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# Economics

## The RBI's Clampdown on Paytm Payments Bank: Unpacking the Consequences, Features, and Benefits of India's Payment Banks

### 1: Paytm Payments Bank Under RBI's Scrutiny

- The RBI recently imposed a restriction on Paytm Payments Bank, barring it from offering its core services, namely accounts and wallets.
- This move is not an outright cancellation of the bank's licence but restricts its operations significantly.
- The decision was prompted by an investigation that revealed continuous non-compliance and pressing supervisory concerns with Paytm Payments Bank and its parent company, One97 Communications.

### 2: Understanding the Concept of Payments Bank in India

- Payments banks in India were introduced in 2014 following the recommendations of the Dr Nachiket Mor committee.
- The main aim was to extend basic banking services to the unbanked, underbanked populations and small businesses focusing primarily on digital payments and remittances.
- These institutions are seen as a tool by RBI to increase the reach of financial services to remote parts of the country.

### 3: Key Features of Payments Banks

- Payments banks in India offer limited services compared to traditional banks. For instance, they cannot offer loans, credit cards, or issue demand drafts.

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- Their primary focus is accepting deposits up to ₹200,000, remittance services, net banking, and providing other banking services like ATM/debit cards, and third-party fund transfers.
- Payments banks are technologically-driven and generally have tie-ups with telecom operators and fintech companies to provide accessible services.

### 4: The Reach and Impact of Payments Banks

- Payments banks target remote areas and financially excluded segments to promote financial inclusion.
- They have been instrumental in achieving financial inclusion by offering easier access to basic banking services.
- They have also contributed to the government's initiative of transitioning towards a cashless economy by promoting digital payments.

### 5: The Benefits and innovations in the Banking Sector

- These banks play an important role in educating customers about digital payments and responsible financial practices.
- The entry of Payments Banks has increased competition in the banking sector, potentially leading to improved services and lower costs for customers.

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## India's Emergence as a Net Exporter of Toys

### 1: The Transformation of Indian Toy Industry

- The toy industry in India displayed an extraordinary growth trajectory, with exports rising by 239% and imports falling by 52% between 2014-15 and 2022-23.

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- Various policy changes from the "permit licence Raj" era to the 'Make in India' initiative have played a significant role in the industry's evolution.
- The recent success of the toy industry is largely credited to 'Make in India' initiatives.
- The negative trade balance of Rs.1,500 crore in 2014-15 turned positive from 2020-21 resulting in India's emergence as a net exporter of toys.
- Despite high import duties, there is a decline in net exports from Rs.1,614 crore to Rs.1,319 crore between 2022-23, proportional to a more significant decline in toys (31%) compared to all toys (18%).

## **2: Factors for Becoming a Net Exporter**

- Increase in customs duty from 20% to 60% and further to 70% in 2023 along with Non-tariff barriers, such as Quality Control Order (QCO) and mandatory sample testing, have deterred toy imports.
- Coronavirus-led disruption in global supply chains in 2020-21 impacted imports. Restoration of global supply in 2022-23 reduced net exports, indicating a correlation between supply chain disruptions and India's net export performance.

## **3: Challenges Faced by Toy Industry**

- Domestic productive capabilities remain limited along with declining labour productivity, raising concerns about efficiency and competitiveness.
- Dependence on foreign nations for sourcing raw materials, outdated technology, high GST rates, competition from cheap alternatives, and an unorganised and fragmented market structure pose significant challenges.

## **4: National Action Plan for Toys (NAPT)**

- Launched by the Indian Government in 2020, this comprehensive plan aims to globally promote the Indian toy industry including traditional handicrafts and handmade toys.
- The plan includes 21 action points, decided by the DPIIT, addressing various dimensions such as

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design, quality control, e-commerce, skill development, and promotion of indigenous toy clusters.

## **5: The Way Forward**

- The effectiveness of protectionist measures needs to be evaluated along with fostering a system that maintains a balance between protectionism and competitiveness.
- Encouraging investment in technology, research and development, and skill enhancement is of utmost importance.
- Rigorous enforcement of quality control measures such as QCO can help meet international standards.
- Introducing environment-friendly practices and developing localised infrastructure to support the toy manufacturing clusters can maximise the industry's potential.

The recent surge in the Indian toy industry has presented as a remarkable growth story. However, to continue the growth trajectory, encouraging investment, improving quality standards, and creating a sustainable environment are essential. With the right measures, India has the potential to become a global toy manufacturing hub.

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# **India Plunges into Blue Economy 2.0: Exploring Sustainable Economic Growth**

## **1: Understanding the Blue Economy Concept**

- The World Bank defines the blue economy as the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, better livelihoods, and job creation, while preserving ocean ecosystems' health.

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- It includes sectors like fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, seawater renewable energy, coastal tourism, and marine biotechnology.
- Comparing Blue Economy 1.0 and 2.0, Blue Economy 2.0 extends its focus onto coastal restoration, climate-resilient activities, and developing aquaculture within a sustainable ocean management framework.

## **2: India's Blue Economy – Significance and Challenges**

- With a 7,517-kilometre-long coastline, nine coastal states, 1,382 islands, significant navy ports, and an extensive Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), India stands as a major player in the blue economy.
- The coastal economy sustains over 4 million fisherfolk, offering immense economic and trade potential in fisheries, ocean energy, sea-bed mining, tourism, and shipping activities.
- Despite its potential, India faces environmental (overexploitation of resources, climate change, pollution), economic (infrastructure deficit, insufficient funding, skill gap), social (livelihood dependence, coastal erosion, equal access), and governance (regulations, institutional coordination) challenges.

## **3: The Government's Coming Up Actions**

- In the recent Interim Budget, the government proposed environment-friendly development via the promotion of blue economy 2.0. This focuses on climate-resilient activities restoration and adaptation measures.
- Plans also stretch to set up five integrated aqua parks and enhance the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) to boost aquaculture productivity, double exports and create employment opportunities.
- The government has already launched initiatives such as the Draft policy on India's Blue Economy, 2022, Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Program, Sagarmala Project, Deep Ocean Mission, and collaborated with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

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## **4: Embracing the Future with Blue Economy 2.0**

- Given India's vast maritime interests, the blue economy possesses immense potential for shaping India's economic growth.
- It may turn into a significant GDP multiplier and well-being, provided sustainability and socio-economic welfare remain at its core.
- Challenges require a united front to overcome, involving governments, businesses, research institutions, and communities in developing and implementing sustainable practices. These collaborative efforts will drive the successful transition from Blue Economy 1.0 to 2.0.

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## **IEA's Renewables 2023 Report: a Glimpse of future Renewable Energy Prospects**

### **1. Introduction to the Renewables 2023 Report:**

The recent Renewables 2023 report released by the International Energy Agency (IEA) provides an in-depth analysis and projection of the global renewable energy sector. The report sheds light on its progression, present dynamics and the challenges still hindering its full potential.

### **2. Significant Highlights of the Renewables 2023 Report:**

- Record Growth and China's Dominance: The report highlights a 50% growth in global yearly renewable capacity additions to almost 510 GW in 2023. A significant trend shows that China spearheaded solar photovoltaics (PV) and wind additions.

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- **Global Power Mix Transformation:** With renewables anticipated to exceed coal as the primary source of electricity generation by 2025, the global power mix is undergoing a massive shift.

- **Accelerated Growth in Key Regions:** The US, EU, India, and Brazil, driven by favourable policies and better economic opportunities, are focusing more on renewable power.

- **Shifting Market Dynamics and Biofuel Expansion:** Solar PV and onshore wind power have become more affordable than fossil fuel plants. Also, countries like Brazil are pushing for increased biofuel adoption in emerging economies.

### **3. Challenges and Solutions Outlined in the Report:**

- **Financial Constraints:** The accessibility of funding for renewable projects in developing economies has been outlined as a significant challenge.

- **Grid Bottlenecks:** A prominent issue is managing the swift deployment of fluctuating renewables, causing operational hiccups due to inadequate grid expansion.

- **Wind Industry Challenge:** Supply chain disruptions pose significant challenges, especially for offshore wind projects.

- **Major Recommendations:** The IEA advises a threefold increase in global renewable power capacity by 2030 to align with the Net Zero Emissions by 2050 (NZE) Scenario.

### **4. Indian Renewable Energy Targets & Government Initiatives:**

The Government of India has undertaken significant targets and initiatives to promote renewable power generation in the country with aims like non-fossil fuel energy capacity of 500 GW by 2030 and net-zero emission target by 2070. Initiatives include Pradhan Mantri- Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM), National Solar Mission, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, and Suryamitra Skill Development Programme.

### **5. About IEA:**

Established in 1974, the IEA focuses on energy security, economic development, environmental awareness, and global cooperation. It consists of 31 member and 13 associate countries, including India. The IEA's mandate has broadened over the years to include guidance towards net-zero emission energy systems and incorporating essential minerals and metals for clean energy technologies.

### **6. Major Reports by IEA:**

Along with the Renewables 2023 report, IEA regularly releases the World Energy Outlook Report, India Energy Outlook Report, World Energy Investment Report, and the Annual Energy Efficiency Market Report.

### **GK part:**

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) was founded during the 1973-1974 oil crisis.

- IEA's member countries are primarily from the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

- Renewable energy is acquired from sources that are naturally restored on a human timescale such as sunlight, wind and geothermal heat. Renewables are key to addressing climate change and can be harnessed without depleting resources.

- India's Panchamrit Goals form a significant part of its renewable energy ambitions.

- The "Pradhan Mantri- Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan" or PM-KUSUM scheme was launched by the Government of India to provide financial and water security to farmers via harnessing solar energy capacities of India.

- IEA's 2023 report projects renewables to surpass coal as the dominant source of power by 2025.

# Geography and Environment

## Latest Update on Ramsar Sites in India

### 1: Introduction to Ramsar Sites in India

- In recent news, the total number of Ramsar Site in India has soared to 80, up from 75. This comes as India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has announced the addition of five new wetlands to the Ramsar sites list, on the eve of World Wetlands Day, 2024.
- Among these new Ramsar sites, three are in Karnataka, namely the Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, the Aghanashini Estuary, and the Magadi Kere Conversation Reserve. The remaining two, which are the Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and the Longwood Shola Reserve Forest, are located in Tamil Nadu.
- Tamil Nadu continues to occupy the pole position with the maximum number of Ramsar Sites (16 sites), and Uttar Pradesh trails with 10 sites.

### 2: The Ramsar Convention

- The Ramsar Convention, named after the city in Iran where it was adopted on February 2, 1971, is an international pact concerning wetlands of global importance. In India, it kicked in on February 1, 1982. Under this agreement, internationally significant wetlands are designated as Ramsar Sites.
- World Wetlands Day, celebrated around the world and marking the adoption of the historic agreement, takes place on February 2 every year. The theme for World Wetland Day, 2024 revolves around 'Wetlands and Human Wellbeing' to highlight the crucial role of wetlands in improving human lives.

### 3: Key Characteristics of the Latest Ramsar Sites

- The newly declared Ramsar sites have unique features that contribute significantly to the environment and biodiversity conservation.
- The Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve is an ancient, man-made irrigation reservoir that serves as an important habitat for bird species.
- The Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve is another man-made wetland created for water storage and irrigation and supports a number of vulnerable and near-threatened bird species.
- The Aghanashini Estuary, situated where the Aghanashini River merges with the Arabian Sea, offers a range of vital ecosystem services and supports a diverse range of livelihoods.
- Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary, home to nearly 198 bird species, provides water for agricultural use.
- The Longwood Shola Reserve Forest, a tropical rainforest located at the upper sections of Tamil Nadu, is home to several globally endangered and vulnerable bird species.

### 4: Noteworthy Initiatives for Wetland Conservation

- On a global level, the Montreux Record and the celebration of World Wetlands Day are significant initiatives to conserve wetlands.
- At the national level, India has rolled out the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA), the Amrit Dhrohar Capacity Building Scheme, and the National Wetland Conservation Programme (NWCP), started in 1985.

In summary, these recent additions to the list of Ramsar Sites underline India's commitment to conserving crucial wetland ecosystems, which play a vital role in preserving biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and supporting livelihoods. Aspirants for government exams should keep track of such developments to boost their current affairs knowledge.



# Odisha To Host World's First Melanistic Tiger Safari

## 1: An Insight Into The World's First Melanistic Tiger Safari In Odisha

- Odisha is facilitating the setup of the world's first melanistic tiger safari near the Simlipal Tiger Reserve (STR).
- The safari, spread across approximately 200 hectares near Dhanbad-Balasore National Highway-18, is constructed to simulate the landscape of STR.
- Initially, this revolutionary safari will house three melanistic tigers from Nandankanan Zoo along with rescued or orphaned tigers.

## 2: Pseudo-Melanistic Tigers: Their Uniqueness and Conservation Needs

- Melanism is a genetic condition leading to increased melanin, giving rise to black or nearly black skin, feathers, or hair in animals.
- Simlipal Tiger Reserve shelters 16 tigers, with 10 of them being pseudo-melanistic due to elevated melanin levels.
- The World's first melanistic tiger safari aims to heighten awareness about the melanistic tigers' conservation needs by providing a platform for researchers and enthusiasts to interact.

## 3: Approvals and Regulations

- The melanistic tiger safari project requires the green signal from the Central Zoo Authority and other regulatory bodies supervising wildlife initiatives in India.
- A National Tiger Conservation Authority committee will conduct a feasibility study of the proposed site before giving the final approval.

## 4: Different Color Variations in Tigers

- Tigers can exhibit several colour variations, like the common orange with black/brown stripes, white

tigers resulting from leucism, and golden tigers due to a recessive gene called "wideband."

## 5: An Overview of Simlipal Tiger Reserve

- Located in the Deccan Peninsula Biogeographic Zone, Simlipal is home to diverse flora and fauna, hosting 7% of India's flowering plants and 8% of its orchid species.
- Apart from tigers, Simlipal also teems with sambar, chital, barking deer, gaur, and mouse deer, leopards, and fishing cats.
- The concerted management efforts have revived the mugger crocodile populations along rivers Khairi and Deo.
- Simlipal has been recognized as a Global Network of Biospheres site since 2009.

This focus on establishing the world's first melanistic tiger safari highlights Odisha's commitment towards conserving the unique genetic lineage of Royal Bengal Tigers, emphasising the importance of biodiversity preservation. This landmark project signifies a revolutionary turn in wildlife tourism, creating a platform to advance the study of melanistic tigers and promote their conservation.

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## India's Renewable Energy Vision: IREDA's Role and its Implications for Climate Goals

### Illuminating India's Renewable Energy Landscape

- The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) recently came into the spotlight when it discussed India's renewable energy landscape at an international webinar organised by the World Bank.

- IREDA outlined India's ambitious targets, aimed at combating climate change while ensuring energy security.

## **Key Highlights from IREDA's**

### **Address**

#### **1. Investing Immensely for Climate Goals:**

- India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), constituting self-guided climate pledges under the Paris Agreement, necessitate investments up to Rs 30 lakh crore by 2030.
- As per India's NDC objectives, India pledges to curtail emission intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030, starting from 2005 levels, and obtain about 50% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil-fuel-based energy resources by 2030.
- Major investment requirements lie within hydro power, waste-to-energy sectors, Green Hydrogen, power transmission, wind and battery space, manufacturing and solar power capacity build-up.

#### **2. Enhancing the Rooftop Solar Sector:**

- Under the spotlight was the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, a roof-top solar scheme poised to power 1 crore households, backed by an investment exceeding Rs. 75,000 crores.
- This scheme not only offers key benefits but also promotes awareness regarding renewable energy, contributing to India's goal of attaining Net-Zero emissions by 2070 and Energy Independence by 2047.

#### **3. Growth of Energy Demand:**

- India's energy demand is projected to surge considerably due to ambitious government plans and maximum energy demand will be met via renewable sources.
- About 90% of this demand is anticipated to be fulfilled by renewable sources but until efficient energy storage for renewable energy is reached, thermal energy will also be concurrently developed.

## **IREDA and Government Interventions**

- Established in 1987, IREDA is a 'mini ratna' company under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). It specialises in renewable energy project financing, encouraging other financial institutions/banks to contribute to the sector.
- The Government has launched several initiatives like the Renewable Purchase Obligations, PM-KUSUM scheme, PLI scheme for Solar PV manufacturing, and 100% FDI under automatic route for renewable energy.

## **Concluding Remarks on International Energy Agency (IEA)**

- The IEA, an autonomous forum providing analysis, policy recommendations, and data, helps countries secure sustainable energy. Founded in 1974 post major oil crisis, its focus areas now include energy security, economic development, environmental awareness, and global engagement.
- Based in Paris, France, the IEA consists of 31 member countries, 13 associate countries including India, and 4 candidate countries. Membership to the IEA requires being a part of the OECD.

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## **Declaration of Gupteswar Forest as the Biodiversity Heritage Site**

### **1. Introduction and Importance of Gupteswar Forest:**

- \* Gupteswar forest, adjacent to Gupteswar Shiva temple in Koraput district, Odisha, is now the state's 4th Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS).
- \* The forest encompasses a land area of approximately 350 hectares, carrying immense cultural and biological significance.
- \* The area is regarded as sacred by the local community due to the presence of sacred groves.

\* It is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, making it ecologically significant.

## **2. Rich Diversity of Fauna and Flora:**

\* Gupteswar Forest harbours an astonishing number of 608 faunal species, including 28 distinct types of mammals.

\* Significant species found are the mugger crocodile, kanger valley rock gecko, sacred Grove Bush Frog, black baza, Jerdon's baza, Malaber trogon, common hill myna, white-bellied woodpecker, and banded bay cuckoo.

\* The forest's subterranean limestone caves house eight species of bats, two of which are under the near-threatened category- Hipposideros galeritus and Rhinolophus rouxii.

\* The forest also showcases extensive floral diversity like the endangered medicinal plants Indian trumpet tree and the Indian snakeroot.

## **3. Understanding The Biodiversity**

### **Heritage Sites:**

\* Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS) are exceptional, ecologically delicate areas carrying high biodiversity of wild and cultivated species.

\* These sites encompass the rare, endangered, and keystone species.

\* Under the provision of Section 37(1) of 'The Biological Diversity Act, 2002', State Governments have the authority to declare areas of biodiversity importance as BHS following consultation with local bodies.

\* However, creation of a BHS doesn't impose restrictions on the traditional practices and usages of local communities unless voluntarily agreed.

\* Instead, it aims to enhance the community's quality of life via effective conservation measures.

## **4. A Brief History of Biodiversity**

### **Heritage Sites in India:**

\* The inaugural BHS of India was Nallur Tamarind Grove in Bengaluru, Karnataka, declared in 2007.

\* As per the National Biodiversity Authority, India boasts 45 BHS as of February 2024.

\* The latest additions to BHS in the past year include Haldir Char Island West Bengal and

Birampur-Baguran Jalpai West Bengal (Both May 2023), Tungkyong Dho Sikkim (June 2023), Gandhamardan Hill Odisha (March 2023) and Gupteswar Forest Odisha (Feb 2024).

## **5. GK Enhancement:**

\* Understanding the significance, purpose, and procedure of designating a region as BHS broadens the scope of knowledge regarding biodiversity conservation efforts in India.

\* Recognition of Gupteswar Forest as a BHS outlines its ecological importance and diverse species present.

\* Awareness about such heritage sites increases the scope of tourism, which further aids in the socio-economic upliftment of local communities engaged in the sector.

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## **Concerns Raised on Plastic Waste Pollution in India - A Detailed Overview**

### **1: A Stark Red Flag on India's Plastic Waste Management**

- The Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has raised serious concerns over the handling of plastic waste in India.

- The criticism primarily targets the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for its lackadaisical approach towards this growing problem.

- While the PAC acknowledged the Ministry's efforts since May 2021, it emphasised the need for more effective measures.

- The report cites a swelling increase in plastic waste generation from 15.9 lakh tonnes per annum in 2015-16 to a staggering 41.2 lakh TPA in 2020-21.

- Most alarming was the revelation that half of the total plastic waste in the country remained unutilized in 2019-20. This directly contributes to pollution of air, water, and soil, with far-reaching effects on human health.

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## **2: Gaps Destabilising Plastic Waste Management**

- The PAC pointed out a significant data gap, with numerous State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) failing to provide data on plastic waste generation for 2016-18 to the CPCB.
- Data inconsistencies were also noticed between records from Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and SPCBs.

## **3: International and National Measures Against Plastic Pollution**

- The UN's Environment Assembly, with 124 participating countries including India, signed a resolution in 2022 to create a legal binding agreement to end plastic pollution.
- At the national level, the Indian Government imposed a ban on uncollectable/recyclable Single-Use Plastics (SUP), prohibiting the production, import, sale, and usage of plastic bags thinner than 120 microns.
- The latest inclusion, Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2022, has introduced guidelines on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic packaging.

## **4: Recommendations and Steps Forward**

- The PAC report underscores the need for authentic data assessment and mandatory reporting on the national dashboard.
- It calls for immediate measures like awareness campaigns, funds for R&D on alternatives, making implementing agencies accountable, and enhancing recycling facilities.
- It suggests a closer watch on industries and the inclusion of a bottom-up approach to include every block in the country having at least one plastic waste recycling unit.
- Encouragement for industry participation through incentives could boost compliance and foster better ties with waste pickers.

## **5: Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and its Role**

- EPR is designed to make producers accountable for the environmental impacts of their products throughout their lifecycle.
- This initiative is aimed not just towards better waste management but also alleviating the burden of waste processing and disposal from municipalities.
- EPR is applicable to a variety of waste types, including plastic waste, electronic waste (e-waste), and battery waste.

## **6: Introduction to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Public Accounts Committee (PAC)**

- Both the CPCB, a statutory organisation formed in 1974, and PAC, a non-executive entity with advisory power established in 1921, are instrumental in addressing environmental concerns in India.
- While the CPCB's core function lies in providing technical services to the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, PAC monitors adherence and advises major financial policies.

Through this critical evaluation, the gravity of plastic waste pollution in India and the efforts in motion to mitigate it becomes evident. This study extensively covers the challenges, measures, and implications associated with combating plastic pollution, making it highly relevant for government exams and general knowledge expansion.

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# International Relations

## Historic Ban on Donkey Skin Trade: An African Union Resolution

### 1: The Historic Ban on Donkey Skin Trade

- During the 37th African Union Summit, 2024 held in Ethiopia, African heads of state unanimously agreed to ban the trade of donkey skin, thus ending the slaughter of donkeys for their hides all over the continent.
- It is a monumental decision ensuing from the Dar es Salaam declaration, which was adopted at the first African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resource (AU-IBAR) Pan-African Donkey Conference in December 2022.

### 2: The Dar es Salaam Declaration and its Influence

- The Dar es Salaam declaration was signed in Tanzania during the Pan African Donkey Skin Conference, organised by AU-IBAR. It emphasises the severe implications of donkey skin trade on African communities and animals.
- The declaration highlights the rapid depletion of Africa's donkey population and calls for more investments in policies, research, and legislation to protect the species.
- It also pushed for a resolution to halt the commercial slaughter of donkeys for their skins for 15 years, and further aimed to design a strategy to address exploitation, productivity, and production of donkeys.

### 3: Understanding the Donkey Skin Trade

- The donkey skin trade involves rampant unkind practices, where donkeys are brutally killed for their skins and exported to China. This trade is lawful in some countries and outlawed in others.
- The collagen extracted from donkey skins is used in ejiao, a traditional Chinese medicine, and subsequently used in beauty products, food, and drinks.

### 4: The Negative Effects of Donkey Skin Trade

- The ruthless treatment of donkeys in the skin trade has caused intense suffering and decimation in their population over the past decade.
- The donkey skin trade also threatens the UN's sustainable development goals, including eradicating poverty. Millions of people depend on donkeys as the sole carrier to escape severe poverty.
- The trade impacts women and children's economic and educational opportunities, depriving them of these useful animals for tasks such as fetching water and as draught animals.

### 5: Indian Wild Ass: Relevance and Conservation Status

- The Indian Wild Ass is a subspecies of the Asian Wild Ass and is unique due to its distinctive white markings on the rump and shoulder with a stripe down the back outlined in white.
- The last population of Indian Wild Ass is found in the Rann of Kachchh, Gujarat in a desert and grassland ecosystem.
- Conservation Status of Indian Wild Ass is 'Near threatened' as per IUCN, included in Appendix II by CITES, and placed under Schedule-I as per Wildlife Protection Act (1972).

This African Union Resolution serves as an important marker in the conservation efforts of donkey populations, both domestically and globally. While it puts a critical light on international animal trade practices, it also opens up essential discussions on safeguarding animal rights and their role in sustainable development.

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## Union Cabinet approves India-UAE Bilateral Investment Treaty: A Step towards Boosting Economic Engagement

### 1: An Introduction to Bilateral Investment Treaty concerning India and the UAE

- The Union Cabinet recently approved the signing and ratification of a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- This BIT aims to amplify bilateral economic engagement, which includes Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).
- The treaty forms part of International Investment Agreements (IIAs) under the umbrella of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
- The expected outcome of this BIT is the improvement of investor confidence, an increase in foreign investments and overseas direct investment opportunities, ultimately impacting positively on employment generation.

### 2: India's BIT Strategy and Position

- India has been actively negotiating Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) with various countries to synergize foreign direct investment (FDI).
- The recent Interim Budget emphasised India's strength in negotiating BITs with trade partners aiming at amplifying the inflow of FDI.
- India adopted a model BIT in 2016 intending to balance the rights of investors and the Government's obligations.
- India is now striding towards stronger economic integration with western nations like the United

Kingdom (UK) and the European Union through Free Trade Agreements and investment treaties.

### 3: The Significance of BITs

- BITs increase the confidence of investors by offering a level playing field and non-discrimination in all aspects.
- BITs facilitate an independent forum for dispute settlement by arbitration.
- They can catalyse the inflow of FDI; for instance, India's FDI inflow from 2014-23 was a whopping \$596 billion.
- BITs also contribute to economic growth and employment generation in the host country.
- They provide legal protection to investors, crucial for investments in countries with unpredictable or unstable domestic legal frameworks.

### 4: Challenges Associated with BITs

- BITs often create an unequal distribution of rights and obligations between developed (source of FDI) and developing countries (FDI recipients).
- BITs increase the risk of litigation, with some developing countries facing huge penalties from international arbitral tribunals due to alleged treaty violations.
- They sometimes present ambiguous legal standards and concepts.
- They can't address all issues investors face abroad, like American companies in China struggling with protecting and enforcing their intellectual property rights (IPR).
- BITs may lead to "Treaty Shopping", where investors take advantage of the most favourable nation clause to sue a host country under an unrelated treaty.

### 5: BITs - The Need for Balanced Negotiation and Implementation

- The current global economic and political trends suggest an imbalance in development, inequality, and injustice among the nations.



- BITs are seen as tools that assure investors of a level playing field and provide dispute settlement by arbitration.
  - Yet, their negotiation and implementation require careful balancing of interests, addressing the challenges associated with them.
  - The interests of both the investing and host countries should be balanced when negotiating and implementing BITs.
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## **Navigating the Turbulence: China's Economic Challenges and India's Opportunities**

### **1: Bracing the Storm: China's Economic Landscape Overview**

- 2023 proved to be economically tumultuous for China with a growth rate of 5.2%, one of its lowest in the last three decades.
- This challenging economic landscape has been shaped due to a variety of factors like a struggling real estate market, demographic issues, and high youth unemployment.

### **2: Untangling the Gordian Knot: In-depth Look at China's Economic Challenges**

- The slow growth has been attributed to issues such as a deficit in job creation and an ageing demographic that adversely affects productivity.
- Despite policies allowing up to three children, China struggles with a steadily decreasing population, a legacy of their one-child policy.
- The real estate sector, a cornerstone of China's economy, is embroiled in financial difficulties, with industry giants like Evergrande and Country Garden facing hardships.

### **3: A Global Outlook: China's Challenges at the Global Front**

- As the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter, China is viewed as a key contributor to environmental degradation.
- The protracted trade war and disputes over technological dominance have escalated tensions between China and the U.S.
- Territorial disputes in the South China Sea and human rights violations attract widespread international scrutiny and criticism.

### **4: India's Steady Strides Amid China's Economic Commotion**

- With a youthful working demographic, initiatives to bolster infrastructure, and a business-friendly environment, India is well-positioned to navigate the global turbulence.
- As domestic manufacturing sectors receive increasing international recognition, multinational corporations are eyeing India as a reliable investment hub favouring green manufacturing.

### **5: Overcoming Impediments: Areas for India's Improvement**

- Despite positive strides, India wrestles with challenges such as a skill gap in the workforce, inadequate infrastructure, and a lower ranking in the ease of doing business.
- To enhance competitiveness, India must prioritise addressing these challenges by investing in vocational training, streamlining the regulatory environment, and raising R&D investments.

### **6: Carving out the Future: Contemplating the Way Forward**

- Upskilling the workforce and fostering innovation and technology are pivotal to handle the future economic landscape.
- Constructive diplomatic dialogues and persistent resolution efforts towards territorial disputes with

China might serve to enhance bilateral relations and stimulate regional economic prosperity.

In essence, while the current economic shifting landscape in China brings a set of challenges, it also unfolds enormous opportunities for India. However, addressing the nation's own challenges is crucial to fully leverage these opportunities.

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## India's Crude Oil Import Dynamics amid Red Sea Disruptions

### 1. Introduction and Context:

- Recent disturbances in the Red Sea region have significantly influenced India's oil import dynamics, prompting a shift away from conventional suppliers like the United States.

- Rising freight rates caused by the heightened tensions in the Red Sea rendered US crude economically unserviceable for Indian refineries, leading to a reversion to traditional suppliers in the Persian Gulf (West Asia).

### 2. The Red Sea Incidents - A Major Shift:

- The turmoil in the Red Sea region marked a sharp turn of events, especially with the drone attack on the chemical tanker MV Chem Pluto, a Japanese-owned, Liberian-flagged ship with Netherlands management.

- MV Chem Pluto embarked on a journey from Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia, intending to reach New Mangalore, India, but was attacked approximately 200 nautical miles off the coast of Gujarat.

- Allegedly, the assault was orchestrated by Houthi rebels based in Yemen, condemning Israel's actions in Gaza.

### 3. India's Oil Import Framework:

- The current disruptions have had a direct impact on India, the world's third-largest oil consumer, succeeding the US and China.

- India imports roughly 85% of its oil demand, a figure expected to rise given the weakening domestic production.

- Major suppliers include Russia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE with Russia remaining India's single biggest supplier of oil, avalanche by 1.53 million barrels per day (bpd) in January 2024.

### 4. Government Measures to Tackle Rising Oil Demand:

- The Indian government has adopted multiple strategies, including promoting energy efficiency, fuel diversification, and electric mobility, to manage increasing oil demand.

- Attractive policies for oil exploration and substantial investments in technological advancements like Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) techniques by ONGC are implemented, increasing domestic oil production.

### 5. Way Ahead for India:

- Diversifying biofuel development beyond ethanol blending could serve as a robust strategy to meet future energy demand sustainably.

- The promotion of integrated public transportation systems and active mobility could reduce the demand for oil-based fuels.

- Mandating green building standards for all construction could significantly cut energy consumption.

- Transitioning towards a hydrogen economy offers another path forwards, which could supply a clean alternative to fossil fuels across several sectors including transportation, manufacturing, and power generation.

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# Expansion of UPI Services and RuPay in Sri Lanka and Mauritius

## Introduction and Significance:

The Prime Minister of India recently inaugurated the launch of Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services in Sri Lanka and Mauritius, and RuPay card services in Mauritius. This was executed in collaboration with NPCI International Payments, local banks, and under the guidance of the Reserve Bank of India. This strategic move seeks to foster economic ties and improve seamless digital transactions amongst the nations.

## Understanding RuPay and UPI:

### **I. RuPay:**

- Developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), RuPay is a domestic card payment network that is widely used across India at ATMs, e-commerce websites, and POS devices.
- Supported by the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, it aids in creating a secure electronic payment and settlement system in India.
- RuPay cards cater to diverse societal segments with special variant cards.
- After Nepal, Bhutan, UAE, and Singapore, RuPay is now accessible in Africa through Mauritius.

### **II. UPI:**

- UPI is a real-time digital payment system, developed by NPCI in 2016.
- Based on the IMPS infrastructure, it enables instant, seamless money transfers between any two parties' bank accounts.
- The countries accepting UPI payments include France, UAE, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and others.

## Benefits of UPI and RuPay in Mauritius and Sri Lanka:

1. Seamless Transactions: The adoption of RuPay and UPI will simplify transactions, both

domestically and internationally, for the users in Mauritius and Sri Lanka.

2. Enhanced Financial Access: The acceptance of RuPay cards at ATMs and PoS terminals in Mauritius will advance the reach of digital payments. UPI connectivity in Sri Lanka enables QR code-based payments at merchant locations.

3. Promotion of Financial Inclusion: The provision of RuPay cards and UPI services encourages diverse socio-economic groups to participate in the digital economy.

4. Strengthened Economic Ties: The initiation of these services helps foster economic cooperation and collaboration and supports local businesses by promoting cashless transactions.

5. Foster Innovation and Technological Advancement: The introduction of RuPay and UPI indicates a strong inclination towards digital innovation, showcasing Mauritius and Sri Lanka as progressing economies in the global digital landscape.

## India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):

- Known as the India Stack, India's DPI includes open and interoperable platforms that provide identity, payment, data sharing, and consent mechanisms for various digital applications.
- Key components include Aadhaar, DigiYatra, DigiLocker, and Account Aggregator.
- This infrastructure creates opportunities for innovation, economic transformation, and fosters inclusive growth in the digital space.



# Polity

## India's Recent Amendments to Surrogacy Rules - A Comprehensive Overview

### India's Surrogacy Legislation - A Shift Towards More Inclusive Parenthood

- Introduction to the Recent Amendment: The Indian Government recently revamped the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules of 2022, allowing for egg or sperm donation in surrogacy cases where one partner within the married couple suffers from a medical condition that prevents natural conception.

### Reversing the Previous Surrogacy Rules

- March 2023 Amendment: The revision overturns the rules amended in March 2022 that prohibited the use of donor gametes and confined the use of only the intending couple's own genetic material for surrogacy.

### Criticism and Legal Challenges to the March 2023 Amendment

- Issues and Challenges: The stringent rules contributed to angst, especially among couples who were unable to conceive naturally due to medically established conditions. It also engendered legal disputes, including a case brought to the Supreme Court by a woman diagnosed with Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) Syndrome – a congenital disorder that often results in female infertility.

- Supreme Court Perspective: The Supreme Court has raised queries about the effectiveness of such restrictive rules on surrogacy, observing that these regulations undermined the basic purpose of surrogacy.

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### The Salient Features of the Recent Amended Surrogacy Rules

- Amended Provisions: Under the new provisions, surrogacy with donor gametes is permitted if either partner in the couple requires it due to a medically validated condition. A key caveat is that surrogacy is not an option if both partners suffer from an ailment inhibiting natural conception.

- New Rules for Single Women: Divorced or widowed women opting for surrogacy must utilise their own eggs, but are permitted to use donor sperm.

### Understanding Surrogacy

- Surrogacy Defined: Surrogacy is a legally binding agreement wherein a woman, known as the surrogate, carries and delivers a baby for an individual or a couple known as the intending parents.

- Classifications: Surrogacy can be further divided into two types. In 'Traditional Surrogacy,' the surrogate's own egg is fertilised with the intended father's sperm. Conversely, in 'Gestational Surrogacy,' the surrogate carries an embryo created using the intending father's sperm and intending mother's egg, or if necessary, donor sperm or egg.

### Different Surrogacy Arrangements

- Altruistic and Commercial Surrogacy: Altruistic surrogacy is conducted with no financial gains for the surrogate, while in commercial surrogacy, the surrogate receives monetary compensation.

### Other Noteworthy Provisions in Indian Surrogacy Laws

- Permissibility and Restrictions: Surrogacy in India is only lawful for altruistic purposes and infertile or disease-stricken couples. Commercial surrogacy is strictly prohibited, as are any practices exploiting surrogate mothers or potential parents.

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- Eligibility for Couples: Couples must have been married for 5 years with age limits set, and they should not already have living children barring some exceptions.
  - Criteria for Surrogate Mothers: The surrogate mother must be a close relative of the couple, married with a child, within a specified age range and may only be a surrogate once in her lifetime.
  - Legal Parental Recognition: The baby born through surrogacy is legally considered the biological child of the intending couple.
  - Abortion Policy: The termination of pregnancy needs consent from both the surrogate and appropriate authorities, in harmony with the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act.
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## **Internet Shutdowns in India - An Analysis**

### **1: Prevalence and Causes**

- Internet shutdowns have become a common practice in India, especially during times of conflict or tension. Majority of these shutdowns happened due to issues such as the Citizenship Amendment Act, the abrogation of Article 370, and other socio-political tensions.
- The aim behind these shutdowns is maintaining peace and preventing unrest, owing to the role of the internet in spreading misinformation and coordinating unlawful activities.

### **2: Legal Provisions Supporting Shutdowns**

- Internet shutdowns were largely imposed under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) till 2017.
- In 2017, the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rule 2017 was brought in giving official sanction to such shutdowns.

### **3: Arguments Supporting Internet Shutdowns**

- The government contends that such shutdowns help in maintaining national security and preventing spread of misinformation.
- They argue that these measures are temporary, targeted, and crucial to control civil unrests, riots, or protests.

### **4: Counter Arguments Against Shutdowns**

- Critics express concerns over the infringement on freedom of expression, disruptions in the economic activities, effect on the educational system, and healthcare services.
- They also highlight the potential harm to India's global image, possible deterrent to foreign investments, violations of human rights, and lack of transparency.

### **5: Crucial Legal Verdict**

- In the Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India case (2020), the Supreme Court declared indefinite internet shutdowns as impermissible, stating that internet use is a fundamental right under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.
- The court also emphasised that any shutdown orders should be subject to judicial scrutiny and be made public to ensure transparency.

### **6: Conclusion and Way Forward**

- In a democracy, governments should provide justifications and ensure transparency for disrupting internet services.
- Indiscriminate shutdowns have high societal and economic costs and can often prove ineffective.
- Considering the proportionality and necessity of such actions is essential.
- For better internet governance, there is a need for a transparent and accountable system.

## **General Knowledge Part:**

- Section 144 of CrPC gives the power to prevent unlawful gathering of people and abstain from certain activities in situations of unrest.
- Article 19 of the Indian Constitution guarantees all citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression.
- In case of Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020), the Supreme Court upheld the fundamental right to use the internet, emphasising on the need for transparency and judicial scrutiny in case of internet shutdowns.

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# **Inclusion of PVTGs to ST List in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh through Recent Legislative Amendments**

## **Introduction and Salient Features:**

- Recently, the Indian Parliament sanctioned two important contributions to legislation aimed at amending the lists of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
- The intention of these bills is to include specific tribes as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), and certain communities from the SC list to the ST list, following local government recommendations.
- The inclusion was decided after consultation with the Registrar General of India and the National Commissions for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes.
- Such decision-making was facilitated using the Voice Vote method.

## **Understanding the Bills and Proposed Changes:**

- "The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024": It seeks to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 as applicable to Andhra Pradesh. The result is the

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inclusion of Bondo Porja, Khond Porja, and Konda Savaras under the ST category.

- "The Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2024": It aims to amend both the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, and the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, as applicable to Odisha. A number of PVTGs have been included in the ST list and some communities have been moved from SC to the ST list.

## **The Significance of the Amendments:**

- The modified lists address discrepancies in the classification and treatment of certain tribes across different regions.
- Tribes that were recognized as ST in Andhra Pradesh but faced discrimination in Odisha will be now rectified, ensuring equitable access to government facilities and services.
- Inclusion in the ST list allows for reservation quotas in education, employment, and politics.

## **Understanding the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG):**

- It is a sub-category within the Scheduled Tribes which is deemed more vulnerable than standard Scheduled Tribes.
- In India, there are 75 PVTGs with the maximum, 13, being in Odisha and followed by 12 in Andhra Pradesh.
- The initiatives supporting PVTG include PM-Janman, Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, and PM PVTG Mission, all aimed to improve their living standards.

## **Constitutional Provisions:**

- As per Article 342(1), the President, after consultation with the Governor of the state, may classify tribes or tribal communities or divisions within tribes/tribal communities as Scheduled Tribes in that particular state or UT.
- The Parliament holds the right to include or exclude from the list of STs through law-making decisions. However, a notification issued under this article cannot be changed by any subsequent notifications.

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# Landmark Ruling on Electoral Bonds Scheme: Supreme Court Invalidates the Law

## I. Introduction & Context

In a key verdict, the Supreme Court (SC) of India issued a unanimous ruling invalidating the Electoral Bond Scheme (EBS) and corresponding amendments. The Constitution Bench, composed of five judges, deemed these legislations unconstitutional. The verdict casts consequential implications on the landscape of political financing in India. The judges asserted that the EBS violated the fundamental right to information provided under Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution.

## II. Explanation of the SC Verdict

The SC proclaimed the EBS and the amendments in various legislative acts such as the Finance Act, 2017, Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951, Income Tax Act, 1961, and the Companies Act, 2013, as unconstitutional. Prior to these amendments, political parties had to adhere to strict requirements that included the declaration of contributions exceeding Rs 20,000 and establishing a cap on corporate donations.

## III. Reinstating the Previous Legal Framework

The judgement of the SC restored the legal norms that were in place before the amendments introduced by the Finance Act, 2017. Critical aspects of the verdict include:

- Reiteration of Section 29C of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which mandates political parties to disclose donations above Rs 20,000.

- Revocation of the Finance Act, 2017 amendment to the Companies Act, 2013, that removed the cap on corporate donations and the need for disclosure. The SC highlighted its concern over unchecked corporate influence on elections.

- An element of focus was the Income-tax Act, 1961, which requires record maintenance for contributions more than Rs 20,000. The SC ruled against the amendment introducing exemptions from record-keeping requirements for Electoral Bond contributions.

## IV. The Proportionality Test & Constitutional Validity

The court used the proportionality test to scrutinise whether the EBS violated voters' right to information and the transparency of election procedures. The proportionality test stands as a crucial judicial norm to balance state action with individual rights. Any interference with these rights must comply with "reasonable restrictions" specified under Article 19(2) assessed through this test.

## V. Government's Arguments and Stand of SC

The government argued the necessity of donor anonymity for upholding privacy rights and curbing black money circulation as state interests. SC, in turn, dismissed anonymity as a legitimate state interest. It emphasised the importance of the right to information for fostering democratic participation and for holding the government accountable.

## VI. Directions by the Supreme Court

The SC ordered the State Bank of India (SBI) to cease issuance of electoral bonds. It also mandated the SBI to provide details of the bonds purchased by political parties since April 2019 to the Election Commission of India (ECI), including the dates of purchase, name of the purchaser, and denomination of the purchased bonds.

## **VII. About Electoral Bonds**

Introduced in 2018, the electoral bonds scheme allowed anonymous funding to political parties. Donations through electoral bonds were issued by the SBI and sold in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore.

## **VIII. Diverse Recommendations on Funding of Political Parties**

Various recommendations have come from the Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections, 1998, the Election Commission's report in 2004, and the Law Commission, 1999. They focused on publishing party accounts, public funding, state funding, and several restrictions and provisions.

## **IX. How does Global Political Funding Differ from India?**

Globally, political funding often centres around individual candidates. However, in India, political parties are the main focus. Across the world, funding frameworks typically comprise bans or limits on certain donors, expenditure caps, and public funding. Contrarily, in India, there is a lack of donation limits on individuals and legal expenditure caps on parties, stirring concerns about potential influence and transparency.

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## **Raisina Dialogue 2024**

### **Introduction:**

The Raisina Dialogue is a much-anticipated annual conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics. The year 2024 marked the 9th edition of this influential event held in New Delhi, with Greece's Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, attending as the chief guest. The Dialogue unites policymakers, academics, business leaders, and civil society

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members for a comprehensive debate on pressing global issues.

### **Snapshot of Raisina Dialogue:**

- An initiative of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and the Ministry of External Affairs, the Raisina Dialogue aims at discussing critical world challenges.
- It mirrors the design of the Shangri-La Dialogue and forms an essential part of India's "intelligence diplomacy," integral to its national security framework.
- The event's 2024 theme was "Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create," and centred on six "thematic pillars."
- These include technology, sustainability, conflict management, multilateralism, future agendas, and democratic principles.

### **Global Dialogues Analogues To Raisina Dialogue:**

- Munich Security Conference (MSC): Focused on international security policy.
- Shangri-La Dialogue: Centers on Asia-Pacific security matters.
- Oslo Freedom Forum: Steered towards human rights, democracy, and individual liberties.

### **Key Takeaways from Raisina Dialogue 2024:**

#### **Geopolitical Shifts:**

- Heightened discussions on the changing powers and alliances in the global landscape, with an emphasis on major actors like the US, China, Russia, and European nations.

#### **India as a Bridging Power:**

- India's External Affairs Minister projected India as a "bridging power" seeking common ground through a "multi-vector" policy, playing a friend to the world.

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**Significant Economic Connectivities and Therapeutic Steps:**

- Emphasis on vital connectivity projects like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
- A new diplomatic outreach initiated through the participation of the ministerial contingent from the Baltic-Nordic forum.

**Global and Regional Security Concerns:**

- Serious focus on international conflicts, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the challenges posed by an increasingly assertive China.
- Addressed security concerns in sensitive regions like the Indo-Pacific, Middle East, and Eastern Europe.

**Technology and Innovation:**

- Comprehensive discussions on the role of technology and innovation in geopolitics and their implications for national security and international relations.

**Observer Research Foundation (ORF):**

- An independent think tank that aids policy thinking for a strong and prosperous India in a fair and equitable world.
- A significant player in bringing Indian ideas and voices to global forums and providing unbiased, well-researched analysis to various decision-makers globally.

and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), provides an overview of the progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region.

- The report underscores the challenges faced and successes achieved in the region towards realising the SDGs.
- The report also places emphasis on the priorities for improving data availability on SDG indicators, especially for vulnerable populations, in a bid to shape more inclusive and equitable development strategies.

**2: Noteworthy Points from the Report**

- The SDG progress is uneven and inadequate across various population segments and within the five subregions of Asia and the Pacific, with achievement of all SDGs projected for 2062, 32 years behind the 2030 target.
- Only 11% of the 116 measurable SDG targets are on track, and if the current pace continues, only one-third of the progress required is projected to be achieved by 2030, according to the report.
- All targets related to SDG 13 (Climate Action) are either stalled or regressing, highlighting the urgency for integrating climate action measures into national policies and strengthening resilience against climate-related disasters.

**3: Role of Public-Private Partnerships and National Statistics System**

- Digital transformation and bridging skills and employment opportunities for youth and migrant workers, particularly in countries like Vietnam, have been accelerated through Public-Private Partnerships, as noted by the report.
- In North and Central Asia, the national statistical systems in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have been upgraded to better serve stateless populations.

**4: Key Recommendations of the Report**

**Ranks  
Reports Schemes  
and Exercise**

**Asia-Pacific SDG Progress Report 2024: An Overview**

**1: Introduction to Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report**

- The Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report, published annually by the United Nations Economic <https://edupreparator.com/>

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- There's a pressing need to address inequalities affecting marginalised groups such as women, girls, the rural populace, and the urban poor, to provide them with educational and employment opportunities.
- The report underscores the need for substantial increase in investments in sustainable infrastructure and renewable energy to combat challenges posed by climate change and achieve various SDGs.

## **5: India's Progress in Line with the Report**

- According to the report, India's overall SDG score has shown an improvement, rising from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2020–21.
- Noteworthy achievements for India include Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), with goal scores of 83 and 92 respectively.

## **6: About UNESCAP**

- UNESCAP, the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region, has 53 Member States and 9 Associate Members from the region including India.
- It was established in 1947, with its headquarters based in Bangkok, Thailand.
- The objective of UNESCAP is to overcome some of the region's greatest challenges by providing results-oriented projects, technical assistance and capacity building to member States.

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# **Notable Contributions of Bharat Ratna Awardees 2024: Leading Lights of Indian Society**

## **1: Introduction**

- Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian honour of India, is earmarked for 2024's five eminent personalities, namely Karpooori Thakur, Mankombu Sambasivan (MS) Swaminathan, Pamulaparathi Venkata (P. V.) Narasimha Rao, Lal Krishna Advani, and Chaudhary Charan Singh.
- These individuals have excelled in their respective fields of politics, governance, and agriculture, thereby significantly impacting the nation.

## **2: Profile of Awardees and Their Contributions**

### **1. Karpooori Thakur:**

- Known as "Jan Nayak," he served twice as Chief Minister of Bihar.
- Provided reservation benefits for OBCs, EBCs, women, and economically backward classes among upper castes.
- Stress on social justice and inclusive development to uplift marginalised communities.

### **2. Mankombu Sambasivan (MS) Swaminathan:**

- Known as the 'Father of India's Green Revolution,' he made substantial contributions towards agricultural technology and practices.
- Advocated for fair prices for farm produce, sustainable farming, and development of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Right Act, 2001.
- Recipient of prestigious awards like the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan.

### **3. Pamulaparathi Venkata (P. V.) Narasimha Rao:**

- As the 9th Prime Minister of India, he brought about the economic liberalisation of the country.
- Modified India's foreign policy, strengthened relations with the United States and initiated ties with Israel.
- His tenure saw the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts that mandated reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies (ULBs).

#### **4. Lal Krishna Advani:**

- Served as the 7th Deputy Prime Minister of India and as President of the Bharatiya Janata Party.
- Known for his intellectual ability, upholding strong principles, and fostering the idea of a strong and prosperous India.

#### **5. Chaudhary Charan Singh:**

- As the 5th Prime Minister of India and former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, he championed for peasant rights.
- Promoted democracy, secularism, and social justice, and led Uttar Pradesh to abolish the zamindari system.

### **3: Trivia and Background Rules**

- Despite the general guideline suggesting a maximum of three Bharat Ratna awards a year, 1999 and 2024 witnessed the conferring of this honour upon four and five recipients, respectively.

#### **4: Significance for Current Affairs and General Knowledge**

- In general, the profiles, contributions, and relevant discussion points related to these five Bharat Ratna awardees are crucial for aspirants preparing for government exams. They provide insights into the formation of various constitutional acts, the socio-economic transition of India, agricultural reforms, and major shifts in India's foreign policy. Such knowledge can significantly aid in tackling various sections of a competitive exam, including History, Geography, Civics, and Current Affairs.

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## **Mapping and Documenting India's Villages Under Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar Programme**

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### **Introduction and Overview**

- The Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar (My Village, My Heritage) Programme is implemented by the Indian Government.
- This program aims to map and document all villages across the country.
- The Ministry of Culture collaborates with the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts to conduct this national mission on cultural mapping.
- The primary objective is to compile comprehensive information about microscopic aspects of Indian villages, including their life, history, and ethos.
- This data then becomes available to both virtual and real-time visitors through the MGMD web portal.

### **Importance and Key Features of MGMD**

- MGMD is mapping villages under seven broad categories: Arts and Crafts Village, Ecologically Oriented Village, Scholastic Village, Epic Village, Historical Village, Architectural Heritage Village, and Miscellaneous.
- The program is part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) and the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM).
- So far, more than 2 lakh villages out of the planned 6.5 lakh have been mapped and uploaded onto the Mission portal.

### **Overview of National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)**

- The NMCM was established by the Ministry of Culture to document India's cultural heritage and foster self-reliance in India's villages.
- The mission operates on three levels including National Directories, creation of National Digital Inventories, and evolving policies for preserving art practices.
- Its mandate includes creating a national database through cultural mapping and disseminating and revitalising the rich cultural heritage for future generations.

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## **Scheme for Financial Assistance for the Promotion of Art and Culture**

- A central sector scheme devised to support cultural activities and organisations in the country.
- It comprises eight components, each with a distinct objective and funding amount.
- The components include Financial Assistance to Cultural Organizations with National Presence, Cultural Function & Production Grant, Financial Assistance for the Preservation & Development of Cultural Heritage of the Himalayas, and more.

## **Historical Context and Geography**

- MGMD becomes relevant to history and geography as it provides an insightful understanding of Indian villages, traditional practices, and cultural nuances exhibited by different regions across the country.
- This mission contributes to the geographical understanding by mapping and documenting each village's distinct characteristics and landscapes.

## **Significance**

- MGMD and NMCM's primary importance lies in preserving, safeguarding, and revitalising India's cultural heritage. This aligns with the broader objective of cultural preservation and promotion.
- These initiatives provide an opportunity to study and understand India's cultural richness and diversity in depth.
- Financial Assistance schemes also play a crucial role in preventing the erosion of culture and promoting artistic practices via financial support.

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# **Astonishing Escapes from Multidimensional Poverty in India: A Comprehensive Analysis**

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## **I. Introduction and Background on Poverty:**

- Poverty is defined as a lack of essential financial resources and conditions necessary for maintaining a minimum standard of living such as access to clean water, healthy food, and necessary medical attention.
- Poverty estimation traditionally relies on income or expenditure levels. A 'poverty line' represents the minimum expenditure level at which an individual is considered poor.
- A poor person may face multiple disadvantages including poor health, insufficient nutrition, lack of clean water, insufficient access to electricity, poor work conditions and limited educational opportunities.

## **II. Understanding the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI):**

- The MPI globally uses ten indicators, covering three key areas: Health (nutrition, child and adolescent mortality), Education (years of schooling, school attendance), and Standard of Living (housing, household assets, type of cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, and electricity).
- The Indian MPI includes two additional indicators: Maternal Health and Bank Accounts.

## **III. Multidimensional Poverty in India: Insights from 2005-06:**

- The Indian MPI, aided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), revealed a decline in multidimensional poverty from 29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23.
- An impressive total of approximately 24.82 crore individuals managed to escape poverty during this period. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh witnessed the largest reductions.

## **IV. Interrelated Data and Studies:**

- The NFHS-5 data (2019-21) reveals that nearly 135 million individuals managed to escape poverty during the previous five years.

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- A UNDP study highlighted a significant reduction in poverty, with 415 million Indians escaping multidimensional poverty in the last 15 years.

## **V. Exploring the Causes of Poverty in India:**

- Economic slowdown and policy decisions, child malnutrition, pandemic impact, and homelessness are the primary causes of poverty in the country.

## **VI. Government's Initiatives to Alleviate Poverty:**

- The government has expanded social security through various welfare schemes.  
- A particular emphasis has been put on increasing livelihood opportunities, empowering rural women, providing a social safety net, enhancing rural youth's skills, and infrastructure development.  
- States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh made substantial efforts in successfully reducing their poverty rates.

## **VII. Noteworthy Committees on Poverty:**

- Over the years, several committees have been set up to estimate India's poverty rates. These include the Working Group (1962), V N Dandekar and N Rath (1971), Y K Alagh (1979), D T Lakdawala (1993), Suresh Tendulkar (2009), and C Rangarajan (2014).

## **VIII. The Way Forward:**

- Although progress has been made, complete poverty eradication remains India's top priority.  
- It is crucial to address income, education, and opportunity inequalities, which can help promote social cohesion and enhance overall well-being.  
- The government must ensure free supply of education and health services for deserving citizens and socially oppressed classes. This will, in turn, offer a tremendous contribution to eradicate poverty.

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# **The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah Yojana (PM-MKSSY): A Boon for India's Fisheries Sector**

## **1: Brief Understanding of PM-MKSSY**

- It is a sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for the micro and small enterprises in the fisheries sector.  
- The Indian Union Cabinet approved the scheme.  
- Aimed at a total investment of ₹6,000 crore spread over the next four years (2023-2027).  
- The scheme features 50% public finance, including funding from the World Bank and Agence Française de Développement, and the remaining from the private sector.  
- It will be implemented across all states and union territories of India.

## **2: Significance of PM-MKSSY**

- Fishers, fish vendors, aquaculture farmers, and fish workers stand to gain from this scheme.  
- The scheme hopes to bring about gradual formalisation of the fisheries sector and facilitate better access to institutional credit.

## **3: India's Fisheries Sector – An Overview**

- India holds the world's 3rd and 2nd positions in fish and aquaculture production, respectively, and is the 4th largest exporter of fish and fishery products.  
- The fisheries sector is also a significant employer, providing livelihood to over 30 million people.  
- The Department of Fisheries, under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, drives the "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana" for sustainable development of the sector.

## **4: Challenges Faced by India's Fisheries Sector**

1. Overfishing: Overexploitation of fish stocks poses a significant threat.

2. Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing: Unauthorised fishing activities affect fish stock management.
3. Lack of Infrastructure and Technology: Inadequate facilities and outdated technology hinder the sector's growth.
4. Poor Fisheries Management: Limited regulation enforcement, incomplete data on fish stocks, and insufficient management measures lead to overfishing and IUU fishing.
5. Environmental and Climate Challenges: Pollution, habitat destruction, climate changes affect fish distribution and reproduction.
6. Socio-economic Issues: Poverty, unequal resource distribution, access to credit and social services intensify the vulnerability of fishing communities.

## **5: Government Initiatives for Fisheries Sector Growth**

- The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), formed in 2006, plans and promotes fisheries development in India.
- The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) (2020) aims at enhancing fish production and farmers' income.
- Blue Revolution (2015) promotes sustainable management of fisheries.
- Sagarmala Programme (2015) promotes port-led development and the maritime sector.
- The fisheries sector has been guided by the comprehensive National Fisheries Policy (2020).
- Fish Farmers Development Agencies (FFDAs) are present at district levels to provide necessary technical guidance, training, and resources.
- Coastal Aquaculture Authority (CAA) regulates and promotes environmentally sustainable coastal aquaculture activities.

## **6: Way Forward**

- Addressing challenges mandatorily needs joint efforts from the government, fisheries stakeholders, civil society organisations, and the private sector.
- Measures such as sustainable fisheries management, infrastructure and technology investments, strong governance structures, community-centric approaches and climate change

impacts mitigation are crucial for a sustained and resilient fisheries sector.

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# **Exercise Dharma Guardian 2024: A Benchmark of Indo-Japanese Military Cooperation**

## **I. Introduction to Exercise Dharma Guardian**

- The Exercise Dharma Guardian is a notable joint military manoeuvre between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self Defence Force.
- The 5th edition of this exercise commenced on 25th February and will culminate on 9th March 2024 at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.
- Conceived as an annual exercise, the Dharma Guardian is alternately conducted in India and Japan.

## **II. Aims and Objectives: Enhancing Joint Operations**

- The main goal of Exercise Dharma Guardian is to foster military cooperation and augment combined proficiency to carry out joint operations in a semi-urban environment.
- It is organised under the framework of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.
- It encourages high physical fitness, joint planning, tactical drills, and basic special arms skills.

## **III. Activities and Drills: Building Tactical Prowess**

- Several rigorous drills are part of this exercise. These include the formulation of an ISR grid, the establishment of a temporary operational base, setting up mobile vehicle checkpoints, implementing cordon and search operations, and conducting heliborne operations and house intervention drills.

#### **IV. Impact on Defense Cooperation and Bilateral Relations**

- The exercise is instrumental in strengthening defence cooperation and bilateral ties by nurturing camaraderie and encouraging the sharing of best practices in tactical operations.

#### **V. Display of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Initiative**

- The exercise will feature a Weapon and Equipment Display that showcases the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative - a testament to India's growing defence industrial capability.

#### **VI. Other Bilateral Defence Exercises between India and Japan**

- Apart from Dharma Guardian, the defence forces of India and Japan also engage in other bilateral exercises. These include JIMEX (naval), the Malabar exercise (Naval Exercise), 'Veer Guardian' and SHINYUU Maitri (Air Force).

#### **GK Insights:**

- Exercise Dharma Guardian plays a crucial part in the United Nations' mission of maintaining international peace and security under Chapter VII of its Charter.

- The Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiative underscores India's self-resilience in defence manufacturing and industrial capability.

- The inclusion of other bilateral defence exercises like JIMEX, the Malabar exercise, 'Veer Guardian', and SHINYUU Maitri highlights the extensive nature of Indo-Japanese defence cooperation.

In conclusion, Exercise Dharma Guardian 2024 underscores the strengthening defence cooperation between India and Japan while underscoring their commitment to global peacekeeping and security missions under the United Nations Charter. With an emphasis on ideal tactical practices and high physical fitness, the exercise bolsters the combined capabilities of both nations to execute joint operations effectively.

## Miscellaneous

### **Rare High-Altitude Butterfly, Dusted Apollo, Sighted in Himachal Pradesh**

#### **1: Introduction to Dusted Apollo Butterfly**

- The Dusted Apollo (*Parnassius stenosemus*) is a rare high-altitude butterfly, typically found within the inner Himalayas.

- The species was first discovered in 1890 and is observed to reside between altitudes of 3,500 to 4,800 metres.

- The distribution range of this butterfly species extends from Ladakh to West Nepal.

- As a member of the snow Apollo genus (*Parnassius*) it belongs to the swallowtail family.

#### **2: Dusted Apollo Butterfly vs Ladakh Banded Apollo**

- The Dusted Apollo species shares a close resemblance with another butterfly species, the Ladakh Banded Apollo (*Parnassius stoliczkanus*).

- The distinguishing characteristic lies in the discal band (band on a butterfly's wing). For dusted Apollo, this band is complete and extends from the costa to vein one, whereas for the Ladakh Banded Apollo, the discal band is incomplete, extending only up to vein four.

#### **3: Rare Sighting in Himachal Pradesh**

- The Dusted Apollo butterfly was recently sighted and photographed for the first time in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh.

- This event marks a significant milestone in the field of biodiversity for the region.



- Significant as it is a rare phenomenon, as this high-altitude butterfly is not often sighted in these parts of Himachal Pradesh.

#### **4: Other Rare Butterflies**

- Alongside the Dusted Apollo, another rare butterfly species, the Regal Apollo (*Parnassius charltonius*), was also sighted.
- The Regal Apollo species is a protected species under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

#### **5: Importance of the Apollo Butterfly Species**

- The sighting of the Dusted Apollo butterfly in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh, adds to the rich biodiversity of the region.
- Both the Dusted Apollo and the Regal Apollo play an essential role in maintaining the balance in the ecosystem.
- Being high-altitude butterflies, their presence or absence can be significant indicators of climatic changes.

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## **Grammy Award 2024: India's Achievements and Significance**

### **Shakti's Return and Grammy Recognition**

- Fusion music group Shakti, which includes talents like tabla maestro Zakir Hussain and singer Shankar Mahadevan, has overcome the competition to win the 66th Grammy Award (2024) for the Best Global Music Album.
- The winning album, "This Moment," marks their third studio album release and signifies the group's return to the music scene under the same name after nearly five decades.

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### **Brief Overview of Grammy Awards**

- Grammy Awards, best known for the golden gramophone statuette conferred on the winners, started as the Gramophone Award in 1959 in the United States.
- The award is an annual initiative by the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS) or the Latin Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (LARAS). The LARAS awards focus exclusively on Spanish and Portuguese language recordings.
- With the first awards given to artists who shone in 1958, these awards serve to acknowledge and honour outstanding musical achievements.

### **India's Historical Performance in the 2024 Grammy Awards**

- The band Shakti, also including member artists John McLaughlin, Ganesh Rajagopalan, and Selvaganesh Vinayakram, scored the 2024 Grammy with their album "This Moment."
- The band's work was described as an "unprecedented transcontinental collaboration," capable of marrying Eastern and Western music traditions in an innovative manner. This successful blend set the stage for what is presently known as world music.
- Zakir Hussain displayed exceptional talent, clinching two additional Grammys at the same ceremony.
- These supplementary awards were conferred for the best global music performance with 'Pashto' and for the best contemporary instrumental album 'As We Speak.'. The latter album has Indian flute player Rakesh Chaurasia, the nephew of the highly respected flautist Hariprasad Chaurasia, lending his skills.

This major success for India in the 2024 Grammy Awards not only establishes the country's musicians' talent on a global platform but also highlights the world's acceptance and appreciation of Indian-mixed music styles.

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# Revival of Ancient Subika Painting: Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Manipur

## 1: Introduction and Background on Subika Painting

- Subika Painting is an integral part of Manipur's rich cultural heritage.
- It is closely associated with the history of the Meitei community of Manipur.
- There are six surviving manuscripts depicting the Subika painting: Subika, Subika Achouba, Subika Laishaba, Subika Choudit, Subika Cheithil and Thengrakhel Subika.

## 2: The Current State of Subika Painting

- Despite its historical significance, the ancient Subika Painting has been marginalised and neglected over the years.
- As a consequence, awareness regarding this distinct painting style has declined significantly among the younger generation.
- In an attempt to revive this nearly extinct art form, a collaborative initiative is currently ongoing in Manipur.

## 3: The Process of Subika Painting

- Subika paintings are created on handmade paper. The materials for the manuscripts are locally sourced.
- The traditional method involves the use of handmade paper made from tree barks.

## 4: The Importance of Reviving Subika Painting

- The revival of Subika painting is instrumental in preserving and promoting the unique cultural history of the Meitei community.
- This initiative can also contribute to local economic growth by creating a source of livelihood for local artisans and craftsmen.
- Increased awareness about Subika painting can also promote cultural tourism in the region and boost Manipur's reputation as a cultural destination.

## 5: General Knowledge Related to Subika Painting

- Manipur, the northeastern state of India, is known for its rich cultural history, of which Subika painting is a vital part.
- The Meitei community, associated with Subika painting, is one of the major ethnic groups in Manipur.
- Artists create Subika paintings using locally sourced materials, reflecting the indigenous sustainability practices.
- The survival of only six manuscripts of Subika painting underscores the urgency of the current revival efforts.

As a crucial part of Manipur's cultural heritage, the ancient Subika Painting needs careful preservation and promotion. The current revival efforts not only signify a regaining of cultural pride but also offer diverse opportunities in terms of local economy enhancement and cultural tourism.

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# Commemoration of 200th Birth Anniversary of Swami Dayanand Saraswati: A Glimpse into His Profound life and Contributions

## 1: Birth and Early Life of Swami Dayanand Saraswati

- Swami Dayanand Saraswati was born as Mool Shankar Tiwari on 12th February 1824 in Tankara, Gujarat.
- His parents, Lalji Tiwari and Yashodhabai belonged to an orthodox Brahmin family.
- Due to being born under Mool Nakshatra, he was named Mool Shankar in his childhood.
- During the years 1845-60, he wandered as an ascetic in pursuit of truth.

## 2: Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati's Philosophical Journey and Contributions to Society

- Swami Dayanand was not only an Indian philosopher but a notable social leader and the formative figure behind the Arya Samaj.
- His consequential work, Satyarth Prakash (The True Exposition) encapsulate his ideas and views.
- He became the first protagonist for Swaraj (self-rule) with his visionary call "India for Indian" in 1876.
- Believing in a classless, casteless and united India, he strived for India's freedom from foreign rule.
- He envisioned Aryan religion as the common thread uniting all Indians.
- A firm believer in the Vedas, he considered them to be the foundation stone of Hinduism which led him to coin the phrase "Back to the Vedas".
- He also championed the Vedic chaturvarna system, where caste isn't determined by birth but by a person's occupation.

## 3: Swami Dayanand Saraswati's Contribution to the Educational Sphere

- Saraswati introduced revolutionary changes in the Indian educational system and was seen as a key visionary shaping modern India.
- The establishment of DAV (Dayanand Anglo Vedic) schools in 1886 realised his vision to reform the education sector.
- The first DAV School was established at Lahore with Mahatma Hansraj as the headmaster.

## 4: Know About Arya Samaj

- Arya Samaj seeks to reestablish the supremacy of the Vedas as the absolute truth, rejecting all post-Vedic additions.
- The organisation has been a powerful force for social reform, upholding the sanctity of the Vedas, karma, samsara, cow protection, and societal change.
- It opposes several traditional practices such as animal sacrifice, murtis worship, rituals for ancestors (shraddha), caste-based birth system, untouchability, child marriage, pilgrimages, and temple offerings.
- Arya Samaj has been instrumental in furthering female education, advocating intercaste marriage, setting up missions, orphanages, and homes for widows, establishing a network of schools and colleges, and contributing towards famine relief and medical works.

In conclusion, the 200th birth anniversary celebration of Swami Dayanand Saraswati indeed offers an opportunity to reflect upon his profound impacts that have helped shape modern India. His teachings continue to enlighten and create social reforms even today.

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# Unveiling the Legacy of Rani Chennamma: 200 Years of Powerful Rebellion

## 1: Rediscovering Rani Chennamma

- Rani Chennamma was born on 23rd October 1778 in Belagavi district, Karnataka.
- Married at 15 years old to Raja Mallasarja, she ruled Kittur until 1816.
- She adopted a child, Shivalingappa, as the kingdom's successor after the death of her son and husband, which was not recognized by the British East India Company under the 'Doctrine of Lapse'.

## 2: The Fierce Battle Against the British

- Chennamma resisted the British invasion in 1824 with an army of 20,000, trained in martial arts and military tactics.
- Known for employing guerrilla warfare tactics, she killed a British official in defence of her kingdom.
- Despite their fierce resistance, Kittur fell to the British due to superior firepower.

## 3: The Everlasting Legacy

- Rani Chennamma's relentless spirit and stand against British rule, even after her imprisonment in Bailhongal Fort, became an inspiration for many others.
- Honoured by the Indian Government who issued a postage stamp in her name in 2007.
- Found remembrance of her life and valour is still alive through Kannada lavis or popular folk songs.

## 4: Understanding the Doctrine of Lapse

- A policy implemented by Lord Dalhousie, Governor-General between 1848 to 1856, which enabled the annexation of any princely state under the control of the East India Company that did not have a natural legal male heir.
- Established a rule where any adopted son of the Indian ruler could not be proclaimed as heir to the kingdom.

## 5: Rani Chennamma: A Beacon of Courage

- Her rebellion remains a symbol of courage and defiance in the face of challenges, and is considered an important chapter in the Indian struggle for freedom.
- Rani Chennamma's campaign against the British is considered one of the earliest instances of resistance against British rule, predating the first war of Independence by three decades.
- Her life and journey are a testament to her commitment, dedication, and an inspiration to the women of the country.

Final Thoughts: The National campaign 'Naanoo Rani Chennamma' pays tribute and emphasises the importance of Rani Chennamma's brave role against the British in the nation's struggle for freedom. Her story symbolises the strength of women as vanguards of dignity and justice.

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