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MAGAZINE

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CUET & CLAT 2025

MARCH 2024

Congratulations!

Saakhi Dewan
100 Percentile in CUET
Lady Shri Ram College

Khusharg Verma
100 Percentile in CUET
St. Stephen College

Priyadashi
99 Percentile in CUET
Daulat Ram College

Tanvi Chripal
99 Percentile in CUET
Vivekananda College

You Are Next..

OUR ENTRANCE TEST ACHIEVERS 2022-23

Saakhi Dewan
Psychology Hons
Lady Shri Ram
College, DU

Khusharg Verma
History Hons
St. Stephen
College, DU

Priyadashi
Psychology Hons
Daulat Ram
College, DU

Tanvi Chripal
Psychology Hons
Vivekananda
College, DU

Rashi Ahuja
94 Percentile
in CUET
Pol Sc

Ankur Gaba
93 Percentile
in CUET
Geography

Sneha Jain
Graphic Designing
Pearl's Academy

Kashish Garg
BA (Pol Sc)
Delhi University

Abhay Ahuja
BA (JMC)
IP University

Saksham
BA(JMC) VIPS
(IP University)

Rishabh
BA (Pol Sc)
Delhi University

Garvit Manocha
BBA, Maharaja
Agrasen
IP University

Jatin Gulati
BA(JMC) VIPS
IP University

Vanshika Sharma
BA (Pol Sc)
Delhi Univeristy

Diya Chauhan
BA (Pol Sc)
Delhi Univeristy

Nijjil Narula
BCA VIPS
IP Univeristy

Aarna Katyal
BA (Psychology)
Delhi Univeristy

Shivani
BA PROGRAM
Delhi University

Pratham Sarin
Data Science
AKTU

Krish
BA Hons
Delhi University

Preet
B.El.Ed
Delhi University

Adil Khan
Dr. Ambedkar
University

Aastha Anand
BBA Surajmal
IP University

Tisha
BA (Eng)
IP University

Gagandeep Singh
BBA VIPS,
IP University

Kartik Arora
BA(JMC) BVP
IP Univeristy

Mayank Chaudhary
BA (Program)
Delhi University

Pragati Gwari
BBA FIA
Delhi University

& Many More

OUR ENTRANCE TEST ACHIEVERS 2021-22

PREAL CHAUHAN
100 Percentile in
Geography, Pol.Sc.
& History

JAHANVI SHARMA
100 Percentile in
Psychology

PLAKSHA JAMMORIA
99 Percentile in
English &
General Test

KASHISH
95+ Percentile in
Psychology, History
and Political Science

VANSH GUPTA
95+ Percentile in
Business Studies, Eco.,
Mathematics & Eng.

JUHI CHAUHAN
95 Percentile in
Geography &
English

ANKITA
94 Percentile in
History

PRASIDHI SRIVASTAVA
90+ Percentile in
English, Economics,
Bus. Studies,& Acc.

SAMYA
90+ Percentile in
Geography, Pol.Sc.,
& Psychology

LAKSHITA
90+ Percentile in
English &
General Test

HARSH SHARMA
90+ Percentile in
Geography &
Political Science

KHUSHI GUPTA
90 Percentile in
Psychology and
General Test

REEJAK
90 Percentile in
English, Geography
Pol. Sc.& General Test

TANVISH SINGH
Sr. Guru Gobind
College of
University DU

GAGANDEEP
I.P. University

DHRUV GUPTA
95 Percentile in
Business Std.
Eco., Acc
General Test

MADHAV
Christ
University

ANSH GOEL
I.P. University

ANGAD
Sri Guru Nanak
Dev Khalsa, DU

SUJATA
Delhi
University

RAGHAV
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
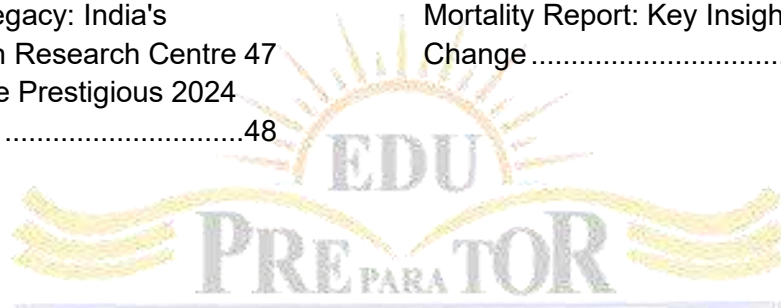University

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You Are Next ..

Current Affairs March 2024

Geography and environment

Nitrogen Pollution: A Global Threat to Clean Water

Introduction and About
• Nitrogen pollution refers to the overabundance of nitrogen compounds in ecosystems, primarily in rivers and lakes.
• This pollution is the result of human activities and is currently leading to a severe threat to clean water supplies.

Why Nitrogen Pollution Is A Growing Concern
• A recent study projects that approximately one-third of global river sub-basins will face serious clean water shortage by 2050 due to nitrogen pollution.
• According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), each year, over 200 million tonnes of reactive nitrogen, forming 80% of the total, is lost to the environment.
• Major contributors to nitrogen pollution include a growing consumption of nitrogen-based fertilisers, harmful industrial processes, livestock farming, and biomass burning.

Effects of Nitrogen Pollution: An Environmental and Health Crisis
• Excessive amounts of nitrogen lead to eutrophication or the overgrowth of algae and aquatic plants, creating oxygen-depleted zones where aquatic life suffocates and dies.
• High levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) exacerbate respiratory problems such as asthma and can increase the risk of respiratory infections.
• Nitrate contamination in drinking water is a serious health risk, known to cause methemoglobinemia or "blue baby syndrome" in infants.

• Nitrous oxide (N_2O) depletion of the ozone layer increases the risk of skin cancer, cataracts, and other health problems in humans, besides damaging marine ecosystems and crops.

Government Initiatives in Combating Nitrogen Pollution
• The Indian government has launched several initiatives to curb nitrogen pollution, including the Bharat Stage (BS VI) Emission Standards, Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS), issuance of Soil Health Cards, and the introduction of Nano Urea.

The Role of Nitrogen in our Ecosystem
• Nitrogen is a vital constituent of living organisms and is present in forms of amino acids, proteins, hormones, chlorophylls, and vitamins.
• Nitrogen needs to be 'fixed' before plants can take it up, which is achieved through N-fixing microbes, industrial processes, and atmospheric lighting.

Way Forward: Sustainable Practices and Green Infrastructure
• Implementing sustainable agricultural practices and improving wastewater treatment can significantly curtail nitrogen pollution.
• Green infrastructure should be incentivized to encourage eco-friendly development and curb pollution.

Final Thought: Upholding the UN's Call for Sustainable Nitrogen Management
• In 2019, the United Nations Environment Assembly adopted a resolution calling for sustainable nitrogen management.
• It's crucial for nations worldwide to implement this recommendation and reduce the environmental damage caused by irresponsible nitrogen management practices.

Global Waste Management Outlook 2024: "Turning Rubbish into a Resource"

Introduction and About

1. The Global Waste Management Outlook 2024 (GWMO 2024) was co-published by UNEP (UN Environment Programme) and ISWA (International Solid Waste Association).
2. This report provides a comprehensive look at global waste management trends and costs, with a primary focus on municipal solid waste.
3. The report also brings attention to the impact of waste pollution on the environment, especially concerning issues like biodiversity loss, the contamination of freshwater sources, and the release of harmful chemicals into the environment.

Why in the News?

1. The report was launched in February 2024 during the 6th UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA-6) held at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.
2. The theme for UNEA-6 was "Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle the triple planetary crisis: climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste."

Environmental Implications of Waste Mismanagement

1. Waste pollution contributes significantly to biodiversity loss and poses risks to ecosystem integrity.
2. Land disposed waste can contaminate freshwater sources with pathogens, heavy metals, and hazardous chemicals, posing threats to wildlife and human health.
3. Open burning of waste releases Unintentional Persistent Organic Pollutants (UPOs), harmful chemicals that spread through the air and food chain, causing health issues like cancer and infertility.

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Important Findings

1. One third of the world's population (around 2.7 billion people) lack access to waste collection services.
2. Approximately 540 million tonnes of municipal solid waste, representing 27% of the global total, are not collected.
3. The report predicts a significant increase in global waste generation from 2.3 billion tonnes in 2023 to 3.8 billion tonnes by 2050.

Pathways to Achieve a Circular Economy

1. The report suggests adopting a circular economy model to decrease waste generation and yield a net gain of $108 billion per year.
2. Key pathways for progress include the use of data and digitalization, banning problematic materials, engaging citizens in waste avoidance and segregation, and developing national expertise to create effective policies.
3. Everyone can contribute by practising waste segregation, home composting, and supporting zero waste enterprises.

Innovative Solutions for Waste Management

1. The report highlights several innovative solutions for waste management, including recycling technologies, robotic waste sorting, biodegradable materials, zero waste strategies, and consumer education.
2. Waste-to-Energy (WtE) technologies that convert non-recyclable waste into usable forms of energy such as heat and electricity are also emphasised.

Key Takeaways

1. The GWMO 2024 highlights the global waste management crisis, suggesting a shift towards a circular economy to address the issue.

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2. It underscores the importance of individual action, government policy, and advanced technologies in transforming our current waste management practices.

3. The report is a significant resource for policymakers, exam aspirants, and everyone interested in understanding the current and future prospects of global waste management.

Conclusion

The GWMO 2024 is an important source of information about global waste generation, its impacts, and potential solutions. It encourages everyone to participate in the journey towards better waste management and the adoption of a more sustainable, circular economy.

Turnaround in the Black Sea: Admiral Alexander Moiseev Appointed as Acting Head of Russian Navy

Introduction and Recent Developments

- Admiral Alexander Moiseev has been installed as the new acting head of the Russian Navy. This decision follows a series of successful attacks on Russia's Black Sea Fleet by Ukraine that left the fleet suffering severe losses.

The Black Sea: An Overview

- Known also as the Euxine Sea, the Black Sea is one of the world's major water bodies and a renowned inland sea.
- This Atlantic Ocean's marginal sea is centrally located between Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

Geographical Details of the Black Sea

Land Boundaries:

- The Black Sea is surrounded by six countries: Ukraine to the north and northwest, Russia and Georgia to the east, Türkiye to the south, and Bulgaria and Romania to the west.
- A mnemonic to remember these bordering countries is BURGeR-T: Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Romania, and Türkiye.

Maritime Boundaries:

- The Black Sea connects to the Sea of Marmara via the Bosphorus Strait, which further links it to the Aegean Sea (an elongated embayment of the Mediterranean Sea) through the Dardanelles Strait.
- The Dardanelles, Bosphorus, and the Marmara Sea form the Turkish straits system, a transitional zone between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.
- The Black Sea also has a connection to the Sea of Azov through the Strait of Kerch.

Surrounding Mountains:

- The Black Sea is encircled by several mountain ranges - the Pontic in the South, the Caucasus in the East, and the Crimean Mountains in the North.

Inflowing Rivers:

- Several significant rivers, including the Danube (the second-longest river in Europe, following the Volga in Russia), Dnieper, and Dniester, supply water to the Black Sea.

Why is this Development Important?

- The appointment of Admiral Alexander Moiseev as the new acting head of the Russian Navy comes at a critical juncture in the geopolitical scenario at the Black Sea.
- Following Ukraine's successful operations, significant losses of the Russian Black Sea Fleet and such a significant reshuffling within the Russian Navy construct marks a pivotal moment for the region's naval politics.

- Understanding these developments is crucial in the context of general knowledge and current affairs for government exams, with critical emphasis on national and international security affairs and geopolitics.

The Insights and Implications of Global Methane Tracker 2024

Key Highlights of Global Methane Tracker 2024

- Methane emissions from fossil fuels in 2023 nearly touched the highest level ever recorded with a total of approximately 120 million tonnes (Mt).
- Bioenergy, majorly from biomass use, further contributed to 10 Mt of methane emissions, showing no increase since 2019.
- Serious methane emissions events rose by over 50% in 2023 as compared to the previous year, including significant fossil fuel leaks of more than 5 million metric tonnes worldwide.
- Major incident: Over 200 days lasting well blowout in Kazakhstan.
- Almost 70% of these emissions originated from the top 10 emitting countries – U.S. leading for oil and gas operations, followed closely by Russia, and China ranking highest in the coal sector.

The Role and Emission of Methane

- Methane is a simple hydrocarbon (CH_4) and the main component of natural gas.
- It has a 20-year global warming potential of 84, making it the second most potent greenhouse gas after CO_2.
- Methane, however, has a shorter atmospheric life than CO_2, but significantly contributes to global warming, accounting for about 30% of global temperature rise since pre-industrial times.

Major Methane Emission Sources

- Natural sources: Anaerobic decomposition of organic matter in both natural and man-made wetlands.

- Agriculture: Flooded rice paddies and livestock excreta.
- Combustion and industrial processes: Fossil fuels, biomass burning, and organic waste decomposition in anaerobic environments during processes such as landfills and wastewater treatments.

Initiatives Against Methane Emissions

- India: Harit Dhara (HD), BS VI Emission Norms, National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
- Global: Methane Alert and Response System (MARS), Global Methane Pledge, Global Methane Initiative (GMI), MethaneSAT.

Global Methane Pledge

- Launched at UNFCCC COP26 in November 2021, it aims at a 30% reduction in global methane emissions from 2020 levels by 2030.
- India, however, refrained from signing the pledge due to its reservations that such initiative would shift focus from controlling CO_2 emissions and burdening the agricultural sector, impacting trade, and economic growth.

The International Energy Agency (IEA)

- Founded in 1974 in Paris, the IEA is an intergovernmental organisation focusing on energy security, future energy needs, and environmental impact analyses.
- Their flagship publications include World Energy Outlook Report, World Energy Investment Report, and India Energy Outlook Report.
- India joined the IEA in 2017.

The report throws light on the rising methane emissions, the efforts taken to control them, and emphasises the need to further increase these efforts globally. It also highlights the significance of controlling methane emissions to limit global warming and mitigate climate change.

Pioneering Steps towards a Green Future: India's First Green Hydrogen Steel Plant

Introduction-India's 1st Green Hydrogen Steel Plant:

- The first-ever green hydrogen plant in India for the stainless steel sector was recently inaugurated by the Union Minister of Steel at Hisar, a facility of Jindal Stainless Limited.
- The plant is a global pioneer, being the world's premier off-grid green hydrogen facility within the stainless steel industry.
- It incorporates rooftop and floating solar to underline India's commitment towards green growth, job creation, and accomplishing the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2070.

Supplementing Government Initiatives:

- Steel Scrap Recycling Policy, 2019: Aims to promote domestic scrap availability to diminish coal consumption in steel manufacturing.
- National Green Hydrogen Mission: Implemented by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to transform India into a global hub for green hydrogen production, utilisation, and export.
- The Motor Vehicles (Registration and Functions of Vehicles Scrapping Facility) Rules introduced in September 2021, to augment the availability of scrap in the steel sector.
- NEDO Model Projects: Energy efficiency enhancement projects in steel plants by Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization.

India's Initiatives for Green Hydrogen Promotion:

- National Hydrogen Mission: Launched in Union Budget 2021-22, this aims to globally position India for green hydrogen and its derivatives, as well as facilitate R&D and pilot projects.
- Green Hydrogen Consumption Obligations: Proposed by MNRE to mandate fertiliser and petroleum refining industries to incorporate a specific percentage of green hydrogen in their total consumption.
- Green Hydrogen Hubs: Regions capable of large scale green hydrogen production/usage identified to be developed as green hydrogen hubs.

Comprehending Green Hydrogen:

- Hydrogen is an essential industrial fuel used in ammonia, steel, refineries, and electricity production.
- Current hydrogen manufacturing produces 'black or brown' hydrogen from coal.
- 'Green' hydrogen is produced from renewable energy sources like wind or solar via electrolysis.
- The hydrogen colours refer to the source of electricity used to produce hydrogen.

National Green Hydrogen Mission in Focus:

- The mission incentivises commercial green hydrogen production, intending to make India a green hydrogen exporter.
- It focuses on demand creation, production, utilisation, and exporting of green hydrogen.
- Interventions include the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition Programme and development of Green Hydrogen Hubs.
- The objective is to generate a green hydrogen production capacity of 5 MMT per annum and renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW in India by 2030.
- The initiative aims to attract investments worth over Rs 8 lakh crore, creating approximately six lakh jobs.
- It is expected to reduce fossil fuel imports by over Rs 1 lakh crore and decrease nearly 50MT of annual greenhouse gas emissions. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy oversees the mission.

Maintaining Equity: A Persistent Issue in IPCC's Future Emissions Scenarios

Unveiling the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

- The IPCC is a UN body tasked to assess climate change relevant science.
- Creation took place in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- The objective is to assist governments with scientific information useful in climate policy formulation.
- The panel does not conduct independent research. Rather, contributions from global volunteers shape the work of the IPCC.

IPCC's Assessment Reports Overview

- The IPCC compiles comprehensive Assessment Reports detailing climate change knowledge, causes, potential impacts, and response options.
- Since its inception, the panel has released six Assessment Reports, the most in-depth scientific reports on global climate change.
- The 6th Assessment Report is divided into three parts: three Working Group reports and a synthesis report.
- The panel is currently in its seventh Assessment cycle (AR7).

Assessing Future Scenarios: IPCC's Methodology

- IPCC employs Integrated Assessment Models (IAMs), which map out potential climate and energy futures.
- IAMs integrate inputs from various disciplines like macroeconomic growth projections, energy consumption forecasts, land-use changes, and the evolution of the climate according to physics principles.
- However, a limitation of IAMs is their focus on least-cost assessments, often overlooking equity issues between different nations.

Findings of the Recent Study on IPCC's Reports

- Experts from Bengaluru and Chennai conducted a study assessing 556 IPCC scenarios.

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- Despite making up 60% of the global population, regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, West Asia, and rest of Asia will have below-average per-capita GDP in 2050.
- Similar inequity was found in the consumption of goods, energy, and fossil fuels between the Global North and the Global South.

The Principle of Equity in Climate Change mitigation

- Equity principles and differentiated responsibilities are embedded in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- This recognises that while a global response is necessary to tackle climate change, it is fair for more affluent nations to bear more responsibility for these actions.

Concluding Remark

- The authors of the study urge that the development of IPCC scenarios should be both equitable and environmentally sound. This issue represents a significant gap in the emissions modelling domain. Consequently, future model and scenario building efforts need to bring equity and climate justice issues to the forefront.

World Air Quality Report 2023: India Ranked Third Most Polluted Country

Introduction: World Air Quality Report 2023

A recent report by Swiss organisation IQAir identifies India as the world's third most polluted country.

Key Highlights: India's Air Quality Situation

1. India ranks third in terms of being the most polluted country globally, with a PM2.5 concentration of 54.4 micrograms per cubic metre, which is a significant pollution indicator.

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2. Bangladesh and Pakistan are the first and second most polluted countries, thereby surpassing India.

3. Among the world's top 10 most polluted cities, nine are in India.

4. Delhi has held the title of the world's most polluted capital city for the fourth consecutive year.

5. Begusarai in Bihar is found to be the world's most polluted metropolitan area.

Health Impacts and WHO Guidelines

1. About 96% of India's population is exposed to PM2.5 concentration levels seven times higher than the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended levels.

2. Over two-thirds of Indian cities have reported annual averages above the safe threshold.

3. PM2.5 pollution is associated with a higher occurrence of heart diseases and oxidative stress.

Global Air Quality Scenario

1. Seven nations, including Australia, Estonia, Finland, Grenada, Iceland, Mauritius, and New Zealand, have met the WHO's PM2.5 annual guideline.

2. Africa, despite its large population, continues to face a significant data gap in air quality, thereby hindering targeted interventions.

3. Countries like China and Chile boast reduced PM2.5 pollution levels, indicating successful strategies to combat air pollution.

Global Impact of Air Pollution

1. Air pollution contributes to around seven million early deaths globally, each year.

2. It is implicated in one out of nine deaths worldwide.

3. Exposure to fine particles could lead to several health complications, including mental health issues and cognitive impairment in children.

WHO Air Quality Guidelines

1. WHO regularly revises its air quality guidelines to shield public health from the persisting threat of air pollution.

2. The guidelines cover multiple pollutants, including those of particulates (PM2.5 and PM10) and gases (O3, NO2, SO2, CO).

Understanding Particulate Matter (PM)

1. PM constitutes a complex mix of minuscule particles and liquid droplets suspended in the air.

2. They can be differentiated based on their size - PM10 and PM2.5, referring to particles with diameters less than 10 and 2.5 micrometres, respectively.

Consequences of Air Pollution

1. Pollution causes respiratory diseases and leads to high mortality rates.

2. According to WHO data, 99% of the global population breathes air exceeding guideline limits, with the poorest countries suffering the most.

3. Air quality is crucial for climate and ecosystems. Policies to curb air pollution offer a win-win strategy for climate and health.

4. Notably, all Indians face exposure to harmful levels of PM2.5.

5. The economic cost of pollution, due to premature deaths and morbidity, accounted for economic losses of USD 36.8 billion, approximately 1.36% of India's GDP.

Art And Culture

Recognition of Tripura's Traditional 'Risa' Attire - Geographical Indication (GI) Tag Announced!

1: A Snapshot of the Renowned Risa of Tripura

- Risa is a handwoven textile which is a part of the traditional attire of Tripura.

- It is used as an upper garment by women and holds enormous social and religious importance in their culture.
- In a significant cultural event known as 'Risa Sormani', young Tripuri girls aged between 12 to 14 are bestowed with a risa.
- On the religious front, it is worn in tribal community festivals like Garia Puja, symbolising prosperity and unity, as well as during weddings.
- Risa is resourcefulness embodied, serving multiple practical purposes - from a head scarf to a cummerbund, and even as an improvised hanger to carry infants.
- It is also presented as a token of honour and respect to esteemed guests and achievers.
- The traditional Tripuri female attire comprises Risa, Rignai (lower garment), and Rikutu (wrap for newlywed women).
- Risa's historical rootedness goes back far before the rule of the Manikya kings, who governed Tripura for more than 500 years in the 15th century.

2: Understanding the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- A GI tag is a protective mark given to products that have specific geographical origin and possess qualities or reputation that are due to that origin.
- This tag ensures that only those authorised (usually residents of the geographical territory) are allowed to use the famous product name.
- It offers protection to producers who can certify the geographical origin of their products, preventing unauthorised parties from copying imitations.
- A registered GI is valid for a period of 10 years.
- The department responsible for registration of GI Tags in India is the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade functioning under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

3: Legal Framework Governing GI Tags

- The regulation of GI tags in India is governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

- This framework aligns with the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- The Paris Convention underscores the importance of protecting industrial property and geographical indications as key components of intellectual property through Articles 1(2) and 10.

4: GI Tag for Risa – The Significance

- The traditional tribal attire 'risa' from Tripura has recently been conferred the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- This accreditation acknowledges the uniqueness and ubiquity of this textile tradition in Tripura, and it contributes to the state's cultural identity.
- The GI tag will also aid in amplifying the recognition of Risa and improving the local economy by adding value to the product.
- This acknowledgement also encourages preservation and perpetuation of traditional crafts and folklore.

The Significance and Impact of Exercise MILAN 2024 and Recent Developments in the Indian Navy

1: Introduction to Exercise MILAN 2024

- Exercise MILAN 2024 is the 12th edition of a biennial Multilateral Naval Exercise, held under the aegis of Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam.
- It saw its beginnings in 1995 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The naval forces of Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand participated in this year's edition.

2: The Structure and Aims of Exercise MILAN 2024

- The exercise is divided into two phases: The Harbour Phase and the Sea Phase.
- Activities during the Harbour Phase include an International Maritime Seminar, city parades, technical exhibitions, expert interactions, and sports events. The theme for this year's seminar was 'Partners across Oceans: Collaboration, Synergy, Growth'.
- The Sea Phase involves the active participation of ships and aircraft from friendly nations, alongside Indian Navy's vessels, and other units.
- The central aim of the exercise is to enhance professional interaction between friendly navies and gain experience in multilateral large-force operations at sea.

3: Major Recent Developments in the Indian Navy

- Commissioning of New Ships: Some recent indigenously-built additions to the fleet include INS Vikrant (aircraft carrier), INS Mormugao (stealth guided-missile destroyer), INS Vagir (Kalvari-class submarine), and INS Sandhayak (the first Survey Vessel Large or SVL ship).
- Acquisition Programs: The Navy is currently engaged in Project 17A (stealth frigates) and Project 75I (submarines) with an aim to enhance naval capabilities.
- Submarine Rescue Advancements: The acquisition of advanced Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicles (DSRVs) and induction of two indigenous Diving Support Vessels have significantly improved submarine rescue operations. India now belongs to a select group of 12 nations possessing the technology for submarine rescue.

4: Other Noteworthy Achievements

- The Indian Navy has recently made strides in missile technology by successfully engaging a land target with the BrahMos missile at an extended range of 900 km.

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In conclusion, Exercise MILAN 2024 not only provides a platform for international naval collaboration but also showcases India's advancements in naval technology and capacity. These developments bear testament to India's commitment towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing and its strategic importance in maintaining maritime security.

The 4th Edition of SCO Startup Forum: Fostering Innovation and Job Creation

1: Introduction to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Startup Forum

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Startup Forum recently hosted its fourth edition in New Delhi.
- Its primary goal is to expand and encourage startup interactions among the SCO member states.
- The objective is to nurture an environment that is favourable to innovation, spur job creation, and motivate young talent to create innovative solutions.

2: A Deep Dive into the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- The SCO is a permanent international intergovernmental organisation that was announced in June 2001 in Shanghai, China.
- It was formed by Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.
- The essence of the SCO is to foster cooperation and mutual support in multiple areas like trade, investment, energy, transportation, and security.

3: Key Facts About the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) To Remember:

- Headquarters: The headquarters of the SCO is situated in Beijing, China.

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- Formation: It was presented to the world on June 15, 2001, and officially came into effect on September 19, 2003.
- Official Languages: Chinese and Russian are the official languages of the SCO.
- India's Membership: India became a member of the SCO on June 8-9, 2017, during the SCO Astana Summit.
- Supreme Decision-Making Body: The Heads of State Council (HSC) acts as the supreme decision-making body within the SCO.
- Permanent Bodies: The SCO has two permanent bodies: SCO Secretariat in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent.
- Member Countries: The current member countries comprise China, India, Iran (which joined in July 2023), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

4: Why the SCO is Crucial in Current Affairs

- The SCO plays a pivotal role in maintaining regional stability in Central Asia and fostering cooperation among the member countries.
- Forums like the recent SCO Startup Forum promote innovation and entrepreneurship, which contribute significantly to job creation and economic growth in the member countries.
- Being a member of the SCO, India's role, and participation in various SCO activities and summits always holds importance in international relations and world affairs related sections of many government exams.

By understanding these key aspects of the SCO and its recent events, aspirants preparing for government exams can be well equipped to answer any related questions correctly.

Celebrating Geological Marvels: Pandavula Gutta and Ramgarh Crater as Geo-Heritage Sites

1. Introduction to Geo-Heritage Sites: Pandavula Gutta and Ramgarh Crater

- Both Pandavula Gutta and Ramgarh Crater have been officially declared Geo-heritage sites. This recognition has been bestowed by the respective state governments, thereby preserving the geological legacy of these regions. Pandavula Gutta is the only Geo-heritage site in Telangana while Ramgarh Crater is located in Baran district of Rajasthan.

2. Unravelling the Marvels of Pandavula Gutta

- Pandavula Gutta, situated in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district of Telangana, is a geological spectacle predating the Himalayan hills.
- This site is filled with exceptional rock shelters and reveals evidence of habitation from the Mesolithic period, specifically around 10,000 B.C. to 8,000 B.C.
- The site houses Palaeolithic cave paintings, dated between 500,000 BCE–10,000 BCE, that provide a glimpse into prehistoric life.
- The cave artworks depict various animals such as Bison, Antelope, Tiger, and Leopard, along with geometric designs and use of different pigments like green, red, yellow, and white.
- Due to its unique topography, Pandavula Gutta is a favoured destination for rock-climbing enthusiasts.

3. Understanding Geo-Heritage Sites and National Geological Monuments

- Geoheritage showcases sites or zones that have remarkable scientific, educational, cultural, or aesthetic value, all the while presenting unique geological features.

- These areas may house exclusive rock formations, fossils, or landscapes that hold immense importance for education, research, cultural significance, or visual appeal. Moreover, they hold potential to contribute to the local and regional economy as eminent tourist destinations.
- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) or respective State governments take steps to protect these sites.
- Established in 1851, GSI is responsible for declaring geo-heritage sites/national geological monuments and maintaining them. This organisation was initially founded with the aim to discover coal deposits suitable for Railways.
- With its headquarters in Kolkata, GSI is attached to the Ministry of Mines. The agency's primary responsibility is creating and updating national geoscientific information, and assessing the potential for mineral resources.

Revitalising Historical Legacies: The Sabarmati Ashram Redevelopment Project & Dandi March

1: Investing in History: Sabarmati Ashram Redevelopment Project

- Prime Minister of India recently initiated the Sabarmati Ashram Redevelopment Project on the 94th anniversary of the Dandi March.
- Aided by an investment of Rs 1,200 crore, the project aims to restore, conserve, and rejuvenate the historically significant Sabarmati Ashram, founded by Mahatma Gandhi.

2: Unravelling History: Sabarmati Ashram and its Significance

- Established in 1917 by Mahatma Gandhi, the Sabarmati Ashram is nestled on the west bank of the Sabarmati River near Ahmedabad's Juna Vadaj village.

- The Ashram's establishment marks one of Mahatma Gandhi's five settlements; two in South Africa and three in India.
- Sabarmati Ashram played a crucial role in India's independence movement, providing a foundational base for Gandhi's significant socio-political activities and experiments.
- Notably, the Ashram witnessed pivotal movements like the Dandi March in 1930 and several other satyagrahas.
- The Ashram, managed today by the Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust (SAPMT), emphasises Gandhi's principles of simplicity, self-sufficiency, and communal living and is a symbol of his enduring legacy.

3: A Step into the Past: The Dandi March

- Dating back to ancient Indian times, salt making, primarily handled by farmers, gradually became a commercial commodity subject to British imposed salt tax.
- Sensing the salt tax as an exploitative colonial measure, Mahatma Gandhi mobilised the masses against British rule using the emblematic Dandi March or Salt Satyagraha.
- Launched from Sabarmati Ashram on March 12,1930, the Dandi March concluded on April 6, 1930, with Gandhi breaking the salt law, thereby igniting a wave of civil disobedience against British salt monopoly.

4: The Road Ahead: Redevelopment Impact and Objectives

- The Sabarmati Ashram Redevelopment Project, beyond just conservation, aims to reinforce Gandhian philosophy and principles among new generations.
- The project would also help in enhancing tourism, contributing to economic development, and promoting awareness about India's struggle for Independence.
- By preserving and rejuvenating these historical landmarks, India pays tribute to the legacies of its freedom struggle and the great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi who contributed significantly to it.

Honour for Madhya Pradesh: Six Heritage Sites Added to UNESCO's Tentative List

1: An Introduction to the Commendable Accomplishment

- Madhya Pradesh has scored a grand achievement as six of its coveted heritage sites have now made their way onto UNESCO's tentative list.
- The six sites that have just been included are Gwalior Fort, Historical Group of Dhamnar, Bhojeshwar Mahadev Temple, Rock Art Sites of Chambal Valley, Khooni Bhandara (Burhanpur), and God Memorial of Ramnagar (Mandla).

2: The Long-Drawn Journey to Recognition

- The process to include Khooni Bhandara, an underground water system, in UNESCO's World Heritage list started back in 2010.
- Orchestrating towards this endeavour, a UNESCO team visited the site in 2013 and suggested improvements.
- These suggestions were promptly rectified by the district administration, municipal corporation administration, and the Madhya Pradesh government, resulting in an action plan to enhance facilities at the location.

3: A Deep Dive into the Remarkable Heritage Sites

1. Khooni Bhandara

- An intricate underground water system composed of eight waterworks, Khooni Bhandara is located in the historic city of Burhanpur, in the Burhanpur district of Madhya Pradesh.
- Constructed in 1615 CE, it is one of the most significant historic water systems in India, echoing the Persian qanat approach and thereby exhibiting our rich historical ties.

2. Gwalior Fort

- Nestled near Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior Fort is a hill fort whose existence can be traced back to at least the 10th century.
- A testament to India's colourful historical pallet, it has been held by numerous dynasties such as the Hunas, Gurjara –Pratiharas, Kachchhapaghatas, Tomars, Lodis, and the Mughals, each leaving their indelible marks.

3. Historical Group of Dhamnar

- Dhamnar caves are perched on a hill near the village of Dhamnar in the Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh.
- Featuring a total of 51 caves carved into the laterite hill, they showcase a beautiful mix of Buddhist and Hindu architectural influences.

4. Bhojeshwar Mahadev Temple

- Situated in the Bhojpur village of Madhya Pradesh, Bhojeshwar Temple is an incomplete Hindu temple.
- Believed to have been started in the 11th century during the reign of the Paramara king Bhoja, the blueprint for this unfinished beauty is intriguingly engraved on the surrounding rocks.

4: Understanding UNESCO's Tentative List and World Heritage Site

- UNESCO's Tentative List acts as an inventory of properties that each state party seeks to consider for nomination.
- The Operational Guidelines, 2019 of UNESCO hence obligate any monument or site to be listed on the tentative list for one year before final nomination.
- Once a nominated site makes it to the list, it gains global recognition as a World Heritage Site, honoured for its "outstanding universal value".

- It contributes significantly to the preservation and protection of cultural treasures and natural areas across the globe.

To conclude, with the inclusion of these six sites, India now boasts 52 sites on UNESCO's tentative list, each with its unique narrative of historical, cultural, or natural significance, awaiting global recognition.

Record State Government Bond Yield Surge: An Overview

In a recent financial update, state governments mobilised a record amount of Rs. 50,206 crore through the auction of State Development Loan (SDL) Bonds. This stands as the highest weekly borrowing ever recorded, significantly exceeding the set indicative borrowing target of Rs. 27,810 crore as per data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This surge indicates a robust demand for state government securities in the financial markets.

1: Understanding Bonds and Government Securities

- Bonds Explained:
A bond represents a borrowing instrument that functions like an IOU, with countries or companies issuing bonds to raise funds. Government Bonds, also known as G-secs in India, are considered one of the safest investments due to their sovereign guarantee.

- Types of G-Secs:
There are different categories of G-Secs, including Treasury Bills (T-bills), Dated G-Secs, State Development Loans (SDLs), and Cash Management Bills (CMBs). SDLs are particularly notable, as they represent loans raised from the market by State Governments through auctions.

2: Deciphering Bond Yields and Yield Curve

- Bond Yields:
The yield of a bond symbolises the effective rate of return it produces. It varies with the bond's price and depends largely on the face value, coupon payment, and coupon rate of the bond.

- Yield Curve:
This graphical visualisation represents the interest rates on debt over various maturity periods, indicating the expected yield for an investor if they lend money for a specific timeframe.

3: The RBI's Role in Managing Bond Yields

The RBI leverages Open Market Operations (OMOs) to regulate bond yields and maintain economic stability. By tactfully buying or selling G-secs in the open market, the RBI can influence liquidity, encourage or dissuade borrowing and investment, and manage economic conditions effectively.

4: Factors Influencing Yield Curve

Influential factors include market demand and bond prices, as well as alignment matching with the prevailing economy's interest rate.

5: Impact of Increasing Bond Yield

- Financial Institutions:
Banks and mutual funds may suffer losses due to the direct inverse relationship between bond prices and yields.

- Borrowing Costs:
A rise in bond yields implies an increase in government borrowing costs, potentially leading to higher interest rates for corporate entities and individuals.

- Corporate Bonds:
To attract investors, companies may have to raise the interest rates on their bonds which could lead to increased borrowing costs and potentially impact profitability.

- Equity Markets:
An increase in bond yields may lead to a shift in investment interest from the equities market to fixed-income securities. This could have an adverse effect on equity prices.

Conclusion

The surge in bond yield has a variety of implications. It's crucial for both investors and the government to understand these impacts and manage their decisions appropriately. The RBI plays a crucial role in manoeuvring these economic conditions to ensure overall growth and sustainability. Understanding the nuances of G-Secs, bond yields, and the impact of changes in these areas is vital for anyone involved in the financial markets.

Economy

The Dilemma of Employment Trends in India: Findings from the ILO's India Employment Report 2024

1. Unravelling the ILO Report:

The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) India Employment Report 2024 presents an analysis of India's employment challenges and trends over two decades, utilising various data sources. The report explores both positive and negative trends in employment, particularly focusing on youth employment.

2. Bright Spots in India's Employment Landscape:

- Women encounter a rise in self-employment and unpaid family work.

- Steady increase in labour productivity accompanies technological progress.

- Hike observed in female labour market participation rates, especially in rural regions.

- A shift from agricultural to non-agricultural sector jobs in the workforce, hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. The Dark Side: Challenges in India's Employment Scenario:

- Youth unemployment took a drastic leap from 5.7% in 2000 to 17.5% in 2019.

- Employment growth remained stagnant till 2019 before beginning to rise.

- A vast portion of employment (82%) is dominated by the informal sector. Predominance of self-employment and casual employment.

- Wages remain low, stagnant or even at a decline. A slight wage increase was observed for casual labourers, while regular workers witnessed stagnant or declining real wages.

- Foreseen migration rate of India is about 40% by 2030, with a projected urban population of 607 million.

- Rise in contractualization, with long-term contracts for only a minority of workers. Increase in regular employment till 2018, followed by a decline.

- Livelihood insecurities proliferate, particularly in non-agricultural organised sectors, with insufficient social protection coverage.

- The young Indian workforce, despite being a demographic asset, confronts a skills gap. 75%

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lack the essential skills like sending emails with attachments, 60% are unable to copy-paste files, and 90% cannot use spreadsheets for mathematical formulas.

4. Education and Skills Gap:

- Notwithstanding an overall rise in education levels, significant disparities persist across social groups, economic backgrounds, and regions.

- Only a minuscule proportion of youth have undergone formal vocational training, with less than 4% accessing it.

5. Recommendations and Way Forward:

- The report emphasises the need for targeted interventions to enhance vocational education, increase the level of formal employment, improve wages, and reduce the skills gap.

- Strengthening the link between education and employment is essential. Initiatives like skill development programs, increased investment in education, promoting digital literacy among the youth are urged to be implemented.

6. Types of Employment in India:

- The Indian employment landscape is primarily bifurcated into organised and unorganised sectors. The former includes employees of the government, public sector units, and private sector enterprises. The latter includes the labour-intensive, low-scale industries, agricultural labour, home-based workers, and casual labour in construction, trade, and transport.

The Ban on Cotton Candy: Unravelling the Ingredients & Their Impact on Public Health

Cotton Candy in the Crosshairs

- Recently, Himachal Pradesh has instituted a one-year ban on the manufacturing, sale, and storage of Cotton Candy or Candy floss.
- This action was taken after Rhodamine B, a potentially harmful colouring agent, was found present in this popular carnival snack.
- Other states in India, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Goa, have already put similar restrictions in place about the usage of such harmful food colourings.

The Dangers of Cotton Candy

- Regular consumption of snacks containing these synthetic dyes may lead to serious long-term health risks, including possible carcinogenesis.
- Cotton candy primarily comprises spun sugar, sold prevalently at carnivals, fairs, and amusement parks. It forms a fluffy texture, similar to cotton, when spun out through tiny holes after being heated and liquefied.

Decoding Rhodamine B

- Rhodamine B, an inexpensive colouring agent, is commonly used in the textile, paper, and leather industries.
- This agent has been illicitly used to colour street foods like cotton candy and gobi manchurian, despite being unfit for consumption and capable of causing acute toxicity and irritation in the eyes and respiratory tract.
- Though not classified as carcinogenic to humans by the World Health Organisation, some studies on rats indicate carcinogenic effects.

The Affairs of Colour in Food

- Although Rhodamine B is not generally added to food products, it often finds its way into street food sold by small vendors due to ignorance about permissible food dyes.
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has expressly prohibited Rhodamine B in food products under the Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006. Violations can result in punishment.

Approved Food Colours under the Food Safety Act, 2006

- The FSSAI permits only a few natural and synthetic colours in food items.
- Natural colours include Carotene, Carotenoids, Chlorophyll, Riboflavin, Caramel, Annatto, Saffron, and Curcumin whereas synthetic allowed colours are Ponceau 4R, Carmoisine, Erythrosine, Tartrazine, Sunset Yellow FCF, Indigo Carmine, Brilliant Blue FCF, and Fast Green FCF.
- However, even these permissible food colours are not permitted in all food items and have specified uses.

Understanding the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

- The FSSAI, established under the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006, is an autonomous statutory body with the mandate of protecting and promoting public health by regulating and supervising food safety and quality in India.
- FSSAI is responsible for standardising regulations for food products, granting licences to food businesses, enforcing food safety laws, and conducting risk assessments and research on food safety issues.
- The FSSAI also organises campaigns and events such as World Food Safety Day, Eat Right India, and Food Safety Mitra, among others, aiming to educate and create awareness about food safety.

This new emergence of food safety issues serves to remind the public and food vendors alike on the critical importance of having only safe and approved ingredients in our food. The bans aim at enforcement and adherence to these crucial food safety regulations to protect public health.
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India's Standing in the Global Gender Gap Index 2022 - An Overview

1: Deciphering the Global Gender Gap Index

- The Global Gender Gap Index is an annual benchmark launched by the World Economic Forum (WEF) that measures the disparities between men and women over four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment.
- The index scores countries between 0 and 1, with 1 signifying absolute gender parity and 0 denoting complete disparity.
- In 2022, 146 countries were evaluated and the report provides insights into the gender equality progress made over the years.

2: India's Positioning in the Global Gender Gap Index 2022

- In the 2022 index, India ranks 135 out of 146 countries, its seventh-highest scoring in the last 16 years.
- India's overall score has shown a minor improvement from 2021, moving from 0.625 to 0.629.

3: Detailed Analysis of India's Score in Four Dimensions

1. Political Empowerment:
- Despite ranking 48th, the highest among all the sub-indices, India's score is quite low at 0.267.
- However, India's score remains above the global average in this category.

2. Economic Participation and Opportunity:
- India's rank is disappointing at 143, with only Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan ranking lower.

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   - Although India's score has improved from 0.326 to 0.350, it remains far below the global average.

3. Educational Attainment:
   - India's ranking falls at 107 with a slight decrease in its score since 2021.
   - Factors taken into account here include literacy rate and the enrolment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

4. Health and Survival:
   - India's worst performance is in this segment, ranking last (146) among all the countries.
   - This metric assesses the sex ratio at birth (in %) and healthy life expectancy (in years).

This comprehensive analysis of India's standing in the Global Gender Gap Index 2022 indicates areas where urgent attention is required to improve gender parity. Not only can this contribute to the country's social-development, but it may also impact India's global recognition in terms of gender equality.

UN Report on Global Food Waste: Current Scenario and Ways Forward

Understanding the Magnitude of Global Food Waste:

- The United Nations recently released a report titled 'Think Eat Save: Tracking Progress to Halve Global Food Waste'. This report highlighted the alarming scale of food waste across the globe.
- It was reported that in 2022, approximately 1.05 billion tonnes of food were wasted, which accounts for 19% of food available to consumers. This wastage was primarily at the retail, food service, and household level.
- Households were identified as the biggest culprits, generating 60% of the total food waste in 2022, resulting in 631 million tonnes.

Food Waste vs. Food Insecurity:

- A striking contradiction evident in the report was that while the world wasted a significant amount of food, nearly 783 million people were facing hunger, with a third of humanity grappling with food insecurity.
- Unlike common perception, food waste is not exclusive to affluent nations. The disparity between high-income, upper-middle income, and lower-middle income countries regarding household food waste is just 7 kg/capita/year.

Geographical Dispersion and Environmental Impact of Food Waste:

- A notable difference exists between urban and rural areas of middle-income countries in terms of food waste, with rural regions generally wasting less.
- The environmental cost of food loss and waste is immense as it generates between 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions. This is close to five times the total emissions from the aviation sector.

India's Struggle with Food Wastage:

- India, harbouring the largest hunger-population globally, wastes approximately 78.2 million tonnes of food annually as per the United Nations Food Waste Index Report.
- The report indicates that rural India is more frugal, wasting less food compared to urban areas.
- According to the 2023 Global Hunger Index Report, India ranks 111 out of 125 countries, reflecting a 'serious' level of hunger severity.

Recommended Solutions:

- The UN report emphasised the necessity of improved data on food waste, accurate measurement being the first step towards effective management.
- Governments are urged to establish food waste reduction policies in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12.3.

- Public-Private Partnerships could play a vital role in developing effective strategies to reduce food waste.
- The significance of consumer awareness, innovation, and technology, and adoption of sustainable practices across the food supply chain were also highlighted as potential solutions to counter food waste.

This current affairs information touches upon several key areas important for government exams such as international organisations (United Nations), global issues (Food Waste), national issues (India's food waste and hunger scenario), and sustainable development goals. An understanding of this information may benefit candidates in both the General Knowledge and environment sections.

A Paradigm Shift in India's Cooperative Sector: A Look at the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan

1: Delving into the Grain Storage Plan: A New Mark of Progress

- Introduction to the recent inauguration of the world's largest grain storage plan by the Indian Prime Minister.
- This significant development targeted at 11 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) in 11 states launches a new chapter in India's cooperative sector.
- The plan aims to establish a vast storage capacity of 700 lakh tonnes within the next five years with an investment of ₹1.25 lakh crore.
- This endeavour will help create agricultural infrastructure at the grassroots level, with the integration of various existing government schemes.

2: The Promising Outcomes from the Grain Storage Plan

- Farmers will have the freedom to store their produce at PACS godowns and either use the stock as bridge finance for the next crop cycle or sell at MSP to evade distressed sales.
- This move is expected to minimise post-harvest losses, increasing farmer earnings and strengthening food security while bringing benefits to the consumer base.

3: Understanding the Cooperative Sector in India and its Evolution

- Acknowledging India's magnificent network of over 800,000 cooperatives spread across several sectors.
- The first Five-Year Plan (1951-56) flagged cooperatives as key to comprehensive community development.
- Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002, paved the way for multi-state co-operatives, and the 97th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2011 established the right to form cooperatives as a fundamental right.
- The establishment and recent amendment in 2022 to the Multi-State Co-operative Societies aimed at better regulation of the sector.

4: Spotlight on Some Major Cooperatives of India

- PACS, AMUL, IFFCO, HOPCOMS, and Lijjat Papad are among the notable success stories in India's cooperative sector.
- Their reach and impact vary from credit and dairy to fertilisers and food processing, setting benchmarks for upcoming cooperatives.

5: Confronting the Challenges in the Indian Cooperative Sector

- The sector grapples with several issues such as limited professionalism, political interference, funding constraints, infrastructural deficiencies, low social awareness, and participation.
- These challenges often hamper the growth and effectiveness of cooperatives, especially in rural areas.

6: Possible Measures to Strengthen and Innovate in the Cooperative Sector

- Infrastructural development and technology adoption can considerably enhance the value chain and market access for cooperative products.
- Cooperatives can be remodelled as centres for experimentation and innovation in agriculture and renewable energy.
- The concept of "cooperative influencers" can effectively change public perception and enhance participation in the cooperative model.
- The idea of "cooperative acceleration zones" and cooperative-led tourism initiatives can also add new dimensions to this sector.

The evolution of India's cooperative sector via the recent ambitious grain storage plan demonstrates the potential of cooperatives as powerful tools for empowering people and driving sustainable growth. However, identifying and addressing the existing challenges is crucial to leveraging this potential more effectively.

Detailed Analysis of the Recent Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23

About the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)

- The HCES is a significant survey conducted every five years by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- It predominantly collects data on goods and services consumed by households across India.
- This data contributes to the calculation of macroeconomic indicators like Gross Domestic Product (GDP), poverty rates, and Consumer Price Inflation (CPI).

Significance of the Recent Household Consumption Expenditure Survey

- The survey was aimed at assessing the Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure (MPCE) and examining the distribution of households and individuals across different MPCE categories.
- Recent findings indicate a significant reduction in poverty levels to about 5% in India.
- Such statistics provide valuable insights into the living standards and economic conditions of the Indian population.

Salient Takeaways from the Recent Survey

- The survey observed an increase of 33.5% and 40.42% in MPCE in urban and rural sectors, respectively.
- Food expenditure comprised 46% and 39% of total expenditure for rural and urban households, respectively.
- There exists a significant gap between the MPCE of the poorest and richest 5% of India's population.
- Sikkim records the highest MPCE among states, while Meghalaya displays the highest rural-urban MPCE disparity.
- Among Union Territories, Chandigarh tops the list in terms of MPCE, while Ladakh and Lakshadweep have the lowest figures.

Understanding Food Expenditure Trends

- The proportion of food expenditure has steadily decreased from 1999-2000 onwards, while non-food expenditure has risen correspondingly.
- This shift signifies enhanced incomes, greater spending on healthcare, education, clothing, conveyance, and entertainment.
- Within food consumption expenditure, the share of cereals and pulses has reduced over time.

National Statistical Office (NSO) – Driving Core Statistical Activities

- NSO was established in 2019 by merging the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).

- C. Rangarajan Committee first proposed NSO's establishment.
- It operates under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- Its primary role is to collect, compile, and disseminate reliable and pertinent statistical data.

Amul, The Backbone of India's Dairy Sector: A Golden Jubilee Tribute

1: The Success of Amul: An Emblem of Empowerment

- Amul was established in 1946 as the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited in Anand, Gujarat.
- The prime mover behind Amul was Tribhuvandas Patel, supported by luminaries like Morarji Desai and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- Amul turned the dairy market around in 1950, functioning as a brand for the dairy products churned out by cooperative organisations.
- It is currently managed by the GCMMF (Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation), which represents over 3.6 million milk producers in Gujarat.
- The success of the 'Amul Model' or Anand Pattern is firmly rooted in an egalitarian approach that places power and responsibility in the hands of small-scale producers.
- Amul's pathway to success has become an internationally-acclaimed case study in the arena of cooperative economics and rural development.
- Practically, the White Revolution or Operation Flood in India, launched in the 1970s was brought to life due to Amul's forward-thinking initiatives.
- Not only serving the domestic market, but Amul also exports its products to more than 50 countries today.

2: Understanding India's White Revolution or Operation Flood

- Commissioned by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) under Verghese Kurien's (known as 'Father of White Revolution in India') leadership in 1965, the White Revolution or Operation Flood aimed to link rural milk producers with urban consumers via dairy cooperatives.
- Through three phases from 1970 to 1996, the initiative bolstered the nation's milk production and management efficiency, piloting India to the position of the world's largest milk producer.
- Post-Operation Flood, the sector witnessed deregulation, and the private sector made an entry with a foreign equity allowance of up to 51% (excluding malted products). This led to the creation of the Milk and Milk Products Order (MMPO) in 1992 to oversee and regulate the dairy industry.

3: Contemporary Dairy Production Scenario

- Today, India triumphantly holds the title of being the world's top milk producer, contributing to twenty-four percent of global milk production as of 2021-22.
- The last decade witnessed a rise of almost 60% in milk production, and a per capita availability increase of about 40%.
- The states excelling in milk production are Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh.
- The industry is flourishing at a pace of 6% per year, and India exports dairy products worth USD 284.65 Mn worldwide.

4: Initiatives and Challenges in Dairy Sector

- Various initiatives have been launched, such as the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF), National Programme for Dairy Development, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana, Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) to Livestock Farmers, Rashtriya Gokul Mission, National Livestock Mission to boost the dairy industry.
- Despite this, challenges persist, including low milk yield due to inferior quality feed, inadequate veterinary care, obstacles in milk collection and

processing, adulteration concerns, disparities in profit distribution and frequent cattle diseases.

5: The Road Ahead

- Priorities for the future include strengthening veterinary care, enhancing infrastructure, funding research and development in genetics, nutrition, and disease management, and promoting farmer cooperatives.
- The Amul journey provides a powerful model for addressing these challenges, through empowerment, process management, and business innovation.

INFAAR 2019-2022 Report: Examining Antimicrobial Resistance in India's Fisheries and Livestock Sectors

1: A Brief about INFAAR and its New Report

- The Indian Network for Fishery and Animal Antimicrobial Resistance (INFAAR), initiated by ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) in tandem with the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), is a dedicated platform to keep tabs on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in India's aquaculture and veterinary sectors.
- Recently, they released the first-ever national report documenting AMR surveillance in the country's fisheries and livestock sectors (i.e., the INFAAR 2019-22 Report).

2: Understanding Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

- Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is a global concern where microorganisms like bacteria, viruses, fungi, etc., evolve resistance against antimicrobial medicines, making them ineffective in treating infections.

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- Misuse of certain medications like oxytocin in dairy industries contributes towards this issue.

3: Key Observations from the INFAAR Report

- The INFAAR report revealed a notably high resistance (60% or higher) to penicillin in the fisheries sector, primarily by Staphylococcus.
- Even higher resistance levels were observed in the livestock sector, particularly among E. coli and Staphylococci.
- Antibiotic usage seems to be more prevalent in organised and contractual farming practices.
- The data gathered by INFAAR for this report covers the years 2019 through 2022, and includes information from three aquaculture systems and several major food-producing animals.

4: Other Initiatives against AMR

- Besides INFAAR, several other initiatives are on board to battle the rising tide of AMR, including the AMR Surveillance Network and the National One Health Program for Prevention and Control of Zoonoses.
- The Integrated One Health Surveillance Network for Antimicrobial Resistance and the GLASS IT Platform, a web-based platform, are dedicated to global data sharing on AMR.
- Furthermore, Operation AMRITH (Antimicrobial Resistance Intervention For Total Health) focuses on implementing interventions for comprehensive health protection.

5: Importance and Insights

- The INFAAR report provides critical insights into the prevalence and pattern of AMR in India's aquaculture and livestock sectors. The findings highlight the sectors and regions requiring urgent action.
- Monitoring AMR is imperative to public health safety, as it can lead to severe outcomes if infections cannot be controlled due to antimicrobial resistance.
- The initiative helps in planning and executing suitable interventions, thereby contributing towards

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achieving the objectives of the National Action Plan on AMR.

Sudden Rise in Challenges faced by Indian Gig Workers: A Detailed Look

1: Background - Gig Workers in the Indian Scenario

- Gig Workers: They work on a temporary, flexible basis, often for multiple employers performing different jobs or services. They are typically independent contractors rather than traditional employees and have more control over when and where they work.

- Gig Economy: It refers to a market system in which temporary positions are common and organisations recruit independent workers for short-term jobs.

2: The Current State - What the Recent Study Revealed?

- Extensive Working Hours: Around 33% of app-based cab drivers work for more than 14 hours a day, with over 83% working more than 10 hours. Over 60% of drivers from SC and ST work over 14 hours daily.

- Low Wages: More than 43% of gig workers earn less than Rs 500 daily or Rs 15,000 monthly after deducting all costs. Additionally, 34% of delivery workers earn less than Rs 10,000 a month. These income disparities contribute to existing social inequalities.

- Financial Hardships: A whopping 72% of cab drivers and 76% of delivery persons face obstacles managing expenses.

- Work Conditions: Demanding work hours leading to physical exhaustion and increase in the risk of

accident, customer misbehaviour, and issues such as ID deactivation are notable problems.

3: Social Safety Net for Gig Workers - Why is it Essential?

- Providing social security to gig workers is crucial due to economic security, the flexibility of the sector resulting in job security and income uncertainty. It can lead to a healthier and more productive workforce, ensure equity in opportunities and secure long-term financial security.

4: The Roadblocks in Providing Social Security Benefits to Gig Workers

- Challenges include blurred boundaries between self-employment and dependent employment, determining company obligations, appropriate funding mechanisms, efficient data sharing, and coordination among gig platforms, as well as educating gig workers about their rights.

5: Possible Solutions for Ensuring Social Security for Gig Workers

- The Code on Social Security, 2020, provides for gig workers, and the rules are yet to be framed. Drawing lessons from international practices, expanding employer responsibilities and eliminating the practice of classifying gig workers as self-employed are some possible solutions.

6: Government Initiatives for Gig Workers

- The Code on Social Security, 2020, requires gig employers to contribute to a Social Security Fund overseen by a government-led board.
- The Code on Wages, 2019, provides for universal minimum wage and floor wage across organised and unorganised sectors, inclusive of gig workers.

7: Conclusion - The Long Road Ahead

- Though certain steps have been taken to ensure the well-being of gig workers, the concerns are deep-rooted and call for comprehensive reforms and stricter enforcement of existing laws.

RBI Extends Timeline for Regulatory Sandbox

1. Introduction and Overview:
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently extended the period for completing different stages of a Regulatory Sandbox (RS) to nine months. This is a two-month increase from the previous duration.
- The concept of a Regulatory Sandbox originated from the recommendations of an inter-regulatory Working Group constituted by RBI in 2016 to explore FinTech's granular aspects and their potential regulatory implications.
- The RS allows the live testing of new financial products or services within a controlled regulatory environment, permitting relaxation rules for testing.

2. Current Progress:
- The RS aims to promote responsible innovation in financial services, improve efficiencies and benefit consumers.
- The sandbox offers a formal avenue for regulators to engage with the ecosystem and develop regulations that foster innovation.
- Potential applicants for the RS include Fintechs, banks, and companies supporting financial services businesses.

3. Advantages and Challenges:
- Benefits: The RS provides various benefits such as; Regulatory Inputs, Enhanced Knowledge, Cost-Effective Testing, and contribution to Financial Inclusion.
- Challenges: Some potential challenges associated with RS include Flexibility and Time Constraints, securing case-by-case authorizations,

the need for Regulatory Approvals even after successful sandbox testing, and more.

4. Future Prospects:
- It is suggested to simplify the application procedures, increase transparency, provide comprehensive support for innovators, and establish fast-track approval mechanisms for validated innovations to enhance RS's effectiveness.

5. RS Implementation in India:
- In 2019, the RBI introduced the first regulatory sandbox program which facilitates live testing of innovative financial products and services in a secure environment.
- The RBI sandbox operates on a thematic cohort basis, such as retail payments, cross-border transactions, or MSME lending.

6. Key Elements of RS:
- The RSA operates on thematic cohorts emphasising financial inclusion, payments and lending, digital KYC, etc.
- The RBI may grant some regulatory relaxations for the RS.
- Certain sectors are excluded from the RS, including credit registry, cryptocurrency, initial coin offerings, etc.

7. Extension to Telecom Sector:
- Emulating the RS model, the government introduced a "Millennium Spectrum Regulatory Sandbox" initiative. This includes a Spectrum Regulatory Sandbox (SRS) and Wireless Test Zones (WiTe Zones) to streamline telecom R&D activities and explore new spectrum bands for technological advancements.

This strategic approach taken by the RBI to extend the RS timeline might further pave the way for more innovative and effective financial products and services, potentially boosting both the sector's growth and overall economic stability.

NABARD's Rs. 1,750-crore Fund Allocation to Boost Agri-startups

1: Unveiling NABARD's Ambitious plan for Agri-startups

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is all set to roll out a Rs. 1,000-crore initiative designed to help agri-startups.
- This initiative goes hand-in-hand with an additional allocation of Rs. 750 crore, targeted for pre-seed investments in new, unproven ideas.
- The objective behind this move is to shift agricultural funding from traditional agriculture to innovative and technology-driven urban and rural enterprises.
- The scheme is part of a broader initiative to transition from production credit to investment credit in the agricultural sector.

2: Decoding Agri-startups and the Challenges They Face

- Agri-startups are emerging businesses that aim to revolutionise the agricultural sector by creating innovative solutions, technologies, or business models.
- The startup services as part of this initiative range from providing information on crop yields and pest infestations to offering farming as a service.
- Despite the potential in agri-startups, they face challenges such as a lack of seed funding, limited knowledge of available technology, and issues with the maturity of agribusiness incubators.

3: Government's Endeavour to Aid Agri-Startups

- The government has previously launched several other programmes to support this growing sector.
- These include the Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM), 2021, Innovation, and Agri-Entrepreneurship Development Programme under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).

- The government aids agri-startups via priority sector lending and offering support through the NIDHI Seed Support Program (NIDHI-SSP) under the Department of Science & Technology (DST).

4: NABARD's Nabventures— A Boon for Rural Agriculture Startups

- Nabventures, a subsidiary of NABARD, is slated to manage the proposed Rs 750 crore Blended Capital fund to help agricultural start-ups and rural enterprises.
- The aim of this Blended Capital fund is to help pre-seed startups with unproven ideas or uncertain growth potential, specifically those with insufficient equity for scaling.
- This funding will encompass startups in agri-tech, animal husbandry, fisheries, food processing, and biotechnology sectors.
- This capital support scheme launched by NABARD is modelled after the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) blended finance strategy to bolster sustainable development in developing nations.

RBI Integrated Ombudsman Scheme: A Sweeping Initiative for Streamlined Financial Conflict Resolution

1. Introduction

- The term 'Ombudsman' is a concept originated from Sweden and refers to an officer appointed by the legislature to attend to complaints against a service or administrative body, providing both a resolution for conflicts and a sense of security for ordinary people against public organisations. In India, an Ombudsman is assigned to settle grievances in sectors like Insurance, Income Tax, and Banking.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in its recent report, has noted a massive 68.2% increase in complaints under its Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (IOS) in FY 2023, with figures touching

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703,000. This development has marked a significant surge from FY22's 9.4% and FY21's 15.7% increase.

2. Overview of the RBI Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS)

- The RB-IOS is an initiative to unite three of RBI's Ombudsman schemes that cater to Banking (2006), NBFCs (2018), and digital transactions (2019).
- This consolidated scheme's primary objective is to address customer complaints over service deficiencies by RBI regulated entities. These entities include banks, NBFCs (Non-banking Financial Companies), and prepaid instrument players.
- RB-IOS covers non-scheduled primary co-operative banks with a ₹50 crore and above deposit size, reflecting a "One Nation One Ombudsman" ethos.

3. Necessity of the Integrated Ombudsman Scheme

- Since the rollout of the first Ombudsman scheme in the 1990s, consumers often found issues with the system, primarily due to the lack of grounds on which they could question the regulated entity's conduct.
- Integrating systems (banking, NBFC, digital payments), extending complaint grounds, and dissolving jurisdictional issues are expected to increase consumer participation.

4. Defining Features

- The scheme operates on the premise of 'deficiency in service' as the reason for filing a complaint, with a finite exclusion list. Earlier barriers of complaint rejection based on grounds coverage have been eliminated.
- Its introduction has seen a centralised receipt and processing centre established in Chandigarh.
- Artificial Intelligence tools have been introduced to improve coordination between banks and investigation agencies.
- Customers can file complaints, track them, and offer feedback through a single email address.

5. Appellate Authority

- The RBI's Executive Director in charge of the Consumer Education and Protection Department would serve as the Appellate Authority under the integrated scheme.

6. Importance and Expected Outcome

- The Integrated Ombudsman Scheme is a significant step towards an improved customer complaint resolution mechanism for RBI's regulated bodies.
- The initiative aims to promote a user-friendly, consistent, and streamlined system that will augment customer satisfaction and foster financial inclusivity.

The Ambitious India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement

1: Introduction and Overview

- The Government of India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), consisting of countries Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein, have recently formalised a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).
- The primary aim of the agreement is to boost investments and augment trade in goods and services between India and the EFTA countries.

2: The European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

- The EFTA is an intergovernmental organisation, established in 1960 involving four member countries (Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein).
- The organisation supports the promotion of free trade and economic integration among its members while operating in parallel with the European Union (EU).
- Remarkably, these four member states (EFTA countries) participate in the European Single

Market and are part of the Schengen Area but are not a part of the European Union Customs Union.

3: Overview of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)

- India and EFTA have established an agreement that includes 14 chapters focusing on market access related to goods, rules of origin, trade facilitation, and trade remedies.
- This is the fourth such agreement that India has signed since 2014 – previously with Mauritius, the UAE, and Australia.
- The TEPA is primarily designed to encourage target-oriented investment and job creation.

4: Key Points of the TEPA

- EFTA has made a commitment to promote investments in India to increase the stock of FDI by USD 100 billion within 15 years.
- Furthermore, EFTA aims to facilitate the generation of 1 million direct employment opportunities in India through these investments.
- EFTA is offering 92.2% of its tariff lines, which covers 99.6% of India's exports, excluding sensitive sectors such as dairy, soya, coal, and certain agricultural products.

5: Opportunities Presented by TEPA for India

- The TEPA presents a wide range of opportunities for Indian exporters, then they will get access to specialised inputs and more markets.
- Indian companies can use Switzerland as their hub to extend their reach to the EU market.
- The agreement will give a substantial boost to India's 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives by encouraging domestic manufacturing in sectors like Infrastructure, Manufacturing, Pharmaceuticals, among others.

6: Challenges for India

- Traditionally, India has a trade deficit with a significant portion of its top trade partners except for the U.S.
- The India-EFTA deal may also contribute to this trade deficit issue despite the investment commitment made by EFTA.
- Other potential challenges include difficulties in accessing the EFTA market, especially Switzerland, due to the complex web of tariffs, quality standards, and approval requirements.

7: Conclusion

- The TEPA could significantly impact India's trade and employment scenarios, marking a significant step in India's economic diplomacy.
- However, overcoming the potential challenges and leveraging the agreement's potential will be crucial if India is to maximise the benefits from the established TEPA with EFTA.

India's First Integrated Oil Palm Processing Unit Kick-starts Operations in Arunachal Pradesh

1. National Emphasis on Oil Palm: Charting A New Path

- Operation start of India's first integrated oil palm processing unit in Arunachal Pradesh by 3F Oil Palm, one of India's biggest oil palm development companies.
- The inauguration was conducted virtually by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 9th during his visit to Itanagar.
- The state-of-the-art oil palm factory is part of Mission Palm Oil under NMEO-OP, featuring facilities such as a palm waste-based power plant and a zero-discharge effluent plant among others.
- The government intends to use the Mission Palm Oil to attain self-sufficiency in edible oils and boost farmer income.

2. The Rise in Demand for Edible Oils: Looking to the Future

   - Rising demand for edible oils and growing significance of palm oil to food security in the nation.
   - Government's ambitious plan to invest 1,100 crores in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh by the year 2030, aiming to create 1,700 jobs.
   - Identification of 1,30,000 hectares of land suitable for oil palm cultivation in Arunachal Pradesh, accounting for 33% of the government-designated fit for cultivation area in the Northeast region alone.

3. NMEO-OP: Aiming High for Self-Sufficiency

   - Launch of the National Mission for Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) in August 2021.
   - The mission's goal to increase oil palm cultivation and boost crude palm oil production to 11.20 lakh tonnes by 2025-26.
   - Successful establishment of 111 nurseries and 12 seed gardens, demonstrating the potential for area expansion under the mission.
   - Generous benefits and assistance offered to farmers, such as hedge fund against global price volatility, special assistance for planting material and management, tools for harvesting, and establishment of custom hiring centres.

4. Palm Oil & Global Supply Chains: A Prolific Resource

   - Global production of 73 Million tonnes in 2020, marking palm oil as the most extensively used vegetable oil.
   - India stands as the topmost importer of palm oil, serving as 40% of its vegetable oil consumption.
   - India's reliance on Indonesia for meeting half of its annual requirement of 8.3 MT of palm oil.

5. The Prominence & Versatility of Palm Oil

   - Palm oil, an edible oil derived from the mesocarp of the fruit of oil palms, is used in diverse products from food to hygiene and cleaning products.

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   - The use of crude palm oil as 'green diesel' in biofuel production.
   - Increased efforts encouraged among Indian farmers to expand palm oil production due to its importance for India's cooking requirements and potential for diversifying procurement.

Polity

Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023: Introducing Changes in Electronic Evidence Provisions

1: About Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023

- Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) is a new law enacted to replace the Indian Evidence Act.
- Introduced changes in electronic evidence provisions including definitions and admissibility procedures.
- It is one of the three new criminal laws to be implemented from July 1, 2024. The other two laws are the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (replacing the IPC) and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (replacing CrPC).
- This Act retains much of the original content of the Indian Evidence Act with slight modifications in the scope of secondary evidence and electronic evidence provisions.

2: Issues with Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023

- The Supreme Court acknowledges the susceptibility of electronic records to tampering in the absence of safeguards, potentially leading to miscarriage of justice.

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- Ambiguity exists regarding the criteria for admissibility of electronic records.
- Accused individuals, irrespective of whether they are within or outside police custody, still face discrimination.
- Potential for coercion in obtaining information from individuals in police custody, which can impact the reliability and willingness of such evidence.
- There is an over-reliance on expert opinions for validating electronic evidence which can add more workload to forensic laboratories and delay legal proceedings.

3: Enhancing the Effectiveness of BSA

- Introduce secure handling of electronic evidence and ensure a proper chain of custody as per the recommendations of the Standing Committee.
- Follow guidelines by the Karnataka High Court for safeguarding during search and seizure.
- Address coercion-related evidence, and revise custody-related provisions for fairness as per the Law Commission's recommendations.
- Malimath Committee recommendations include the introduction of minor violation category 'social welfare offences', adoption of a 'mixed system' blending adversarial and inquisitorial elements, and lowering the standard of proof for conviction.

4: International Perspective of Electronic Evidence Provisions

- The European Union is working towards mutual admissibility of electronic evidence in criminal proceedings, implying uniform standards across member states.
- Key aspects include ensuring only verifiable electronic evidence is used, secure handling from production to custody, and involving IT experts for fair evaluation at the accused's request.

5: Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023: A Glimpse into History and Geography

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- BSA 2023 will replace the Indian Evidence Act from July 1, 2024, making it a significant development in the legal history of India.
- Geographically, the law will be applicable across India, offering a uniform framework for electronic evidence proceedings nationwide.

Reformative Measures for Temples in Karnataka: Introduction of Karnataka Temple Bill

Karnataka Temple Bill: An Overview and Its Intentions

- The Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was recently passed by the State Legislative Assembly of Karnataka.
- The Bill proposes to create a Common Pool Fund by collecting 5% from temples with gross income between ₹10 lakh - ₹1 crore, and a 10% levy on temples with an income above ₹1 crore annually.
- The fund is proposed to be administered by a body named 'Rajya Dharmika Parishath'.
- The fund aims to provide for welfare measures such as insurance coverage, death relief funds, and scholarships for children from families of priests, as well as maintenance of state-controlled 'C' category temples with an annual income below ₹5 lakh.

Comparison with Temple Revenue Collection Systems in Other States

- In Telangana, religious institutions with annual earnings above ₹50,000 must contribute 1.5% of their income to the state government.
- Kerala manages its temples through state-run Devaswom (temple) Boards.
- In Uttarakhand, 51 temples and shrines, including Badrinath, Kedarnath, Yamunotri, and Gangotri, were liberated from state government control in 2021.

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Historical Perspective on Regulation of Temples in India

- The Justice Party introduced the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act in 1927.
- In 1950, The Law Commission of India aspired to regulate the misuse of temple funds and assets via an act of law.
- The Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (TNHR&CE) Act was enacted and its constitutional validity was questioned in the Supreme Court. However, in the famous Shirur Mutt case, the Supreme Court upheld the law while nullifying certain provisions. The revised TNHR&CE Act, legislated in 1959, still stands today.

The Hindu Religious Endowments Commission: An Insight

- In 1960, the Hindu Religious Endowments Commission was established by the Government of India, led by Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar.
- The Commission's role was to investigate issues related to Hindu Public Religious Endowments.
- The Commission stated the necessity of government control over temples to prevent their mismanagement and neglect, noting that the lack of regulations in some states led to general apathy towards these institutions.

Understanding the Mechanism and Implications of Rajya Sabha Elections

1: Rajya Sabha Elections: The Basic Procedure

- The Rajya Sabha elections are held indirectly, by the elected members of each state's Legislative Assembly, according to Article 80 of the Indian Constitution.

- In situations where the number of candidates exceeds the vacancies, the Rajya Sabha elections are necessitated.
- The Representation of the People Act, 1951 was amended in 2003 to prevent cross-voting, enforcing open ballot system during the elections.

2: Allocation of Seats and Election Process

- The Rajya Sabha houses a total of 250 members representing states and Union Territories.
- A certain number of seats are allocated to states based on their population.
- Elections occur through an indirect system of proportional representation using Single Transferable Vote (STV).
- Quotas determine the number of votes required for a candidate to secure a seat.
- The process of preferential voting and the management of surpluses and eliminations ensure an efficient election process.

3: Significant Cases and Legal Amendments

- In 2018, the Supreme Court denied the option of "None Of The Above" (NOTA) in the Rajya Sabha elections.
- Parliamentary privileges do not exempt legislators from criminal prosecution for taking bribes, as illustrated by the overturning of the judgement regarding the JMM bribery case in 2024.

4: Applicability of the Anti-Defection Law

- The Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, known as the "anti-defection" law, does not apply to Rajya Sabha elections.
- Party members are not obliged to adhere to party instructions during these elections, leading to instances of cross-voting.

5: Understanding and Impacts of Cross Voting

- Cross-voting happens when a party member votes for a candidate from another party.
- Disagreements, inducements, and ideological differences often lead to cross-voting.
- Cross-voting can compromise representation, encourage corruption, weaken party discipline, and undermine democratic values.
- Conversely, cross-voting can also indicate independence, serve as a system of checks and balances, and foster accountability.

6: Supreme Court Rulings Regarding the Tenth Schedule and Rajya Sabha Elections

- The Supreme Court has upheld the system of open ballot for Rajya Sabha elections while recognizing that disciplinary actions can be faced by those who vote against party lines.
- The apex court ruled that actions both inside and outside the legislative body can infer voluntary giving up of membership.

7: Ways to Improve the Election Process

- Stricter laws and regulations are required to combat electoral malpractices.
- Promoting discipline and accountability within political parties can also lead to significant improvements in the democratic process.

The Patents (Amendment) Rules, 2024: Streamlining the Indian Patent System

I. Introduction

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently notified the Patents Amendment Rules, 2024. This will introduce substantial changes to the Indian
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patent practice and procedure, affecting inventors, applicants, and patent stakeholders.

II. Key Changes Brought About by the Amendment

- Accelerated Patent Examination Process: Patent applicants can now file a Request for Examination (RFE) in a reduced timeline of 31 months from the priority date, compared to the previous 48 months. This effectively speeds up the patent examination process.

- Simplified Form Submission: After receiving the First Examination Report (FER), applicants need to only compose and deliver an updated, single Form 3.

- 'Certificate of Inventorship' Introduction: This amendment will allow inventors to be recognized for their contributions to patented inventions, filling a significant gap as the Indian patent certificate does not currently identify inventors.

- Cap on Filing Statements: Patent holders now only need to file patents once every three years instead of once every financial year.

- Changes in Opposition Procedures: The solicitation period of recommendations from the Opposition Board and the response time for the applicants have been revised.

- Divisional Application Amendments: In accordance with a 2023 Delhi High Court decision, a divisional application for an invention mentioned in a provisional or complete application can now be filed or extended to a further divisional application.

III. Definition and Basics of a Patent

A patent is a statutory right given to an inventor by the Government granting exclusive rights to the inventor for a limited period. It precludes others from manufacturing, using, selling, importing the patented product or process without the patentee's consent. The patent system in India is regulated by

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the amenable Patents Act, 1970 and its subsequent amendments.

IV. Term of a Patent

A patent in India is valid for 20 years from the date of filing the application. For applications submitted under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), the period will be 20 years from the international filing date.

V. Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

The PCT is an international treaty encompassing over 150 contracting states. It facilitates patent protection for an invention simultaneously in multiple countries through an international patent application which can be filed with the respective national patent office or the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in Geneva.

In conclusion, the Patents (Amendment) Rules, 2024 introduces numerous pivotal changes to accelerate and streamline the patent procedure in India, strengthening the country's patent regime and fostering better recognition of inventors' contributions.

A Deep Dive into the Need for Reformation in India's Undertrial Bail System

1: Eye-Opening Statistic of India's Undertrial Scenario

- India harbours a stark industrial population with 75% of its prison folks not yet legally convicted.
- Growing concerns reflect on the inefficiency of India's bail mechanism, triggering the Supreme Court's call for reform.
- This pressing issue comes to light in the Satender Kumar Antil vs Central Bureau Of Investigation case, 2022.

2: Pitfalls in the Current Bail Adjudication System

- India's bail adjudication depends heavily on specific case-based court discretion.
- Courts tend to deny bail or set strict conditions when faced with factors such as serious offence, gravity and potential absconding.
- There is a lack of clarity in rationale as the reasons for bail denial aren't frequently stated.

3: Distinct Disadvantage for the Marginalised

- In India, marginalised individuals bear the brunt of bail exceptions, with higher instances of denials or stringent conditions.
- Bail compliance is challenging with roadblocks like lack of funds, property, identity proof, family support, and understanding of court procedures.

4: Ineffectiveness of Existing Laws & Need for Reformation

- The Fair Trial Programme's data indicates loopholes in current bail laws, where undertrials often can't comply with bail conditions, causing further detention.
- The system is biassed towards the assumption that every arrested individual can afford bail or have influential social connections, overlooking the reality.

5: Examining the Custody Types

- In Police Custody, the accused is detained by police in a lock-up to prevent interference with evidence or witnesses.
- Judicial Custody places the accused under the Magistrate's supervision to avert evidence or witness tampering post police custody.

6: Bridging the Gap: The Way Forward

- India requires major bail law revisions to level the playing field, irrespective of individuals' socio-economic backgrounds.
- The Supreme Court suggests a special bail legislation mirroring the UK's Bail Act, to establish a general bail right and explicit bail decision criteria.

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- It's crucial to provide undertrials with legal support for court appearances and fulfilling bail conditions.
- Arrest safeguards should be inclusive, especially towards disadvantaged populations.
- Support programs could be set up to assist undertrials through legal aid, financial aid, and social assistance.
- Cross-sector collaboration can help create comprehensive solutions for bail reform.
- Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are integral to keep track of working reforms and areas of concern.

Note: The Fair Trial Programme is a Delhi-based criminal justice initiative at the National Law University, aiming to secure fair trials for undertrial prisoners. It leads young professionals, such as lawyers and social workers, in assisting the State Legal Services Authority.

Demands for Statehood - The Unfolding Scenario in Ladakh

1: Resurgence of Demand for Statehood in Icy Ladakh

- Thousands of Ladakh residents, battling harsh sub-zero temperatures, are out on the streets pushing for their demands of statehood.
- Their demands revolve around the unique needs of the region including job opportunities, land protection and parliamentary representation.

2: The Genesis of the Demand

- The origin of these demands traces back to the decision made by the Government in 2019 which revoked Article 370, thereby removing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.
- This decision culminated in the division of Jammu and Kashmir into Ladakh and the remaining regions.
- Post-division, the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) were formed in

the successive year by the districts of Leh and Kargil to address public grievances and demands.

3: Unravelling the Demands of Ladakh

- In line with their determination to assume greater control over their affairs, the residents of Ladakh are advocating for the elevation of Ladakh from a Union Territory to a fully-fledged State.
- The people's aspiration for job reservations has been partly fulfilled by the Ladakh administration's decision to raise the Scheduled Tribe (ST) reservation in direct recruitments from 10% to 45% in 2023.
- The articulation for distinct parliamentary constituencies for Leh and Kargil underlines an appreciation of the unique demographic and geographical peculiarities of each region.
- Civil society groups are rallying for the inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule, as safeguarding their land, resources, and employment have become paramount concerns following the revocation of Article 370.

4: Understanding the 6th Schedule

- Under Article 244, the Sixth Schedule authorises the formation of Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) within designated states.
- Currently operational in tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram, these councils enjoy legislative, judicial and administrative powers.
- Their mandate includes lawmaking and governing local infrastructure on a variety of matters such as land, forests, and village administration.

5: Insights into Ladakh

- Administered by India as a Union Territory, Ladakh is strategically positioned within the larger Kashmir region.
- It shares borders with Tibet, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and China.
- Historically, as a trade nexus, Ladakh continues to be of strategic importance. Leh and Kargil are its major towns and are home to a diverse range of religious groups.

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- Despite a sparse population, cultural ties with Tibet persist in Ladakh. It has a predominantly tribal population, with scheduled tribes such as Balti Beda, Bot (or Boto), Brokpa (or Drokpa, Dard, Shin), Changpa, Garra, Mon, and Purigpa.

Gender Disparities in Global Healthcare: Insights from the Fair Share for Health and Care Report

1: Introduction and Key Highlights of the WHO Report

• The World Health Organization recently released a report titled 'Fair Share for Health and Care', examining the gender gap in global healthcare.
• According to the report, 67% of the global health and care workforce are women, but they also bear the brunt of 76% of unpaid care work.
• These disparities significantly limit women's economic empowerment and maintain gender inequality in health systems.
• Women are grossly underrepresented in leadership roles in healthcare, mostly occupying lower-status positions.

2: Implications of Gender Disparities and Recommendations

• The gender pay gap limits women's contribution to their family and community welfare. On average, 90% of women's earnings go towards their families' well-being, compared to 30-40% of men's.
• Violence against women in healthcare is alarmingly high, with half of all employees in the sector reporting experiencing violence at work.
• The report urges nations to invest in public health systems, improve working conditions and wages, and address the gender gap in care.

3: The Scenario in India

• Indian women spend approximately 73% of their total daily work time on unpaid work compared to men's 11%.
• The situation worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic, with 59% of the 4.5 million people who took on unpaid work being women.

4: Tackling Gender Disparity – Government Initiatives

• Several initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Mahila Shakti Kendra, and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh have been launched in India to address gender disparity.
• Government schemes like Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna bank account opening for girls, Programmes like Stand-Up India and Mahila e-Haat for promoting female entrepreneurship have been initiated.
• In an effort to increase the participation of women in decision-making and governance, 33% of the seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions have been reserved for women.

5: Concluding Remarks

While these measures constitute steps towards gender parity, the existence of such significant disparities as reported by WHO indicates the need for further concerted efforts. Ensuring equal pay, mitigating violence and discrimination, enhancing women's representation in leadership and decision-making roles, and valuing caregiving duties are essential for a just (fair) and inclusive health and care system. Continual monitoring, more robust policies, and a commitment to actionable strategies are required to close the gender gap in healthcare.

A Deep Dive into the Delhi Excise Policy Case: CM's Arrest, Role of ED, and Future Governance

1: Unravelling the Delhi Excise Policy Case

- The Delhi Excise Policy Case refers to the controversy surrounding the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22, which was implemented in November 2021 but later scrapped in July 2022 due to allegations of corruption.
- The Delhi CM, according to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), played a pivotal role in the scam, prompting his arrest and custody.
- Key accusations in this case involve egregious decisions leading to significant financial losses, alleged kickbacks to private companies, formation of cartels, and electoral influence.

2: The Functionality of a Governing CM from Jail

- The Indian Constitution does not directly address whether a CM can legally run the government from jail, but courts have emphasised constitutional morality, good governance, and public trust.
- Unlike the President or the Governors, CMs do not enjoy immunity from civil or criminal proceedings. They can be removed from office upon conviction.
- Practical challenges such as restricted access to official documents or communication barriers pose significant hurdles to a CM governing from jail.

3: Probing into ED's Role and Structure

- The ED, under the Ministry of Finance, is tasked with investigating money laundering offences and foreign exchange violations.
- Recruitment is open and also draws officers from other investigation agencies like IRS, IPS, and IAS.
- The ED is governed by acts such as Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999 (FEMA), Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), and Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA), to ensure financial integrity and compliance in India.

4: Possible Implications: President's Rule

- Impracticality of governing from jail could lead to the Lt. Governor citing 'failure of constitutional machinery in the state,' which might trigger President's rule under Article 239AB of the Constitution.
- The President's rule entails bringing the national capital under the Union government's direct control until new arrangements are made.

5: Understanding Legal Framework and Offence specifics

- As per the Representation of the People Act, 1951, a CM can only be disqualified or removed from office when convicted.
- The accused should forfeit the right to the office due to public faith in their moral conduct, as per the Manoj Narula versus Union of India Case, 2014.
- Kickback, as alleged in this case, refers to illicit payments made to facilitate or influence a transaction or decision, escalating the significance of the case.

This case reaffirms the need for rigorous oversight and adherence to the principles of good governance in public office. With the impending process of justice, it exemplifies how even the highest office bearers are not above the law, thereby bolstering public faith in the Indian legal system.

In-depth Analysis of Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code Bill 2024

Introduction:

The Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2024, recently passed by the Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly, has sparked wide-ranging conversations. The Bill, which aims to streamline laws concerning marriage and property inheritance, is now awaiting President's approval. A notable

part of this Bill is the compulsory registration of live-in relationships, penalising them under certain circumstances, thereby opening a dialogue on individual freedom and the state's scope in monitoring private relationships.

I. Understanding the Uniform Civil Code (UCC):

- Origin & Constitutionality: The UCC's concept is rooted in Article 44 of the Constitution under the Directive Principles of State Policy. It urges the state to work towards establishing a common civil code for all citizens. However, its implementation lies at the government's discretion.
- Implementation across India: So far, only Goa has a UCC, inherited from the Portuguese Civil Code, 1867.
- Judicial Stance on UCC: The Supreme Court of India has, on several occasions, called for the implementation of UCC, highlighting it in landmark cases such as Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs. Shah Bano Begum (1985), Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India (1995), and John Vallamattom v. Union of India (2003). More recently, in Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira (2019), the court hailed Goa's UCC as an example for the rest of the country.
- Law Commission's Stand: In a 2018 consultation paper, the Law Commission opined that the formulation of a UCC was neither necessary nor desirable at that stage.

II. Insights into Uttarakhand's UCC Bill, 2024:

- Purpose: Uttarakhand's UCC Bill proposes to replace varying personal laws of different religions with a single set of laws dealing with marriage, divorce, adoption, and inheritance, as guided by Article 44.
- Proposals: Prohibition of polygamy, nikah halala, iddat, triple talaq, child marriage; uniform age for girls' marriage across religions, and obligatory registration of live-in relationships are among the key proposals of this Bill.
- Significance: This Bill promotes gender equality by ensuring equal treatment of men and women in
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matters such as property inheritance and marriage, with an intention to increase the property share for Muslim women from the current 25%.
- Exemptions: Scheduled Tribes, constituting around 3% of the state's population, are exempted from the Bill.

III. Concerns & Issues:

- Age constraints: The marriageable age continues to be 18 for women and 21 for men, despite ongoing discussions around this issue.
- Controversial Aspects: The mandatory registration of live-in relationships and criminalisation under non-compliance with certain conditions have raised concerns, potentially empowering the state to control consensual relationships and infringe on individual autonomy.

Unveiling the Proposal of One Nation, One Election (ONOE)

I. Understanding One Nation, One Election (ONOE)
- ONOE is a proposal to synchronise the timeline of all elections in India, encompassing Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, and local body elections.
- The objective behind ONOE is to streamline the electoral process, minimise disruptions to governance, and optimise political stability.

II. The Historical Perspective
- Prior to 1967, ONOE was the norm in the country.
- The Law Commission had previously recommended the synchronisation of all elections.

III. Outlining the Key recommendations of the High-Level Committee
- A phased transition is recommended, starting by aligning Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies elections.

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- It suggests holding municipal and panchayat elections within 100 days of Lok Sabha and State elections.
- Proposed amendments for simultaneous elections fall outside of Article 368(2), and thus do not require states' ratification.
- The recommendation also includes creating a single electoral roll and electoral identity cards.
- The committee suggests a constitutional authority of Parliament for ONOE implementation.

IV. Understanding the Benefits and Challenges of Simultaneous Elections

Benefits of Simultaneous Elections:
- Reduction in distraction in governance resulting from recurring elections.
- Addressal of political corruption through substantial reduction in election expenses.
- Leading to cost savings and optimization of electoral infrastructure.
- Offering greater convenience to citizens in voting.
- Better utilisation of law enforcement resources and reduced horse-trading.

Challenges Associated with ONOE:
- To renegotiate the constitutional framework to accommodate mid-tenure collapse of governments.
- Addressing logistical concerns associated with the implementation of ONOE.
- Addressing federalism concerns and maintaining state governments' autonomy and independence.
- Ensuring that recurrent elections and state-specific demands are not compromised.
- To prevent a biassed democratic structure.

V. Outline of the Prospective Way Forward

- Building consensus among diverse stakeholders for implementing simultaneous elections.
- Making necessary amendments to the Constitution and related Acts and Procedures.
- Ensuring substantial investment in electoral infrastructure and technology.
- Creating a legal framework to handle unexpected situations arising during the simultaneous election cycle.

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- Engaging in a massive awareness campaign to make voters understand the process, advantages, and challenges of simultaneous elections.

Decoding the New Digital Initiative - 'NITI for States'

1: Introduction

- The 'NITI for States' platform, recently inaugurated by the Union Minister of Electronics & Information Technology, is the latest digital endeavour that aspires to empower states and union territories to reach national development goals.
- The 'Viksit Bharat Strategy Room' at NITI Aayog has also been unveiled.

2: Unravelling the 'NITI for States' Platform

- This platform has been created by NITI Aayog to serve as a data repository, aiming to centralise integration across all states and union territories for more data-driven decision making.
- It exhibits real-time data monitoring and updates from 10 sectors and two specific themes - gender and climate change.
- Sectors encapsulated in this platform include agriculture, energy, health, livelihoods and skilling, manufacturing, MSMEs, tourism, urban, water resources and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene).
- Noteworthy features include an extensive knowledge base, multilingual accessibility, digital training modules, an expert help desk, and a feature for data integration leveraging data from the National Data & Analytics Platform (NDAP).

3: Exploring the 'Viksit Bharat Strategy Room'

- This interactive space permits end-users to authentically visualise and assess data, trends, and policies.

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- The strategy room is equipped with a voice-enabled AI for seamless interaction and allows connection with various stakeholders via video conferencing.
- It is aimed to be a replicable model that can be deployed at state, district, and block levels.

4: NITI Aayog's Development-Driven Initiatives Across States

- The development support services provided by NITI Aayog involve project planning, financing, and implementation, primarily focusing on infrastructure creation.
- Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) stands dedicated to rapid and effective transformation of the most under-developed districts across the country.
- Other specific programmes such as the Composite Water Management Index (CWMI), SDG India Index, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), and SATH (Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital) are some of the robust initiatives spearheaded by NITI Aayog.
- Recently, AIM in association with Meta launched Frontier Technology Labs (FTLs) in schools across India to foster innovation, with 10,000+ Atal Tinkering Labs established nationwide.

Given the vast potential of these programs, they can be employed as cue points for questions in government exams. These initiatives are significant in shaping the national development trajectory and the active role played by governmental bodies like NITI Aayog.

Ascending Numbers of Global Migrant Deaths in 2023: An Overview

1. Introduction:
Illegal Migration has gained the attention of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In 2023, IOM reported the death of 8,565 migrants on
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both land and sea routes, a disturbing increase of near 20% from the previous year. The data was monitored through the "Missing Migrants" project initiated back in 2014.

2. The International Organization for Migration (IOM):
- Originated in 1951 post World War II disruptions, IOM evolved from the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME).
- It underwent name changes reflecting its evolution as a migration agency and became a related organisation with the United Nations in 2016.
- Currently, it includes 175 Member States and 8 states with observer status. India became a member state on 18th June 2008.
- Notably, IOM has responded to various global crises such as Hungary in 1956, Chile in 1973, the Asian tsunami and Pakistan earthquake in 2004/2005, among others.

3. Threat to India's Security Due to Illegal Trans-Border Migration:
- Rampant Illegal migration has led to periodic clashes among citizens and migrants, undermining the rule of law, and compromising their constitutional rights.
- Illegal activities of migrants include fraudulent acquisition of identity cards, unauthorised voting, trans-border smuggling, militant organisation formation, and more, disturbing peace and order.
- Drastic rise in human trafficking and increase in militancy because of the impact on the existing Muslim community in the regions such as Assam.
- Infiltration by Islamic terrorists, adding an alarming dimension to India's security problem.

4. Factors Promoting Illegal Immigration:
- Political Factors: Discriminatory land laws, riots, and wars in countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan have been significant reasons for the dislocation of Hindus to India.
- Religious Discrimination: Manipulation of land laws by vested interest groups and corrupt

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administrators to dispossess Hindus from Bangladesh.

- Population Growth: A growing population demands more resources and when the resource distribution becomes unequal, it leads people to migrate to other lands.
- Stagnated Economic Growth and Joblessness: Slow industrial growth in comparison to the growing labour force makes people look for other locations with potential employment opportunities.
- Porous Borders: Indian borders shared with Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan are long and varied, which poses a challenge to management and control of illegal immigration.

To sum up, the escalating numbers of global migrant deaths in 2023 shed light on the intricate complexities of international migration policies. Illegal migration, owing to numerous socio-political and economic reasons, is a pressing global issue that requires collaborative global efforts for resolution.

Article 356 of the Indian Constitution and its Implications in Contemporary India

1. Background of Article 356 of the Indian Constitution
- Article 356, also known as "President's Rule," finds its roots in Section 93 of the 1935 Government of India Act.
- It is a situation in which the state government is suspended and the governor, a central appointee, presides over the state.
- This provision was first invoked in 1954.

2. Inception and Insights into Article 356
- The Article entails provisions in case of a failure of constitutional machinery in states.

- The President can dismiss the state government and impose the centre's rule.
- The President's Rule can either be acted upon when the state governor informs about a failure of state machinery, or the President independently becomes convinced of it.
- In respect of Article 365, the President's Rule can be invoked if a state disobeys the Union's directives.

3. Provoking Causes of President's Rule
- Invoking President's Rule usually occurs when the Centre, as part of its duty under Article 355, identifies that the state machinery has failed.
- It may also occur if the state government refuses to follow or execute directives from the Centre.

4. The Process and Provisions under Article 356
- The President, under this article, has the right to suspend the state government given a situation where the latter cannot function in accordance with the Constitution.
- The President may declare a national or state emergency under Articles 352 and 356 respectively.
- The Council of Ministers no more once this regulation is imposed, and the state comes directly under the Union government.
- The President's Rule must be approved by both houses of Parliament and can continue for a total of six months, extendable upon parliamentary approval to a maximum of three years.

5. Parliamentary Approval and Duration of President's Rule
- A proclamation declaring President's Rule must be approved by both Houses of Parliament within two months from the issuance date.
- The rule can last for six months initially, and can be extended every six months with the consent of the Parliament, for a maximum of three years.
- The 44th Amendment Act of 1978 introduced legislation to limit Parliament's ability to extend President's Rule beyond a year.

6. S.R. Bommai Vs. Union of India Case and its significance

- The dismissal of the S.R. Bommai government in Karnataka in 1989 under Article 356 was deemed arbitrary, leading to a case lodged in the Supreme Court.
- The ruling in 1994 clarified the misuse of Article 356 and set fair conditions for its invocation.

7. Critiques of President's Rule

- The invocation of Article 356 has often been criticised for being used arbitrarily to dispel state governments for political interests.
- It has been allegedly misused for suspending or dissolving Assemblies and preventing political parties from forming governments in states.
- The method of implementation of President's Rule has also faced criticism, however, in some instances, the enforcement was necessary.

This background and understanding of Article 356 form a crucial part of the Indian democratic machinery and must be comprehended by individuals preparing for government examinations. It gives insight into scenarios where the Centre can take over the governance of a state and the checks and balances in place to prevent misuse. Future aspirants must be well versed in this aspect of the Indian Constitution.

Revolutionising Indian Automotive Market: New Electric Vehicle Policy 2024

1: Introduction and Overview of the Policy

1. The Government of India has introduced the New Electric Vehicle Policy 2024, targeted at transforming India into an EV manufacturing powerhouse.

2. The policy strategically aligns with the 'Make in India' campaign to promote local manufacturing and technological advancement in the EV sector.

2: Key Highlights of the Policy

1. Allows duty reductions on EV imports. The custom duty slashes to 15% is applicable on EVs with a minimum CIF value of USD 35,000.

2. The policy's Import Cap and Investment Prerequisites stipulate a cap on the number of imported EVs at 8000 per year.

3. Manufacturers must make a minimum investment of Rs 4,150 crore to benefit from duty concessions.

4. The measure encourages the establishment of operational facilities within a 3-year timeline and the achievement of 25% minimum domestic value addition within the period.

5. The duty waived on imported EVs is capped at the investment made or Rs 6484 Cr.

3: Evolving EV Market in India

1. With India being the world's third-largest automobile market and one of the fastest-growing, the EV sector is poised to emerge as a significant category within the automotive industry.

2. Total EV registrations surpassed 1.5 million units by the end of 2023, showing robust growth in the EV market.

4: Other Electric Vehicle Initiatives in India

1. Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS) 2024, Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP), National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Storage, EV30@30 campaign, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Automobile and Auto Components, and National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) are other key initiatives aimed at encouraging EV adoption.

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5: Challenges Encountered by Indian EV Market

1. The dearth of charging infrastructure, high upfront cost of EVs, limited consumer awareness and lack of service centres present significant challenges in the EV market.

2. The market's dependence on subsidies and policy uncertainty further complicates long-term planning for automakers and consumers.

6: Future Course of Action

1. Expanding the charging infrastructure network, implementing battery swapping policy, and promoting innovation in battery technology are critical steps forward.

2. Besides, educational campaigns are necessary to increase consumer awareness about EV benefits.

In conclusion, the New Electric Vehicle Policy 2024 aims at revolutionising the Indian automobile market by promoting EV manufacturing, reducing dependency on oil imports, and fulfilling India's climate goals. While challenges persist, strategic planning and action can largely mitigate them, paving the way for a sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation system in India.

Science And Tech

Exploring the Role and Impact of Digital Governance in India and Future Prospects

Introduction and About Digital Governance

- In recent interaction, the Prime Minister of India and tech titan, Bill Gates, probed into the prospect of utilising Artificial Intelligence (AI) to strengthen digital governance in health, agriculture and education sectors.
- Digital Governance involves leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to deliver streamlined government services, facilitate transactions, and integrate disparate systems of government-to-business (G2B), government-to-customer (G2C) and government-to-government (G2G)
- Crucial within the ambit of digital governance is Data Governance, which is keenly anticipated with the maiden launch of India's Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA).

The Role of AI in Digital Governance

- AI is instrumental in Indian politics, specifically in election campaigns, maximising tech to surmount language barriers thereby promoting linguistic diversity and inclusive engagement.
- Crucially, AI is being harnessed to stimulate economic growth and life-quality enhancements for citizens.

Connective Digital Initiatives

- Vital digital governance initiatives like Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), CoWIN App, Aarogya Setu, e-Sanjeevani, and e-Hospital have been successful in reaching out to the corners of the country, transforming the healthcare landscape significantly.
- Looking at Digital Governance in Agriculture, the National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA) aims to accelerate agricultural progress using ICTs.

Internet Connectivity and the Digital Divide

- According to ICRIER's report, the digital divide is highly prevalent in the country, with almost 48% of Indians without internet access and a rural-urban divide reaching a whopping 58%, significantly higher than the world average of 49%.

- Counteracting this, according to IAMAI's 2023 report, nearly 52% of Indians have access to the internet.

Potential Threats and Challenges

- The increasing reliance on digital systems presents the risk of heightened cybersecurity threats. In 2022, close to 91% of Indian firms have faced ransomware attacks, resulting in financial loss for 55% of them.
- The implementation of DEPA and similar tools have sparked concerns regarding personal data security and privacy. Inappropriate implementation or management can lead to misuse or misappropriation of personal information.
- Digital inequality looms large as a significant concern wherein certain societal sections may fail to gain equal access to digital resources and services.
- Further, the system is challenged by the threat of AI-powered malware, deep fakes distortion, and vulnerability of existing infrastructure to cyber threats.

The Road Ahead

- Looking forward, Digital Empowerment and Online Education are highlighted as central components to reach a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 50% by 2035 as targeted in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- Some key government initiatives aiming to augment digital governance include myGov.in, UMANG, e-Office, Mobile Seva, and Digi-Locker, all developed with the distinct purpose of offering seamless citizen services.
- As India continues to rely heavily on digital governance, it is now critical more than ever before to build robust systems, address potential threats, and ensure fair and secure access to digital resources for all.

Pioneering a New Benchmark in AI: Anthropic's Clause 3 AI Chatbots

1. Introduction to Claude 3 AI Chatbots

- The recently announced Claude 3 AI models by artificial intelligence start-up Anthropic have been identified as ground-breaking in industry standards for numerous cognitive tasks.
- Anthropic, a competitor of OpenAI, was originally established by preceding leaders at ChatGPT.
- This AI start-up has closely associated itself with Amazon being its primary cloud computing partner whereas OpenAI has a significant partnership with Microsoft.

2. Claude 3: A Trio of Artificial Intelligence

- The Claude 3 family comprises three advanced AI models in consecutive order of abilities- Claude 3 Haiku, Claude 3 Sonnet, and Claude 3 Opus.
- Claude is a set of Large Language Models (LLMs) created by Anthropic.
- LLMs is a special group of generative AI models designed to comprehend and generate human-like text.
- The Claude chatbot is skilled in handling text, voice messages, and documents and can generate faster, contextual responses compared to its contemporaries.

3. Training Mechanism of Claude Chatbots

- Training for these chatbots involves Supervised Learning (SL) and Reinforcement Learning (RL).
- The process under SL involves the LLM producing and later revising responses based on

certain principles. The aim for this is to reduce any damaging effects of the AI's outputs.

- The RL phase involves training the model based on feedback generated by the AI itself, in which the responses are evaluated based on constitutional principles.

4. Unveiling Claude 3: Haiku, Sonnet, and Opus

- Claude 3 Opus is heralded as the most powerful model, Claude 3 Sonnet is the mid-tier model balancing capability and cost, and Claude 3 Haiku is suited for use cases requiring instantaneous responses.
- Currently, Claude Sonnet powers the Claude.ai chatbot for free with only an email sign-in required.
- However, Opus is only available through Anthropic's web chat interface and Claude Pro subscription service.

5. Situational Limitations of Claude 3 Models

- While Claude 3 excels in tasks such as answering factual questions and OCR - optical character recognition (the ability to extract text from images), and creative tasks like writing Shakespearean sonnets, it sometimes struggles with complex reasoning and numerical problems.
- The models also showcased biases in their responses, favouring certain racial groups over others.

6. Unveiling Large Language Models (LLMs)

- LLMs are capable of decoding common language problems like text classification, answering questions, and text generation.
- These models undergo training on extensive datasets to comprehend patterns, structures, and relationships within human language.
- They can be divided into Autoregressive Models, Transformer-based Models, and Encoder-decoder Models based on their architecture.

- Also, these models can be Pretrained and Fine-tuned Models, Multilingual Models, and Domain-specific Models based on their training data.
- The size and availability of LLMs also identify them as large high-performance requiring models, open-source readily available models, and closed-source proprietary models. Some notable examples of these models are LLaMA2, Bloom, Google BERT, OPT-175 B for open-source models and GPT 3.5 by OpenAI, and Gemini by Google for closed-source models.

Stepping up Defence Capabilities: Agni-5 Missile with MIRV Technology

1: Introduction and Background

- India recently carried out a successful first-ever flight test of the indigenously developed Agni-5 ballistic missile featuring Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle (MIRV) technology.
- This significant test was conducted off the coast of Odisha at Dr. A.P. J. Abdul Kalam Island.
- The test flight is part of India's 'Mission Divyastra'.

2: Understanding Agni-V

- Agni-V is an advanced surface-to-surface ballistic missile developed under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP) in India.
- It is an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) developed from the ground up by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India.
- Known as a fire-and-forget missile, Agni-V, post-launch, does not need further guidance and cannot be intervened without an interceptor missile.
- With a range of over 5000 km, Agni-V is built to strike targets beyond this distance.
- It is capable of carrying a warhead weighing about 1500 kg.
- The whole family of Agni missiles, i.e., Agni-1 through Agni-5, forms the backbone of India's nuclear launch capabilities.

- Agni-V has undergone and passed multiple successful tests since its inception in 2012.

3: Understanding MIRV Technology

- The latest version of the Agni-5 missile is now equipped with MIRV technology.
- Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle (MIRV) technology empowers a single missile to release several warheads that can target different locations or the same area, at varying times.
- This technological enhancement increases the potency of the missile by granting it the capability to attack multiple targets simultaneously.
- The MIRV feature of Agni-V is primarily aimed at addressing threats from China.
- These missiles can be launched from different terrains, including land and sea (submarines).

4: Global Perspective

- As of the present context, only a handful of countries have managed to acquire MIRV-equipped missiles. They are the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom.
- Pakistan is in the process of developing such missile systems. Additionally, there are speculations that Israel might also possess or is potentially developing a similar system.

The successful integration of the MIRV technology in Agni-5 not only fortifies India's defence but also positions it as a key global player in advanced warfare technology. Agni-5's enhanced capability could reshape strategic dynamics in the Asian region.

Devin AI: World's First AI Software Engineer - The Dawn of a New Programming Era.

1: Unveiling Devin AI: The Next Chapter of Software Development

- Devin AI is the world's foremost fully autonomous AI software engineer, established by Cognition, an AI startup.
- Not just an assistant to developers, Devin AI autonomously oversees complete projects from ideation to deployment, dramatically transforming the software development process.
- This innovative advancement replaces the conventional methodology of coding and machine learning, setting new dimensions in software engineering.

2: The Building Blocks: Components and Capabilities of Devin AI

- Devin AI incorporates a blend of pivotal components, significantly contributing to its capabilities:
    a. Natural Language Processing (NLP): Enabling Devin to comprehend the human aspects of software development resulting in effective translation of instructions into code.
    b. Machine Learning (ML): Fueling Devin's perpetually enhancing learning curve by assessing a myriad of code, data, and development designs.
    c. Advanced Reasoning and Planning: Devin's ability to strategize development, make guided decisions and manage intricate projects places it far beyond basic coding assistants.
    d. Real-World Development Tools: Devin can utilise a virtual environment comprising a code editor, terminal, and web browser.

3: Securing Access to Devin AI: Navigating the Process

- As Devin AI is still in its development phase, acquiring access involves requesting early access.
- Expressing interest in using Devin can be done through an early access program provided by Cognition Labs.
- Contacting the developers via email and providing relevant details such as individual information, organisation details, and prospective tasks for Devin AI, is crucial for the application.

- Cognition Labs has a selection process, and therefore a potential waiting period post submission for evaluation.

4: Upgrading Software Development: Analysing the Benefits of Devin AI

- Devin AI endows numerous benefits that can dramatically boost the software development process:

　　a. Enhanced Efficiency: Automating repetitive tasks, allowing for faster development cycles by offering streamlined workflow.

　　b. Improved Accuracy and Quality: Minimising risk of human errors and ensuring constant high quality performance.

　　c. Unlocking New Possibilities: Democratizing development and fostering innovation by freeing up developers to focus on creative aspects.

　　d. Strengthening Collaboration: Bridging the gap between human and AI intelligence and improving communication, leading to a highly efficient development flow.

This new advancement in technology redefines software development and opens up a plethora of opportunities for individuals and organisations alike. With Devin AI, the era of advanced software engineering powered by artificial intelligence is truly upon us.

Navigating the Challenges of Nuclear Waste Management

1: Understanding Nuclear Waste

- Nuclear waste refers to the byproduct generated from nuclear reactors during nuclear fission, specifically when uranium-235 decomposes into barium-144 and krypton-89.
- These byproducts cannot undergo further fission, hence are categorised as waste.
- The alarming radioactivity of these waste products necessitates their careful storage to prevent potential environmental disasters.

2: Process of Nuclear Waste Management

- The process of nuclear waste management begins by storing the spent fuel under water to cool and shield its radioactivity.
- After cooling, the waste is then shifted to dry cask storage for a longer-term containment.
- Different kinds of waste management are adopted according to the condition, some waste is treated and stored on-site at nuclear power stations, while high-level waste may be treated by vitrification.
- Furthermore, separating reusable fissile materials by reprocessing spent fuel is a notable strategy; however, it drives an issue of nuclear proliferation due to the need for specialised facilities.

3: Global Strategies for Storing Nuclear Waste

- Deep Cask Storage: The cooled spent fuel is placed in large steel cylinders which contain inert gas and get sealed, ensuring containment of radioactivity.
- Geological Disposal: This involves burying the waste deep underground in stable geological formations, effectively safeguarding it from human contact.
- Reprocessing: A method by which spent fuel is chemically treated to separate the useful and waste materials. Although potent in solutions, it can inadvertently lead to the making of weapons-grade plutonium, demanding robust regulatory oversight.

4: Challenges Faced in Nuclear Waste Management

- The array of challenges associated with nuclear waste management spans from the long-term containment of radioactive materials to potential environmental contamination.
- Other vital concerns include the high costs associated with the waste management system, decommissioning nuclear facilities, and the safe disposal of nuclear waste.
- A public apprehension regarding the safety measures, environmental impact, alongside

technical and regulatory complications further add to the issues in formulating sustainable solutions.

5: India's Approach to Nuclear Waste

- As part of its expansive nuclear program, India has constructed facilities for reprocessing spent fuel to extract plutonium for its nuclear reactors and weapons.
- The reprocessing plants situated in Trombay, Tarapur, and Kalpakkam handle the spent fuel from research reactors and pressurised heavy water reactors.
- Despite having waste management systems in place and reprocessing capabilities, challenges persist, especially concerning the storage and treatment of high-level and intermediate-level waste.

This scrutiny of nuclear waste management practices and the associated challenges offer crucial insight into the current global concerns and present potential pathways to improve these systems, ensuring utmost safety and minimal environmental impact.

Miscellaneous

Leap Year: A Quintessential Component of the Gregorian Calendar

I. Understanding Leap Year

- Leap Year is defined as a year with 366 days as opposed to the regular 365 days.
- The extra day is added to February, making it 29 days long.
- This phenomenon marks one full orbit of the Earth around the Sun, as it refers to Earth's 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds journey.
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- The rounded-up version of the Earth's orbit is 365 days, but the additional nearly six hours are compensated every fourth year as a full day.
- Without leap years, calendars would slowly lose synchronisation with the Earth's seasons, thereby affecting crucial activities pertinent to them like harvesting and planting.

II. Tracing the Evolution of Leap Years

- The Julian calendar led to errors over time due to inaccurate approximations of the solar year.
- By the 16th century, the calendar was about ten days ahead of the solar year, necessitating reforms.
- Pope Gregory XIII initiated these reforms in 1582, ten days were exercised to realign the calendar with the solar year.
- To prevent such discrepancies in future, the Gregorian calendar introduced a refined leap year rule, skipping three leap years every 400 years.

III. Unraveling the Mathematics of Leap Year

- Leap years are typically multiples of four, such as 2016, 2020, and 2024. However, not all multiples of four classify as leap years.
- According to the Gregorian leap year rule, every year number divisible by four may be a leap year unless it's an end-of-century year (ends with '00'). These must only be considered if divisible by 400.
- For instance, the year 2000 was a leap year, but 1900 wasn't, under this specification. The years 2024, 2028, 2032, and 2036 are all predicted leap years.
- To fine-tune the calendar and achieve closer alignment with the solar year while maintaining accurate seasons, some leap years are skipped for centuries that aren't divisible by 400. This intricate system compensates for the fact that the addition of a leap day every four years actually contributes a bit too much time, about 44 extra minutes.

Enhancing Nutrition and Combating Anaemia: Government's Mission Utkarsh in Focus

Introduction and Overview:
- 'Mission Utkarsh' is a strategic initiative taken by the Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Women and Child Development to combat the widespread issue of anaemia in Indian women and children, particularly in adolescent girls.
- This mission emphasises facilitating the nutrition of susceptible individuals using Ayurveda interventions.

Understanding Anaemia:
- Anaemia is a critical health condition that refers to a deficient count of red blood cells or an inadequate oxygen-carrying capacity in an individual's body.
- Widespread causes of the condition include iron deficiency, vitamin A, B12, and folate deficiencies, chronic inflammation, parasitic infections as well as inherited disorders.
- Anaemia can lead to severe symptoms like fatigue, weakness, dizziness, and drowsiness. It poses significant threats to pregnant women and children.

Anaemia Prevalence in India:
- As per the National Family Health Survey 2019-20, anaemia is a prevalent health issue among Indian women and children.
- The survey profiled 22 states and Union Territories, revealing a majority of women and children suffering from this ailment in over half of these regions.
- World Health Organization (WHO) criteria categorise women of reproductive age with haemoglobin levels below 12g/dL and children under five with levels under 11.0 g/dL as anaemic.

Mission Utkarsh - A Closer Look:
- Mission Utkarsh has 15 central ministries or departments collaboratively working to elevate the most affected districts up to the state and national averages.
- The initial phase emphasises the amelioration of adolescent girls' anaemic status (14-18 years) in five identified districts across five states - Assam (Dhubri), Chhattisgarh (Bastar), Jharkhand (Paschimi Singhbhum), Maharashtra (Gadchiroli), and Rajasthan (Dhaulpur).
- The primary intention is to work towards realising "Anaemia Mukt Bharat" or Anaemia Free India.

Government Measures Against Anaemia:
- The responsibility of strengthening health services and executing national programs substantially falls on respective State/UT governments, with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare providing financial and technical support under the National Health Mission.
- The Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS) Programme is being implemented to manage high prevalence and incidence of anaemia amongst adolescent girls and boys.
- Under WIGS, supervised weekly ingestion of Iron Folic Acid (IFA) tablets has been introduced. Biannual deworming with Albendazole is also provided.
- The Government has established systems like the Health Management Information System & Mother Child Tracking System for reporting and tracking anaemic cases.
- The Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) directs specialised ANC check-ups on the 9th of every month to detect and treat anaemia cases.
- To manage severe anaemia complications, initiatives for operationalizing Blood Bank in District Hospitals and Blood Storage Units in sub-district facilities are in place.

Exercise Tiger Triumph: A New Chapter in India-U.S Relations

Introduction and Overview:

Exercise Tiger Triumph is a tri-Service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise conducted between India and the United States. Commencing on the Eastern seaboard, this exercise marks a fresh chapter in the burgeoning military collaboration between the two nations.

Why in News:

Exercise Tiger Triumph has been initiated as a means to solidify the India-U.S relationship while focused on disaster relief and humanitarian assistance operations. The exercise is set to comprise of a harbour phase followed by a sea phase. During these stages, forces from both nations will collaborate to hone command and control operations, operational manoeuvres, and joint sustainment operations. The servicemen will also partake in various cultural and athletic events.

Significance of Exercise Tiger Triumph:

- To develop Interoperability: One of the significant objectives of the exercise is to establish interoperability for carrying out Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.
- Refinement of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): The exercise aims to fine-tune SOPs to ensure the swift and smooth coordination between the military forces of both countries.
- Building Trust and Confidence: Exercise Tiger Triumph strives to enhance mutual trust and confidence in the ability to operate jointly and respond as an integrated force.

Geographical Significance:

The exercise taking place on the Eastern seaboard signifies the strategic importance of this region. This area is pivotal to both nations regarding defence and maritime security, underlining the need for strengthened joint operations.

Historical Relevance:

Exercise Tiger Triumph is a significant development in the historical relationship between India and the United States. While they have

conducted bilateral naval exercises, the inclusion of all three services - Army, Navy, and Air Force, in a single venture, marks a key moment in their defence partnership.

In Conclusion:

Exercise Tiger Triumph marks a significant chapter in the defence relations between the U.S. and India. By focusing on the development of interoperability, refinement of SOPs, and building trust, this exercise is expected to bring notable improvements in their Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations. The ultimate goal being the creation of an integrated joint force prepared for any eventualities in the future.

Enlightening the aquatic legacy: India's Inaugural National Dolphin Research Centre

1: Unveiling India's first National Dolphin Research Centre

- India's first National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) manifests a crucial phase in the conservation efforts of endangered Gangetic dolphin.
- The NDRC, situated near the Ganga river in Bihar, intends to provide extensive research opportunities on several aspects concerning Gangetic dolphins, including their behaviour, causes of their mortality, and survival abilities.
- Approximately half of India's estimated stock of 3,000 Gangetic dolphins reside in the state of Bihar.

2: Journeying through the life of the Ganga River Dolphin

- Officially discovered in 1801, the Ganga River Dolphin, also named as the "Tiger of the Ganges," lives in the major river systems of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. This includes Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems.

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- These dolphins, fundamentally blind and freshwater-dependent, are known to hunt using ultrasonic sounds for echolocation of their prey.
- Mothers and calves are often found travelling together in small groups or solitude.
- A typical Ganga dolphin surfaces every 30-120 seconds for breathing, earning it the popular name 'Susu'.
- Females are generally larger than males and birth a single calf every two to three years.

3: Importance and threats encountered by the Ganga River Dolphin

- Declared as the National Aquatic Animal in 2009, the Ganga River Dolphin symbolises a significant indicator of the health of the river ecosystem.
- However, they face considerable threats like unintentional killing due to entanglement in fishing gear, poaching for medicinal dolphin oil, and habitat destruction due to pollution, development projects, and increasing vessel traffic.

4: Conserving the legacy through protective measures

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the Ganga River Dolphin as endangered.
- It is enlisted under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna) lists it under Appendix I and CMS (Convention on Migratory Species) under Appendix 1.
- Bihar has established the Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary for its conservation.
- In addition, India celebrates National Ganga River Dolphin Day on October 5 each year.
- The Indian government has also initiated 'Project Dolphin' as a part of its conservation efforts.

This centre's establishment will boost the research and conservation efforts of the endangered Gangetic Dolphins in India. Carrying immense ecological significance, their conservation will help in preserving the health and biodiversity of the Ganga River.

Riken Yamamoto Bags the Prestigious 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize

I. Introduction and All About the Prize:
- Riken Yamamoto, a renowned Japanese architect, clinched the coveted 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize. This award is often esteemed as the "Architecture Nobel," and honours architects from all around the globe for their noteworthy contributions to architecture.
- The Pritzker Architecture Prize was instituted in 1979 by the Pritzker family from Chicago. The prize serves to credit living architects who have significantly influenced humanity and the built environment through their work. The laureate is rewarded with $100,000 and a bronze medallion to recognize their accomplishments.

II. Riken Yamamoto: The Esteemed Laureate of 2024:
- Riken Yamamoto has joined the prestigious league as the ninth laureate to be chosen from Japan. His notable architectural design emphasises transparency and interaction. His works have carved a significant mark in Japanese architecture and have now received international acclaim with the Pritzker Prize.
- His illustrious career encompasses award-winning projects such as the Hiroshima Nishi Fire Station, completed in the year 2000, and the Koyasu Elementary School, completed in 2018.

III. Pearls for General Knowledge:
- The Pritzker Architecture Prize has been awarded on an annual basis since 1979 and is administered by the Hyatt Foundation. It is considered to be one of the world's premier architectural accolades.
- The award is intended to honour a living architect or architects who built work that demonstrates exceptional talent, vision, and commitment, and who have made considerable contributions to

architecture that have had a lasting impact on humanity.

- With Riken Yamamoto's victory, Japan has had nine winners so far, reflecting the country's significant contribution to global architectural innovation.

- His works, like the Hiroshima Nishi Fire Station and the Koyasu Elementary School, are considered representative of his design philosophy. They stress on transparency, interaction, and functionality, all while respecting the environment and cultural context.

IV. Wrapping it up: Why it Matters?

- The Pritzker Architecture Prize serves not only to acknowledge the talent and efforts of individual architects but also to underline the importance of architecture to our lives. It acknowledges that buildings and spaces designed with care, imagination, and consideration can positively impact the daily lives of people and their communities.

- It also reflects the growing influence of Japanese architecture globally and its commitment to sustainable, functional, and thoughtful designs that prioritise both user experience and cultural relevance.

ETHANOL 100 fuel: A Game-changer for Eco-friendly Transportation

1: Introduction to ETHANOL 100 fuel

- Recently, the Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Housing and Urban Affairs launched 'ETHANOL 100'.

- ETHANOL 100 is a unique fuel variant known for its high-octane rating, generally ranging between 100-105.

- The fuel has been introduced with the goal of ensuring improved efficiency and power output in high-performance engines and minimising environmental impact.

2: ETHANOL 100 fuel: Composition and Versatility

- ETHANOL 100 comprises 93-93.5 percent ethanol mixed with 5 percent gasoline and 1.5 percent co-solvent to act as a binder.

- The fuel stands as a greener and cleaner choice compared to gasoline, producing significantly fewer emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants. This paves the way for combating climate change and improving air quality.

- The versatility of ETHANOL 100 is noteworthy, as it can be consumed by a wide range of vehicles, including Flex-Fuel Vehicles (FFVs).

3: Understanding Flex-Fuel Vehicles

- Flex-fuel Vehicles, often abbreviated as FFVs, are designed to operate on a variety of fuels.

- Equipped with an internal combustion engine (ICE), these vehicles can utilise petrol, ethanol, or methanol, thus providing a wide choice of fuels to consumers.

- While FFVs require a few modifications, they are primarily built to bring flexible and efficient fuel consumption options to users.

Endnote: Importance of ETHANOL 100

- ETHANOL 100 is not just another fuel option, but a promising step towards sustainable energy consumption in transportation.

- The blend provides a pragmatic and powerful solution for vehicular emissions, which is a substantial contributor to global warming and air pollution.

- Overall, the introduction of ETHANOL 100 is a revolutionary initiative by the government, poised to accelerate India's journey towards greener and cleaner mobility.

PM-SURAJ Portal Launched: A Step Forward for Marginalised Communities

1: Understanding the PM-SURAJ Portal

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled the national online portal 'Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan and Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan' (PM-SURAJ), reflecting the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's commitment to uplifting marginalised communities.
- The portal facilitates credit support to 1 lakh entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups, such as Scheduled Castes, backward classes, and Safai Mitras.
- This initiative is a significant stride towards putting the underprivileged at the centre of our national development goals by enhancing accessibility to financial resources.

2: Why in News?

- PM-SURAJ portal is in the news due to its target of empowering marginalised sections of the Indian society.
- During the launch, PM Modi interacted with beneficiaries of various schemes, including NAMASTE, VCF-SC, VCF-BC, and ASIIM.
- The move to provide Ayushman health cards and personal protective equipment (PPE) kits to sewer and septic tank workers (Safai Mitras) under the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) attained highlighted attention.

3: About NAMASTE Scheme

- Initiated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the NAMASTE scheme seeks to eliminate hazardous sewer and septic-tank cleaning practices.
- The scheme aids in the identification of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) and provides them with occupational training and PPE kits.
https://edupreparator.com/

- It also helps equip Sanitation Response Units (SRUs) with safety devices and ensures health insurance benefits to SSWs and their families under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).
- Apart from mitigating health risks, the scheme is geared towards promoting entrepreneurship. It offers funding support and subsidies to sanitation workers, enabling them to acquire sanitation-related equipment.
- It also emphasises the power of information and awareness. It will deploy massive campaigns, conducted by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) & National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC), to disseminate information about the interventions of NAMASTE.

4: Geography, History, and Importance

- This initiative spans nationwide, indicating its significant geographical reach.
- Being a recent initiative, the PM-SURAJ portal represents a fresh chapter in India's efforts towards social justice and empowerment.
- The initiative holds paramount importance as it aims to uplift disadvantaged communities, supporting not just their survival but also their progress. The push towards the eradication of unsafe sanitation practices and fostering entrepreneurial growth under NAMASTE scheme signals the government's commitment to enhanced living standards and equality.

In conclusion, the PM-SURAJ portal is an integral part of India's commitment towards social justice, presenting an all-encompassing approach that incorporates financial, educational, health, and safety provisions. Its alignment with the principles of equity and progress makes it a significant benchmark in the journey towards an inclusive and thriving society.

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Modernising Indian Army: The Induction of AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopters

Introduction & About
- The Indian Army Aviation Corps took a substantial step towards modernization with the establishment of its first unit dedicated for operating the advanced AH-64E Apache attack helicopters.
- This establishment took place in Jodhpur, Rajasthan marking a significant milestone in the Indian Army's combat capabilities.

AH-64E Apache - A World's Pioneer
- The AH-64 Apache is recognized globally as the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopter and is currently used by the US Army and a number of international defence forces.
- Possessing advanced technologies and capabilities, the Apache is a twin-turboshaft attack helicopter equipped with a nose-mounted sensor suite for target acquisition and night vision.

The Deal with Boeing
- In the year 2020, a major deal was inked between Boeing and the Indian Government which included the acquisition of six more Apache helicopters specifically for the Indian Army.
- The contract marked a concrete step in India's goal of strengthening its defence equipment with modern and efficient technology.

Apache's Significance to the Indian Army
- With the induction of the AH-64E Apache, the Indian Army now boasts two types of attack helicopters in their arsenal, the Apache and the indigenous Light Combat Helicopter 'Prachanda'.
- They are expected to enhance the versatility of the Army to conduct a variety of missions, such as pursuit, reconnaissance, and electronic warfare.

Conclusion - A Step Towards Modern Warfare
- The induction of the AH-64E Apache signifies India's accelerating efforts in modernising its defence forces and gear.
- The Apache helicopters will provide a much-needed boost in combat capacities, and considerably strengthen the operational readiness of the Army.

Tobacco Board Green-lights Karnataka's 2024-2025 Crop Cultivation

1: The Recent Move by The Tobacco Board

- Recently the Tobacco Board has sanctioned Karnataka to cultivate and produce 100 million kilograms of tobacco for the crop year 2024-2025.
- Approved growers are required to register online, starting from the 24th of March, 2024 for new applicants, and on the 27th of March, 2024 for the ones seeking re-registration or relocation.

2: About The Tobacco Board

- Established in 1976 under the First Five-Year Plan by the Government of India, the Tobacco Board operated under the Department of Commerce.
- The Board supervises, regulates, and promotes Indian tobacco production.
- Its responsibilities also include assisting Indian exports, conducting research and development, licensing growers and traders, and providing support and financial aid to farmers.

2: Role of Tobacco Board

- The Board also maintains the economic balance of tobacco cultivation and trade, with respect to public health, regulation, and the country's unique agricultural conditions.

3: Implementation Procedure

1: Registration Requirement and Limitations

- Tobacco growers are urged to register for the upcoming season launching on 27th March 2024. In addition, they must adhere to the authorised planting area and not exceed the prescribed borders.
- Compliance to these regulations are crucial for a lawful and plentiful harvest.

2: Diversification of Income

- Apart from tobacco, farmers are advised to cultivate other crops as well for income diversification purposes. This strategy can shield them from probable changes in the market and assure their long-term economic survival.

4: Tobacco Cultivation Process

- The process includes the selection of seeds, nurturing in nurseries, transplantation, growth phase, topping and suckering, harvesting, curing, grading and packing, and final processing for end use.

5: Cultivation Implication and Future Prospects

- Tobacco cultivation authorization in Karnataka plays a significant role in the state's economy and many farmers' livelihoods.
- There are concerns regarding health risks and environmental impacts which must be managed.
- Thus, the state faces the task of weighing economic rewards from tobacco production against public health risks and the sustainability of agricultural practices.
- Future policies might impose stricter regulations and possibly shift focus towards alternative, less hazardous agricultural products.

Unfolding the Tale of Tiny Trotters: World Sparrow Day

1: A Bird's Day Out: Introduction to World Sparrow Day

- World Sparrow Day is observed annually every March 20.
- The inception of this global event was a collaborative effort between the Nature Forever Society of India and the Eco-Sys Action Foundation of France.
- First observed on March 20, 2010, the day is devoted to raising awareness about the declining population of sparrows and emphasising the need for their conservation.

2: Fighter Feathers of 2023: Theme for World Sparrow Day

- The theme for World Sparrow Day 2023 dips its hat to the theme of the previous year: "I Love Sparrows."
- This theme underscores the crucial role that individuals and communities play in conservation efforts for sparrows.

3: Skyborne Symphonies: About Sparrows

- Sparrows, small passerine birds belonging to the genus Passer and the family Passeridae, are renowned worldwide.
- The genus accounts for approximately 30 species globally, with the most renowned being the house sparrow, Passer domesticus.

4: Inhabitant of the Nest Nooks: House Sparrow

- The house sparrow, scientifically known as Passer domesticus, is analogous in size to a tennis ball and flaunts a brown coat adorned with black streaks.

- Known for its social nature, it is commonly found in groups of eight to ten members, chattering and chirping to communicate.
- They are a common sight around human habitation, making their nests in holes and crevices in walls and sometimes using birdhouses and nest boxes in gardens.
- Aside from Antarctica, China, and Japan, the house sparrow has established populations on all continents, primarily native to Eurasia and North Africa.

5: Feathers in Peril: Threats and Conservation Status

- House sparrows face significant threats, including habitat destruction and pollution caused by microwave towers and pesticides.
- Despite these threats, the house sparrow's conservation status is currently listed as 'Least Concern' on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Red List.
- Marking a significant milestone in conservation efforts, the house sparrow was declared the state bird of New Delhi in 2012 as part of a major campaign to save and increase awareness about this species.

6: GK Tidbits: What You Should Know

- The initiative for World Sparrow Day was originated by an Indian organisation – The Nature Forever Society.
- The house sparrow, globally spread, is one of our closest companions from the avian world as it habitually nests in human-made structures.
- Despite being widespread, sparrows are continuously in decline, signalling an imbalance in our shared natural environment, which is crucial to reflect upon.
- The house sparrow was declared the state bird of New Delhi, India.
- The conservation status of house sparrows, as per IUCN, is 'Least Concern,' indicating its survival is not currently threatened to the extent of becoming endangered. However, local declines and extinctions have been recorded.
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Understanding HbA1C Test and NATO's DIANA Program

Introduction to HbA1C Test and Diabetes Burden in India
- India is grappling with a massive diabetes burden, housing 17% of the world's diabetic population.
- One of the pivotal tools in the early detection and management of this disease is the Haemoglobin A1C (HbA1C) test.
- It is also known as the glycated or glycosylated haemoglobin test.

Understanding the HbA1C Test
- The HbA1C test gives a 2-3 month average of blood glucose levels in the body.
- It measures sugar-coated red blood cells, hence providing a robust assessment of long-term glucose control.
- Unlike fasting and post-meal tests, the HbA1C test is unaffected by recent meals, making it a reliable tool.
- Normal Hb1A1C is below 5.7%, pre-diabetes is indicated between 5.7 and 6.4%, while 6.5% or higher can indicate diabetes.

Significance and Limitations of the HbA1C test
- India houses over 10 crore diabetic and 13.6 crore pre-diabetic individuals. Over 35% Indians suffer from hypertension, and almost 40% suffer from abdominal obesity, both of which intensify the risk of diabetes.
- The test isn't foolproof but used alongside other tests for a comprehensive diabetes assessment.
- Home to specific factors fluctuating the test results including kidney or liver failure, anaemia, certain medications, and pregnancy.

Examination of NATO's DIANA Program:
- The Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) is an initiative by North Atlantic

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Treaty Organization (NATO) aimed at boosting dual-use innovation capacity across the Alliance.
- It recently approved a proposal for establishing an accelerator and two test centres in Finland, with the goal of nurturing technology, innovation, and business development for both civil and defence objectives.

Alliances of NATO
- Besides its 30 member countries, NATO expands its influence through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the Partnership for Peace (PfP), and the Mediterranean Dialogue.
- The EAPC is a multilateral platform for dialogue and consultation on political and security-related issues among Allies and partner countries.
- PfP program enables partners to build an individual relationship with NATO.
- Mediterranean Dialogue aims to contribute to the security and stability in NATO's Mediterranean and North African neighbourhood.

The DIANA initiative under NATO is crucial for technology development and innovation for defence and security purposes. Similarly, understanding the HbA1C test is pivotal in tackling the diabetes burden in India. This knowledge about international organisations and health issues forms an integral part of general knowledge for government exams.

Indian Army Participates in LAMITIYE-2024: Enhancing Military Relations and Skills Exchange with Seychelles

1: Introduction and About LAMITIYE-2024
- LAMITIYE-2024, aptly meaning 'Friendship' in the Creole language, signifies the biennial joint military exercise between the Indian Army and the Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF).
- This year marks the 10th edition of this collaborative event which has a consistent

objective, which is to enhance interoperability in Sub-conventional Operations in Semi-Urban environments under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter on Peace Keeping Operations.
- Activities in LAMITIYE include Field Training Exercise, combat discussions, lectures, and demonstrations.
- This training event has been fostering and promoting bilateral military relations and enabling the exchange of skills and experiences since it first began in 2001.

2: Why is LAMITIYE-2024 in News?
- Recently, it gained attention as the Indian Army contingent engaged actively in the 10th edition of this joint military exercise.
- This continued participation of the Indian Army reiterates the importance India places on its military relationship with Seychelles, a strategic island nation in the Indian Ocean.

3: Geostrategic Importance of Seychelles
- Seychelles' location, northeast of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, affords it significant strategic importance.
- The country is known for its attractive features, such as stunning beaches, extensive coral reefs, natural reserves, and rare wildlife, including the giant Aldabra tortoises.

4: Unique Features and World Heritage Status
- Seychelles houses the Aldabra Atoll, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that holds a distinguished position as the world's largest raised coral atoll.
- The Aldabra Atoll is also noteworthy due to it being home to the world's largest giant tortoise population.

5: GK Points to Remember
- LAMITIYE is a Creole word, of one of the official languages in Seychelles, which translates to 'Friendship'.
- This series of military exercises commenced in the year 2001.

- Seychelles is an island nation situated northeast of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean.
- The Aldabra Atoll in Seychelles is not only a UNESCO World Heritage Site but also the habitat for the world's largest population of giant tortoises.

In conclusion, LAMITIYE-2024 symbolises the strengthening of military ties between India and Seychelles and enables each to learn and evolve through shared experiences.

India's Progress in Human Development Index 2023-24: A Look at the Details

1: Understanding the Human Development Index (HDI)

- The Human Development Index is a statistical tool used to measure the average achievements of a country in three basic life aspects, first published in 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Developed by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq, the HDI is incorporated into the UNDP's Human Development Report.
- It comprises additional indices like Multidimensional Poverty Index, Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index, Gender Inequality Index (since 2010) and Gender Development Index (since 2014).
- It adopts Amartya Sen's 'capabilities' approach, focusing on human well-being and quality of life over economical means.

2: India's Performance in HDI 2023-24

- India's ranking on the HDI improved to 134 out of 193 countries in 2022, compared to 135 out of 191 countries in the previous year.
- The country has experienced a 48.4% increase in its HDI value between 1990 and 2022.
- India's life expectancy at birth improved from 67.2 years in 2021 to 67.7 years in 2022.
- Expected years of schooling increased by 5.88% from 11.9 to 12.6 years, resulting in an 18-position improvement.

- The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita also saw a growth from $6,542 to $6,951.

3: India vis-à-vis Neighbour Countries in HDI

- India's neighbours Sri Lanka and China have better rankings at 78th and 75th positions respectively, both in the high human development category.
- Bhutan and Bangladesh stand at 125 and 129 respectively while Nepal and Pakistan rank lower than India at 146 and 164.

4: India's Progress in Gender Inequality

- India showed significant progress in reducing gender inequality, ranking 108th out of 166 countries in Gender Inequality Index (GII) in 2022.
- India's GII value of 0.437 betters both the global average (0.462) and the South Asian average (0.478), indicating better performance in reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market.
- India's adolescent birth rate in 2022 stood at 16.3, improving from 17.1 in 2021.
- However, India continues to have a large gender gap in the labour force of 47.8 percentage - men (76.1%) and women (28.3%).

5: Recommendations by Human Development Report

- The Human Development Report stresses on the need for strengthening commitment towards a shared future.
- Focuses on planetary public goods for climate stability, digital public goods for equitable human development, new financial mechanisms, and efforts to reduce political polarisation through governance focused on enhancing citizens' voices and tackling misinformation.

Significant Progress in Gender Equality: Analysis of India's Performance

Understanding the Gender Inequality Index (GII)

- The GII is a composite index assessing gender inequality using three metrics: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market participation.
- The GII values range from 0 to 1 with 0 indicating equality and 1 indicating extreme levels of inequality. For this evaluation, a low GII value is ideal, signifying low inequality between women and men.

India's Remarkable Progress in 2022 GII Ranking

- In the recent GII 2022 report by UNDP, India ranked 108th out of 193 countries, with a score of 0.437.
- In comparison to the GII 2021, wherein India stood at 122 out of 191 countries, it can be observed that the nation moved up by 14 ranks in one year.
- Analysis of the last decade shows a consistent improvement in India's GII rankings, providing hope for better gender equality in the future.

Challenges Contributing to Gender Inequality in India

- Gender-Based Violence: A widespread issue, with nearly a third of all Indian women having experienced physical or sexual violence per the National Family Health Survey-5.
- Unequal Access to Education: Cultural, economic and safety factors interfered with the enrolment, retention and completion rates of girls in schools.
- Invisible Labour: Women's contributions in the form of unpaid work- household chores, childcare, elderly care- are often unacknowledged.
- Gender Wage Gap: The estimated income distribution per the World Inequality Report 2022

displayed an enormous wage gap, with men earning 82% of the labour income, and women merely 18%.
- Child Marriage: India houses one in three of the world's child brides per UNESCO. Though the occurrence decreased by half from 47% in 2006, certain states still report higher instances than the national average.

Government Measures for Gender Equality Promotion

- Several schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Mahila Shakti Kendra, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandna Yojna, and Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna have been launched for the protection, education, and empowerment of the girl child.
- To further women's economic independence, initiatives such as the National Creche Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Gender Budget, and Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme have been initiated.
- In terms of political representation, 33% reserved seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions and the Constitutional Amendment Act ensuring one-third of all seats for women provide an encouraging picture.
- The implementation of various programmes like Vigyan Jyoti, promoting higher education for girls, and One Stop Centres for violence support also contribute significantly towards gender equality.

Global Gender Gap Report Findings

- India ranked 127 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report, 2023.
- The report analyses the state and progress of gender parity across four dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, Political Empowerment.

In conclusion, India presents a mixed picture with significant advancements in gender equality marked by improved GII rankings while outlined by persistent deep-rooted societal challenges. The proactive and holistic initiatives by the government

indeed provide optimism for reaching a future with improved gender equality.

UN Releases Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report: Key Insights and Initiatives for Change

1: Child Mortality: Significant Drop and Remaining Challenges

• The recent report, "Levels and Trends in Child Mortality" by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, showed a considerable decline in under-five deaths worldwide. The figure has been reduced by over 50% since 2000 and he annual toll of global under-five deaths stood at 4.9 million in 2022.

• Sustained efforts from a range of stakeholders led to the consistent decrease in child mortality. This included contributions from governments, healthcare professionals, organisations, local communities, and families.

• Despite advancements, the report draws attention to the high death toll among children, adolescents, and youth, which remains unacceptably high.

• The severity of the issue is highlighted by the startling statistic that between 2000 and 2022, 221 million children, adolescents, and youth lost their lives.

2: Persistent Inequalities in Child Survival

• The report also notes that disparities in survival chances are influenced by geographical location, socio-economic status, and living situation.

• Children in fragile or conflict-affected settings face graver threats to their survival.

• Regional disparities are stark, with sub-Saharan Africa expected to bear most of the death toll by 2030 unless current trends change.

3: Failing to Meet Sustainable Development Goals

• Most countries will not meet the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets on time. These goals aim to drastically reduce under-five mortality.

• If the SDG-5 vision were realised, about 9 million more children could potentially reach the age of five.

• However, under current trends, 59 countries will fail to meet the under-five mortality target set under the Sustainable Development Goals.

4: Potential Solutions to Curb Child Mortality

• Recommendations include increasing access to family planning services, improving antenatal care services, and implementing effective screening programs to identify and manage risk factors associated with preterm births and stillbirths.

• Improved data collection could ensure accurate record-keeping and effective implementation of targeted interventions.

• Guidelines for maternal and perinatal deaths surveillance should be implemented effectively in order to identify trends and opportunities for intervention.

5: India's Initiatives for Women Nutrition and Preventing Child Mortality

• In alignment with the objectives of the report, India has implemented various programs to improve nutrition and reduce child mortality like the National Nutrition Mission (NNM) or POSHAN Abhiyaan.

• Anaemia eradication programs like the Anaemia Mukt Bharat Abhiyan have been introduced.

• Under Mission Shakti, two sub-schemes, Sambal and Samarthya, aim to promote women's safety and empowerment.

• The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme provides food, preschool education, primary healthcare, and other essential services to children under six years of age and their mothers.

This report serves as a much-needed reminder for the global community of the pressing need to address child mortality and the related socio-economic and geographical disparities that continue to pervade our societies.

Space For Notes

Space For Notes