond rises



Yield Inversion talking place in US Economy

GST Levy on Food

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Economics

Why in news?

- **5% Goods and Services Tax (GST)** has been levied on several **food items and grains** that are sold in a **pre-packed, labelled form even if they are not branded**.
 - Affected food items, include **wheat, pulses, rice, curd and lassi**
 - **Exempt when sold loose**
 - Pre-packed items weighing **over 25 kg** would not attract GST
- Other items to have lost their tax-exempt status include
 - **Bank cheques**
 - **Maps and atlases,**
 - **Hotel rooms that cost up to ₹1,000 a night**
 - **Hospital room rents of over ₹5,000 a day.**

Reasons for such levy

- **Rationalize** tax structure
 - When GST was rolled out, a GST rate of 5% was made applicable on branded cereals, pulses, flour.
 - Later this was amended to tax only such items which were sold under a registered brand.
 - This tax exemption triggered '**rampant misuse**' by **reputed manufacturers and brand owners** leading to a gradual drop in revenues.

GST Levy on Food

Criticism

- The traders' body, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), has urged to roll back the tax, arguing that **85% of the country's consumers** use such unbranded goods.
- Economists expect a marginal impact from these taxes on India's consumer **inflation** rate that has now been over 7% through the first quarter of 2022-23.
- Majority of **Informal market players** in these goods. They will find it difficult to implement the taxes.

GST Council

- Body decide on matters of GST
 - Tax rates
 - Implementation of GST.
- As per **Article 279A** of the amended Constitution, the GST Council is a joint forum of the Centre and the States, shall consist of the following members:
 - a) **Union Finance Minister - Chairperson**
 - b) **The Union Minister of State, in-charge of Revenue of finance - Member**
 - c) **The Minister In-charge of finance or taxation or any other Minister nominated by each State Government - Members**

The Council makes recommendations to the Union and the States on important issues related to GST

Power tariff revisions and the state of DISCOMs

Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Why is news?

- **Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco)** filed a general retail power tariff revision petition with the **Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission** proposing to hike power tariffs by 10% to 35%.
- **Mounting losses, outstanding loans and the consequent increase in interest burden**, have compelled the **Tangedco** to file the petition.

Overall Status

- Most power DISCOMs in the country incur losses every year — the total loss was estimated to be **₹90,000 crore in the financial year 2021**.
- To help these DISCOMs, the Centre in **May 2020**, announced a **Liquidity Infusion Scheme**, under which loans of **₹1,35,497 crore** have been sanctioned. As of **December 31, 2021**, a total of **₹1.03 lakh crore** has been disbursed.

Approach of State govts

- **State governments are reluctant to increase tariffs** for political purposes.
- The general approach of many parties is to **use electricity as a tool for their political agenda** and make promises to allure people despite knowing that such assurances, if implemented, are not sustainable in the long run.

Power tariff revisions and the state of DISCOMs

Power subsidies

- A common feature of the power distribution policies of the States is to provide **free or heavily subsidised supply to agriculture**.
- The connections for the farm sector are **unmetered**.
- Meters are there only to do an assessment of consumption and not for billing

Terminology

- **Discoms**
- **Gencos**
- State Electricity Regulatory Commission

First bullion exchange in India

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Economics

Where?

- India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX) is **set up at International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)**
- **In Gujarat's GIFT City (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City, located between Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar.**
- **Inaugurated by PM Modi**

Who can trade on the IIBX?

- Registration is required with **International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA)**
1. **Qualified Jewellers**
 - Minimum net worth of Rs 25 crore
 - 90 per cent of the average annual turnover in the last three financial years through deals in goods categorised as precious metals.
 2. **Non-resident Indians and institutions**
 3. **Funds such as Gold ETF** – Allowed in Medium term
- **Report to IFSCA**
 - The IIBX will submit a report to IFSCA on a monthly basis providing details of trade.

First bullion exchange in India

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Economics

What will trade?

- Gold 1 kg 995 purity
- Gold 100 gm 999 purity .
- T+0 settlement (100% upfront margin)
- More Gold and Silver products expected later on

Advantages

- All Bullion imports will be channelized
- price discovery
- transparency in disclosures
- guaranteed centralised clearing
- assurance of quality
- Facilitate financialization
- Sourcing integrity of the bullion by mandating compliance to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas.

First bullion exchange in India

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Economics

Steps in formation

- Announcement in Budget 2020
- The International Financial Services Centres Authority (Bullion Exchange) Regulations, 2020, was notified in December 2020 for trading of precious metals, including gold and silver.
- **Ashok Gautam** took charge as the first managing director and **CEO of IIBX** in February 2022. – Worked in IDBI Bank as Executive Director

Fed Reserve rate hike

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

Why in News?

- To **cool down raging inflation** in the United States — at 9.1% in June, the inflation rate is at a four-decade high — the Federal Reserve or Fed (US' central bank) decided to raise the Federal Funds Rate target by another **75 basis points**
- Since March, the Fed has steadily pushed up the **targeted FFR** from zero to almost **2.5%** now

Federal Funds Rate (FFR)

- ▶ The FFR is the **interest rate at which commercial banks in the US borrow from each other overnight.**
- ▶ **The US Fed can't directly specify the FFR but it tries to "target" the rate by controlling the money supply.**
- ▶ When the Fed wants to raise the prevailing interest rates in the US economy, it reduces the money supply, thus forcing every lender in the economy to charge higher interest rates.
- ▶ The process starts with commercial banks charging higher to lend to each other for overnight loans.

Fed Reserve rate hike

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

Why is the Fed tightening money supply?

- **Reduce funds availability**
- **Control Inflation**

What are the risks of monetary tightening?

- ▶ **Fall in Growth**
- ▶ **Aggressive monetary tightening — like the one currently underway in the US — can lead to recession.**
- ▶ **Negative Growth rate for two quarters**
- ▶ **Consequences of Recession**

Fed Reserve rate hike

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Economics

Impact on India

- Flight of Capital
- Depreciation of Rupee
- Fall in exports

Definition of Recession in the US

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Economics

Definition

- **National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)** — more specifically, the NBER's **Business Cycle Dating Committee** —declares a recession in the US. But the NBER defines recession a little differently.
- Definition - It is a **significant decline** in economic activity that is **spread across the economy** and that **lasts more than a few months**
 - 3 factors
 - Depth
 - Diffusion
 - Duration
- Usual Definition – **Negative growth rate for consecutive quarters**

Why doesn't the NBER accept the two quarters definition?

1. Economic activity identified on basis of **multiple indicators**, not just GDP.
2. **Depth of decline is important**. Real GDP could decline by relatively small amounts in two consecutive quarters on account of peak in the correspondence period in the last year.
3. Main focus of NBER is on **monthly data**. Thus, emphasis is given to monthly indicators.
4. Consider not just the **GDP Data** (Production side data), but also **GDI Data** (Income side data).

Reviving BSNL in a competitive telecom market



Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

What has happened?

- The Union Cabinet approved BSNL revival package worth ₹1.64 lakh crore.
- The second reform package after 2019 is meant to be utilised over the next four years.
- It is expected that the package could help with a turnaround in such a manner that BSNL starts earning profits in FY2026-27.

Details of Package

- 3 Components**
 - BSNL would be allocated spectrum in 900/1800 MHz band administratively at the cost of ₹44,993 crore via equity infusion. Spectrum can be defined as invisible radio frequencies on which wireless signals travel, facilitating phone calls and internet usage. The Spectrum would enable BSNL to provide high speed data utilising a vaster network presence, more importantly, in rural areas.
 - In order to pursue its social objectives, the Government would provision ₹13,789 crore to the company to fund its operational viability gap in the commercially unviable rural wireline operations that it had undertaken between 2014-15 and 2019-20.
 - The Government would also be increasing the authorised capital from ₹40,000 crore to ₹1.50 lakh crore in lieu of its adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues, provision of capital expenditure and allotment of spectrum. The AGR refers to the fee-sharing mechanism that computes the share in revenues that the telecom service providers (TSPs) are required to pay the government as annual licence fee and spectrum usage charges.

Reviving BSNL in a competitive telecom market



Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

2019 Package

- The most important feature was the proposed merger of Mahanagar Telecom Nigam Ltd (MTNL) and BSNL.
- BSNL reaches out to populations in rural areas and MTNL is based in the metro cities of Mumbai and Delhi.
- Merger had been delayed owing to financial reasons, including the high debt of MTNL.

Good call | The government on Wednesday approved a package for the revival of state-owned telecom firm BSNL which recorded the biggest loss among CPSEs^ in FY21



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q. Which of the following provisions have been part of BSNL revival package announced in year 2022?

1. 5G Spectrum allocation
2. Expenditure to undertake operations in rural areas
3. Capital infusion for AGR dues

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ques. Which of the following are the possible implications of depreciating Rupee:

1. Discourages Exports
2. Encourages Imports
3. Make Loan repayment difficult
4. Encourage foreign investment into India

Select the Correct answer using the code given below

- (a) 1, 3 and 4
- (b) 1, 2 and 3
- (c) 3 and 4
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ques. Consider the following statements about Opium cultivation in India:

1. Recently, Private sector has been allowed in Production of Opium in India.
2. Opium has certain medicinal uses. Its derivatives are used as pain killers and cough syrups.
3. Opium Cultivation in India is restricted under licenses issued by State governments.

Select the Correct answer using the code given below

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ques. Consider the Following Pairs:

Term - Objective

1. Currency War – Maintain Export Competitiveness
2. Reverse Currency War – Reduce import cost

Which of the above Pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q. Consider the following statements regarding bonds:

1. The Market value of bond rises with the growth rate in the economy.
2. During times of recession, there is fall in the yield received from bonds.
3. The face value of bond is always lower than its market value

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Q. Consider the following statements regarding GST on food items in the country:

1. The unbranded rice sold in packed form without labels is subject to GST.
2. The branded rice is subject to GST.
3. The unbranded wheat sold in packed form in quantity exceeding 25kg is subject to GST.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Q. Consider the following statements regarding India's First Bullion Exchange:

1. The First Bullion Exchange has been set up in Gujarat's GIFT City.
2. All Indian Citizens are allowed to trade in the Exchange.
3. Gold, Silver and Gem stones are traded at the bullion exchange.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 1 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Q. Which of the following can be possible impact on India of increase in the interest rates in the US:

1. Appreciation of rupee
2. Increase in Foreign investment
3. Fall in exports

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 only
- (d) None of the above

Q. How is Recession identified in the US Economy?

- (a) Negative Growth rate for two consecutive quarters
- (b) Negative Growth in income levels for two consecutive quarters
- (c) Significant decline in economic activity that is spread across the vital sectors of economy and that lasts more than a 1 year
- (d) Significant decline in economic activity that is spread across the economy and that lasts more than a few months

Ques. During the past year, Indian rupee has slid continuously against the US Dollar and crossed the psychological benchmark of Rs. 80/\$. Do you think that fall in Indian Rupee against Dollar in account of weakness in Indian Economy or is it attributed to Global Phenomenon?

Q. Do you think that populist measures are one of the vital causes behind the lack of power sector distribution reforms in India? Explain. (10 Marks, 150 words)

Q. The Federal Reserve Monetary tightening policies have the potential to create multiple challenges for Indian economy on the external sector front. Explain. (10 Marks, 250 words)

ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY

Proposed amendments in Environmental Legislations

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Environment

Derecho

- ▶ Band of Straight-line storms (Not Circular)
- ▶ Travel hundreds of miles
- ▶ Cover a vast area
- ▶ Rare
- ▶ Summer phenomenon
- ▶ Usually Central and Eastern USA

Criteria

- ▶ Wind gusts of at least 93 km per hour
- ▶ Affected area extending more than 400 km.
- ▶ Time gap between successive wind damage events should not be more than three hours.

Green Sky

- ▶ Interaction of light with the huge amount of water held in winds.
- ▶ Big raindrops and hail scatter away all but the blue wavelengths due to which primarily blue light penetrates below the storm cloud.
- ▶ This blue then combines with the red-yellow of the afternoon or the evening sun to produce green.



Proposed amendments in Environmental Legislations

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Environment

Existing

- ▶ 8 Laws
 - ▶ Existing
- Imprisonment upto 5 years or with a fine up to one lakh rupees, or with both.
- Continuing nature, Additional fine of upto ₹5,000 for every day of contravention; also a provision for jail terms to extend to 7 years.

Proposed

- ▶ Only monetary fines
- ▶ Only serious environmental crimes causing grave injury or death would invite imprisonment under IPC.
- ▶ Quantum of fines to be raised
- ▶ Decided by an 'adjudication officer' and transferred to an 'Environment Protection Fund'

Evaluation

- ▶ Imprisonment is the biggest deterrent
- ▶ Rich corporates would get away by paying fines at the most

Proposed amendments in Environmental Legislations



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Environment

Existing provisions

- Environment Ministry has proposed amendments in four key legislations
- Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
- Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
- Public Liability Insurance (PLI) Act, 1991
- Punishment Prescribed for Violations
- ❑ Imprisonment upto 5 years or with a fine up to one lakh rupees, or with both.
- ❑ Contravention of Continuing nature. Additional fine of upto ₹5,000 for every day of contravention; also a provision to extend jail term to 7 years.

Proposed Changes

- Monetary fines will be levied, not imprisonment
- Only serious environmental crimes causing grave injury or death would invite imprisonment under IPC.
- Quantum of fines to be raised. Proposed changes suggest fines ranging from 5 Lakhs to 5 Crores
- Appointment of New officer called 'Adjudication Officer'
- Fines to be decided by 'adjudication officer' and transferred to an 'Environment Protection Fund'



Proposed amendments in Environmental Legislations



Need for Change

- Backlog of cases pertaining to environment laws
- Centre for Science and Environment - Courts took between 9-33 years to clear a backlog of cases for environmental violations
- In most cases, it was practically impossible to hold a specific individual in an organisation responsible for a specific crime given the burden of proof required.
- No top executive in India had gone to jail for an environmental crime.
- New amendments will make it easier to hold organisations accountable

Criticism

- Existing clause of imprisonment was to deter violators and not to imprison them
- Environment damage is too costly and proposed penalties cannot compensate for this damage
- Avenue for Corruption- Confer arbitrary powers to Adjudication Officers to decide upon quantum of fine
- Rich corporates would move away just by paying fine



Change in Forest Conservation Rules



Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III, Environment & Biodiversity

About Forest Conservation Rules

- ▶ The Forest Conservation Rules deal with the implementation of the Forest Conservation Act (FCA), 1980. They prescribe the procedure to be followed for diversion of forest land for non-forestry uses.
- ▶ Forest Conservation Act seeks to protect forest and wildlife, particularly it prevents the State governments' from diverting forest land for non-forest purposes and seeks to increase the area under forests.
- ▶ The approval for diversion of forest land beyond 5 hectares, the approval is given by the Central government. This approval is given by a specially constituted committee, called the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC).
- ▶ The FAC examines each case and approves (or rejects a proposal). The FAC approval also means that the future users of the land must provide compensatory land for afforestation as well as pay the net present value (ranging between ₹10-15 lakh per hectare.)
- ▶ The recommendations of FAC are then forwarded to the concerned State government where the land is located. The State government is also required to ensure that provisions of the Forest Right Act, 2006 are complied with.

Updated Rules

- ▶ Parliament is scheduled to begin its monsoon session on July 18, 2022 and the law requires that the rules be placed before both the Houses.
- ▶ According to the Centre, the new rules will "streamline" the process of approvals. The rules make a provision for private parties to cultivate plantations and sell them as land to companies who need to meet compensatory forestation targets.
- ▶ This, according to the government, will help India increase forest cover as well as solve the problems of the States of not finding land within their jurisdiction for compensatory purposes.

Change in Forest Conservation Rules



Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III

Criticism of Updated Rules

- ▶ The updated Forest Conservation Rules does not mention what will happens to tribals and forest-dwelling communities whose land would be diverted for non-forest uses.
- ▶ Prior to the updated rules, state bodies would forward documents to the FAC that would also include information on the status of whether the forest rights of locals in the area were settled.
- ▶ Congress spokesperson, Jairam Ramesh, alleged that the latest version of the rules, updated last month, allowed forest land to be diverted to industry without settling questions of the rights of forest dwellers and tribals who resided on those lands.
- ▶ Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav has given clarification that complying with the FRA, 2006 is mentioned in the rules before States order diversion of the land.

Kala Azar or Black fever disease detected in West Bengal



Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III, Environmental Changes

Why in news?

- ▶ Kala-azar was **practically eradicated from West Bengal**. Recent surveillance, however, led to the detection of **65 cases in 11 districts**.
- ▶ Earlier this year, **Jharkhand** had reported its first kala azar-related **death in over 8 years**.
- ▶ Known to be **fatal in over 95 per cent of the cases, if left untreated**
- ▶ The disease is endemic in **Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal**.
- ▶ In the country as a whole, there has been a **significant decline in cases** over the years. In **2014**, around **9,200 cases** were reported while in **2021** the number fell to **1,276 cases**.
- ▶ **90% cases in 10 countries including India, China**

Kala-azar

- ▶ Kala-azar or **Black fever** or **Visceral Leishmaniasis** is a **protozoan parasitic disease**.
- ▶ It is spread by **sandfly bites**. Sandflies are brown in colour and have hairs on their bodies. The **flies are infected** with the **parasite** called '**leishmania donovani**'.
- ▶ The vector sandfly is known to **live in cracks and crevices of muddy houses**, especially in **dark and humid corners**.
- ▶ The disease affects some of the poorest people and is linked to malnutrition, population displacement, poor housing, a **weak immune system** and a lack of financial resources. Leishmaniasis is also linked to **environmental changes** such as deforestation, and urbanisation, according to WHO.

Kala Azar or Black fever disease detected in West Bengal



Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III

Symptoms

- ▶ **Common Symptoms**
 - **Irregular bouts of fever** over many days
 - **Weight loss**
 - **Enlargement of the spleen and liver**
 - **Anaemia**
- ▶ The **skin may become dry, thin and scaly** in patches and **hair may be lost**.
- ▶ In people with a light skin tone, **greyish discolouration of the skin of hands, feet, abdomen and face** may be seen, that is why the disease is also called "**Black fever**".

Treatment

- ▶ Leishmaniasis is a **treatable** and curable disease, which requires an **immunocompetent system** and thus those having a weak immune system are prone to get severely affected.
- ▶ **Anti-leishmanial medicines** are available for treatment.
- ▶ **Vector control** is also recommended, which means reducing or interrupting the transmission of disease by decreasing the number of sandflies in surroundings through insecticide spray, use of insecticide-treated nets, etc.
- ▶ The government aimed to eliminate the disease in India by **2015**, but that deadline was missed. However, the number of cases has been brought down significantly through the **National Kala-Azar Elimination Programme**.

Record-breaking heatwave in Europe

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Environment & Biodiversity

Place

- ▶ Recurrent Heatwaves from Spain, Italy to Germany and UK.
- ▶ On July 19, the UK recorded its highest temperature ever, going past 40 degrees Celsius for the first time, at London's Heathrow airport.
- ▶ Heat waves in Europe are **increasing in frequency and intensity** at a faster rate **than almost any other part of the planet**, including the Western United States.
- ▶ Leading to **forest fires**



Record-breaking heatwave in Europe

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III

Causes

- ▶ **Global warming**
- ▶ **Low Pressure Zones over Europe**- Low-pressure zones tend to draw air toward them. In this case, the low-pressure zone has been steadily drawing hot air from North Africa toward it and into Europe.
- ▶ **Warming in the Arctic**, which is occurring much faster than other parts of the world, may play a role. As the Arctic warms at a faster rate, the temperature differential between it and the equator decreases. This leads to a decrease in summertime winds from North.

WHO classifies monkeypox as 'public health emergency'



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Environment & Biodiversity

WHO Declaration

- The World Health Organization has declared the global monkeypox outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern" (PHEIC), one step below that of a 'pandemic'.
- The monkeypox outbreak has affected more than 14,500 people in 72 countries.
- It is the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the WHO that decides on the seriousness of a public health crisis.

Impact of Declaration

- As part of the PHEIC declaration, which is said to be "temporary" and reviewed every three months, countries are expected to follow guidelines.
- They are grouped in three categories: Those with no reported cases or where the last case was from 21 days ago; those with recently imported cases and experiencing human-to-human transmission and finally, countries where cases are being reported and have a history of the presence of the virus.
- The guidelines direct countries to step up surveillance, spread awareness, and ensure that at-risk groups are not stigmatised.

India's plan to bring cheetahs from Africa to Madhya Pradesh



Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Environment

Cheetah Extinction in India

- The Asiatic cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952 and is a critically endangered species surviving only in Iran.
- In 1947, there were confirmed records of the cheetah's presence in India, but the three surviving males were gunned down by Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo of Surguja state in what is now Guru Ghasidas National Park in Chhattisgarh.

Import of Cheetah into India

- ▶ India and Namibia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Wednesday to reintroduce the African cheetah in India.
- ▶ The first batch of eight cheetahs are expected to arrive from Namibia in August this year at Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary, in Madhya Pradesh, comprising four male and four female cheetahs.
- ▶ Government's stated goals is "to use the cheetah for restoring open forest and savanna systems that will benefit biodiversity and ecosystem

India's plan to bring cheetahs from Africa to Madhya Pradesh

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Environment

Concerns

- Ability of the cheetahs to adapt to Kuno's **foreign environment**
- While the vegetation is the same, we have higher rainfall than they have (in Namibia).
- They also have sub-zero temperatures which we don't have here.
- Just before the cheetahs arrive, **leopards** in Kuno will be moved out of the territory demarcated for the cheetahs to prevent conflict between species.
- Conservationists critical of these reintroduction plans have also questioned whether the park has the capacity to adequately provide **prey**.
- Estimates from 2011 indicated that the project involved approximately **300 crores**, figures that could be utilised native species and their habitats, especially for species that are often neglected and ignored. for the cheetahs.

India adds five more Ramsar sites

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Environment

Ramsar Convention

- Ramsar convention is an international convention on conservation of wetlands. Ramsar is a place in Iran where this convention came into force. The convention was adopted in the year **1971**.
- The objective of the convention is **conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands**. The convention recognizes **ecological, economic, cultural, scientific and aesthetic value of the wetlands**.
- The convention entitles **financial assistance** for conservation of wetlands and requires the member nations to **share knowledge** amongst themselves for conservation of wetlands.

India adds five more Ramsar sites

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Environment

Sites from India

- 49 → 5 = 54
- Tamil Nadu
 - Karikili Bird Sanctuary
 - Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest
 - Pichavaram Mangrove
- Madhya Pradesh
 - Sakhya Sagar
- Mizoram
 - Pala Wetlands

Global Standing

- India's Ramsar wetlands are spread over 11,000 sq.km — around 10% of the total wetland area in the country — across 18 States.
- No other South Asian country has as many sites.
- The U.K. (175) and Mexico (142) — smaller countries than India — have the most Ramsar sites, whereas Bolivia spans the largest area with 1,48,000 sq.km under the Convention protection.

Draft e-waste rules threaten jobs, collection network

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Environment

Extended Responsibility under E-waste (Management) Rules, 2016

- These rules introduced a system of **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** compelling makers of electronic goods to ensure a **proportion of the goods they sold every year was recycled**. They are expected to **maintain records** annually demonstrating this.
- Most companies however **did not maintain an in-house unit** in charge of recycling.
- This gave rise to a **network of government-registered companies, called producer responsibility organisations (PRO)** which acted as an intermediary between manufacturers of electronic goods and formal recycling units.

How do PRO work?

- ▶ The PROs **typically bid for contracts from companies and arrange for specified quantities of goods to be recycled and provide companies certified proof of recycling** that they then maintain as part of their records.
- ▶ As of March, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has registered **74 PROs and 468 authorised dismantlers**, which have a collective recycling capacity of about **1.3 million tonnes** (around **22% of E-waste generated in India**).

Draft e-waste rules threaten jobs, collection network

What does Draft Rules Say?

- The Ministry issued a **draft notification** that **does away with the PROs and dismantlers** and vests all responsibility of recycling with authorised recyclers.
- **Companies can certificates equivalent to their annual committed target** and thus do not have to be involved with engaging the PROs and dismantlers.
- This update to the 2016 e-waste rules is in draft mode and **open to public comment** until July 31.
- Under the new rules, **recyclers will likely establish their own supply chains, and companies will no longer bear any responsibility for ensuring that their product is recycled.**

Why the new Draft?

- ▶ The current system managed by **PRO isn't always reliable** as there have been several instances of **double-counting** (where the same articles recycled once for one company are credited into the account for multiple companies).
- ▶ The proposed rules **shifted responsibility for controlling e-waste away from producers of goods to recyclers.**

Draft e-waste rules threaten jobs, collection network

Criticism

- There are too **few recyclers** across India and predominant in the big cities and in the absence of dismantlers, **goods would now have to travel greater distances** to be recycled.
- **Detrimental to E-waste management atleast in the short run.**
- **Unemployment of 25000 to 30000 people**

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

3. Which of the following are the possible causes of Recurrent Heat Waves in Western Europe in recent times?

1. Increase in temperature in Arctic region
2. Formation of high pressure zones in Southern Europe
3. Global Warming

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q. Consider the following statements regarding declaration of disease as Public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC):

1. The declaration of PHEIC is made by UN Secretariat, and implemented globally by WHO.
2. The declaration is temporary in nature and is reviewed after every 15 days.
3. Recently, Monkeypox has been declared PHEIC.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 3
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Cheetah in India:

1. Cheetah has been extinct in India for more than 100 years.
2. India is seeking to import Cheetah from Iran.
3. The Cheetahs are planned to arrive at Kuno wildlife sanctuary, Gujarat.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 only
- (d) None of the above

Q. Recently, 5 new sites have added from India to the list of Ramsar Wetlands. Consider the following statements:

1. With the inclusion of 5 new sites, India has contributed the maximum number of sites listed under the Ramsar convention.
2. Among the 5 new sites, three sites are there in Madhya Pradesh.
3. Among the 5 new sites, Sakhya Sagar in Madhya Pradesh is one of the recognized sites.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 only
- (d) None of the above

Q. Consider the following statements about Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) under E-waste (Management) Rules, 2016:

1. The EPR requires makers of electronic goods to ensure a proportion of the goods they sold every year was recycled.
2. The EPR mandates manufacturers of electronic goods to have in house unit for recycling purposes.
3. The recycling of electronic goods cannot be outsourced to third parties by the manufacturers.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1 only

Q. Government of India is planning to import Cheetah into India. What are the arguments in favour of this import and what are the criticisms of this plan? What is your opinion in this regard?

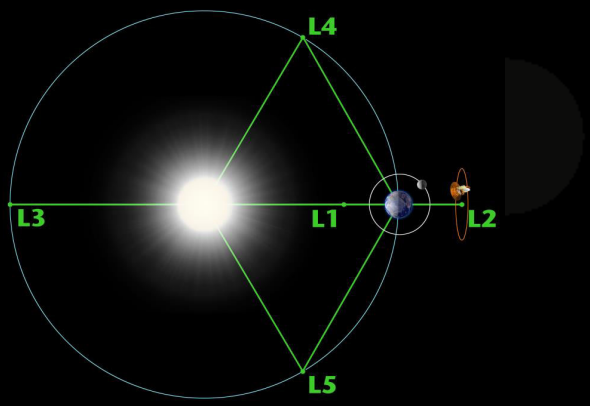
SCIENCE
&
TECHNOLOGY

James Webb Space Telescope – First images

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III, Science & Tech.

About the Telescope

- ▶ The JWST is the **largest and most powerful** telescope ever built.
- ▶ **NASA** led its development with **the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Canadian Space Agency**.
- ▶ Launched aboard a rocket on **December 25, 2021**
- ▶ Currently at a point in space known as the Sun-Earth **L2** Lagrange point, approximately **1.5 million km** beyond Earth's orbit around the Sun.
- ▶ Lagrange Point 2 is one of the five points in the orbital plane of the Earth-Sun system. Points, where the **gravitational forces** of the two large bodies cancel each other out.
- ▶ L2 is a position directly behind Earth in the line joining the Sun and the Earth. It would be **shielded from the Sun** by the Earth as it goes around the Sun, in sync with the Earth.
- ▶ Named after **Italian-French mathematician** Josephy-Louis **Lagrange**



NASA's Webb Telescope and the first look at the universe from 13 billion years ago



James Webb Space Telescope – First images

Difference with Hubble Telescope

- ▶ See right through and into massive clouds of dust that are opaque to earlier generation visible-light observatories like the Hubble Telescope.
- ▶ Another difference is that the Webb is equipped with cameras and other instruments sensitive to infrared or “heat” radiation, and the Hubble is not.

The expansion of the universe causes the light that would normally be in wavelengths that are visible to be shifted to longer infrared wavelengths, normally invisible to human eyes

Mission of the telescope

- ▶ Look back around 13.5 billion years to see the first stars and galaxies forming out of the darkness of the early universe
- ▶ To compare the faintest, earliest galaxies to today’s grand spirals and understand how galaxies assemble over billions of years
- ▶ To see where stars and planetary systems are being born
- ▶ To observe the atmospheres of extrasolar planets (beyond our solar system), and perhaps find the building blocks of life elsewhere in the universe

First Monkeypox Case Confirmed in India

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

First confirmed case

- The first case of monkeypox was confirmed in India on July 14, after a person who had returned to Kerala from United Arab Emirates developed symptoms of the disease.
- The person’s samples were tested at the National Institute of Virology in Pune.

About Monkeypox

- ▶ Monkeypox is a viral zoonotic disease with symptoms similar to smallpox, although with less clinical severity.
- ▶ The infection was first discovered in 1958 following two outbreaks of a pox-like disease in colonies of monkeys kept for research — which led to the name ‘monkeypox’.
- ▶ A zoonosis is an infectious disease that has jumped from animals to humans. Zoonotic pathogens may be bacterial, viral or parasitic, or may involve unconventional agents and can spread to humans through direct contact or through food, water or the environment.
- ▶ Zoonoses comprise a large percentage of all newly identified infectious diseases as well as many existing ones. Some diseases, such as HIV, begin as a zoonosis but later mutate into human-only strains.

First Monkeypox Case Confirmed in India

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Nature of symptoms

- ▶ The **incubation period** (time from infection to symptoms) for monkeypox is usually 7-14 days but can range from 5-21 days.
- ▶ Monkeypox is usually a **self-limiting disease** with symptoms lasting from two to four weeks.
- ▶ During the **initial phase** of onset of disease, which is between 0-5 days, it is characterized by fever, headache, muscle ache and lymph node swelling.
- ▶ The **swelling of the lymph nodes** is one of the characteristic features of monkeypox and is not observed in similar rash causing diseases like measles, chickenpox and smallpox.
- ▶ Patients also show **generalized weakness or lack of energy** (feeling of exhaustion).
- ▶ **Skin eruptions** usually show up within two days of fever. The skin eruption stage can last between 2 and 4 weeks, during which the lesions harden and become painful, fill up first with a clear fluid and then pus, and then develop scabs or crusts.

Treatment

- ▶ There is **no proven treatment** for monkeypox yet. WHO recommends supportive treatment depending on the symptoms.
- ▶ Those infected are advised to isolate immediately.
- ▶ The **period of communicability** is "1-2 days before the rash until all the scabs fall off/get subsided".

India's first HPV vaccine against Cervical Cancer

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Cervical Cancer

- Cervical cancer is a type of cancer that occurs in the cells of the cervix — the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina.
- Various strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV) play a role in causing most cervical cancer. HPV are transmitted through sex.
- When exposed to HPV, the body's immune system typically prevents the virus from doing harm. In a small percentage of people, however, the virus survives for years, contributing to the process that causes some cervical cells to become cancer cells.

Occurrence

- ▶ Worldwide, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer type and the second most common cause of cancer death in women of reproductive age (15-44).
- ▶ India accounts for about a fifth of the global burden, with 1.23 lakh cases and around 67,000 deaths per year.

Prevention

- ▶ It can be prevented with vaccination and early detection.
- ▶ Still there is little awareness among women for prevention of this cancer. The adolescent girls should be vaccinated with HPV vaccine.

India's first HPV vaccine against Cervical Cancer

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Existing vaccines

- Two vaccines licensed globally are available in India — a quadrivalent vaccine (Gardasil, from Merck) and a bivalent vaccine (Cervarix, from GlaxoSmithKline). Each dose costs Rs 2,800 per dose (Gardasil) or Rs 3,299 (Cervarix). It is recommended that adolescent girls should be vaccinated with two doses.
- Quadrivalent vaccine- A vaccine that works by stimulating an immune response against four different antigens, such as four different viruses or other microorganisms.

New vaccine

- Serum Institute of India (SII)'s vaccine Cervavac recently received the Drugs Controller General of India's (DGCI) approval for market authorisation.
- Cervavac is India's first quadrivalent human papillomavirus vaccine (qHPV) vaccine, and intended to protect women against cervical cancer.
- Cervavac provides protection by generating antibodies against the HPV virus's L1 protein.

Cost Effective

- The new vaccine will be available at cheap rate.
- 50 million girls aged 9–14 years in India

Wastewater based surveillance for COVID-19

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Need

- To manage pandemic-driven situations, a very important estimate is of the number of people infected, regions where infection is high and decreasing or increasing trends in viral load.
 - Testing at mass scale is one option.
- Issues
- Takes time and cost
 - High number of asymptomatic and mild infections

Recent Study

- Waste-water based surveillance for COVID-19 can give estimates of the number of people infected, regions where infection is high and decreasing or increasing trends in viral load.
- Study has been carried out in Hyderabad and Bengaluru
- Carried by a collaboration between Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS), Bengaluru, and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad.

Marburg virus

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Why in News?

- First two cases of the Marburg virus confirmed officially by **Ghana**
- Both the cases have died
- Highly infectious **Ebola-like** disease
- This outbreak is only the second time that the disease has been detected in West Africa.

Marburg virus disease

- ▶ **Marburg virus disease** (MVD), earlier known as **Marburg hemorrhage fever**, is a severe, often fatal hemorrhagic fever.
- ▶ Hemorrhage fever involve **internal bleeding** in the body. Hemorrhagic fever **damage the walls of tiny blood vessels**, making them leak, and can hamper the blood's ability to clot.
- ▶ Marburg, like Ebola, is a **filovirus**; and both diseases are clinically similar. Filovirus is a type of virus and is known to cause Hemorrhage fever.
- ▶ **Rousettus fruit-bats** are considered the natural hosts for Marburg virus. However, African green monkeys imported from Uganda were the source of the first human infection.
- ▶ First detected in 1967 after simultaneous outbreaks in **Marburg** and Frankfurt in **Germany**; and in Belgrade, Serbia.
- ▶ The disease has an **average fatality rate of around 50%**. However, it can be as low as 24% or as high as 88% depending on virus strain and case management.

Marburg virus

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Symptoms

- **High fever, muscle aches and severe headache**
- Around the third day, patients report **abdominal pain, vomiting, severe watery diarrhoea and cramping**.
- In this phase, the appearance of patients has been often described as **"ghost-like" with deep-set eyes, expressionless faces, and extreme lethargy**.
- Between **days 5 and 7**, patients report **bleeding from nose, gums and blood appearing in vomits and faeces**. Severe blood loss leads to death, often between **8 to 9 days** after symptoms begin.

Diagnosis and Treatment

- ▶ **Difficult to clinically distinguish** MVD from diseases such as malaria, typhoid fever and other viral haemorrhagic fevers.
- ▶ Confirmed by lab testing of samples
- ▶ **No approved antiviral treatment** or vaccine for MVD as of now
- ▶ Can be managed with **supportive care** such as rehydration with oral or intravenous fluids, and treatment of specific symptoms can help prevent death.

State of India's submarine fleet

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Why in News?

- Decommissioning of **INS Sindhudhwaj**, a **Kilo Class** diesel electric submarine
- Dwindling submarine fleet
- INS Sindhudhwaj** was in service of the Indian Navy for 35 years.

Kilo Class submarine

- Sindhudhwaj** was commissioned upon acquisition from the Soviet Union in **1987** under a deal wherein ten Kilo Class diesel-electric submarines were purchased by the Indian Navy.
- Life of **30 years** though after **refit** they can remain in service for **ten** more years

Submarine Fleet

- 16 Submarines**
- 7 Kilo Class** - All Kilo Class submarines will be decommissioned in the next few years as they come to an end of their service life.
- 4 Shishumar Class** submarines of German origin
- 4 Scorpene or Kalvari Class** submarines of French origin
- 1 Arihant Class** ballistic missile submarine – indigenous nuclear powered submarine



State of India's submarine fleet

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Ongoing Projects

- Two more Scorpene** class submarines are expected to be commissioned into service by **2023**
- INS Arighat**, indigenous nuclear powered submarine is under construction.
- Six attack submarines** were supposed to be built in India under **Project 75I** for which sanction had been accorded by the government in 2020. Nothing has come off the project due to issues of vendors with the qualitative requirements.

China's fleet

- 6 nuclear-powered ballistic missile** submarines
- 6 nuclear-powered attack** submarines
- 46 diesel-powered attack** submarines.

Nuclear vs Diesel Powered

- Nuclear Powered**- Runs on nuclear Reactor
- Can stay under water for months and more powerful
- Diesel powered** – Require oxygen to burn diesel to charge its battery
- Required to come above water level frequently



Fiberisation requirement ahead of GST deployment



Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Fiberisation

- The process of **connecting radio towers with each other via optical fibre cables** is called fiberisation.
- It helps provide full utilisation of network capacity, and carry large amounts of data once 5G services are rolled out.
- It will also aid in providing additional bandwidth and stronger backhaul support.
- The backhaul is a component of the larger transport that is responsible for carrying data across the network.

Benefits and Status

- Fibre-based media, commonly called optical media, provides almost **infinite bandwidth and coverage, low latency and high insulation from interference.**
- Status
 - To transition into 5G, India needs **at least 16 times more fibre.**
 - Ideally, a country needs **1.3 km of fibre per capita** to ensure good fiberisation. **India's fkm is just .09** compared to 1.35 in Japan, 1.34 in the U.S. and 1.3 in China.
 - There is also a need to increase **data capacity in the fiberised towers.** These tower sites which are connected via fibre are called fibre point of presence (POP).
 - To reach the targeted level of fiberisation, India requires about **₹2.2 lakh crore** of investment to help fiberise 70% towers.

Cryptojacking



Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Meaning

- Cryptojacking is a cyber attack wherein **a computing device is hijacked and controlled by the attacker,** and its resources are used to illicitly **mine cryptocurrency.**
- In most cases, the malicious programme is installed when the user clicks on an unsafe link, or visits an infected website — and unknowingly provides access to their Internet-connected device.

Why is cryptojacking done?

- Coin mining is a legitimate, competitive process used to release new crypto coins into circulation or to verify new transactions.
- It involves solving complex computational problems to generate blocks of verified transactions that get added to the blockchain.
- The reward for the first miner who successfully manages to update the crypto ledger through this route is crypto coins.
- But the race to crack larger number code needs considerable computing power involving state-of-the-art hardware, and electrical power to keep the systems involved up and running.
- Cryptojackers co-opt devices, servers, and cloud infrastructure, and use their resources for mining. The use of 'stolen' or cryptojacked resources slashes the cost involved in mining.

3D Digital Map of Mumbai City

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

3D Digital Map of Mumbai City

- **Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)** has started the process of creating a **real time three-dimensional digital model** of Mumbai city after trying the project on pilot basis.
 - **3D mapping**
The process of 3D mapping will create a digital map of Mumbai's buildings, roads, bridges, underpasses, water bodies, modes of transport, traffic islands apart from its open spaces, civic amenities and slums. This map will have a **360-degree panoramic street view**.
- This is the first time the project is being done pan-Mumbai. In September 2021, BMC

Details of the Project

- ▶ While Mumbai city is approximately 480 sq km, the project will be undertaken for an area of approximately 500 sq km, considering buffer space required while using mapping tools.
- ▶ BMC will appoint a **third party** as a contractor to carry out the project with a timeline of 18 months.
- ▶ As part of the project, BMC will also **map changes** in the city year-on-year for the next three years once the project is live.

3D Digital Map of Mumbai City

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Benefits of the Project

- The 3D map will be used by the administration for infrastructure and development planning, disaster management and response mobilisation, and environment analysis.
- Change detection can be used for finding **unauthorised development**.
- Since it is a 'digital twin' of Mumbai city, created in real time, it will enable simulations for gauging impact areas of **projects, disasters, and urban governance interventions**.

Tools to be used for Project

- ▶ Satellite Data
- ▶ LiDAR Survey
- ▶ Aerial photogrammetry

Precision Cancer therapy

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Present method

- Currently-used anti-cancer drugs target a molecule (the enzyme Topoisomerase 1 or Top1) involved in DNA replication. While DNA replication is essential to cell division, runaway replication characterizes cancer.
- However, cancer cells sometimes develop resistance to Topoisomerase 1-targeted chemotherapy through their intrinsic DNA repair toolbox.

New Precision therapy

- ▶ A combination of molecules (the protein PRMT5, and the enzyme TDP1) can be used as potential targets for developing novel anti-cancer therapeutics.
- ▶ The enzyme PRMT5 is broadly overexpressed in many cancer cells. Therefore, targeting the PRMT5 enzyme with drugs will help in killing cancer cells more effectively.
- ▶ The PRMT5 enzyme, which is found in abundance in cancer cells, directly regulates the natural cellular repair mechanisms through chemical finetuning. This results in repairing of DNA breaks generated by camptothecin and thus, resistance to chemotherapy.

PRACTICE
QUESTIONS

Ques. Marburg disease was named after its first outbreak in

- (a) West Africa
- (b) East Africa
- (c) South America
- (d) Europe

Ques. Match the following pairs:

- 1. Kilo Class – Russia
- 2. Kalvari Class – France
- 3. Shishumar Class - UK
- 4. Arihant Class – Germany

Which of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) One Pair only
- (b) Two Pairs only
- (c) Three Pairs only
- (d) Four Pairs

- Q. Fiberisation is used in context of
- (a) Genetic Modification technology
 - (b) Communication technology
 - (c) Nuclear technology
 - (d) Space technology

- Q. What is Cryptojacking?
- (a) Hacking of Cryptocurrency accounts
 - (b) Hacking of Cryptocurrency exchanges
 - (c) Hacking of Computer resources through cryptocurrency accounts
 - (d) Hacking to Computer resources to carry out cryptocurrency mining

Q. Which local municipal Corporation is the first to undertake 3-D Mapping of its Jurisdiction?

- (a) Mumbai
- (b) Delhi
- (c) Kolkata
- (d) Bengaluru

**INTERNAL
SECURITY**

Turbulence in the airline

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper III; Security Issues

Show Cause Notice

- ▶ Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Show cause notice to Spicejet airline- 3 weeks given to respond
- ▶ Charges mentioned in Show cause notice
 - Failed to establish "safe, efficient and reliable air services"
 - "Poor internal safety oversight" and "Inadequate maintenance actions"
 - Poor financial condition of airline underlying cause

Accidents and Incidents

- ▶ Classification according to Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017
- ▶ Accident- Passenger is fatally or seriously injured, or aircraft sustains structural damage or aircraft is missing
- ▶ Serious incident- Occurrence where there is a high probability of an accident
- ▶ Incident- Occurrence when safety of flight was affected

Turbulence in the airline

Spice Jet Violations

- ▶ 8 incidents since May
- ▶ Cracked windshield- May lead to Pressurisation failure, drop in oxygen levels and thus, Hypoxia- Serious Incident
- ▶ Engine shut down- One out of multiple engines- Incident
- ▶ Engine failure- One out of multiple engines- Incident
- ▶ Bird strike- Not airline's fault
- ▶ Glitch in weather radar- Forced return of flight- Serious incident
- ▶ Smoke inside passenger cabin- Serious Incident
- ▶ Severe turbulence in flight- Head and spine injuries of many passengers- Accident

Powers of DGCA

- ▶ Under Aircraft Rules 1937
- ▶ Impose a fine of ₹1 crore
- ▶ Detain any aircraft if it can lead to danger to persons in the aircraft or to any other persons or property
- ▶ Suspend the airline's air operator's certificate- pre-requisite for offering commercial air services
- ▶ Curtail the airline's flight schedule

SOCIAL ISSUES

TikTok's deadly 'blackout challenge'

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper I; Social Issues

Blackout challenge

- ▶ People are encouraged to choke themselves until they become unconscious due to the lack of oxygen
- ▶ Viral on TikTok
- ▶ Death of many Children

TikTok and India

- ▶ TikTok, which was at one time popular in India, has been banned in the country along with dozens of other apps with links to China since 2020

GEOGRAPHY

Cloudbursts

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains Paper I, Geography

Why in News?

▶ Sudden, "highly-localised rains" in Amarnath, Jammu and Kashmir, on July 8 caused flooding and led to the deaths of at least 16 people at a camp near the Amarnath cave.

What is a Cloudburst?

▶ Extreme amount of rain that happens in a short period

▶ India Meteorological Department (IMD) defines it as unexpected precipitation exceeding 100 mm (or 10 cm) per hour over a geographical region of approximately 20 to 30 square km.

▶ Significant amounts of such rainfall can result in floods.

▶ Amarnath incident does not qualify for cloudburst- 31 mm of rainfall between 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm on July 8 (Less than 100 mm per hour)

Are they Predictable?

▶ Deal with small area and thus, difficult to accurately predict and identify cloudbursts immediately.

▶ More likely to occur in mountainous zones mainly because of terrain and elevation

- At higher elevations, Clouds become saturated and ready to produce rain.

- Due to the upward movement of the very warm current of air, raindrops are carried upwards by the air current instead of falling downwards.

- New drops are formed and existing raindrops increase in size.

- After a point, the raindrops become too heavy for the cloud to hold on to, and they drop down together in a quick flash.

MISCELLANEOUS

North Macedonia's long road to the European Union

Relevance: Prelims

History

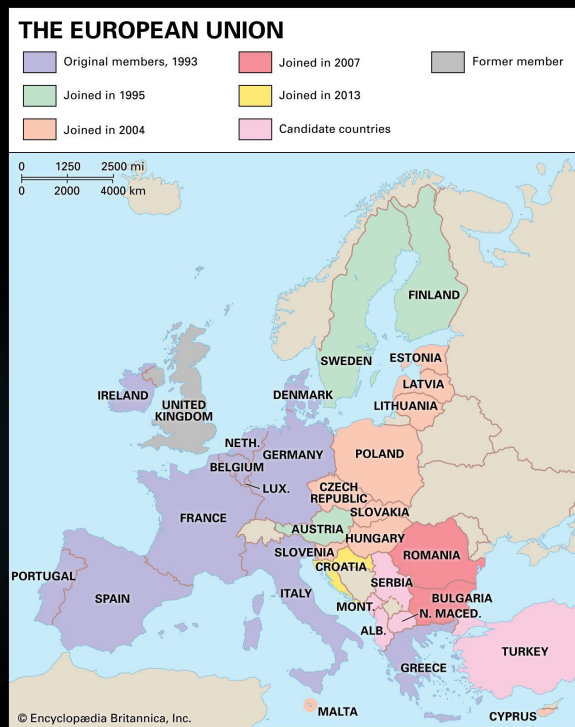
- ▶ Emerged from the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1991, Population of 20 lakh people
- ▶ EU candidate for 17 years
- ▶ EU membership requires approval from all the existing EU members
- ▶ 27 Countries in EU

Objections by other countries to membership

- ▶ Greece
 - North Macedonia was earlier known as Macedonia. Greece objected to adoption of name of Macedonia. Why?
 - Allegation of seeking expansion and merger with the Greece's province of Macedonia
 - Historically Greece Civilization has been called Macedonia- Adopting Macedonia mas name meant usurping Greek history and Culture
 - Deal reached between Greece and Macedonia in 2019. Macedonia adopted new name of North Macedonia
- ▶ Bulgaria raised objections in 2020. Demands by Bulgaria:
 - Acknowledgment that the language of North Macedonia derived from Bulgarian
 - Recognition of Bulgarian minority in North Macedonia- Differences in calculation of numbers of Bulgarian minority in North Macedonia



North Macedonia's long road to the European Union



Source:
Britannica

Leaked Uber Files



Relevance: GS Mains Paper IV

What's the issue?

- ▶ Uber, a Silicon Valley start-up, has witnessed a rapid growth. Its value today stands at \$44 billion with operations in 72 countries and counting.
- ▶ International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) have leaked 'Uber Files' which reportedly include 124,000 internal emails, text messages and documents from inside Uber.
- ▶ ICIJ is a non-profit organization. It retains a network of investigative journalists, which has grown by invitation to 280 of the best investigative reporters from more than 100 countries and territories.
- ▶ Leaked records cover the between 2013 and 2017, period of Ex-CEO of the company, who stepped down in 2017 after allegations of promoting a toxic work culture and even ignoring gender discrimination and sexual harassment at Uber.
- ▶ These Leaks point out that rapid expansion in several key global markets is due to bypassing regulations, lobbying lawmakers, playing around with loopholes, ignoring drivers and passengers safety.

Kill Switch

- ▶ Uber uses an internal tactic called the "kill switch" to escape raids by the government by shutting down internal software.
- ▶ It involves Uber officials learning about possible raids at its offices and sending instructions to IT staff to cut off access to the company's main data systems.
- ▶ It essentially prevents authorities from gathering evidence.

Leaked Uber Files

Relations with people in power

- ▶ The leaked Uber files highlight how the company worked closely with country officials and top notch politicians to sideline local cab businesses and seek favours. Among those named are:
 - French President Emmanuel Macron, when worked as economy minister
 - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who was mayor of Hamburg
 - US President Joe Biden when it was expanding its operations globally

India specific allegations

- ▶ One leaked file reportedly highlights how Uber blamed India's "flawed" criminal database, instead of taking responsibility for a driver accused of raping a 25-year-old passenger in New Delhi in December 2014.
 - Uber used 'Kill Switch' to escape **two raids** in India. Its Bengaluru office was raided by the Regional Transport Office in 2014, and separately, another raid took place in July 2021 based on non-compliance complaints.

COVID-19 vaccine dose tally crosses 200-crore mark

Relevant for Prelims

Why in news?

- ▶ It took the country almost **nine months** to reach the **100-crore** vaccination mark and another **nine months** to touch the **200-crore** milestone.
- ▶ The highest single-day vaccination record of **2.5 crore** doses was achieved on **September 17, 2021**.

Doses- Break up

- The 200 crore doses included **159.44** crore doses of **Serum Institute of India (SII)'s Covishield**, **33.48** crore doses of **Bharat Biotech's Covaxin**, besides other vaccines such as the **Russian vaccine Sputnik V** and **Corbevax** developed by **Biological E**.
- **27.91** crore doses have been administered to **senior citizens above 60 years** of age, while a maximum of **111.4** crore doses were administered in the age group of **18-44** years. The minors age group **12-17** years received a total of **17.51** crore doses in total. The age group of **45-60** years received **41.57** crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines.

Akasa Air – New Domestic airline in India

Relevant for GS Prelims

About New Airline

- Akasa Air
- Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-backed
- Budget Carrier
- 7 August, 2022

Ques. Consider the following statements related to India's Covid-19 vaccination campaign:

1. India has not been able to administer more than 1.5 crore doses in a single day.
2. India took 12 months to complete first 100 crore doses and it completed the next 100 doses in 6 months.
3. 18-44 year age group has been administered more than 50% of the doses.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1 and 2 only