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Topic 1. ELECTRICITY (PROMOTING RENEWABLE ENERGY THROUGH GREEN ENERGY OPEN ACCESS) RULES 2022

Important of Subject: Economy



The Government notified the Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy through Green Energy Open Access) Rules, 2022, which allow consumers with a sanctioned load of 100 kilowatt (kW) to purchase power directly from renewable energy (RE) producers.

- There will be no load limit for captive consumers. Green energy Open access:
- The government has done away with hurdles that compact the supply of RE for each family and business.
- Earlier, if associate business player needed to line up capability or procure capability or enter into PPAs to get RE, open access was a hurdle. Now, open access are provided in 15 days, or else, it'll be deemed to own been provided.
- Another hurdle was associate degree inflated surcharge and extra surcharge, creating it costly.
- The extra surcharge won't be levied and therefore the surcharge are adequate the common level of surcharge within the State, and it'll not be over the surcharge prescribed in Tariff Policy that is 20 %. States cannot increase surcharge by over fifty per cent in 12 years.
- It is not necessary that a client should started the capability. One will raise the developer to line up capability or it will hold a bid for rock bottom tariff. once open access rules, all captive power plants (CPPs) will step by step shift to inexperienced energy, as a result of RE are going to be cheaper.
- Also, for captives, no surcharge are going to be levied.
- The principles offer certainty on charges to be levied that embody transmission charges, wheeling charges, cross-sub - sidy surcharge and standby charges.

- The tariff for inexperienced energy are going to be determined singly by the suitable Commission, that shall comprise the typical pooled power purchase price of the RE, cross-sub - sidy charges, if any, and repair charges covering the prudent price of Discom for providing inexperienced energy.
- Importance of latest rules below open access it'll influence inexperienced power demand within the business and industrial (C&I) section.
- By lowering the edge for open access from the present one MW to one hundred kW, the govt. has opened the door for the market to multiply multi fold within the returning years.
- Notifying a central nodal agency for putting in and operative a single-window inexperienced energy open access system for RE is probably going to steer to a simplified and swish centralised approval method for the developers.
- It's additionally seemingly to open up the market in more States.

Topic 2. NEW ACCOUNTING MECHANISM FOR RELEASING FUNDS FOR GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Important of Subject: Economy

The government managed to save around ₹10,000 crore of interest cost during 2021-22 (FY22) with the help of a new accounting mechanism that aims to release funds for government schemes 'just in time'.

- Finance Secretary TV Somanathan disclosed this on the sidelines of an incident organized to launch Single Nodal Agency (SNA) Dashboard by minister of finance Nirmala Sitharaman.
- About Rs 4.46-lakh crore undergo the centrally sponsored schemes.
- The Union government will track cash the money and facilitate in creating governance clear and therefore the money is additionally sent just in time.
- Below the new system, every State is to spot and designate a SNA for each theme.
- All funds for that State during an explicit theme are going to be attributable into that checking account, and every one expenses are going to be created by all alternative implementing agencies concerned within the account.
- It ensures that allocation of funds to States for the CSS are created during a timely manner and when meeting varied stipulations.

- Stating that 'just in time' are the three magic words in fund transfer, the SNA would create payments simple.
- **Trimming expenditure:** the system would facilitate slow down on the interest expenditure as cash would be discharged at the stage released it's required.
- If the cash is stuck somewhere, the union government would love to minimise what's stuck and hold it wherever it's additional expeditiously control.
- GoI would like to pay as very little as potential of public cash as interest. The SNA and bureau (Treasury Single Account) facilitate the govt.
- To minimise the interest prices borne by the govt. which isn't a trivial value. It'll be very useful in containing business deficit.

What is office (Treasury Single Account)?

- Earlier, after approval, funds were allotted and disbursed to various minis- tries, departments, autonomous bodies and States.
- This method required to be modified because funds weren't being utilized and sitting idle in bank accounts, while the govt.
- Had to borrow and incur interest. Consequently, TSA was designed.
- According to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) working Paper, office may be a unified structure of state bank accounts that gives a consolidated read of government money resources.
- Supported the principle of unity of money and also the unity of treasury, a TSA may be a checking account or a set of connected accounts through that the govt. transacts all its receipts and payments.
- The principle of unity follows from the interchangeability of all money regardless of its finish use.
- Whereas it's necessary to tell apart individual money transactions for management and news purposes, this purpose is achieved through the accounting system and not by holding/depositing cash in transaction- specific bank accounts.
- This allows the treasury to de-link management of cash from management at a transaction level.

Topic 3. WEAKENING RUPEE

Important of subject: Economy



The market drivers of the dollar (USD)-rupee (INR) are now playing out in such a way that they are against the domestic currency.

- India's rupee has fallen 4.7 per cent versus the dollar.
- The rupee broke the range of 77.50-77.80 on the downside on Monday and hit a record low of 78.28.
- There is a possibility for it to touch 79 in the near term.
- Reasons for Rupee Depreciation: Huge Net FPI outflows: The net FPI outflows in June so far is \$2.8 billion.
- **Rising Crude oil imports:** The Indian basket of crude oil hit a decade-high of \$121.28 a barrel last week. WPI and CPI Inflation: The WPI inflation at 15.88 in May is at a new high and the May CPI inflation, although has cooled to 7.04 per cent, is higher than RBI's targeted range.
- Dollar continues to gain strength— as participants are now discounting a 75-bps hike in interest rates by the US Federal Reserve today as US inflation hardened to 8.6 per cent in May.
- **Currency Appreciation:** It is an increase in the value of one currency in relation to another currency.
- Currencies appreciate against one another for a variety of reasons, including government policy, interest rates, trade balances and business cycles. Currency appreciation discourages a country's export activity as its products and services become costlier to shop for.
- **Currency Depreciation:** it's a fall in the price of a currency in a floating exchange rate system.

- Economic fundamentals, political instability, or risk aversion will cause currency depreciation.
- Inflation may rise because of the depreciation of the domestic currency, due to pushes up the rupee value of imported items Currency depreciation encourages a country's export activity as its products and services become cheaper to shop for.

Topic 4. RATIONALIZE FDI APPROVALS UNDER PN3

Important of subject: Economy



Press Note aimed at, geared toward curb predatory takeovers by foreign entities, aimed toward be reviewed in the current economic situation.

What is FDI?

- Foreign direct investment (FDI) is when a company takes controlling ownership in a business entity in another country.
- With FDI, foreign companies are directly involved with every day operations in the different country.
- This suggests they aren't just transferral bringing with them, but also knowledge, skills and technology.

What is Press Note 3?

- Press-note 3 requires that all investments from entities, which are based in a land bordering country, or when the beneficial owner of the investment is based in a land-bordering country (both referred as "restricted entities"), will have to be compelled to be made under the 'approval route' and will need security-clearance.

Why it was introduced?

- It was brought throughout the initial days of the pandemic in April 2020 – and as an immediate reaction to the issues of Indian companies being vulnerable to opportunistic takeovers throughout the pandemic.

- Therefore, they obligatory restrictions on foreign investments which could be ‘predatory’ in nature and to ensure that assets in sensitive sectors don't end up in foreign hands, jeopardising national security.

Why need to rationalize now?

- India’s vaccination drive gathered steam and reasonable control over Covid cases was established, the economy improved as well during this period, the government also introduced several bold reform measures like opening up of travel and tourism, scrapping the controversial retrospective tax imposed in 2012 on transfer of Indian assets and infusing a new life into the earlier moribund telecom sector.
- Therefore, the present healthy trends may potentially ward off any attempts of ‘opportunistic takeovers’ as feared earlier.
- There is ought to review PN3 to boost legitimate investments, particularly from sources like ‘pooled funds’ Investments from restricted entities constituting but 10 per cent (or even five per cent) of the economic interests of an Indian company, in non-strategic sectors, regardless of investment route, may be exempted from the prior approval demand.
- **Additional investments into Indian firms where restricted entities are existing shareholders:** it's well known that a number of start-up sectors (e-commerce, technology, social media, etc) in India have substantial amounts of Chinese investments.
- **Need for bigger transparency and expediency within the approval process:** Another challenge within the context of PN3 has been the time taken for security clearance of the proposals.
- While the security risk posed by Chinese entities persists, there an urgent need for Indian entities to raise funds, particularly in the current geopolitical situation and more so in strategic sectors.

Topic 5. HIGH- SPEED RAIL NETWORK'S FIRST TRAIN TO ARRIVE SOON

Important of subject: Economy


fast track

The Sarai Kale Khan RRTS station will be the largest on the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor

- It will be 215 metres long, 50 metres wide and 15 metres high
- 14 lifts, 18 escalators, 6 entry/exit gates
- Of total 39 piers, 33 have been constructed
- Total 6 platforms with 4 tracks

ACCESSIBILITY FACTOR

- The station will provide interoperability to remaining two corridors of Phase I – Delhi-Panipat, Delhi-SNB-Alwar
- It is being designed to enable commuters to move from one mode of transport to another without exiting the station
- One entrance will open near ISBT station, another near Hazrat
- Veer Hakikat Rai ISBT is at a distance of 85 metres from the station
- Distance from



Construction work in full swing on the priority section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Trial run on Delhi -Ghaziabad- Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor expected in late 2022 being built by National Capital Region Transport Corporation.

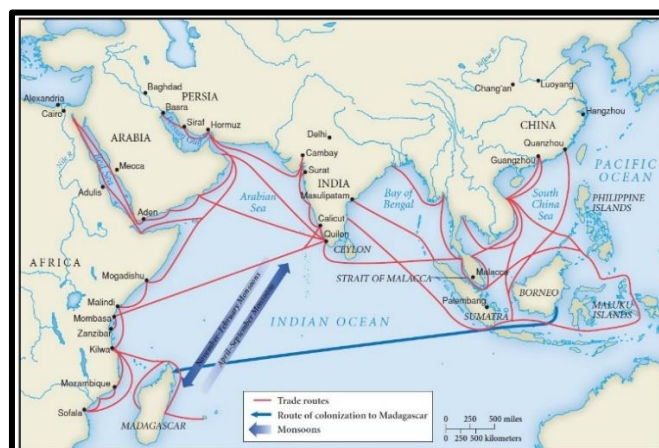
- National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) The NCRTC is a joint venture of the Centre and the governments of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- The NCRTC is mandated with implementing the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) project across the National Capital Region (NCR), ensuring a balanced and sustainable urban development through better connectivity and access.
- The Union cupboard approved the constitution of the NCRTC under the companies Act, 1956, in July 2013 for planning, developing, implementing, financing, operating, and maintaining the RRTS in the NCR to provide comfortable and quick transit to NCR cities and to meet the high growth in transport demand.
- **Out of the eight identified RRTS corridors, the following three were prioritized for implementation by the planning commission:** Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Delhi-Gurugram-SNB-Alwar Delhi-Panipat RRTS overview RRTS is a rail-based semi-high speed, high frequency, high capacity, comfortable, air-conditioned, reliable, and safe commuter service connecting regional nodes.
- Design speed – 180 km/h, Operational speed – 160 km/h, Average speed of 100 km/h – Delhi to Meerut in less than 55 minutes (three times the speed of Metro) Train every ~5–10 minutes; serving traffic nodes at every 5–10 km ETCS-2 Signaling System along with centralized operations control will ensure that train services will not be affected, even during extreme weather conditions.

- RRTS is completely different from conventional railway because it can provide reliable, high frequency, point-to-point regional travel at high speed along a passionate pathway.
- RRTS is completely different from metro because it caters to passengers looking to travel comparatively longer distances with fewer stops and at the next speed.
- Metro rail comes usually serve the requirement of intra-city movement and operate within metropolitan cities like Old Delhi, Chennai, or Kochi;
- RRTS can connect residential district and urban centres in the NCR and will run from one centre to a different, so providing a seamless transit network to the entire region.
- Aerodynamic trains with airline-like transverse seating arrangements.
- Unique aspects/Benefits of RRTS Interoperability to provide seamless movement to commuters, the three RRTS corridors of phase 1, i.e., Delhi – Ghaziabad – Meerut; Delhi – Panipat; and Delhi – Gurugram – SNB – Alwar will be integrated at Delhi's Sarai Kale Khan and remain interoperable.
- Trains will move from one corridor to another, facilitating commuter travel from one corridor station to another without train changes, thus motivating them to leave their private vehicles and switch to the RRTS.
- Multimodal integration RRTS stations will be integrated with various modes of public transport systems like airports, Indian Railway stations, inter-state bus terminals, and Delhi Metro stations, wherever possible.
- This integration can facilitate seamless movement of commuters from one mode of public transport the use and encourage the employment of public transport.
- Option of business class Each RRTS train will have a separate business coach.
- This will encourage business category commuters to modify to public transport for intercity travel.
- Comfortable travel the air-conditioned RRTS coaches can have transverse seating arrangement with an overhead space for luggage, a Wi-Fi connection, among different modern amenities.
- Women's coach Each RRTS train will have a separate coach for women travellers, just like the Delhi Metro.
- Universal accessibility the entire infrastructure of the RRTS, including stations and trains, will be designed with universal accessibility in mind.

- Enhanced economic activities with reduced travel times, the overall productivity of the region would increase, leading to improved overall economic activity and balanced economic development.
- Lower emissions with a reduced number of private vehicles and a shift towards a clean transportation system like the RRTS, fuel consumption is expected to go down.
- Low fuel consumption means lower emissions and less pollution.
- Reduced energy use a shift towards public transportation will reduce energy use by the transport sector in the National Capital Region.
- This would not solely lead to reduced fuel consumption within the region, but also the country's import dependence on foreign oil.
- Technology The NCRTC is implementing a state-of-the-art rail-based rapid transit system in the NCR with a style speed of 180 km/h.
- Such a speed can necessarily need grade-separated tracks and the latest signaling and management systems, to ensure high throughput and safe operation.
- The rolling stock are going to be cool and have the capability of high acceleration and deceleration in a very short span.
- Traction power are going to be through a unambiguously designed 25 kv versatile overhead catenary traction system for elevated stations and a rigid overhead curve system for tunnels.

Topic 6. INDIA AFRICA TRADE

Important of subject: Economy



The African Union is India's fourth largest trading partner after the United States, China and also the UAE.

- India has a negative trade balance with the Africa, implying a dominance of imports over exports.
- In 2019-20, India's trade deficit with the Africa was valued at \$9.1 billion

Topic 7. STRENGTHENING NFRA: GOVT EXAMINING PANEL PROPOSALS

Important of subject: Economy



The Centre on Saturday said it's committed to strengthening the working of the National financial reporting Authority (NFRA), the independent regulatory body setup under the corporate Affairs Ministry for the auditing professional.

- NFRA is an independent regulatory body set up under Section 132 of the companies Act.
- It was established by the Central Government in October 2018.
- After the Satyam scandal took place in 2009, the standing committee on Finance proposed the concept of the National financial reporting Authority (NFRA) for the first time in its 21st report.
- The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) was constituted in 2018 under Companies Act, 2013.
- The Companies Act requires the NFRA to have a chairperson who are going to be appointed by the Central Government and a maximum of fifteen members.
- **The duties of the NFRA are to:** Recommend accounting and auditing policies and standards to be adopted by companies for approval by the Central Government; Monitor and enforce compliance with accounting standards and auditing standards; Oversee the quality of the service of the professions associated with ensuring compliance with such a standards and suggest measures for improvement in the quality of service; Perform such other functions and duties as may be necessary or incidental to the aforesaid functions and duties.

- Prior to the constitution of this authority, the Central Government would prescribe accounting standards on the recommendation of ICAI.
- The Authority shall have power to monitor and enforce compliance with accounting standards, oversee the quality of service or undertake investigation of the auditors of the following class of companies and bodies corporate, namely:- companies whose securities are listed on any stock exchange in India or outside India; Unlisted public companies having paid-up capital of not less than rupees five hundred crores or having annual turnover of not less than rupees one thousand crores or having, in aggregate, outstanding loans, debentures and deposits of not less than rupees five hundred crores as on the 31st March of immediately preceding financial year;
- Insurance companies, banking companies, companies engaged in the generation or supply of electricity Anybody corporate or company or person, or any class of bodies corporate or companies or persons, on a reference made to the Authority by the Central Government in public interest; HQ: New Delhi 5.

Topic 8.WIDENING OF TAX BASE

Important of subject: Economy



Fiscal Policy the tax base is the total amount of assets or revenue that a government can charge tax on.

- As an example, the assessed value is that the tax base for property taxes and taxable income is that the tax base for income tax.
- It can also be defined as the total of taxable income, taxable assets, and the assessed value of property within the government tax jurisdiction.
- Widening of text base mean that the people who are filing returns should be much more.

- Last financial year, IT dept got a total of 7.14 crore returns, which was much higher than the number we got the year prior.
- AIS (Annual Information Statement) on 1st November, 2021 Income Tax Department has rolled out the new AIS (Annual Information Statement) on Compliance Portal which provides comprehensive view of financial transaction done by taxpayer (i.e. PAN based transactions) in a Financial Year at one place.
- This includes info relating to Interest, Dividend, Business receipts, cash deposits/withdrawals, Sale/ Purchase of Securities and units of mutual funds, investments in govt.
- Bonds, TDS / TCS, demand and refund, Sale of land or building, foreign remittance information etc.
- Reported by various entities to the Income Tax Department. AIS is an extensive view of information shown in Form 26AS.
- Along with AIS income tax department also introduced TIS (Taxpayer info Summary).
- TIS provide summarised view of information provided in AIS for the taxpayer for ease of return filling.

Topic 9. RBI- MONETARY POLICY UPDATE

Important for Subject: Economy

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) today stepped up its inflation flight, with its members unanimously voting for an increase in the policy repo rate by 50 basis points.

- The MPC move comes a little over a month after the six- member Committee unanimously voted for a 40 basis points hike in the repo rate in an off cycle meeting on May 4.
- Current repo rate and inflation projections: Following the latest hike, the repo rate is now 4.9 per cent up from 4.4 per cent.
- This will make bank loans (retail and MSME) linked to the external benchmark rates such as the repo rate dearer.
- Reserve Bank of India revised its retail inflation projection for FY23 sharply upwards to 6.7 per cent (assuming a normal monsoon and average crude oil price — Indian basket — of \$105

- **Liquidity stanching:** Along with the increase in the repo rate, the MPC also de-cided unanimously to remain focussed on withdrawal of accommodation stance to ensure that in nation remains within the target (of 4 per cent within a band of +/- 2 per cent) going forward, even while supporting growth.
- **SDF, MSF rates up:** Following the 50 basis points hike in repo rate, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate has moved up to 4.65 per cent (4.15 per cent earlier); and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate to 5.15 per cent (4.65 per cent).
- Under SDF, banks can park surplus liquidity with the RBI, overnight or for longer tenors.
- Under the MSF, banks can get funds from the RBI on overnight basis against their excess statutory liquidity ratio (government securities and state development loans) holdings.
- To ease pressure on rupee the policy tightening is also warranted to reduce the pressure on the rupee from widening the Current Account Deficit (CAD) and stem foreign portfolio outflows.
- Retains GDP growth the central bank retained real GDP growth for 2022-23 at 7.2 per cent.

Topic 10. AHEAD OF SOWING, KHARIF MSP REVEALED

Important for subject: economy

Benchmark rises | On Wednesday, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs increased the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for all mandated Kharif crops for marketing season 2022-23. A look at the increase in MSP for select crops

Crop	MSP 2022-23	Increase in MSP (Absolute)	Return over cost (%)
Paddy (Common)	2,040	100	50
Bajra	2,350	100	85
Ragi	3,578	201	50
Maize	1,962	92	50
Moong	7,755	480	50
Urad	6,600	300	59
Groundnut	5,850	300	51
Sesame	7,830	523	50

SOURCE: PIB

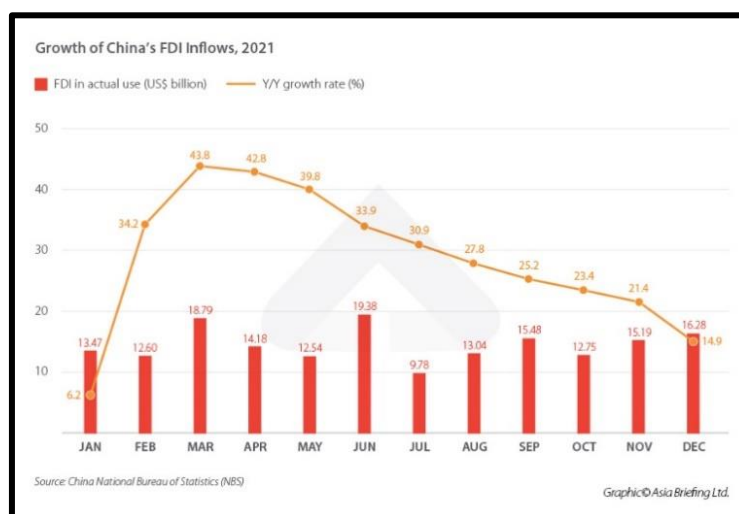
Agriculture The Union Cabinet in June raised the minimum support price (MSP) for paddy by Rs 100 a quintal for the Kharif season of 2022- 23.

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs increased the MSP for all mandated Kharif crops for marketing season 2022-23.
- The rates for 14 crops have been increased in the range of 4% to 8%.
- Paddy is the main Kharif crop, the sowing of which has been already begun.
- The MSP for paddy (common), which was Rs 1,940 a quintal in 2021 -22, and paddy (grade A), which was Rs1,960 a quintal, had increased by Rs 100 The highest increase had been for two forms of jowar at the rate of 8 of 8%.
- And the low EST increase of Rs 92 had been for maize, whose price was Rs 1,870.
- The present increase comes against the backdrop of spiraling input rates, especially due to a sharp increase in fertilizer rates Minimum Support Price.
- The MSP is the rate at which the govt purchases crops from farmers, and is based on a calculation of at least one-and-a-half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.
- MSP is a “minimum price” for any crop that the government considers as remunerative for farmers and hence deserving of “support”.
- Crops under MSP the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) recommends MSPs for 22 mandated crops and fair and remunerative price (FRP) for sugarcane.
- CACP is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- The mandated crops include fourteen crops of the kharif season, six rabi crops and 2 other commercial crops.
- In addition, the MSPs of toria and de-husked coconut are fixed on the basis of the MSPs of rapeseed/mustard and copra, respectively.
- Factors for Recommending the MSP.
- The CACP considers various factors while recommending the MSP for a commodity, including cost of cultivation.
- It takes into account the supply and demand situation for the commodity, market price trends (domestic and global) and parity vis-à-vis other crops, and implications for consumers (inflation), environment (soil and the water use) and terms of the trade between agriculture and non-agriculture sectors.
- Three Kinds of Production Cost the CACP projects three kinds of production cost for every crop, both at state and all-India average levels.

- ‘A2’: Covers all paid-out costs directly incurred by the farmer in cash and kind on the seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, hired labour, leased-in land, fuel, irrigation, etc.
- ‘A2+FL’: Includes A2 plus an imputed value of unpaid family labour.
- ‘C2’: It is a more comprehensive cost that factors in rentals and interest forgone on owned land and fixed capital assets, on top of A2+FL.
- CACP considers both A2+FL and C2 costs while recommending MSP. CACP reckons only A2+FL cost for return.
- However, C2 costs are used by CACP primarily as benchmark reference costs (opportunity costs) to see if the MSPs recommended by them at least cover these costs in some of the major producing States.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) of the Union government takes a final decision on the level of MSPs and other recommendations made by CACP.

Topic 11. DECLINE IN FDI INFLOWS

Important for subject: Economy



UNCTAD's latest World Investment Report suggests a different narrative on foreign direct investment inflows into India in sharp contrast to optimistic official statements of record FDI inflows in 2021-22.

- The publication shows inflows dropping by 30% to \$45 billion in 2021.
- A proximate cause is that big-ticket mergers and acquisitions (M&As) which boosted FDI flows in the recent past were not repeated.

- In 2020, for instance, cross-border M& As surged 83% to \$27 billion in ICT, health, infrastructure and energy to boost overall FDI to \$64 billion.
- During the following year, cross-border M&As were down by a massive 70% to \$8 billion, which impacted overall flows to the country.
- Nevertheless, India remains among the top 10 global FDI recipients.
- Statistics According to official FDI statistics which rose by 2% to \$84 billion in 2021-22 — is not very different from the WIR 2022 numbers.
- This is largely because they include equity inflows, reinvested earnings — which are largely responsible for the record numbers — and other capital.
- If like-to-like comparisons are restricted to equity inflows, official statistics show a decline of 1.4% to \$58.8 billion last fiscal.
- However, gross FDI inflows also must factor in the record amount of repatriation and disinvestments by foreign investors, which surged to \$27 billion in 2020-21 and \$28.6 billion in 2021-22.
- Deducting these from gross inflows constitute direct investments which were similar at \$54.9 billion in both these years and lower than \$56 billion registered in 2019-20.
- Reasons for the decline rapidly waning foreign investor sentiment on green-field investments.
- From \$54 billion in 2018, they plunged to \$30 billion in 2019, \$24 billion in 2020 and \$15.7 billion in 2021.
- Difficulties in doing business on the ground especially in the various states, regulatory uncertainty and land acquisition problems.
- Foreign companies closing down offices or subsidiaries in India.
- Between 2014 and November 2021, as many as 2,783 foreign companies closed down operations out of a total of 12,458 active foreign subsidiaries operating in the country.
- This was due to completion of business objectives and projects, restructuring by parent company, amalgamation, and other management decisions.
- But the reasons also include uncertainties over the policy environment or regulatory hassles.
- Way forward if foreign capital is to contribute to the India growth story, it is necessary to incentivise a much larger proportion of FDI inflows towards the building of Greenfield factories, industrial parks, and other infrastructure.

- Such investments depend on a more stable policy and regulatory framework than the streamlining of procedures and digitisation of paperwork that have improved India's ranking in World Bank's Doing Business indicators.
- Reform to free up the land and labour markets and improving the environment to do business in the states is imperative.
- It is interesting that WIR 2022 mentions that project finance deals under execution in India include the construction of a steel and cement plant worth \$13.5 billion by ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel.
- Such plans cannot fructify unless forest, environment and other clearances are speedily provided.

Topic 12. SURAT DIAMOND INDUSTRY

Important for subject: Economy

Diamonds are believed to have been recognized and mined in India 1st, at the spots where considerably alluvial stone deposits could be found many centuries ago along the rivers Penner, Godavari and Krishna.

- However, the diamond industry started when a local businessman in Surat had brought a boat full of diamond cutters from east Africa to commence the city's diamond polishing industry in 1901. T
- He diamond cutting and polishing industry started way back in the 1960s when some entrepreneurs belonging to the Patel community of Saurashtra started importing rough diamonds and exporting polished diamonds.
- This industry grew gradually until the 1980s after which there was rapid growth.
- Also the Patels from Saurashtra and the Jains from north Gujarat venturing together helped the diamond industry of Surat prosper.
- The economic reforms in 1991 added to the enlargement of this industry.
- Statistics of Surat Diamond Industry In 2005, Surat was reported to have cut 92% of the entire world's diamond pieces and earned India \$15 billion in exports.
- India imports for polishing about \$11 billion worth of rough diamonds annually, with 80% coming from diamond mining companies and the rest from Antwerp.
- The city contributes to more than 80% of the Indian annual export amounting to Rs 70,000 crore.

- Every nine out of ten diamonds you get to see in the stores in the big cities all over the world are cut and polished in India and seventy five you take care of the credit for the diamonds' shine goes to the Surat Diamond industry.
- Over 1.5 million people are engaged in the diamond jewellery industry of Surat and that they have made the city, the heart of the nation's diamond polishing industry.
- Diamonds account for 54% of the total gem and jewellery export basket of the industry and India is world's leading exporter of Cut and Polished Diamonds.
- Surat and many other cities and towns like Navsari, Amreli, and Bhavnagar are popular worldwide as big diamond manufacturing/processing centers whereas Mumbai serves as the diamond trading hub.
- Future of Diamond Industry The industry surely had to face problems like lack of technical expertise in the manpower but with improving skills of the labourers, the Surat diamond jewellery industry is now getting orders of larger and the pricier stones.
- Arrangements are being made by the state and Surat Diamond Association for training, research, marketing and recognizing new potentials for the diamond industry.
- Also, the jewellery park of Surat is trying to bring down major diamond manufacturers of Surat under a single roof.
- Most of the work has currently become computerized.
- The number of diamond consumers are increasing day by day and so is that the demand.
- There is an upcoming Jewellery Park for the Gem & Jewellery entrepreneurs which has all state-of-the-art facilities providing international level infrastructure of highest quality standards.
- Diamantaires is the world's biggest diamond cutting and polishing centre in Surat which has been giving sleepless nights to the diamond manufacturers in Israel and Antwerp.

Topic 13. INDIA, SA, INDONESIA WANT FOCUS ON E-COMMERCE

DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS

Important for subject: Economy

Indian economy Call for discussions on redressing inequitable gains, uneven spread.

- This is for consideration at the twelfth Ministerial Conference in Geneva beginning on June 12.
- The submission by the 3 is also important in the light of attempts made by a group of countries, led by several developed nations, to push a plurilateral agreement (under the so-called joint sector initiative) on the framing e-commerce rules.
- Joint Initiative on E-commerce a group of seventy one World Trade Organization members agreed at the eleventh Ministerial Conference in Dec 2017 to initiate exploratory work towards future World Trade Organization negotiations on trade-related aspects of e-commerce.
- The negotiations are based on members' textual proposals made available to the whole WTO membership.
- The issues raised in members' submissions are discussed under six main themes: enabling electronic commerce, openness and electronic commerce, trust and digital trade, cross-cutting issues, telecommunications, and market access.
- Throughout the negotiations, participants have been encouraged by the coconveners to consider the opportunities and challenges faced by members, including developing and least-developed countries, as well as by small businesses.
- India's take on E-commerce at WTO India at the World Trade Organization (WTO) held that it will not join the negotiations to develop trade rules on e-commerce, as India felt these negotiations are against India's interests.
- Despite protests from major economies like India, seventy six mostly developed nations agreed to initiate talks on e-commerce.
- It has raised concerns and anxiety amongst industry and policymakers in India.

Why is India not joining e-commerce negotiations?

- Data is the new oil of the 21st century.
- Data is the heart of the digital revolution, it is the key resource which can make or break a country in the digital era as all digital technologies like Big data analytics, artificial intelligence, IoT, Robotics, etc.
- Need data for them to become more efficient and intelligent.
- The larger the population of a country, the larger are going to be the amount of data generated, and younger the population the more will be the data generated.

- India's 1.3-billion population is bigger than the population of OECD members (36 countries) taken together, with 66% of its population falling in the age group of 15-64 years, which is around 18 % of the world's young population.
- This amounts to huge data being generated every second in India, which is extremely valuable for the developed world for making the efficient digital products and services in the future.
- This is the root cause for the pressure being applied on India to join the plurilateral e-commerce negotiations.
- Throughout the first industrial revolution, the countries which processed oil were developed, not the ones who produced it.
- Similarly, today countries which process data are/will be developed rather than those generating huge data.
- In this scenario, where data is the new currency of the 21st century, the term 'e-commerce rules' is misleading because: The rules that are being negotiated go much beyond e-commerce and the encompass all digital rules which are required by the developed world to make sure that they have free access to data of the world in future as well.
- This accounts for India's reluctance over the negotiations on the e-commerce as India still doesn't have any comprehensive law on data protection and data ownership nor an e-commerce law, subject to changing dynamics of the digital revolution.
- India fears that new rules might provide the pretext for unfair mandatory market access to foreign companies.
- This will hurt the rapidly growing domestic e-commerce sector, which is still developing in India.

Topic 14. COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

Important of subject: Science and Tech



The Supreme Court of India recently held that copyright infringement is a cognisable offence under the CrPC.

- This means that the police can begin investigations into allegations of copyright infringement on receiving a complaint, rather than after a judicial magistrate had taken cognisance of the offence and directed the police to initiate an investigation.
- As a result of the offence being made cognizable and non-bailable, it takes away the right of the suspect to post a recognisance with the police and shifts the responsibility on to the courts for judicial determination on a defendant basis.
- Copyrights Act 1957, amended in 2012 Copyright is a bundle of rights given by the law to the creators of literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works and the producers of cinematograph films and sound recordings.
- The rights provided under Copyright law include the rights of reproduction of the work, communication of the work to the public, adaptation of the work and translation of the work.
- Copyrights of works of the countries mentioned in the International Copyright Order are protected in India, as if such works are Indian works.
- The term of copyright during a work shall not exceed that which is enjoyed by it in its country of origin.
- Acquisition of copyright is automatic and it doesn't need any formality.
- Copyright comes into existence as soon as a work is made and no formality is needed to be completed for copyright.
- However, certificate of registration of copyright and also the entries made in that function clear evidence during a court of law with regard to dispute relating to possession of copyright.
- Application for copyright will be filed within the Copyright office.
- Computer software package or programmes may also be registered as a 'literary work'.
- As per Copyright Act, 1957 "literary work" includes computer programmes, tables and compilations, together with computer databases.
- 'Source Code' has to be provided at the side of the application for registration of copyright for software system products.

- The 2012 amendments build Indian Copyright Law compliant with the net Treaties – the WIPO Copyright treaty (WCT) and WIPO Performances and Phonograms treaty (WPPT).
- Problems in identifying Copyright Infringement There are special clauses under the Copyright Act which extinguish copyright in copyrighted works in certain circumstances — for example, if a work is qualified for protection under the Designs Act of 2000, it can no longer claim protection under the Copyright Act once it is reproduced beyond a certain threshold.
- Even the terribly question of determination of copyright infringement would need the court to apply the check of considerable similarity (both qualitative and quantitative) on a case-by-case basis.
- Also criminalisation of copyright infringement in India is also a problem.
- The prison term for copyright infringement is three years.
- Copyright Infringement and Copyright Piracy Article 61 of the TRIPS agreement requires criminal measures to be applied for at least “wilful copyright piracy” on a “commercial scale”.
- Although the term copyright piracy itself remains indefinite in TRIPS.
- Consequently, all piracy of proprietary works is an act of infringement, but all infringement can't be termed as piracy.
- So, for example, a person indulging within the mass reproduction of copyrighted books while not the authorisation of the copyright owner would be guilty of copyright piracy.
- On the opposite hand, a dispute between two publishing homes on similar content in their textbooks would qualify only as infringement of copyright and not copyright piracy.
- Criminalizing conduct At best, the Indian Copyright Act makes a distinction between commercial and non-commercial infringement by allowing the courts to impose a sentence of less than six months or a fine of less than Rs 50,000.
- But it doesn't simply legitimize acts of infringement that are non-egregious in nature, except wherever a building/structure is allegedly violating a copyrighted work (for example, in drawings).
- Unless the law is amended to not solely differentiate between the various acts of infringement of copyright however also need previous judicial awareness as a

precondition of criminal investigation by the police, the Supreme Court's recent call can pave the method for the police to impinge on civil liberties, impede the benefit of business and have chilling effects on free speech.

Topic 15. ISSUES TO DOMINATE WTO MEET

Important for Subject: Science and Technology



The twelfth Ministerial Conference (MC12) of the World Trade Organization will take place throughout June 12-15 in Geneva to decide on crucial issues impacting world trade.

- WTO Ministerial Conference the Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making forum of the WTO.
- The last such meeting, the MC11, took place in 2017. MC12 is taking place in the back- ground of the on-going war in Ukraine and the Covid-induced lockdown in parts of China.
- **Important issues that will be discussed at the MC12:** Fisheries sector The negotiations aim to (i) eliminate subsidies to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, (ii) prohibit subsidies for fishing overfished stocks and (iii) subsidies to fishing contributing to overfishing and overcapacity.
- The idea is to curb subsidies that threaten the sustainability of fishing.
- Agriculture and food security For India, securing the Permanent solution to the issue of public stock holding (PSH) would be the top priority.
- The most awaited reform is restoring the functioning of the Dispute Settlement System (DSS) including the Appellate Body (AB).
- This is needed to preserve the rights and obligations of World Trade Organization Members.
- Another area being discussed for reform are the Special and Differential Treatment (S&D) provisions of various World Trade Organization Agreements.
- S&D provisions allow the developing and LDC members to take a longer time to meet the various obligations.

- Many developed countries seek to limit the application of such flexibilities.
- India considers S&D provisions as non-negotiable, treaty-embedded rights which shouldn't be diluted.
- **Special and Differential Treatment (S&D) :** The WTO Agreements contain special provisions which give developing countries special rights and which give developed countries the possibility to treat developing countries more favourably than other WTO Members.
- These special provisions include, for example, the longer time periods for implementing Agreements and commitments or the measures to increase trading opportunities for developing countries.
- These provisions are referred to as “special and differential treatment” (S&D) provisions.
- **The special provisions include:** longer time periods for the implementing Agreements and the commitments, measures to increase trading opportunities for developing countries, provisions requiring all World Trade Organization members to safeguard the trade interests of the developing countries, support to help developing countries build the capacity to carry out World Trade Organization work, handle disputes, and implement technical standards, and provisions related to least-developed country (LDC) Members.
- To promote e-commerce, the World Trade Organization members in 1998 agreed to not charge (Moratorium) Customs Duties on Electronic Transmission for 2 years.
- MC12 may likely agree to further extension.
- To promote e-commerce, the WTO members in 1998 agreed to not charge (Moratorium) Customs Duties on Electronic Transmission for two years.
- Similarly, members agreed to a moratorium on the launch of disputes at the WTO over intellectual property rights.
- This is known as TRIPS non-violation and situation complaints (NVSC) moratorium.
- The Moratoriums on E-Commerce and trips issues were renewed every 2 years.
- MC12 may likely agree to the further extension Easing pandemic pain WTO's response to the pandemic is a priority for MC12.
- India and South Africa proposed waiving patent protections on Covid-19 vaccines temporarily by more generous application of the ‘compulsory licensing’ procedure allowed under the trips agreement.

- Looking at the destruction the pandemic has caused, the decision should have been swift.
- However, under pressure from the pharma lobby, most developed countries argued for solutions which essentially meant opposing the proposal.

Topic 16. TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT BOARD TO LAUNCH RS 1000-CRORE START-UP FUND

Important for Subject: Science and Technology



The Technology Development Board (TDB), a statutory body under the Department of the Science and Technology is set to launch a ₹1,000-crore start-up fund under a public private partnership (PPP) model.

- **The fund will be launched in two phases:** In the first phase, a corpus of ₹400 crore will be set up, of which ₹200 crore will be contributed by a private company.
- In the later phase, TDB will partner with more companies to raise and invest money.
- The fund is sector agnostic and it is looking to invest in start-ups that aim to solve a problem with strong technical solutions and has a wider use case.
- **Technology Development Board** It is formed by an act of the Indian Parliament, namely, the Technology Development Board Act, 1995 under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- TDB is the chief body in India to promote the development and commercialization of indigenous technology and adaptation of imported technology for wider application.
- Its primary objective is to commercialize the fruits of indigenous research.
- It proactively encourages firms to take up technology-oriented products.
- **Technology Development Board Objectives** To stimulate new ideas from small firms even at the risk of failures; To advance the production of competitive consumer products; To propel industries and R&D institutions for product innovation; To develop socially relevant and profitable technologies; To recognise and act in

domains needing strategic interventions; to invest in core technological strengths to enable the Indian industry to stand up to the competitive pressure and the become a global player.

- Technology Development Board Functions The major function of the TDB is the provision of equity capital or loans to industrial concerns and also offers financial assistance to R&D institutions.
- Its loans carry only a small simple interest rate of 5% PA.
- **The other functions are as follows:** Facilitating interaction between the industry, technocrats, scientists and specialists.
- Fostering an innovation culture by the enabling cooperative research between the industry and institutions.
- Providing the enterprises with an interface with banks and financial institutions for funds.
- Creating a new breed of new generation entrepreneurs.
- Assisting partnerships with other similar technology financing institutions.
- Providing vistas for venturing into hi-tech domains.
- Generating job opportunities.
- Technology Development Board Members TDB is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (exofficio member).
- Other than the Chairperson, there are six ex-officio members and four nominated members.
- The ex-officio members are the secretaries of the departments of Scientific & Industrial research, Defence research & Development, Expenditure, Promotion of industry and Internal Trade, and Rural Development.

Topic 17. INDIAN PATENT REGIME VS THE U.S. NORMS

Important for subject: Science and Technology



Trade Representative (USTR) aforesaid in a report released last month that India was one of the foremost challenging major economies as far as ip protection and enforcement is concerned.

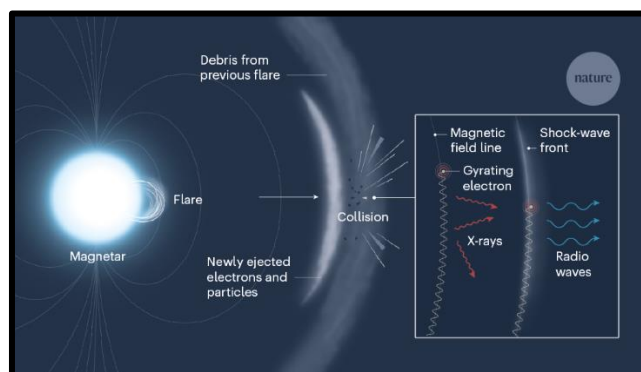
- It has decided to retain India on its Priority Watch List along with six other countries —Argentina, Chile, China, Indonesia, Russia and Venezuela.
- Among the issues raised in the report are India's inconsistencies regarding patent protection, including concerns regarding what can be patented, waiting time for obtaining patents, burdensome reporting requirements, and doubts about data safety.
- The Indian patent regime a patent is an exclusive set of rights granted for an invention, which may be a product or process that provides a new way of doing something or offers a new technical solution to a problem.
- Indian patents are the governed by the Indian Patent Act of 1970.
- India became a party to the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement following its membership to the World Trade Organization on January 1, 1995.
- India is also a signatory to several IPR related conventions, including the Berne Convention, which governs copyright, the Budapest Treaty, the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, and the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), all of which govern various patent related matters.
- An interesting point is that the original Indian Patents Act did not grant patent protection to pharmaceutical products to ensure that medicines were available at a low price.
- Patent protection of pharmaceuticals were re-introduced after the 2005 amendment to comply with TRIPS.
- Article 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act One of the main points of contention between India and the U.S.
- It has been Article 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act.
- Section three deals with what doesn't qualify as an invention under the Act, and Section 3(d) in particular excludes "the mere discovery of a new form of a known substance.
- which doesn't result in the enhancement of the known efficaciousness of that substance or the mere discovery of any new property or new use for a known substance or of the mere use of a known process, machine or apparatus unless such

known process results in a new product or employs at least one new reactant” from being eligible for protection under patent law.

- This prevents what is known as “ever greening” of patents.
- TRIPS and the Doha Declaration.
- The Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health was adopted on November 14, 2001, by the WTO member states.
- It recognises that “intellectual property protection is important for the development of new medicines,” and acknowledges concerns regarding its effects on prices.
- It says that the TRIPS agreement “does not and should not prevent members from taking measures to protect public health,” the declaration points out that the agreement “can and should be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of WTO members’ right to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all.
- Compulsory licenses can be invoked by a state in public interest, allowing companies apart from the patent owner to produce a patented product without consent.
- This ensures the growth of generic drug makers and therefore the public’s access to affordable medicines

Topic 18. FAST RADIO BURST

Important for subject: Science and Technology



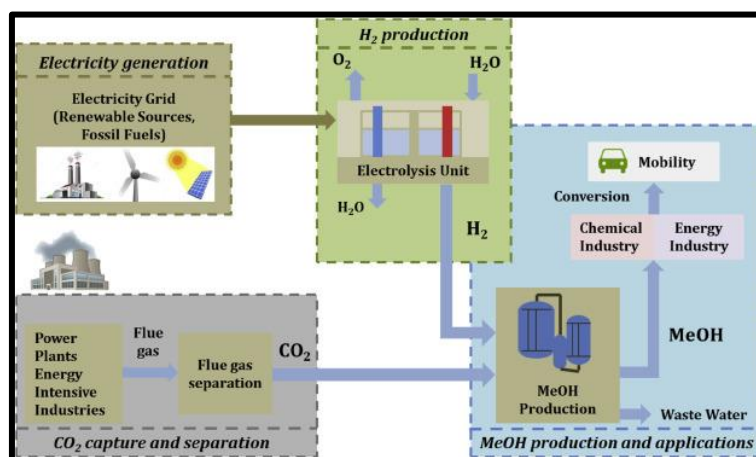
In a paper published in Nature, astronomers have reported a fast radio burst (FRB) whose characteristics are different from almost all other FRBs previously detected, except one.

- Fast radio burst FRBs are bright flashes of light that appear for a few milliseconds and then vanish.
- Since the first FRB was discovered in 2007, 140 more were discovered until June 2021, according to a post on the MIT website.

- “Their origins are unknown, and their appearance is unpredictable,” MIT said. New Study on Fast radio burst.
- The new study in Nature describes FRB 20190520B, first discovered in 2019.
- What makes it different is that unlike many other FRBs, it emits frequent, repeating bursts of radio waves.
- Between bursts, it constantly emits weaker radio waves.
- “Here we report the detection and localization of the repeating FRB 190520B, which is co-located with a compact, persistent radio source and associated with a dwarf host galaxy of high specific-star-formation....,”
- The paper said.
- Only one FRB has been previously observed to behave this way.
- Called FRB 121102, it was discovered in 2012.
- **Significance of new findings:** Calling the behaviour strange, the US National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) said that the discovery raises new questions about the nature of these mysterious objects and also about their usefulness as tools for studying the nature of intergalactic space.
- The astronomers have suggested that there may be two different mechanisms producing FRBs, or that the objects producing them may act differently at different stages.
- Among the candidates for the sources of FRBs are the super dense neutron stars left over after a supernova, or magnetars (neutron stars with ultra-strong magnetic fields).

Topic 19. METHANOL FROM LIGNITE PLANT

Important for subject: Science and Technology

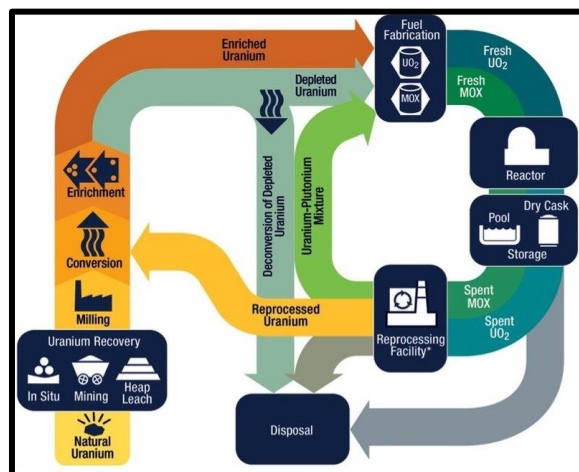


NLC requests Coal Ministry to include project under PLI scheme

- NLC India is working on a pilot project for production of methanol from lignite.
- It plans to set up a 1,200 tonne-a-day unit using 2.5 million tonnes of the lignite.
- The company, which has land and lignite for the project, has requested the Ministry of Coal to include the project in the Centre's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, under which a financial incentive is provided for every unit of production sold, for years.
- **Process:** Methanol can be mixed with petrol or can be converted into di-methyl ether (DME) and mixed with diesel for running vehicles and ships.
- In coal-to-methanol or the lignite-to-methanol plants, coal or lignite is first gasified into a synthesis gas (syn gas) by mixing pulverised coal or lignite with an oxidant such as oxygen or steam.
- The syn gas, which is very hot (about 1,800° C, is a mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen) and is a building block for production of a range of chemicals, including methanol.
- 16/16 Lignite, which has much lower ash content than coal (around 6 per cent compared with 20 per cent and above for coal) is more suitable for gasification than coal.
- Coal gasification makes it possible to use coal with much less carbon dioxide emissions.

Topic 20. RUSSIA DELIVERS MORE EFFICIENT NUCLEAR FUEL FOR KUDANKULAM

Important for subject: Science and Technology

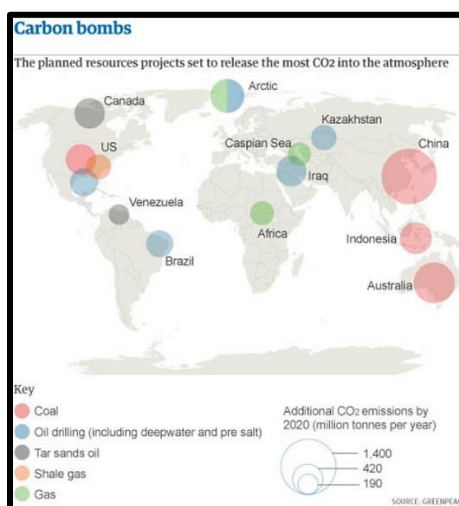


Rosatom the State Corporation of Russia has supplied the first batches of more reliable and cost-efficient nuclear fuel over the existing one, the TVS-2M nuclear fuel, for VVER-1000 reactors in Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP).

- After the next refueling, the reactor will start operations in an 18-month fuel cycle, which was 12 month earlier.
- Compared to the current fuel model, the TVS-2M fuel assemblies have a number of advantages making them more reliable and cost-efficient.
- Firstly, it is the rigidity of a bundle, as it has a welded frame and the additional spacer grid makes the fuel assemblies more vibration-resistant.
- Secondly, the new fuel has increased uranium capacity — one TVS-2M assembly contains 7.6% more fuel material as compared to the earlier fuel bundles.
- Also, Kudankulam fuel in particular is the new generation anti-debris filter protecting bundles from debris damage.
- Russia is building the KNPP under an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) of 1988 and follow-on agreements in 1998 and 2008.

Topic 21. CARBON BOMBS

Important of subject: Environment



A bunch of environmentalists, lawyers, and activists have move to spot and ‘defuse carbon bombs’– coal, oil and gas projects that have the potential to contribute considerably to associate.

- The usage of the term ‘carbon bombs’ picked up once associate degree fact-finding project of The Guardian from might 2022.

- The project according the plans of states and personal corporations everywhere the planet to have interaction in 195 'carbon bomb' comes.
- Every such project, it's believed, can unharness large amounts of CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere.

What are carbon bombs?

- It is "an oil or gas project which will end in a minimum of a billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over its time period."
- Whenever coal, oil, or gas is extracted it leads to pollution and environmental degradation.
- Further, carbon emissions turn up in massive massive amounts once fuel is burned.
- In total, around 195 such comes are known world over, together with within the United States, Russia, West Asia, Australia and India.
- In line with the report, they'll together overshoot the limit of emissions that had been in agreement to within the Paris Agreement of 2015.
- The agreement was to contain the world rise in average temperature to 2 °C and try for the target of 1.5 °C as compared to pre-industrial levels – once the widespread use of coal for trade within the starting within the mid-19th century junction rectifier to a fast rise in average global temperatures.

What does the investigation say?

- More than hr of those carbon bomb projects area unit already afoot, consistent with the investigation.
- With the exception of coal, oil, and gas operations, the report highlighted the threat of paraffin, that "routinely leaks from gas operations and could be a powerful greenhouse emission, housings 86 times a lot of heat than CO₂ over 20 years".
- It place the blame on the businesses conducting these operations, inform to nowadays wherever multiple factors, particularly the Russia-Ukraine crisis, have light-emitting diode to a discount in provide and rise within the demand for fuel.
- As Russian oil has been prohibited by countries within the West, costs have up to the advantage of oil and gas manufacturing corporations.
- The report criticised reliance on fuel from standard sources and not creating use of rising, inexperienced sources of energy.
- Energy firms like ExxonMobil, Total, Chevron, Shell and BP (British Petroleum) area unit all mentioned as having coal bomb projects.

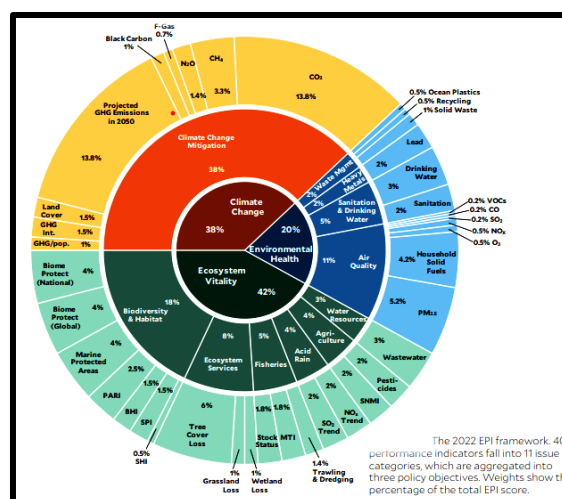
- This in relevancy the International Energy Agency, an international organisation that place along a road map to reduce global carbon emissions to as near to zero as potential by 2050.
- Internet zero emissions means all carbon emissions into the atmosphere should be absorbed by ways like increasing the forest cowl, and decreasing synthetic emissions.

What's the arrange for 'defusing' carbon bombs?

- The network is called towards this goal is named Leave It within the Ground Initiative (LINGO).
- Its mission is to "leave fossil fuels within the ground and learn to measure without them."
- It believes the foundation of global climate change is that the burning of fossil fuels, and also the 100 percent use of renewable energy sources is that the resolution.
- Its listed carbon bomb comes from all over the globe.
- This includes the Carmichael Coal Project in hand by the Adani group, Gevra Coal Mines in Chhattisgarh closely-held by Coal India, and Rajmahal Coal Mines in Jap Jharkhand closely-held by Jap Coalfields.
- Vernacular aims to organise ground support for complaining such projects, challenge them through proceeding, and conduct analysis and studies for a similar.

Topic 22. ENVIRONMENT PERFORMANCE INDEX

Important of subject: Environment

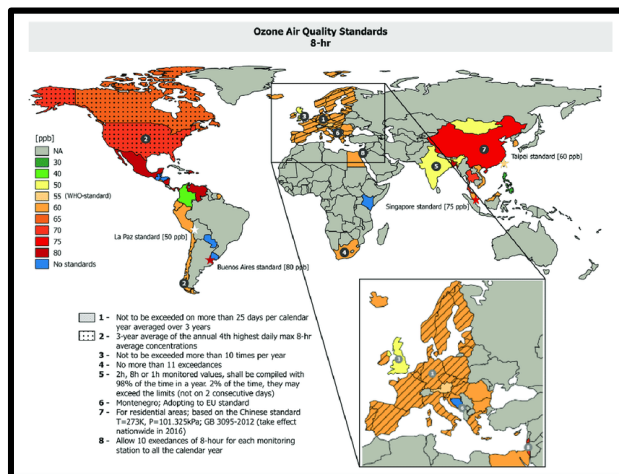


The recently free environment Performance Index -2022, a world ranking system that measures environmental health and property of countries, has graded India last among 180 countries that are graded.

- The self-report inventory, a biennial index, was started in 2002 as Environmental property Index by the planet Economic Forum in collaboration with the Yale Centre for Environmental Law and Policy Columbia University Centre for International natural science information Network.
- Victimization 40 performance indicators across 11 issue categories, EPI ranks 180 countries on temperature change performance, environmental health, and scheme vitality.
- These indicators give a gauge at a national scale of how close countries are to established environmental policy targets.
- The report has found that “good policy results are related to wealth (GDP per capita)”, which means economic prosperity makes it possible for nations to invest a position in policies and programmes that cause desirable outcomes.
- This trend is particularly true for environmental health, as building the necessary infrastructure to produce clean water and sanitation, reduce close pollution, management hazardous waste, and reply to public health crises yields large returns for human well-being.
- The report says that top-performing countries have paid attention to all areas of property, while their lagging peers tend to own uneven performance.
- With a paltry score of 18.9, India’s 180th ranking comes after Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Union of Burma — very cheap five along form up the poorest playing countries for environmental health.
- Asian country has also scored low on rule of law, control of corruption and government effectiveness, per EPI.
- India was ranked 168 in EPI-2020, with a score of 27.6 and denmark has been ranked first.

Topic 23. SURGING OZONE

Important of subject: Environment



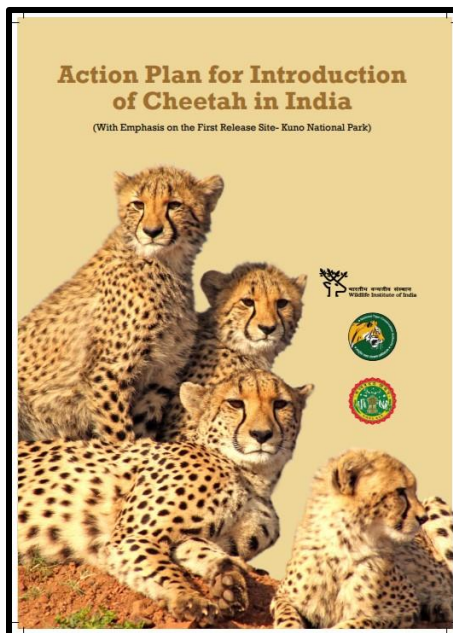
Over the past week, the Central Pollution control board (CPCB) has identified gas as an outstanding waste matter in Delhi on June 2 and June 6.

- Information from the Delhi Pollution control Committee (DPCC) for may also indicates that gas levels were well higher than the 8-hour standard of $100 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and hourly commonplace of $180 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in step with the National close Air Quality Standards at completely different monitoring stations on multiple days.
- A recent analysis by the Centre for Science and environment (CSE) noted that special unfold of gas in Delhi NCR began in March this year with early heatwaves.
- He analysis had stated that the geographical spread of ground-level ozone pollution in NCR in March and April this year was the highest in the past four years.
- Dominant transport pollution might be key to reducing the surge in gas levels in the town that comes with the increase in temperature.
- Ozone:** Ozone is a secondary waste.
- It forms due to atmospherical reaction among nitrogen oxides and VOCs (volatile organic compounds) within the presence of sunlight.
- Element oxides that are emitted from vehicles are there within the atmosphere.
- VOCs are also present because of unburnt hydrocarbons.
- Nitrogen oxide acts as catalyst and vehicles contribute the maximum to nitrogen oxide emission.
- Ozone is known to be a harmful gas for those who have respiratory conditions since it is highly reactive.

- The VOCs energise chemical element oxides in presence of sunlight to convert into gas.
- Sunlight and high temperatures in summer contribute to extend in gas formation.
- Ozone isn't directly emitted from any supply.
- The gases that return from vehicles, industries, power plants notably chemical element oxides and VOCs, underneath the influence of sunlight and temperature react to create ozone.
- To regulate gas, there's to control to regulate precursor gases.
- **To know regarding National ambient Air Quality Standards, kindly refer:**
<https://optimizeias.com/who-global-air-quality-norms/> Ground-level gas can: make it harder to breathe deeply and vigorously Cause shortness of breath and pain once taking a deep breath Cause coughing and sore or scratchy throat Inflammation and injury the airways irritate lung diseases such as respiratory disorder, emphysema, and bronchitis Increase the frequency of unwellness respiratory illness respiratory disorder attacks create the lungs a lot of susceptible to infection still injury the lungs even once the symptoms have disappeared Cause chronic obstructive disease (COPD)

Topic 24. CHEETAH REINTRODUCTION ACTION PLAN

Important for subject: Environment



‘Reintroduction’ of a species means releasing it in an area where it's capable of surviving.

- Reintroductions of large carnivores have increasingly been recognized as a strategy to conserve the threatened species and restore ecosystem functions.
- The cheetah is the only large carnivore that has been eliminated, mainly by overhunting in India in historical times.
- The conservation of the cheetah will be revive grasslands and their biomes and habitat, much like the Project Tiger has done for forests and all the species that have seen their numbers go up.
- With help from the Wildlife Institute of India and the Wildlife Trust of India, the ministry will be translocating around 8-12 cheetahs from South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.
- These countries have the world's largest populations of the animal.
- The big cats will live at Kuno Palpur national park (Madhya Pradesh) owing to its suitable habitat and adequate prey base.
- This year GOI has launched the 'Action plan for Introduction of cheetah in India' under which fifty of these big cats will be introduced in the next 5 years.
- The translocation will have to follow the protocols of international translocation as underlined in the Convention on International trade in endangered species (CITES).
- The action plan was launched at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- NTCA is a statutory body under the Ministry of environment, Forests and global climate change.

Why cheetah?

- Cheetah happens to be the only large carnivore that got completely wiped out from India, mainly due to over-hunting and habitat loss.
- The Action plan highlights the nation's preparedness in bringing the cheetah back.
- Conservation of the Cheetahs has a very special significance for the national conservation the ethic and the ethos.
- The very name 'Cheetah' (Acinonyx Jubatus Venaticus) originates from Sanskrit and means 'the spotted one'.
- **Bringing Back Cheetahs:** A Boon to the Ecosystem Besides conserving the big cat, the initiative in itself is a boon to the ecosystem.

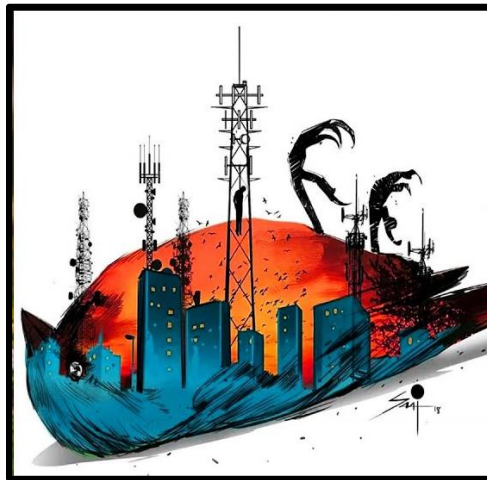
- Cheetahs live in open plains; their habitat is predominantly where their preys live – grasslands, scrubs and the open forest systems, semi-arid environments and the temperatures that tend to be hotter compared to cooler regimes.
- In saving cheetahs, one would have to save not only its prey-base comprising certain threatened species, but also other endangered species of the grasslands and open forest ecosystems, some of which are on the brink of the extinction.
- It's also observed that among large carnivores, conflict with human interests is lowest for Cheetahs.
- They're not a threat to humans and don't attack large livestock either.

Why Kuno?

- Amongst the ten surveyed sites of the central Indian states, Kuno Palpur national park (KNP) in the Madhya Pradesh has been rated the highest.
- This is because of its suitable habitat and adequate prey base.
- KNP is 748 sq. km.
- In area, devoid of human settlements, forms part of Sheopur-Shivpuri deciduous open forest landscape and is estimated to have a capacity to sustain twenty one cheetahs.
- Kuno is probably the only wildlife site in the country where there has been a complete relocation of the villages from inside the park.
- Kuno also offers the prospect of housing four big cats of the India – tiger, lion, leopard and cheetah – and allowing them to coexist as in the past.
- The other sites recommended for holding and conservation breeding of cheetah in India, in controlled wild conditions are:
 1. Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary (1,197 sq. km, habitat 5,500 sq.km), Madhya Pradesh
 2. Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary – Bhainsrorgarh Wildlife Sanctuary complex (~2500 sq.km), Madhya Pradesh
 3. Shahgarh bulge in the Jaisalmer, Rajasthan (4,220 sq.km)
 4. Mukundara Tiger Reserve as fenced enclosure (~80 sq.km), Rajasthan

Topic 25. ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION LEVELS TILL A CERTAIN LIMIT FOUND TO HAVE NO IMPACT ON SPARROWS IN GUWAHATI

Important for Subject: Environment

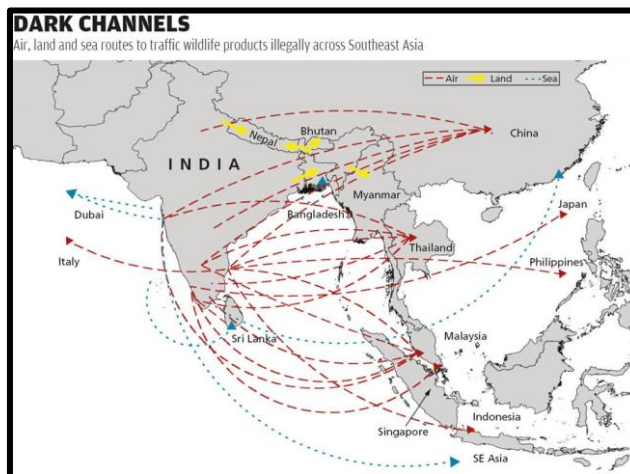


Pollution In a study about the possible impact of radiofrequency EMR on wild birds (house sparrow, great tit, blue tit, and white stork) with regards to their occupancy, abundance, breeding density, reproduction, and species composition.

- The house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) was one of the most ‘successful’ urban birds, occupying two-thirds of the world’s surface.
- However, the recent years have witnessed a decline in their populations across many parts of the world.
- Among the various causes hypothesized were: lack of nesting sites due to rapid urbanization, unsustainable loss of green cover, excessive use of pesticides, lack of traditional granaries, avian malaria, air pollution, and the possible link with increasing electromagnetic radiation emitted from the cell phone towers.
- The study concluded that EMR did not seem to possess a significant correlation with the densities of house and tree sparrows.
- A takeaway from this study is that we should focus more on urban ecological planning, providing more open green spaces so that sparrows and other birds will thrive amidst humans.
- While EMR doesn’t seem to affect house sparrows and the tree sparrows, the authors cannot say the same for other species.
- According to them, exposure to prolonged EMR could be a serious concern for bees, fruit flies, frogs, birds, haywire and even humans.

Topic 26. INDIA AS A HUB FOR WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

Important for Subject: Environment



Biodiversity According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), wildlife trafficking is the fourth largest form of transnational organised crime (after smuggling of drugs, human trafficking, and counterfeiting) worth an estimated £15 billion per annum.

- Despite being a part of the CITES (Convention on International trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora), India isn't only a major source, but also a transit and a destination country for the trafficked wildlife and wildlife products.
- International wildlife trafficking into and out of India mainly occurs through either the long international border along the Northeast or through airports.
- Chennai and Mumbai airports are the major hubs for this illegal activity.
- Wildlife trafficking in India is driven by the demand for raw material like red sandalwood and ivory, and animal parts – particularly rhinoceros horn and tiger parts – for traditional medicine, demand for the meat, and the attraction towards exotic pets.
- When exotic live animals that have been smuggled into India are seized, they're sent to rescue centres or sanctuaries.
- Several international and national governmental organisations are teaming up to develop tools and networks that counter wildlife trafficking.
- Reasons Due to its mega diverse nature (India has 8% of the world's wildlife), and dense human population.
- Porous international borders with China, Myanmar, and other Southeast Asian countries.
- A growing aviation market and the fast-expanding airport sector, and the use of social media as online marketplaces by wildlife traffickers.

- Also, smugglers of exotic wildlife species in India have even resorted to misusing the Voluntary disclosure scheme issued by the Ministry of environment, Forest and global climate change (MoEFCC) in 2020.
- Besides these the reasons, there are major lacunae in laws that pertain to the ownership of the exotic animals in India.
- People caught transporting exotic wildlife species can be charged with the crime only if it can be proven that they crossed an international border illegally with those animals.
- Species trafficked in India Ivory, turtles and tortoises (especially the Indian star tortoise), and red sandalwood.
- Pangolin, Indian rhino for horn, tiger, ornamental fish such as the Channa barca or snakehead (endemic to the upper Brahmaputra basin) and the zebra loach (in the Western Ghats).
- Wildlife trafficking has expanded to include trade in body parts of golden jackals, Asiatic black bears, leopards (for Tantric uses and traditional medicines) and mongooses (for mongoose hair paint brushes).
- Instances of exotic animals such as kangaroos, marmosets, tamarins, and birds such as macaws and parrots being transported across India are on the rise.
- Factors driving wildlife trafficking in India The foremost is the demand for raw materials like red sandalwood and ivory (used in manufacturing luxury products), and animal parts – particularly rhinoceros horn and tiger parts – for traditional medicine.
- Another factor that drives wildlife trafficking is that the demand for meat – many animals such as the Bengal slow loris, soft shell turtles from Uttar Pradesh, deer, antelope, wild cows, and even sea cucumbers are mainly trafficked for consumption.
- The third major driving factor for wildlife trafficking in India lies in the growing demand for exotic pets, especially birds like cockatoos, macaws, and grey parrots.
- Steps taken to reduce wildlife trafficking in India.
- The DRI, which is in the forefront of the battle against smuggling, has teamed up with the Indian Customs as a part of the green Customs initiative of the world Customs Organization, to counter wildlife trafficking into and out of India.
- To combat the rising use of air transport in wildlife trafficking, a suite of tools have been developed by TRAFFIC, along with the United Nations environment

Programme (UNEP), World wildlife Fund-India (WWF-India), and therefore the wildlife Crime control Bureau (WCCB).

- Apart from this, the International air transport Association (IATA) also has a short 20-minute training module to help spread awareness on wildlife trafficking through air transport.
- Airport authorities in Bengaluru have even set up a forest cell to tackle wildlife smuggling.
- The Counter wildlife Trafficking program, run by the wildlife Conservation Society India, conducts training and sensitisation workshops for state forest departments, police forces, customs officials, border security force units, and even the judiciary, on the conducting crime scene investigations and promoting inter-agency collaborations

Topic 27. CHINA AND CAMBODIA TO BEGIN PORT PROJECT

Important of subject: Geography



Mapping China and Cambodia began an expansion operation at the Ream Naval Base in Sihanoukville.

- It has prompted concern in the United States and elsewhere that it will be used by Beijing as a naval outpost on the Gulf of Thai land.
- Phnom Penh denies reports that it will be used as a Chinese naval outpost and described the expansion of the Ream Naval Base as “cooperation between China and Cambodia”.
- Ream faces the Gulf of Thailand, adjacent to the South China Sea, where China has aggressively asserted its claim to virtually the entire strategic waterway.
- The U.S. has refused to recognize China’s sweeping claim and routinely conducts military maneuvers there to rein force that they are international waters.

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Topic 28. CHILEAN LAKE TURNS TO DESERT

Important of subject: Geography



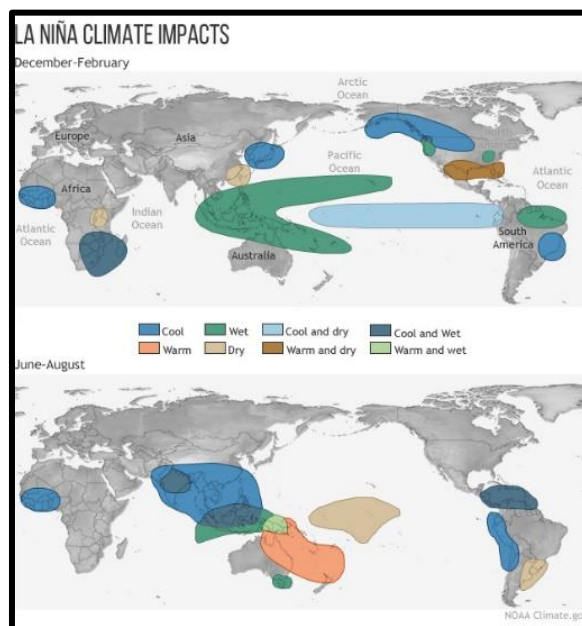
The Peñuelas reservoir in central Chile was till 20 years past the most source of water for the town of Valparaíso, holding enough water for 38,000 Olympic-size swimming pools.

- Water for only two pools now remains. Geographical location Peñuelas Lake is a reservoir in Valparaíso Region, Chile.
- It supplies drinking water, together with another lake called Los Aromos, to Valparaíso and Viña del Mar.
- The reservoir and therefore the surrounding space are protected among Lago Peñuelas National Reserve that is part of la Campana-Peñuelas part Reserve.
- **Reasons for lake turning into desert:** Amid an historic 13-year drought, rainfall levels have slumped in Chile, which hugs the continent’s Pacific coast.
- Higher air temperatures have meant snow within the Andes, once a key store of water for spring and summer, isn't compacting, melts quicker, or turns straight to vapor.
- The drought has hit mine output in the world’s largest copper producer, stoked tensions over water use for lithium and farming, and led capital Santiago to make unprecedented plans for potential water rationing.
- Normally, low-pressure storms from the Pacific unload precipitation over Chile in winter, recharging aquifers and packing the Andes Mountains with snow.

- But naturally occurring warming of the sea off Chile's coast, which blocks storms from arriving, has been intensified by rising global sea temperature, according to a global study on sea temperature and rainfall deficits.
- Ozone depletion and greenhouse gasses affecting Antarctic, meanwhile, exacerbate weather patterns that draw storms removed from Chile, according to a study on variables poignant Antarctic weather.

Topic 29. CLIMATE CHANGE AND LA NIÑA

Important of subject: Geography



Climate change is pushing countries like Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia into a famine as they face their fifth consecutive deficit rainy seasons.

- Climate change is creating the La Nina impact severe'.
- The continuing La Nina could become the longest on record.

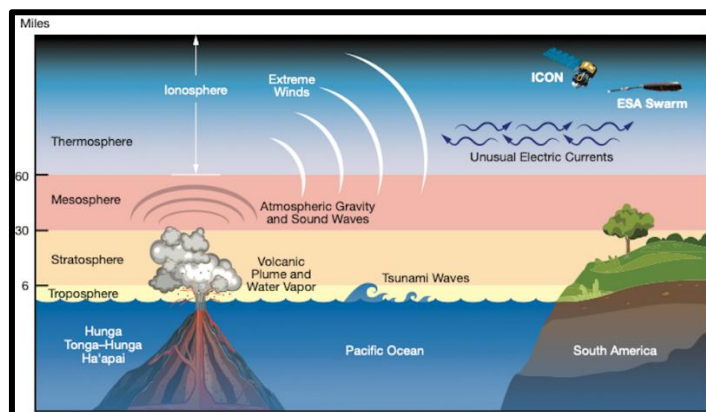
What's La Nina?

- La Nina is a climate pattern that describes the cooling of surface ocean waters on the tropical west coast of South America.
 - La Nina is considered to be the counterpart to El Nino that is characterised by unusually heat ocean temperatures in the equatorial region of the Pacific Ocean.
- Impact of La Nina in East Africa East Africa is experiencing its worst drought spell in four decades. The last season — March to might — was the driest one in over 70 years for African country, Kenya and African country.

- The exceptional weather situation is attributed to La Nina, a natural large-scale cooling of ocean surface temperature in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific.
- This is causing the dry weather and high temperatures in East Africa.
- The present spell of la Nina has been lengthy unusually, because the World meteorological Organization (WMO) same in its bulletin.
- It started in 2020 and will continue to persist through 2022, with a high possibility of continuing into 2023.
- La Semitic deity and its dynamic nature: Nina La Semitic deity may become the longest on record.
- The character of La Nina — an ocean-atmosphere event that usually brings down global temperatures — is changing, indicating a shift in natural climatic patterns in a warming world.
- There are chances that the present La Nina may continue through the southwest monsoon season, winter of 2022 and even early 2023, and will lead to devastating and unpredictable consequences for India and many different regions round the world.
- India will experience a protracted monsoon season the third year during a row, for instance.
- The monsoon seasons of 2020 and 2021 were also extended, resulting in an increase in extreme rainfall events throughout the period and future floods in many states.
- The extension had most likely happened owing to the impact of La Nina, according to climate scientists.

Topic 30. TONGA ERUPTION

Important for subject: Geography

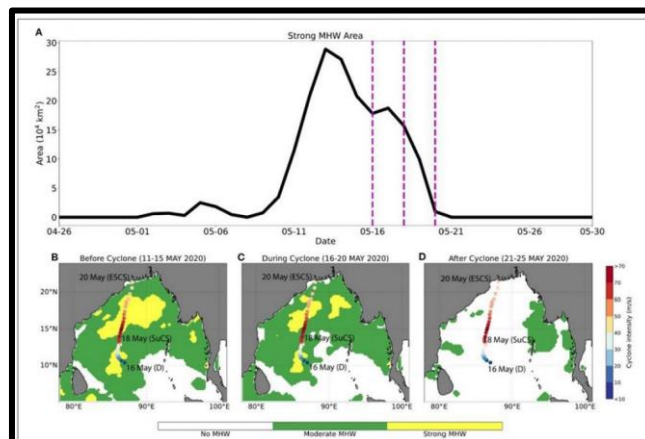


Researchers are starting to piece together why the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Haʻapai eruption in the South Pacific on January 15 was so explosive. Evidence gathered by 2 groups suggests that when the Tongan volcano's centre collapsed, it is spewed an enormous amount of magma that reacted violently with water.

- Tonga Located in the Oceania, Tonga is a small archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean, directly south of Samoa and about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand.
- It has 169 islands, 36 of them inhabited, which are in three main groups – Vavaʻu, Haʻapai, and Tongatapu – and cover an 800-kilometer (500-mile)-long north–south line.
- The total size is just a 747 km² (288 sq mi).
- Due to the spread out all over islands it has the 40th largest Exclusive Economic Zone of 659,558 km² (254,657 sq mi).
- Geologically the Tongan islands are of two types: most have a limestone base formed from the uplifted coral formations; others consist of limestone overlaying a volcanic base.
- Tongan Volcanic Arc was created from the subduction of the westwards-moving Pacific plate under the Australia-India plate at the Tonga Trench.
- The eastern islands are not a volcanic and sit above the mostly submerged Tonga ridge that is runs parallel to the Tongan Volcanic Arc and the Tongan Trench.
- In regards to volcanism, Tonga has been moderate volcanic activity.
- Fonualei has been shown frequent activity in recent years, while is Niuafuʻou which last erupted in 1985, has forced evacuations; other historically active volcanoes include Late and Tofua.

Topic 31. WARMER SUBSURFACE WATERS IN BAY OF BENGAL

Important for subject: Geography



Warm subsurface waters in the Bay of Bengal likely helped fuel the 2020 Amphan super cyclone, a new study has suggested.

- This shows a link between marine heatwaves and cyclones.
- Impacts of Warm subsurface waters: warmer surface waters may have also helped sustain marine heatwaves — prolonged high sea temperatures.
- Marine heatwaves also likely helped intensify the cyclone from category one (cyclonic storm) to category five (super cyclone) in less than thirty six hours, the study published in *Frontiers in Climate*, reported.
- Amphan was the first super cyclone in the Bay of Bengal in the last twenty one years.
- It had been also the costliest tropical cyclone on record in the North Indian Ocean.
- Link between marine heatwaves and cyclones.
- Cyclones are an extreme event, and so are marine heat events.
- Researchers from France, Australia and India investigated the events that LED to the formation of the Amphan super cyclone.
- The sea surface temperature in the southern and northern portions of the Ocean was close to 1.5 and 2°C above the average of 30.2 and 29.7°C, respectively, the study noted.
- A strong marine heatwave covered close to 300,000 square kilometres of the basin.
- Warm subsurface waters could intensify cyclones by allowing heat to flow between the ocean and atmosphere.
- Warmer waters fuel cyclones.
- The sea temperatures cooled as the cyclone approached the coast.
- Subsurface warming also a went down, bringing the marine heatwave event to a close.

- Future studies can evaluate how the atmosphere helps marine heatwave fuels cyclones.

What are Tropical Cyclones?

- Tropical cyclones are violent storms that originate over oceans in tropical areas and move over to the coastal areas bringing about large scale destruction due to violent winds, very heavy rainfall and storm surge.
- They are irregular wind movements involving closed circulation of air around a low pressure centre.
- This closed air circulation is a result of rapid upward movement of hot air which is subjected to Coriolis force.
- Conditions Favourable for Tropical Cyclone Formation large sea surface with temperature higher than 27°C.
- Presence of the Coriolis force, enough to create a cyclonic vortex.
- Small variations in the vertical wind speed.
- A pre-existing weak low-pressure area or low-level-cyclonic circulation.
- Upper divergence above the sea level system.

Topic 32. THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD (NSAB)

Important of subject: Polity

Former National Security planning board Chairman says multiple rounds of talks prove Chinese encroachment occurred in 2020, regardless of govt. Statements

- The National Security advisory board (NSAB) consists of a group of eminent national security usually outside of the govt...
- Members academics sometimes senior retired officers, civilian yet as military, teachers and distinguished members of civil society drawn from and having experience in Internal and External Security, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Science & Technology and Economic Affairs.
- The board meets at least once a month, and a lot of frequently as needed.
- It provides a long-term prognosis and analysis to the NSC and recommends solutions and address policy issues constituted it.
- Initially the Board was constituted for one year, but since 2004-06, the Board has been reconstituted for two years.

Topic 33. PLACES OF WORSHIP ACT AND THE CONTESTING CLAIMS

Important of subject: Polity

Acts The legal battle over the validity of the Places of War ship (Special Provisions) Act of 1991, which underlines the need to protect the liber ty of faith and worship, is gaining steam in the Supreme Court.

- **Places of Worship Act** It is described as “An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious the anyplace of worship because it existed on the 15th day of August 1947, and for the matters connected therewith or incidental to it.” Exemption The disputed site at Ayodhya was exempted from the Act.
- Due to this exemption, the trial in the Ayodhya case proceeded even after the enforcement of this law.
- Besides the Ayodhya dispute, the Act also exempted: Any place of worship which is an ancient and historical monument, or an archaeological site covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- A suit that has been finally settled or disposed of.
- Any dispute that has been settled by the parties or conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence before the Act commenced.
- **Penalty** Section 6 of the Act prescribes a punishment of a maximum of three years imprisonment along with a fine for contravening the provisions of the Act.
- **Criticism** the law has been challenged on the ground that it bars judicial review, which could be a basic feature of the Constitution, imposes an “arbitrary irrational retrospective cut-off date,” and the abridges the right to religion of Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs.

What are its other Provisions?

- **Section 3:** This section of the Act bars the conversion, in full or part, of a place of the worship of any religious denomination into a place of worship of a different religious denomination or even a different segment of the same religious denomination.
- **Section 4(1):** It declares that the religious character of a place of the worship “shall continue to be the same because it existed” on 15th August 1947.
- **Section 4(2):** It says any suit or legal proceeding with respect to the conversion of the religious character of any place of worship existing on 15th August, 1947, pending before any court, shall abate and no fresh suit or legal proceedings shall be instituted.

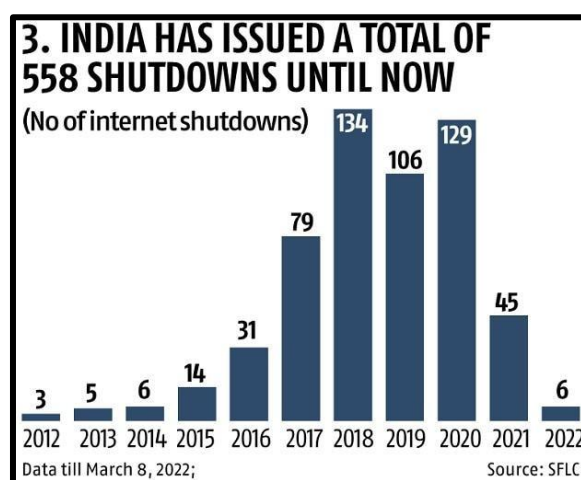
- The provision to this subsection saves suits, appeals, and legal proceedings that are pending on the date of commencement of the Act if they pertain to the conversion of the religious character of a place of the worship after the cut-off date.
- **Section 5:** It stipulates that the Act shall not apply to the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri mosque case, and to any suit, appeal, or proceeding relating to it.

What was the Supreme Court's view during the Ayodhya Judgment?

- In the 2019 Ayodhya verdict, the Constitution Bench referred to the law and said it manifests the secular values of the Constitution and prohibits retrogression.
- The law is thence a legislative instrument designed to protect the secular features of the Indian polity that is one amongst the basic features of the Constitution.

Topic 34. IN INDIA- ARE INTERNET SHUTDOWNS IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAW?

Important for subject: Polity



Constitution India ranks first globally when it comes to cutting off the internet, thereby earning the notorious title of being the “internet shutdown capital” of the world.

- Last year, the mobile internet was shut down 127 times, while it's been cut off 39 times this year so far.
- The reasons given were that shutdowns were imposed as a “precautionary” measure or in response to public protests.

What does the law say?

- Until 2017, India did not have a statute law to order internet shutdowns.

- The power to do so was vested in district magistrates under Section one hundred forty four of the Code of Criminal Procedure. In 2017, new rules to order internet shutdowns were there introduced under the Indian Telegraph Act of 1885.
- These rules – the Temporary Suspension of telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) rules – stated that internet shutdowns can now only be ordered by the home secretary of the union or state governments.
- The rules also say that only in “unavoidable circumstances”, the passing of orders can be delegated to someone not lower than the rank of a joint secretary to the govt of India.
- And even in this case, the official must be authorized by the centre or the state home secretary.
- Shutdowns could be an ordered where “necessary” or “unavoidable”, during a “public emergency” or in the “interest of the public safety”.
- **Regarding Internet shutdowns, Supreme Court in the case of Anuradha Bhasin explicitly recognised two things:** that the freedom to access information is a fundamental right under Article 19(1) (a) of the constitution; and that the freedom to conduct your trade, profession or the business over the internet is also a fundamental right under Article 19(1) (g).
- These rights which are the enshrined in the constitution, can only be curtailed in the interest of the “sovereignty and the security of the state, integrity of the nation, friendly relations with the foreign states, or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence.
- Additionally, most orders for shutdown apply to mobile internet, not broadband.
- Thus, these shutdowns disproportionately affect those from a lower income groups.

Topic 35. PRESIDENTIAL POLLS 2022

Important for subject: Polity

The election commission on Thursday announced that the Presidential election would be held on July 18 and counting of votes, if required, would be held on July 21.

- President Ram Nath Kovind’s term ends on July 24.
- Announcing the schedule, Chief Election Commissioner said the notification would be issued on June 15 and also the last date for nominations would be June 29.

- The date for scrutiny of candidature would be June 30 and the last date for withdrawal of candidature would be July 2.
- The electoral college for the poll will comprise 4,809 members — 233 Rajya Sabha and 543 Lok Sabha members and the 4,033 MLAs of the Assemblies of the States and the Union Territories of Delhi and Puducherry.
- The total value of votes will be 10, 86,431 (5, 43,200 for MPs or 700 votes each and 5, 43,231 for MLAs based on the 1971 Census population figures).
- The MLAs of J&K are no longer part of the Electoral College.
- Each candidate would require fifty members of the Electoral College to propose their name and another fifty to second it.
- The polling would be carried out in the Parliament House for the MPs and at the respective State Assemblies for MLAs, with the Rajya Sabha Secretary General declared as the Returning Officer.
- President under the Constitution of India, there shall always be a President of India (Article 52 of the Constitution).
- He holds the highest elective office in the country and is elected in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Presidential and vice-presidential Elections Act, 1952.
- The said Act is supplemented by the provisions of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Rules, 1974, and the said Act under Rules form a complete Code regulating all aspects of conduct of elections to the Office of the President.

Who elects the President of India?

- The President is elected by an electoral college, which consists of the elected members of both houses of Parliament and also the elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of all the States and also of NCT of Delhi and the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- [Article 54 of the Constitution of India]

What is the term of the office of the President?

- The President shall hold office for a term of 5 years from the date on which he enters upon his office.
- He shall, however, continue to hold office notwithstanding the expiry of his term, until his successor enters upon his office.
- [Article 56 of the Constitution of India]

When is the election of the Office of President of India held?

- Under the provisions of sub-section (3) of Section four of the Presidential and vice-presidential Elections Act, 1952, the notification calling the election to the office of the President can be issued by the election commission on any day within the period of sixty days before the expiry of the term of office of the outgoing President.
- The election schedule shall be so fixed, that the President-elect is able to enter upon his office on the day of following the expiry of the term of the outgoing President.

Who conducts the election to the Office of President of India?

- Under Article 324 of the Constitution of India, the authority to conduct elections to the office of President is vested in the election commission of India.

How is the President elected?

- The Indian President is elected through an Electoral College system, whereby the votes are cast by national and State-level lawmakers.
- The elections are conducted and overseen by the Election Commission (EC) of India.
- The Electoral College is made up of all the elected members of the upper and Lower houses of Parliament (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha MPs), and the elected Members of the Legislative Assemblies of the States and Union Territories (MLAs).
- Related Constitutional Provisions:
- **Article 54:** Election of President
- **Article 55:** Manner of election of President.
- **Article 56:** Term of office of the President
- **Article 57:** Eligibility for re-election.
- **Article 58:** Qualifications for election as President Procedure Before the voting, comes the nomination stage, where the candidate intending to stand in the election, files the nomination along with a signed list of fifty proposers and 50 seconders.
- These proposers and seconders can be anyone from the total members of the Electoral College from the State and the national level.
- The rule for securing fifty proposers and seconders was implemented when the European Community noticed, in 1974, that several candidates, many without even a bleak chance of winning, would file their nominations to contest the polls.
- An elector cannot propose or second the nomination of the more than one candidate.

What is the value of each vote and how is it calculated?

- A vote cast by each MP or MLA is not calculated as one vote.
- The fixed value of each vote by an MP of the Rajya Sabha and also the Lok Sabha is 708.
- Meanwhile, the vote value of each MLA differs from State to State based on a calculation that factors in its population vis-a-vis the number of members in its legislative Assembly.
- The value of each MLAs vote is determined by dividing the population of the State by the number of MLAs in its legislative Assembly, and the quotient achieved is further divided by 1000.

What is required to secure a victory?

- A nominated candidate does not secure victory based on a simple majority but through a system of bagging a specific quota of votes.
- While counting, the EC totals up all the valid votes cast by the Electoral College through paper ballots and to win, the candidate must secure 50% of the total votes cast + 1.
- Unlike general elections, where electors vote for a single party's candidate, the voters of the Electoral College write the names of candidates on the ballot paper in the order of preference.
- The President's election is held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote and also the voting is by secret ballot.

Topic 36. RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016

Important of subject: Governance



Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 simply called the RPWD act, promotes and protects the rights and dignity of people with disabilities in educational, social, legal, economic, cultural and political spheres.

- Salient features of the Act. The Act lays Responsibility on the appropriate governments to require measures and make sure that PWDs enjoy equal rights.
- The categories of disabilities are enhanced from 7 to 21. The Central Government can have the power to feature a lot of types of disabilities.
- Incapacity has been outlined supported evolving and dynamic idea.
- Additional benefits have been provided for persons with benchmark disabilities and those with high support needs.
- All children with benchmark disabilities between 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education.
- The act raised the reservation for people with benchmark disabilities from 3% to 4% in government jobs and from 3% to 5% in higher education institutes.
- Stress has been given to ensure accessibility publicly buildings in a very prescribed time-frame at the side of the Accessible Asian country Campaign.
- There's a provision of a Central advisory board (CAB) on incapacity that is remitted to satisfy each six months.
- The CAB, which has a three-year tenure, is meant to perform because the “national-level consultatory and consultative body on incapacity matters”.
- “The CAB is that the highest policy making body for incapacity issues. Provision for guardianship District Court or any authority selected by the regime underneath that there'll be a joint decision-making between the guardian and also the persons with disabilities.
- Central & State advisory Boards on incapacity are going to be set up as political bodies.
- The office of the Chief Commissioner of PwDs and the State Commissioner of disabilities are going to be strong and can act as regulative bodies and Grievance Redressal Agencies and also monitor implementation of the Act.
- These Offices will be assisted by Advisory Committee comprising experts in numerous disabilities.
- National and State Fund are going to be created to supply financial support to PwDs.
- Penalties for offences committed against PwDs.

- Designated special Courts to handle cases regarding violation of rights of PwDs.

Topic 37. QS RANKINGS

Important of Subject: Governance



The 2023 edition of the QS or Quacquarelli Symonds world university rankings will be released Thursday.

- India's tally in the QS rankings has risen to thirty five this year from twenty nine in 2021.
- According to the rankings, the Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has scored one hundred on the research parameter and joined the league of elite global institutions.
- In the top three hundred, there are six institutions (from India) this year as against four last year (in QS rankings).
- Quacquarelli Symonds world university rankings: This is an annual publication of university rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).
- **The QS system includes 3 parts:** the global overall ranking, the rankings (which name the world's top universities for the study of fifty one different subjects and 5 composite faculty areas), and five independent regional tables —namely Asia, Latin America, Emerging Europe and Central Asia, the Arab Region, and The QS ranking receives approval from the International Ranking Expert Group (IREG), and is viewed as one of the three most-widely read university rankings in the world, along with Academic Ranking of World Universities and Times Higher Education World University Rankings.
- According to Alexa Internet, it is the most widely viewed university ranking worldwide.

- The QS ranking was previously known as Times Higher Education- QS World University Rankings.
- **About QS:** QS is the world's leading provider of services, analytics, and insight to the global higher education sector.
- QS's international conferences for higher education leaders include: Reimagine Education– the world's leading award program and conference for teaching and learning innovation; EduData Summit– a space uniting the world's leading practitioners at the intersection of data and education; QS APPLE– Asia's foremost convention for higher education leaders In 2019, as part of their commitment to sustainability, QS became a certified Carbon Neutral Company reflecting their efforts to reduce its impact on the environment through a range of efficiency initiatives and offsetting unavoidable emissions through a verified carbon offset forestry project in Brazil.

Topic 38. NEW NORMS FOR CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Important for subject: Governance

Right issues the govt has tightened norms for endorsers, as well as celebrities and sports persons, as they're now required to make material connection disclosures and undertake due diligence while doing advertisements.

- According to new guide lines released by the Consumer Affairs Ministry, endorsements must reflect the honest opinions, belief or experience of the endorsers.
- The endorsers have to make material connection disclosures and failing to do so will attract penalty under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA).
- Material disclosures mean any relationship that materially affects the weight or credibility of any endorsement that a reasonable consumer wouldn't expect.
- Violation of these guide lines will attract a penalty of Rs10 lakh for the first offense and Rs50 lakh for the subsequent offense, under the CPA.
- The new guide lines "Prevention of misleading advertisements and necessary due diligence for endorsement of advertisements", which came into effect on June 10, 2022, have been issued to prevent misleading advertisements.
- Consumer Protection Act, 2019 Key Provisions the consumer Protection Act, 2019 establishes the Central consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) whose primary objective will be to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers.

- **It is empowered to:** Conduct investigations into violations of consumer rights and institute complaints/prosecution.
- Order recall of unsafe goods and services.
- Order discontinuance of unfair trade practices and the misleading advertisements.
- Impose penalties on manufacturers/endorsers/publishers of misleading advertisements.
- **Rules on E-commerce and Unfair Trade Practices:** The government will notify the Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020 under the Act whose broad provisions are given below.
- E-commerce entities are required to provide information to consumers, relating to return, refund, exchange, warranty and guarantee, delivery and shipment, modes of payment, grievance redressal mechanism, payment methods, and security of payment methods, charge-back options and country of origin.
- These are necessary for enabling the consumer to make an informed decision at the pre-purchase stage.
- These platforms will have to acknowledge the receipt of any consumer complaint within 48 hours and redress the complaint within one month from the date of receipt.
- They will also have to appoint a grievance officer for consumer grievance redressal.
- The Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020 are mandatory and are not advisories.
- Sellers cannot refuse to take back goods or withdraw services or refuse refunds, if such goods or services are defective, deficient, delivered late, or if they do not meet the description on the platform.
- The rules also prohibit the e-commerce firms from manipulating the price of the goods or services to gain unreasonable profit through unjustified prices.
- **Product Liability:** A manufacturer or product service provider or product seller will be held accountable to compensate for injury or damage caused by defective product or deficiency in services
Basis for product liability action: Manufacturing defect, Design defect.
- Deviation from manufacturing specifications.
- Not conforming to express warranty.
- Failing to contain adequate instructions for correct use.

- Service provided-faulty, imperfect or deficient.
- **Punishment for Manufacture or Sale of Adulterated/Spurious Goods:** In case of the first conviction, a competent court may suspend any license issued to the person for a period of up to 2 years and in case of second or subsequent conviction, may cancel the license permanently.
- **Alternate Dispute Resolution Mechanism of Mediation:** A complaint will be referred by a consumer Commission for mediation, wherever scope for early settlement exists and parties agree for it.
- The mediation will be held in the Mediation Cells which will be established under the aegis of the consumer Commissions.
- There will be no appeal against settlement through mediation.
- **Simplification of the consumer Dispute adjudication Process:** Empowering the State and District Commissions to review their own orders.
- Enabling a consumer to file complaints electronically and in consumer commissions that have jurisdiction over the place of his residence.
- Video-conferencing for hearing and deemed admissibility of complaints if the question of admissibility is not decided within the specified period of 21 days.
- **Other Rules and Regulations:** As per the Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Rules, there will be no fee for filing cases up to Rs. 5 lakh.
- The credit of the amount due to unidentifiable consumers will go to the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF).
- State Commissions will be furnish information to the Central Government on a quarterly basis on vacancies, disposal, the pendency of cases and other matters.
- Apart from these general rules, there are Central Consumer Protection Council Rules, provided for the constitution of the Central Consumer Protection Council (CCPC).
- It'll be an advisory body on consumer problems, headed by the Union Minister of consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution with the Minister of State as Vice chairperson and 34 other members from different fields.
- It will have a three-year tenure and will have the Minister-in-charge of consumer affairs from two States from each region- North, South, East, West, and North-East Region.
- **Consumer rights under the Act It defined 6 rights of the consumers which include:** Right to be protected against the marketing of goods, products or services

which can be hazardous to life and property right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and worth of goods, products and services Right to be assured of access to goods, products and services at competitive prices.

- Right to be heard at appropriate forums Right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices that are involved in exploitation of customers Right to consumer awareness

Topic 39. ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF INDIA WITH WEST ASIA

Important for subject: IR



Bilateral relations Historical relations India's cultural, economic and trade ties with the countries of the West Asian region are deep and abiding.

- Starting with maritime trade, the exchange of goods, services and cultures between the people of the Gulf region including those on the western shores of the Arabian Sea and the people of India's southern and western States reaches back several millennia and significantly predates even the foundation of the Islamic faith.
- The West Asian region also served as a land trade bridge to Greece, Rome and other early European empires and a flourishing trade in spices, cloth, silk and indigo in exchange for gold and silver is well recorded.
- In a more contemporary historical context, the British colonial era saw the advent of even a loose common monetary system with the rupee serving as legal tender in several Gulf States till the middle of the 20th century.
- It was also the discovery and subsequent commercial exploitation of oil in the Gulf region during the colonial era that started to alter the balance of trade flows between India and the countries in the region.

- Present Status 2 Today, the countries of the West Asian region collectively account for well over a sixth of India's total bilateral merchandise trade and contribute about three-fifths of India's crude oil supplies.
- The region is also a major provider of jobs and economic opportunities to Indian workers, professionals and entrepreneurs and houses about 89 lakh Indians.
- These non- resident Indians (NRIs) annually send home about \$40 billion, and account for more than 55% of the country's total remittance in ows.
- Investments from sovereign wealth funds and other large investors from the GCC have also climbed steadily in recent years and India, which earlier this year signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE, is looking to significantly boost trade ties with the region by negotiating more such trade and investment pacts.
- Oil and Gas Trade out of India's total imports of crude oil, the share of the Gulf countries has remained fairly steady at about 60% over the last 15 years.
- In 2020 -21, the top oil exporter to India was Iraq, with a share of more than 22%, followed by Saudi Arabia — about 18%. The UAE, Kuwait and Oman were other Gulf countries among the top 10 suppliers of crude oil to India in the fiscal year ended March 2021.
- Non-Oil Trade Over the five years from 2017 through 2021, Iran and the GCC member states accounted for a 15.3% share of India's cumulative two -way merchandise trade of \$3.98 trillion in that period.
- Of the \$609 billion of exports and imports that the seven countries accounted for in this period, the UAE contributed the lion's share of \$277.4 billion, or almost 7%, making it one of India's largest trading partners.
- Saudi Arabia was next with \$153 billion.
- The region is today a key market for several Indian commodities ranging from tea and basmati rice to electrical equipment, apparel, and machinery.
- Reflecting this importance, India and the UAE signed the CEPA in February with the aim of increasing the total value of bilateral trade in goods to more than \$100 billion in five years and getting services trade to exceed \$15 billion over the same period.
- The trade pact will provide Indian exporters preferential market access on '99% of the country's exports to the UAE in value terms, particularly from labour intensive sectors such as gems and jewellery, textiles, leather, footwear, sports goods, plastics,

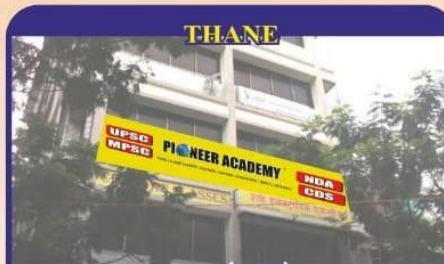
furniture, agricultural and wood products, engineering products, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and automobiles.

- With the region serving as a key hub to markets in Africa, India is keen to gain tariff free access for its exports not just to the Gulf region but also to countries across Africa.
- Overseas Jobs for Indians the West Asian region provides among the largest number of overseas jobs for Indians, with nearly 89 lakh Indians living and working in the Gulf economies.
- The UAE accounts for the largest share of NRIs in the region and is home to more than 34 lakh Indians.
- Saudi Arabia with close to 26 lakh and Kuwait with over 10 lakh are the other large providers of jobs and economic opportunities for Indians.
- The remittances that they sent back home in 2017, according to Pew Research data, accounted for about 55% of the total \$68.97 billion in inward remittances received in India from across the world that year.
- Exact dates of African cheetahs' arrival in India not confirmed the governments of South Africa and Namibia are in the process of fine-tuning the move and a decision would be made later.
- African cheetahs were expected to arrive in India in August this year, after several delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- South Africa and Namibia are vaccinating the cheetahs to prevent any pathogens from spreading.
- They are also following the protocols of international translocation as underlined in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

PIONEER ACADEMY



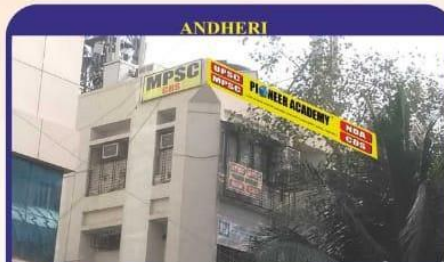
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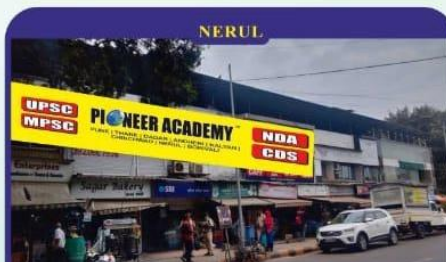
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