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MOST  
IMPORTANT  
TOPICS OF  
MARCH 2024

# CLAT EXPRESS

MONTHLY GK MAGAZINE FOR LAW ENTRANCES BY LAW PREP TUTORIAL

— One —  
**NATION**



— One —  
**ELECTION**



# MEET UP WITH CLAT TOPPERS

📍 JAIPUR





# IMPORTANT TOPICS of March 2024

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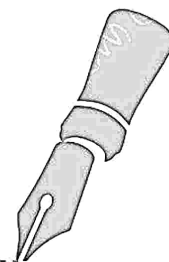
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# Important **Note** for the Readers



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## How to use the magazine

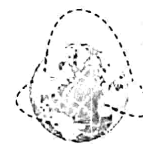
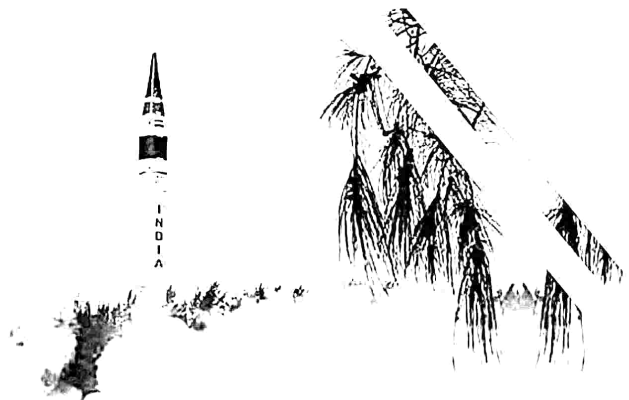
The magazine consists of topics that hold relevance and importance in relation to CLAT. Each topic has following parts:

1. **News:** This section ensures that the readers know what part of the topic has made it to the headlines of a newspaper
2. **Explained:** This section helps the reader to know the context of the topic. Explanation that will help the reader understand about the topic is the motive of this section of the magazine. Before cramming the facts and details about the topic it is essential that you understand the topic. A little detail has never hurt anybody.
3. **Way to marks:** This section of the topic is your gateway to marks that will help you fetch selection in the CLAT. You memorize the points in such a way that they are backed by the understanding of each, and every word written in this section. You can always investigate the internet or take help from teacher for the points you do not understand. Blind rote-learning of the points is not advisable for an unpredictable exam such as CLAT.
4. **Pepper it with:** This section contains those topics which are related to the main topic discussed throughout the page. A little information on the periphery helps you answer those questions that are not part of the daily news but have crawled into the exam paper to fetch you another mark. Topics that are on the side of the main news have often helped in gaining that last mark which eventually puts you into the final selection list of the CLAT.
5. **Practice Questions:** This section has a set of questions to help you gauge your understanding of the topic. You should try and solve the questions once you have thoroughly done the topic. On some days, start with the questions to test yourself for that one situation in the CLAT when you know nothing about the topic, but you will have to guess the answers. On a side note, some questions might come across to you as a surprise but then when has the CLAT main exam not thrown us off our seats!

Happy Learning!

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March 2024

**TOPIC**  
in **NEWS**  
o o o o o o

# Agni 5 test for Multiple Re-entry Technology

## Why in News?

India has recently made a significant advancement in missile technology, joining the select group of nations possessing Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) capabilities.

### Explained:

A series of fire missiles is a family of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) developed by India. These missiles are designed to be long-range and capable of carrying nuclear weapons. The most advanced, the Agni-V, has an official range of 5,000 km. Recently, Agni-V is performed a trial with MIRV (Multiple Independently Re-entry Vehicle) technology in India. The basic MIRV consists of multiple weapons carried by a single missile. Each weapon is mounted on its own re-entrant vehicle and can be programmed to hit a different target. This ability greatly increases the destructive power of a single missile, making it a powerful deterrent. With the successful test of MIRV, India will join a select group of countries with this advanced technology.

### Way to marks:

- This milestone was achieved through the successful flight test named Mission Divyastra, conducted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It marked the first time the indigenously developed Agni-5 missile integrated MIRV technology.

#### About MIRV technology

- MIRV technology originated in the United States, with the deployment of a MIRVed Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) in 1970.
- MIRV allows a single missile to carry multiple warheads (3-4), each capable of targeting different locations independently.
- MIRVs can be launched from both land-based platforms and sea-based platforms, such as submarines, expanding their operational flexibility and range.



#### DRDO tests Agni-5 missile with MIRV tech

- Operational range: 5,000km
- Height: 17m

#### What is MIRV tech?


- MIRV stands for Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles
- This technology allows a single missile to carry multiple warheads, each capable of being aimed at a different target.

#### India joins select group of nations

- Only the US, UK, Russia, France and China have MIRV technology
- Development and deployment of MIRV tech is a closely guarded subject

Source: Times of India

- **Agni-5 Missile**
  - Agni is an Inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) developed indigenously by the DRDO.
  - It is capable of carrying nuclear warheads and has a target range of more than 5,000 km. It uses a three-stage solid-fuelled engine.
- **Missiles in Agni Family:**
  - **Agni I:** Short-range ballistic missile (Range more than 700 km).
  - **Agni II:** Medium-range ballistic missile (Range more than 2000 to 3500 km).
  - **Agni III:** Intermediate-range ballistic missile (Range more than 3000 km).
  - **Agni IV:** Intermediate-range ballistic missile (Range more than 3500 km).
  - **Agni-P (Agni Prime):** A nuclear-capable, two-stage canisterised solid propellant ballistic missile (Range 1,000 to 2,000 km).
- The next upgrade of the Agni missile, Agni-6, is expected to be a full-fledged intercontinental ballistic missile with a range well over 7,000 km.



**SURFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILES**

**Short Range Ballistic Missiles**

Prithvi-I	150 km	1,000 kg
Prithvi-II	250 km	500 kg
Prithvi-III	350 km	1,000 kg
Dhanush	350 km	1,000 kg
Agni-I	700 km	1,000 kg
Shaurya	700 km	1,000 kg
Prahaar	150 km	200 kg


**Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs)**

Agni-II	2,000 km	1,000 kg
Agni-III	3,000 km	2,000-2,500 kg
Agni-IV	4,000 km	1,000 kg

**Intercontinental Range Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)**

Agni-V	5,000 km	1,500 kg ((3-10 MIRV))
Agni-VI (Under Development)	6,000 km	1,000 kg (10 MIRV)
Surva (Under Development)	10,000 km	1,000 kg (10 MIRV)

## FORMIDABLE ARSENAL



**SUBMARINE LAUNCHED BALLISTIC MISSILES**

K-15 Sagarika (B-05)	750 km	500 kg
K-4	3,000 km	1,000 kg

**SHORT RANGE SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES**

Trishul	9 km	5 kg
Akash	30 km	50 kg
Maltri	15 km	10 kg
Barak-8	70 km	60 kg

**ANTI-TANK GUIDED MISSILES**

Nag Anti-tank guided missile

7 km	8 kg
------	------

Helina (Helicopter launched Nag missile)

7 km	8 kg
------	------

**ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILES**

Prithvi Air Defence Missile (Exo-atmospheric at 50-80 km altitude)

2,000 km	DM (Proximity)
----------	----------------

Advanced Air Defence Missile (Endo-atmospheric at 15-30 km altitude)

150-200 km	DM (Hit-to-kill)
------------	------------------

Prithvi Defence Vehicle (Exo-atmospheric at more than 120 km altitude)

2,000-3,000 km	DM (Proximity)
----------------	----------------

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magazine.





**About DRDO**

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is a defense research and development (R&D) agency under the Ministry of Defence in India. DRDO's mission is to achieve self-reliance in critical defense technologies and systems, while equipping the armed forces with state-of-the-art weapon systems and equipment
- Current Minister of Defence is Mr. Rajnath Singh.

**About Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme :**

- The Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) was a program by the Indian government to develop a range of missiles. It was conceived by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the Director of the Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL) at the time, and launched in 1982–83. The program ended in 2008.

**Related news :**

Brahmos missile:

- The BrahMos missile, an Indo-Russian joint venture, has a range of 290 km and is the fastest cruise missile in the world with a top speed of Mach 2.8 (nearly three times the speed of sound).
  - BrahMos is named for the rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva.
  - **India Philippines defence deal :** This venture is part of a monumental defence export contract valued at USD 375 million, making it the largest such agreement India has ever entered into with a foreign nation. The first set of BrahMos missile systems is anticipated to reach the Philippines by the end of March 2024.

**Pepper it With**

- India and Russia cooperation in weapons , MTCR treaty and India.

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**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What does MIRV stand for?  
(a) Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicle      (b) Multiple Inertial Re-entry Vehicle  
(c) Multiple Independently Retargetable Vehicle      (d) Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle
2. Who developed the Agni missile series?  
(a) NASA      (b) ISRO      (c) DRDO      (d) ESA
3. Which Agni missile has the longest range?  
(a) Agni-I      (b) Agni-II      (c) Agni-III      (d) Agni-V
4. What is the speed of BrahMos missile?  
(a) Mach 1.5      (b) Mach 2.0      (c) Mach 2.8      (d) Mach 3.5
5. When was the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme launched?  
(a) 1970      (b) 1982-83      (c) 1990      (d) 2008
6. Who conceived the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme?  
(a) Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam      (b) Dr. Homi Bhabha  
(c) Dr. Vikram Sarabhai      (d) Dr. C.V. Raman
7. Which country recently entered into a defence deal with India for BrahMos missiles?  
(a) Japan      (b) Sri Lanka      (c) Philippines      (d) Australia
8. What is the full form of DRDO?  
(a) Defence Research and Development Organisation  
(b) Department of Research and Defence Operations  
(c) Defence Research and Deployment Organisation  
(d) Defence and Research Development Organisation
9. What is the maximum range of Agni-IV missile?  
(a) 2,500 km      (b) 3,000 km      (c) 3,500 km      (d) 6,000 km
10. Which missile has the capability to carry nuclear warheads?  
(a) BrahMos      (b) Agni-P      (c) Agni-II      (d) Agni-III
11. Which Agni missile is classified as an Intermediate-range ballistic missile?  
(a) Agni-I      (b) Agni-II      (c) Agni-III      (d) Agni-V

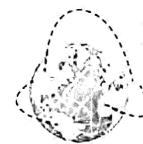


**Current Affairs March 2024**

12. Bhramos is a partnership between India and which country?  
(a) Russia (b) USA (c) France (d) UK
13. Which missile marks India's advancement in MIRV technology?  
(a) Agni-I (b) Agni-III (c) Agni-V (d) Agni-Prime
14. Who is the current Minister of Defence in India?  
(a) Narendra Modi (b) Amit Shah (c) Rajnath Singh (d) Sushma Swaraj
15. What is the official range of Agni-V missile?  
(a) 3,000 km (b) 4,000 km (c) 5,000 km (d) 6,000 km
16. What does BrahMos missile signify in terms of speed?  
(a) It's the slowest cruise missile (b) It's supersonic  
(c) It's subsonic (d) It's hypersonic
17. Which missile is named after the rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva?  
(a) Agni (b) Prithvi (c) BrahMos (d) Shaurya
18. What is the maximum range of Agni-I missile?  
(a) 500 km (b) 700 km (c) 1,000 km (d) 1,500 km
19. Which missile is expected to be a full-fledged intercontinental ballistic missile with a range over 7,000 km?  
(a) Agni-V (b) Agni-Prime (c) Agni-IV (d) Agni-VI
20. How many warheads can a MIRV missile carry?  
(a) 1 (b) 2 (c) 3 (d) 4

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March 2024

**TOPIC**  
in **NEWS**  
.....

## CAA rules notified by GOI

### Why in News?

Union Home Minister Amit Shah notified the rules of the Citizenship Amendment Act passed in 2019.

#### Explained:

- The Citizenship Act, 1955, establishes the legal framework for acquiring Indian citizenship. This includes various stages of citizenship, such as birth, descent, registration and naturalization in India. Normally, it requires 12 years of residence in India, but the Act allows the government to make an exception. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), enacted in 2019, amends the 1955 Act. It allows Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan to enter India illegally before 2014. The law states that these minorities face religious persecution in their home country.
- The CAA has been criticized for excluding Muslims and potentially disenfranchising many legally resident undocumented immigrants. A case in point is the proposed census of Indian citizens, the National Register of Citizens (NRC). While not directly related to the CAA, some fear that the NRC could be used to identify illegal immigrants and could be deported, as the CAA provides a pathway to citizenship for certain excluded groups. The protests were motivated by concerns of possible discrimination and disenfranchisement over the implementation of CAA and NRC.

#### Way to marks:

- Through Citizenship Amendment Act, the Central government can grant citizenship to Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Christian and Parsi refugees, who came to India before December, 31 2014, from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- "The process of obtaining Indian citizenship through naturalization will be expedited for them. Unlike other foreigners, they are eligible to get citizenship after a total residency period of six (1+5) years the other foreigners, this period is twelve (1+11) years.

#### **The Citizenship Act, 1955**

- The Citizenship Act, 1955 provides various ways in which citizenship may be acquired.
- It provides for citizenship by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation and by incorporation of the territory into India.
- In addition, it regulates the registration of Overseas Citizen of India Cardholders (OCIs) and their rights.
- An OCI is entitled to some benefits such as a multiple-entry, multipurpose lifelong visa to visit India.



- The act has been amended six times in 1986, 1992, 2003, 2005, 2015 and 2019.

#### **Constitutional provisions related to Citizenship :**

- Citizenship is listed in the Union List under the Constitution and thus is under the exclusive jurisdiction of Parliament.
- The Constitution does not define the term 'citizen' but details of various categories of persons who are entitled to citizenship are given in Part 2 (Articles 5 to 11).
- Unlike other provisions of the Constitution, which came into being on January 26, 1950, these articles were enforced on November 26, 1949 itself, when the Constitution was adopted.

#### **The Rules:**

- The rules states that applicants will have to provide six types of documents and also specify the date of entry into India.
- The list of documents includes birth certificates, tenancy records, identity papers, any licence, or educational certificate issued by the government authority in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT 2019	Notified CAA Rules
<p align="center"><b>NO REQUIREMENT OF VALID PASSPORT</b></p> <p>The rules have done away with the earlier mandatory requirement of passport of Pakistan, Bangladesh or Afghanistan and a residential permit issued by India.</p> <p>Any document that shows that either of the parents or grandparents or great-grandparents of the applicant is or had been a citizen of one of the three countries.</p>	
<p align="center"><b>NO REQUIREMENT OF VISA</b></p> <p>The rules have removed the mandatory requirement of Visa and have provided that even a certificate issued by an elected member of a local body would be sufficient.</p>	
<p align="center"><b>NO REQUIREMENT OF LANGUAGE CERTIFICATE</b></p> <p>The rules have done away with the requirement of producing a certificate from an educational institution that the applicant knows one of the languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. According to the new rules, just a declaration to that effect and being able to speak the language will be enough.</p>	
<p align="center"><b>PROOF OF ENTRY INTO INDIA BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2014</b></p> <p>The rules provide that any one of the listed 20 documents provided in the rules would be admissible.</p>	
<p align="center"><b>LIMITED POWERS OF STATE GOVERNMENTS</b></p> <p>The rules tweak the process of grant of citizenship in a manner that state governments would have limited participation in the process. The new rules provide for an empowered committee to be instituted by the Centre for receiving and processing the applications</p>	

**About CAA**

- The CAA provides citizenship on the basis of religion to six undocumented non-Muslim communities (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India on or before 31st December, 2014.
- It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920.
  - The two Acts specify punishment for entering the country illegally and staying here on expired visas and permits.

**Exemption**

- CAA law does not imply on the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura as included in Sixth Schedule of the Constitution including the tribal areas of Karbi Anglong in Assam, Garo Hills in Meghalaya, Chakma district in Mizoram, and Tribal areas district in Tripura.

**Assam Accord :**

- It was a tripartite accord signed between the Government of India, State Government of Assam and the leaders of the Assam Movement in 1985.
- The signing of the Accord led to the conclusion of a six-year agitation that was launched by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) in 1979, demanding the identification and deportation of illegal immigrants from Assam to Bangladesh.
- It sets a cut-off of midnight of 24th March 1971, for the detection of illegal foreigners in Assam.
- However, the demand was for detection and deportation of migrants who had illegally entered Assam after 1951.

**Clause 6 of the Accord :**

- It says that constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.
- The committee chaired by Biplab Kumar Sarma was constituted to define 'Assamese People' and institute safeguards for them.

**About NRC:**

- The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is an effort by the Indian government to identify and deport unlawful immigrants in accordance with Section 14A of the Citizenship Act of 1955, as amended by the Foreigners Act of 1946.

The National Register of Citizens, known as NRC, is a list in Assam aimed at identifying legitimate residents and removing illegal migrants, particularly from neighboring Bangladesh.

*Related News*

National Population Register (NPR) :

- NPR is a database containing a list of all usual residents of the country.
  - A usual resident for the purposes of NPR is a person who has resided in a place for six months or more and intends to reside there for another six months or more.
- Its objective is to have a comprehensive identity database of people residing in the country.
- It is generated through house-to-house enumeration during the “house-listing” phase of the Census.
- The NPR was first collected in 2010 and then updated in 2015.

**Pepper it With**

- Other ways of acquiring Citizenship , concept of dual Citizenship.

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**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

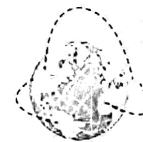
1. Who notified the rules of the Citizenship Amendment Act?  
(a) Narendra Modi      (b) Amit Shah      (c) Rajnath Singh      (d) Nirmala Sitharaman
2. The Citizenship Amendment Act grants citizenship to refugees from which countries?  
(a) India, Nepal, Bhutan      (b) Sri Lanka, Maldives, Myanmar  
(c) Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan      (d) China, Russia, Iran
3. How many years of residency are required for citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act?  
(a) 5 years      (b) 6 years      (c) 11 years      (d) 12 years
4. Which communities are eligible for citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act?  
(a) Muslims      (b) Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs  
(c) Buddhists, Muslim, Parsis      (d) Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists
5. Which accord sets a cut-off date for the detection of illegal foreigners in Assam?  
(a) Mumbai Accord      (b) Delhi Accord      (c) Assam Accord      (d) Chennai Accord
6. What does Clause 6 of the Assam Accord focus on?  
(a) Economic development      (b) Cultural and social identity  
(c) Environmental conservation      (d) Infrastructure development
7. What is the objective of the National Register of Citizens (NRC)?  
(a) Economic reform      (b) Identifying and deporting unlawful immigrants  
(c) Promoting tourism      (d) Environmental protection
8. When was the Citizenship Act of 1955 first amended?  
(a) 1956      (b) 1970      (c) 1986      (d) 1995
9. What does NPR stand for?  
(a) National Policy on Rehabilitation      (b) National Primary Registration  
(c) National Population Register      (d) National Policy on Resources
10. Who is exempted from the Citizenship Amendment Act in the tribal areas of Assam?  
(a) Hindus      (b) Muslims      (c) Tribal communities      (d) Buddhists
11. Which religious group is excluded from the benefits of the Citizenship Amendment Act?  
(a) Christians      (b) Muslims      (c) Sikhs      (d) Parsis

Current Affairs **March 2024**

12. Which document is required for applicants under the Citizenship Amendment Act?  
(a) Marriage certificate (b) Birth certificate (c) Driving license (d) Passport
13. When must refugees have entered India to be eligible for citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act?  
(a) Before December 31, 2004 (b) Before December 31, 2010  
(c) Before December 31, 2014 (d) Before December 31, 2018
14. What is the period of residency required for citizenship for other foreigners?  
(a) 5 years (b) 6 years (c) 11 years (d) 12 years
15. Which government agency handles the processing of applications under the Citizenship Amendment Act?  
(a) Election Commission (b) Ministry of External Affairs  
(c) Ministry of Home Affairs (d) Ministry of Finance
16. How many documents are required for applicants under the Citizenship Amendment Act?  
(a) Four (b) Five (c) Six (d) Seven
17. What is the primary concern regarding the National Register of Citizens (NRC)?  
(a) Identifying citizens (b) Environmental conservation  
(c) Economic development (d) Identifying illegal immigrants
18. Which Indian state is not covered by the Citizenship Amendment Act?  
(a) Assam (b) Kerala (c) Gujarat (d) Rajasthan
19. What is the base cut-off date for identifying foreigners in Assam under the Assam Accord?  
(a) December 31, 1971 (b) March 24, 1971 (c) January 26, 1950 (d) November 26, 1949
20. What is the objective of the National Population Register (NPR)?  
(a) To promote tourism (b) To identify citizens  
(c) To maintain healthcare records (d) To have a comprehensive identity database



# Launching of Coal Logistics Plan & Policy



March 2024

**TOPIC**  
in **NEWS**  
.....

## Coal logistics Plan and Policy

### Why in News?

India has taken a groundbreaking step in its coal sector with the unveiling of the "Coal Logistics Plan and Policy," a transformative initiative aimed at modernising coal transportation.

#### Explained:

Coal logistics has long been a persistent issue in India, particularly during the summer months when power plants face shortages of coal amid rising electricity demand. The coal sector has one major issue which is related with the supply of coal to the power plants. The lack of supply forces the government to buy the coal from other countries which further escalates the cost.

The Coal Logistics Plan and Policy aims to enhance coal logistics by making it more affordable, efficient, and environmentally friendly. It encompasses various aspects such as storage, loading, unloading, and delivery of coal to power plants, steel mills, cement factories, and washeries.

#### Way to marks:

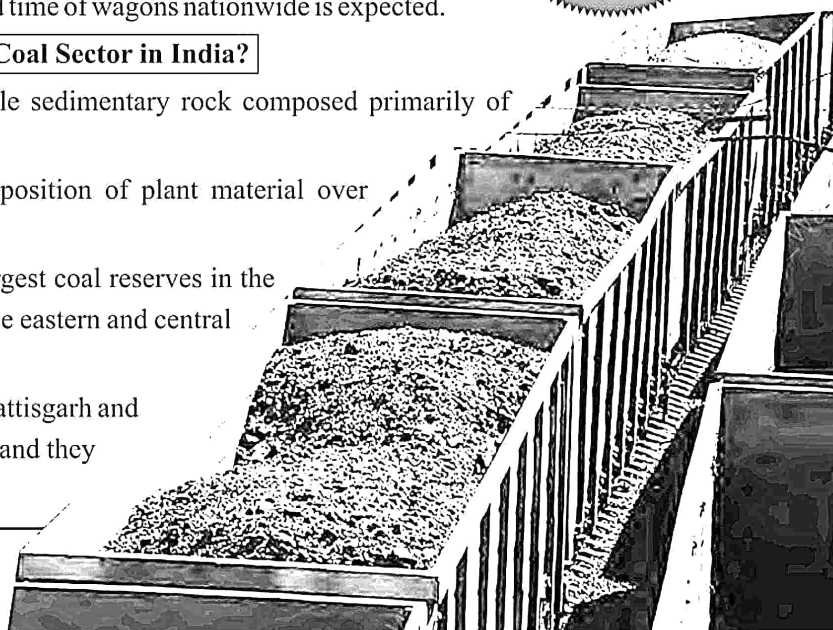
- It proposes a strategic shift towards a railway-based system in First Mile Connectivity (FMC) projects, aiming for a 14% reduction in rail logistic costs, and an annual cost-saving of Rs 21,000 Crore.
- **Expected Outcomes:** It is expected to minimise air pollution, alleviate traffic congestion, and reduce carbon emissions by approximately 100,000 tonnes per annum.
- Moreover, a 10% saving in the average turnaround time of wagons nationwide is expected.

#### What is the Status of the Coal Sector in India?

- **Coal:** Coal is a naturally occurring, combustible sedimentary rock composed primarily of carbon, along with hydrocarbons.
- It forms through the accumulation and decomposition of plant material over millions of years.
- **Coal Reserves in India:** India has the fourth largest coal reserves in the world and its coal reserves are concentrated in the eastern and central parts of the country.
- The major coal-producing states are Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, along with parts of Madhya Pradesh, and they

India's first  
coal logistics  
policy was  
launched in  
the year 2022

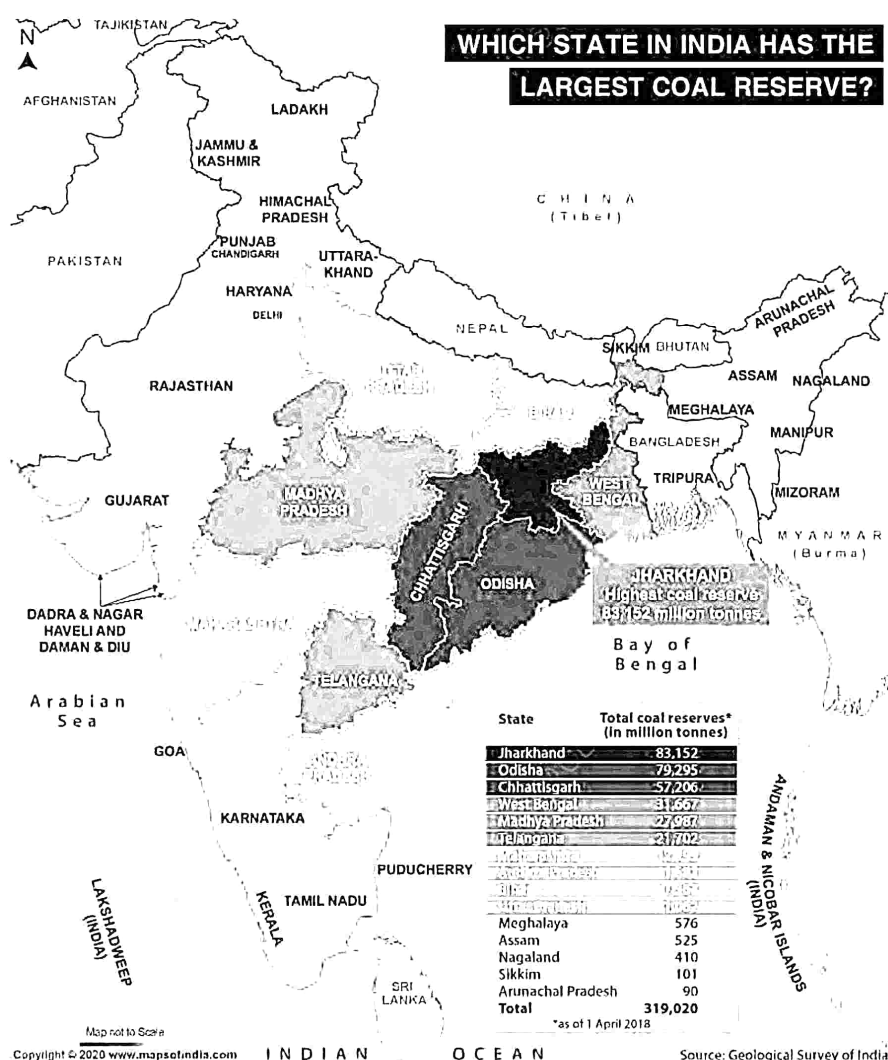
Shri Prahlad  
Joshi is currently  
the Minister of  
Coal and Mines  
in India.



account for 75% of domestic raw coal dispatches in India.

### Types of Coal and Clusters in India:

- **Anthracite:** With a carbon content ranging from 80% to 95%, it is present in limited quantities primarily in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Bituminous coal:** Containing between 60% to 80% carbon, it is predominantly found in regions such as Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Lignite:** It is characterised by its carbon content of 40% to 55% and high moisture levels, and is primarily found in areas including Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Jammu & Kashmir.
- **Peat:** With a carbon content below 40%, it represents the earliest stage of the transformation from organic matter,



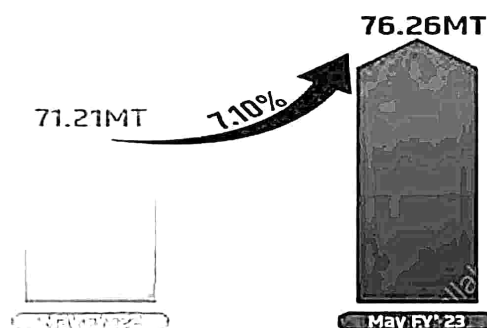
**Significance of Coal for India:**

- Coal is the most important and abundant fossil fuel in India. It accounts for 55% of the country's energy needs.
- The country's industrial heritage was built upon indigenous coal. Currently, 70% of India's power demand is met by thermal power plants, which are mostly powered by coal.
- Coal Imports in India: Present import policy allows for the unrestricted import of coal under Open General License.
- Consumers, including the steel, power, and cement sectors, as well as coal traders, can import coal based on their commercial requirements.
- Steel sector primarily imports coking coal to supplement domestic availability and improve quality.
- Other sectors like power and cement, along with coal traders, import non-coking coal to meet their respective needs.

Coal Production Goes up to 76.26 Million Tonne in May 2023

**Extra Shots**

Currently, India's coking coal imports surge to a 5 year high and the the major exporters to India is Australia, which dominates the list with 60% of India's imports. USA and Russia are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> position respectively.


**Coal Production Growth**  
 May '23 as compared to May '22


Source: pib.gov.in

**Adani case:** Adani's Carmichael coal mine project in Queensland is a significant global investment in coal, prompting discussions on its pros and cons.

- In August 2010 Adani Mining bought Linc Energy's Galilee basin coal tenement in Queensland for \$A500 million in cash plus a \$2 per tonne royalty (indexed to the Consumer Price Index) for the first twenty years of coal production. The company refers to the project as the Carmichael Coal Project. According to Linc, the Galilee tenement an indicated resource of 500 million tonnes and a further 7.3 billion tonnes as an inferred resources. The company claims that the "tenement is capable of producing up to 60 million tonnes of coal per year once fully operational."

### About Coal India limited

- Coal India Ltd (CIL) is a public sector undertaking that is the largest coal producer and supplier in India.
- It operates under the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, of 1973, which gives it a monopoly over coal mining and distribution in the country.

CIL which was formed in year 1975 was a fully government-owned entity until its disinvestment in 2010. Currently, the government holds a majority shareholding with a share percentage of 67%.

### Government Efforts :

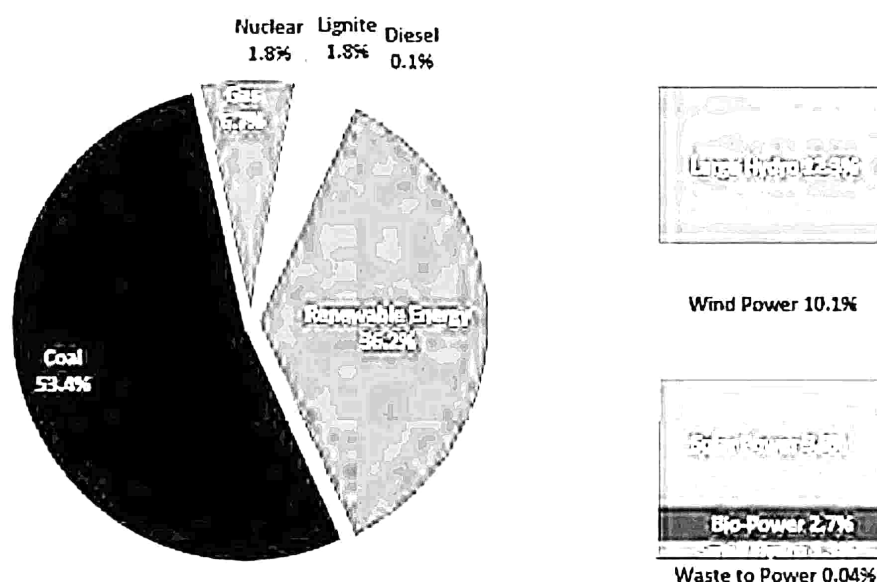
The Coking Coal Mission had been launched by the Ministry for enhancement of coking coal production from 45 Million Ton in 2020-21 to 140 MT by 2029-30 which includes 105 MT from CIL.

### Mineral Laws (Amendment) Act, 2020:

Amendment to provide for allocation of coal blocks for composite Prospecting Licence-cum-Mining Lease ("PL-cum-ML") to help in increasing the available inventory of coal/ lignite blocks for auction.

## India - Cumulative Installed Power Capacity Mix (%)

Renewables (including Large Hydro) comprise ~36.2% of India's total installed capacity, with solar accounting for ~9.8%. Among renewables, solar accounts for ~27.2% of the installed capacity



Data from CEA, MNRE, Mercom via a Solar Project Tracker (Installed Capacity as on 31 Mar 2020)

Source: Mercom India Research

**Related News**

India has signalled a commitment to clean energy with ambitious targets like 500GW of non-fossil, including 450 GW Renewable Energy (RE) capacity addition and 43% RE purchase obligation by 2030.

Net Zero Target:

India has set itself an ambitious long-term goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2070.

In August 2022, India updated its Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) under the Paris Agreement to reflect its aim of achieving 50% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy sources by 2030

**Pepper it With**

- Dedicated freight corridor of Indian Railways , Captive mining of coal.



**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Who is the current Minister of Coal and Mines in India?  
(a) Narendra Modi      (b) Amit Shah      (c) Rajnath Singh      (d) Prahlad Joshi
2. What is the primary objective of the Coal Logistics Plan and Policy?  
(a) Environmental degradation      (b) Traffic congestion  
(c) Affordable, efficient logistics      (d) Power plant construction
3. Which mineral resource forms the basis of India's energy needs?  
(a) Oil      (b) Coal      (c) Natural gas      (d) Uranium
4. What is the percentage of India's power demand met by thermal power plants?  
(a) 50%      (b) 60%      (c) 70%      (d) 80%
5. Which states in India account for 75% of domestic raw coal dispatches?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra      (b) Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand  
(c) Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu      (d) Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab
6. What is the carbon content range of anthracite coal?  
(a) 40%-55%      (b) 60%-80%      (c) 80%-95%      (d) Below 40%
7. Which country dominates India's coking coal imports?  
(a) USA      (b) Russia      (c) Australia      (d) China
8. Under which act does Coal India Ltd operate?  
(a) Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973      (b) Mineral Laws (Amendment) Act, 2020  
(c) Coal Logistics Plan and Policy      (d) Coking Coal Mission
9. What is the primary purpose of the Coking Coal Mission?  
(a) Reducing traffic congestion      (b) Enhancing coal logistics  
(c) Increasing coking coal production      (d) Promoting renewable energy
10. What is the expected reduction in rail logistic costs under the Coal Logistics Plan?  
(a) 5%      (b) 10%      (c) 14%      (d) 20%
11. Which sector primarily imports coking coal in India?  
(a) Power      (b) Cement      (c) Steel      (d) Automotive

Current Affairs **March 2024**

12. What is the major source of India's coal reserves?  
(a) Northern regions (b) Southern regions  
(c) Eastern and central parts (d) Western regions
13. What is the primary aim of the Mineral Laws (Amendment) Act, 2020?  
(a) Enhancing coal logistics (b) Increasing coal imports  
(c) Allocating coal blocks for mining (d) Promoting renewable energy
14. Which type of coal is primarily found in regions like Jharkhand and West Bengal?  
(a) Anthracite (b) Bituminous coal (c) Lignite (d) Peat
15. What is the percentage of India's coal reserves in the world?  
(a) First (b) Second (c) Third (d) Fourth
16. What is the primary aim of India's coal import policy?  
(a) Promoting renewable energy (b) Reducing coal consumption  
(c) Meeting commercial requirements (d) Encouraging domestic production
17. Which type of coal has the highest carbon content?  
(a) Lignite (b) Peat (c) Bituminous coal (d) Anthracite
18. What is Indian's renewable energy target for 2030?  
(a) 450 GW (b) 500 GW  
(c) 250 GW (d) 550 GW
19. Which mineral law gives Coal India Ltd a monopoly over coal mining and distribution?  
(a) Coal Logistics Plan and Policy (b) Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973  
(c) Coking Coal Mission (d) Mineral Laws (Amendment) Act, 2020
20. What is the primary significance of coal for India?  
(a) Economic development (b) Environmental conservation  
(c) Social welfare (d) Political stability



## Election Commissioner resigns

### Why in News?

Recently, Election commissioner Arun Goel gave resignation from his post.

#### Explained:

The Election Commission of India monitors elections across the country, ensuring their fairness and integrity. It consists of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEC) and other Election Commissioners, who are appointed by the President of India. Currently, it was seen that the election commissioner Arun Goel and Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar were having differences between them. The issue came out after both of them came back from West Bengal after reviewing the election preparation for Lok Sabha elections.

The resignation of election commissioner has also thrown a new controversy related with the procedure of election of the new commissioners. It has a question related with the constitution of the committee for selection which earlier included CJI along with PM and Leader of Opposition which was later changed to PM along with Leader of Opposition and Cabinet minister. This has lead to a government majority in the game of selection leading to controversy.

#### Way to marks:

#### Constitutional Provisions

- Part XV (Article 324-329) of the Indian Constitution: It deals with elections and establishes a commission for these matters.
- **Article 324:** Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission.
- **Article 325:** No person to be ineligible for inclusion in, or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex.
- **Article 326:** Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be based on adult suffrage.
- **Article 327:** Power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to Legislatures.
- **Article 328:** Power of Legislature of a State to make provision with respect to elections to such Legislature.
- **Article 329:** Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters

#### Composition of the Election Commission:

- The election commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and a such number of other election commissioners, if any, as the President may from time to time fix.



- Appointment:

Till the end of 2023, Election Commission was appointed by the President of India on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers headed by the PM. Now a new act has been passed in this regard which is- The CECs and other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023 which replaces the Election Commission (Conditions of service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.

- According to the Act, the CECs and ECs will now be appointed by the President upon the recommendations of a Selection Committee which consists of the PM, a Union Cabinet Minister and the leader of opposition of the largest opposition party in Lok Sabha
  - A Search Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary will propose a panel of names to the Selection Committee.
  - The salary and conditions of service will be equivalent to the Cabinet Secretary. Earlier, it was equivalent to the Supreme Court Judge.
- When any other election commissioner is so appointed the chief election commissioner shall act as the chairman of the election commission.
  - The president may also appoint after consultation with the election commission such regional commissioners as he may consider necessary to assist the election commission.

***Extra Shots***

*Law Commission in its 255th report suggested a collegium to improve appointments, consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Justice of India for the appointment of the Election Commissioners.*

In January 2015, Anoop Baranwal filed a PIL on the ground that the current system for appointing members of the Election Commission of India (ECI) is unconstitutional.

On 23 October 2018, a bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and SK Kaul referred the matter to a five-judge Constitution Bench. On 6 January 2020, the Court tagged a similar petition by Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay to the matter.

After hearing four days of substantial arguments in November 2022, the Constitution Bench decided to change the process for Election Commission appointments in order to secure their independence. The Bench created a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, and the Chief Justice of India. This committee will make recommendations and advise the President on Election Commission appointments until Parliament enacts a separate law on the subject.

**Removal**

- They can resign any time or can also be removed before the expiry of their term.
- The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from his office in the same manner and on same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court. It means, he can be removed by the President on the basis of a resolution

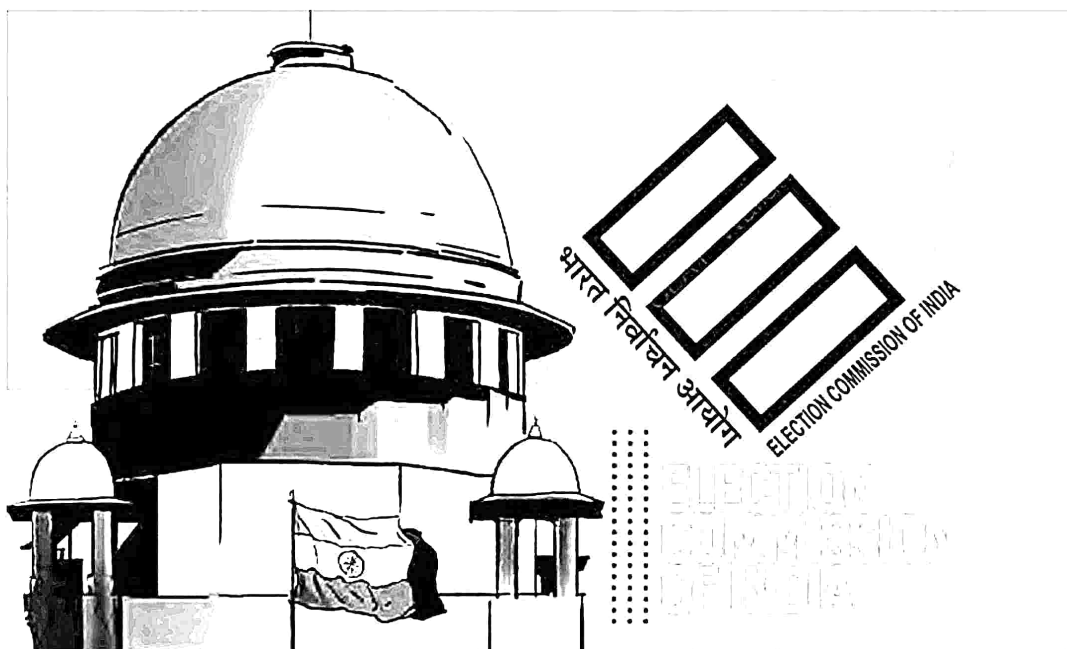
passed to that effect by both the houses of Parliament with special majority, either on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity. Thus, he does not hold office till the pleasure of the President.

- Any other Election Commissioner or a regional commissioner cannot be removed from the office except on the recommendation of the chief Election Commissioner.

- First Election Commissioner of India was Sukumar Sen
- Dr. Nagendra Singh was the 4<sup>th</sup> Election Commissioner of India and has also been the President of the International Court of justice from 1985-1988

#### **Chief Election commissioner and other Election Commissioners**

- Today, the Election Commission has been functioning as a multi-member body consisting of three election commissioners.
  - Originally the commission had only one election commissioner but after the Election Commissioner Amendment Act 1989, it was made a multi-member body.
- The chief election commissioner and the two other election commissioners have equal powers and receive equal salary, allowances and other perquisites, which are similar to those of a judge of the Supreme Court.
- In case of difference of opinion amongst the Chief Election Commissioner and/or two other election commissioners, the matter is decided by the Commission by majority.
- They hold office for a term of six years or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier and can resign at any time or can also be removed before the expiry of their term.



Source: livelaw



**Powers and functions of the Election Commission of India**

- Ensuring that free and fair elections are conducted: The major function of EC is to conduct free and fair elections whether it is the general elections or the legislative assembly elections. The list of elections that are conducted by the election commission include:
  - Lok sabha and Rajya Sabha elections
  - State legislative assembly elections
  - President and Vice-president elections
  - Parliament and state legislature by-elections
- Preparation of electoral rolls:
- Planning the election schedule:
- The Quasi-judicial role: The election commission performs some quasi-judicial functions such as ensuring that the model code of conduct is followed in the area/areas where the elections are being held. The EC also supplies its own inputs on cases during the elections where there is some kind of malpractice involved.
- Cancellation of election: There are certain situations in which the election commission might have to cancel polls like when the voting might be rigged or any other involvement of malpractice. If this happens, then the election commission has to order for a fresh election.
- Giving recognition to new political parties and allotting symbols:
- Disqualification of candidate: The election commission can also disqualify any candidate if the candidate has not filed his or her elections returns to the EC on time. The EC also provides advice to the president to potentially disqualify any MLA or MP if they are found guilty of malpractice.
- Code of conduct: It is the responsibility of the election commission to ensure the code of conduct is followed during the period of elections and no malpractice takes place.

**Limitations**

- The Constitution has not prescribed the qualifications (legal, educational, administrative or judicial) of the members of the Election Commission.
- The Constitution has not specified the term of the members of the Election Commission.
- The Constitution has not debarred the retiring election commissioners from any further appointment by the government.

**State Election Commission**

- The Election commission is not concerned with the elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states. For this, the Constitution of India provides for a separate State Election Commission.
- The Constitution of India vests in the State Election Commission, consisting of a State Election Commissioner, the superintendence, direction, and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of all elections to the Panchayats and the Municipalities (Articles 243K, 243ZA).
- The State Election Commissioner is appointed by the Governor.

ECI and SECs-

- The provisions of Article 243K of the Constitution, which provides for setting up of SECs, are almost identical to those of Article 324 related to the EC. In other words, the SECs enjoy the same status as the EC.

**Initiatives by election commission of India :**

- SVEEP – Systematic voter's education and electoral awareness program.
- C-Vigil – to maintain the integrity of election process.
- Election commission has setup Media Certification and Monitoring Committee  
ECI has tied up with IIT Madras to develop a new technology under the 'Digital India' programme

**Pepper it With**

- Lok Sabha Elections in India , Postal Ballot system and voting system for elderly in India.

To download  
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**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is the constitutional article that vests superintendence, direction, and control of elections in the Election Commission?  
(a) Article 321                      (b) Article 324                      (c) Article 330                      (d) Article 335
2. Who was the first Election Commissioner of India?  
(a) Sukumar Sen                      (b) Nagendra Singh                      (c) M.S. Gill                      (d) T.N. Seshan
3. How many election commissioners form the Election Commission of India today?  
(a) One                      (b) Two                      (c) Three                      (d) Four
4. What is the tenure of office for election commissioners?  
(a) 4 years                      (b) 5 years                      (c) 6 years                      (d) 7 years
5. Who appoints the Election Commissioners in India?  
(a) Prime Minister                      (b) President  
(c) Chief Justice of India                      (d) Leader of the Opposition
6. What is the constitutional article that deals with disqualification of candidates by the Election Commission?  
(a) Article 326                      (b) Article 327                      (c) Article 328                      (d) None of above
7. Which committee recommends the appointment of Election Commissioners under the CECs and other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023?  
(a) Appointment Committee                      (b) Selection Committee  
(c) Nominating Committee                      (d) Advisory Committee
8. What is the constitutional article that empowers Parliament to make provisions with respect to elections to legislatures?  
(a) Article 325                      (b) Article 326                      (c) Article 327                      (d) Article 328
9. What is the primary function of the State Election Commission?  
(a) Conduct Lok Sabha elections  
(b) Conduct elections to the Rajya Sabha  
(c) Conduct elections to panchayats and municipalities  
(d) Conduct state legislative assembly elections
10. Who appoints the State Election Commissioner?  
(a) President                      (b) Prime Minister                      (c) Governor                      (d) Chief Minister

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11. What is the constitutional article that specifies adult suffrage as the basis for elections to the House of the People and Legislative Assemblies?  
(a) Article 323                      (b) Article 324                      (c) Article 325                      (d) Article 326
12. Who acts as the chairman of the Election Commission when other election commissioners are appointed?  
(a) Prime Minister    (b) Chief Election Commissioner  
(c) President    (d) Union Council of Ministers
13. What is the term of office for election commissioners?  
(a) 5 years                      (b) 6 years                      (c) 7 years                      (d) 8 years
14. Who is responsible for the superintendence, direction, and control of elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states?  
(a) Prime Minister    (b) Election Commission  
(c) State Election Commission    (d) President
15. Which constitutional article deals with the power of Parliament to make provisions with respect to elections to legislatures?  
(a) Article 327                      (b) Article 328                      (c) Article 329                      (d) Article 330
16. What is the primary objective of the Election Commission?  
(a) Ensure free and fair elections    (b) Ensure political stability  
(c) Ensure economic development    (d) Ensure social welfare
17. Who heads the Search Committee under the CECs and other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023?  
(a) Prime Minister    (b) Chief Justice of India  
(c) Cabinet Secretary    (d) President
18. What is the constitutional article that bars interference by courts in electoral matters?  
(a) Article 328                      (b) Article 329                      (c) Article 330                      (d) Article 331
19. What is the constitutional article that ensures no person is ineligible for inclusion in electoral rolls on the grounds of religion, race, caste, or sex?  
(a) Article 325                      (b) Article 326                      (c) Article 327                      (d) Article 328
20. Who suggests the collegium for appointments of Election Commissioners, according to the Law Commission's 255th report?  
(a) Prime Minister    (b) Chief Justice of India  
(c) Leader of the Opposition    (d) None of above



## India EFTA Trade Partnership Agreement

### Why in News?

- India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).
- India has been working on a TEPA with EFTA countries comprising Switzerland, Iceland, Norway & Liechtenstein.
- This agreement aims to encourage investments and enhance trade in goods and services between the two parties.

### Explained:

On March 10, 2024, a landmark trade agreement was signed between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). EFTA is a four-member intergovernmental bloc that promotes the economic integration of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. After 15 years of negotiations, this Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) is poised to enhance economic relations. The agreement promises benefits such as tax cuts, trade facilitation and increased markets for businesses on both sides. This means they can deliver jobs, higher trading volumes and stronger investments. TEPA marks a new chapter for India's trade relations and is expected to create a flexible and harmonized supply chain among member countries.

The agreement also provides for a surety to India for an investment of \$100 billion by the four countries which is a huge success for India and its economic growth in the coming phrases as it will enhance the employment generation along with increase in forex reserves of the country.

### Way to marks:

- India has been working on a TEPA with EFTA countries comprising Switzerland, Iceland, Norway & Liechtenstein.
- This agreement aims to encourage investments and enhance trade in goods and services between the two parties.

### Key Highlights of TEPA:

- Legal commitment for promoting target-oriented investment and creation of jobs

### Extra Shots

*India-EU bilateral trade was \$135 billion in the year 2022-23.*

*India-European Union (EU) FTA, officially known as the Broad-Based Trade and Investment Agreement, has been being negotiated since 2007. However, it has not been materialised into a deal due to various outstanding issues between India and the EU.*



- EFTA has committed to promote investments with the aim to:
  - increase the stock of FDI by USD 100 billion in India in the next 15 years, and
  - to facilitate the generation of 1 million direct employment in India, through such investments.
- Coverage:
  - EFTA is offering 92.2% of its tariff lines which covers 99.6% of India's exports.
  - The EFTA's market access offer covers 100% of non-agri products and tariff concession on Processed Agricultural Products (PAP).
  - India is offering 82.7% of its tariff lines which covers 95.3% of EFTA exports of which more than 80% import is Gold.
- Sensitivity related to PLI in sectors such as pharma, medical devices & processed food etc. have been taken while extending offers.
- Inclusion of Services

Services offers from EFTA include better access through digital delivery of Services (Mode 1), commercial presence (Mode 3) and improved commitments and certainty for entry and temporary stay of key personnel (Mode 4).

- TEPA has provisions for Mutual Recognition Agreements in Professional Services like nursing, chartered accountants, architects etc.
- Robust IPR regime

The IPR chapter with Switzerland, which has high standard for IPR, shows India's robust IPR regime.

- India's interests in generic medicines and concerns related to evergreening of patents have been fully address.

India's trade with EFTA <sup>(1)</sup>			
(in million dollars)			
EFTA countries	Exports	Imports	Trade balance
Switzerland	73	5	8
Denmark	0	8	-8
Finland	484	782	-298
Sweden	1,382	19,657	-18,275
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,879</b>	<b>20,452</b>	<b>-18,574</b>

**About European Free Trade Association (EFTA)**

The EFTA is the intergovernmental organisation of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

It was set up in 1960 (by the Stockholm Convention in 1960) by its then seven Member States for the promotion of free trade and economic integration between its members.

The organisation operates in parallel with the European Union (EU), and all four member states participate in the European Single Market and are part of the Schengen Area.

However, they are not a party to the European Union Customs Union.

**Related :**

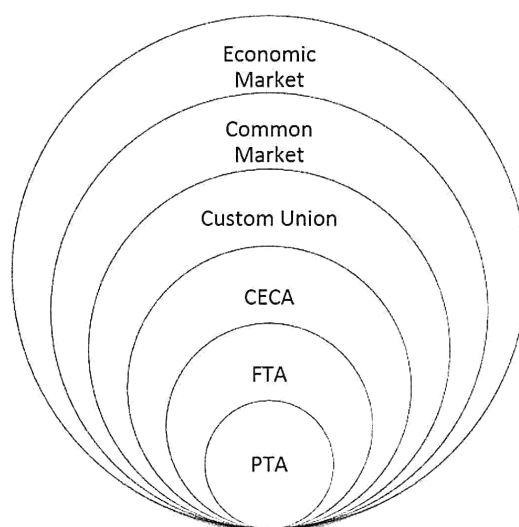
This is India's fourth such agreement since 2014. The previous agreements were signed with Mauritius, the UAE, and Australia.

Foreign Trade Policy 2023:

- Notified by the Central Government in the exercise of powers conferred under section 5 of the Foreign trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.
- Four pillars of the new FTP approach:
  - From incentive to tax remission.
  - Greater trade facilitation through technology
  - Export promotion through collaboration.
  - Focus on emerging areas- E commerce

**What is European Economic Area ( EEA)?**

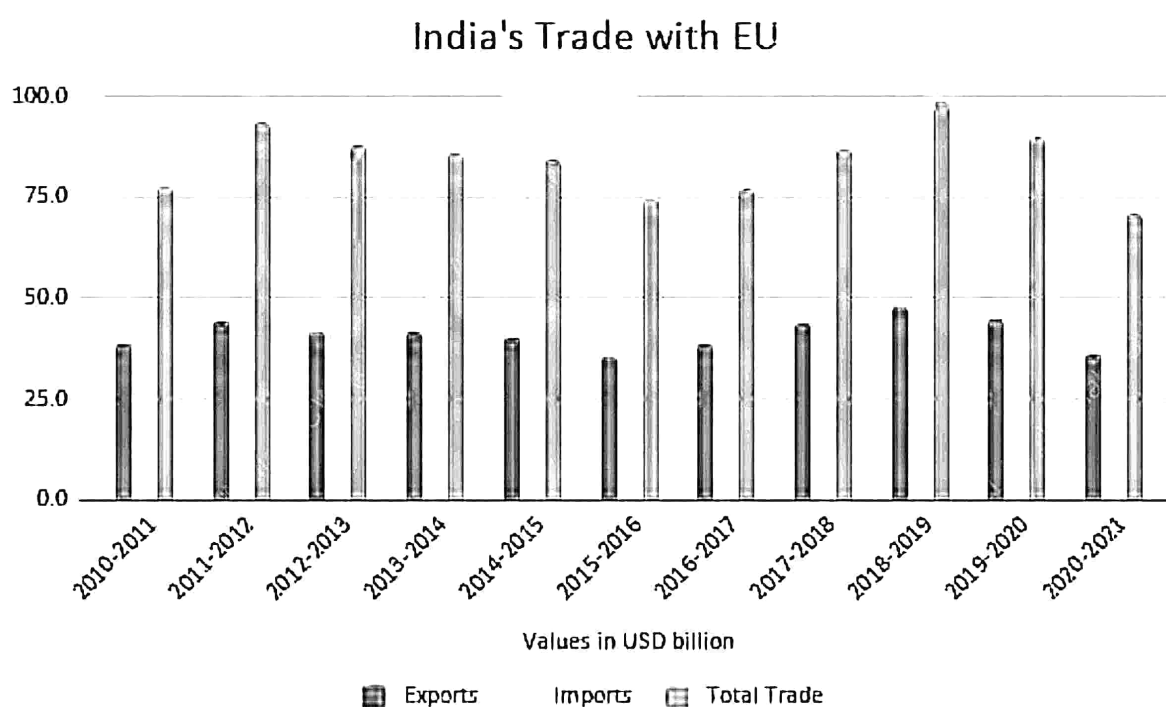
The EEA includes EU countries and also Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. It allows them to be part of the EU 's single market. Switzerland is not an EU or EEA member but is part of the single market.



Source: Wikipedia

**About FTA :**

- FTA is an agreement between the countries or regional blocks to reduce or eliminate trade barriers, through mutual negotiations with a view to enhancing trade.
- It includes goods, services, investment, intellectual property, competition, government procurement and other areas.
- This concept of free trade is the opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism.
- FTAs can be categorized as Preferential Trade Agreement, Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), and Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).





# European Union (EU)



Brussels, Belgium  
Est. 1993



**About:** It is a political and economic union of 27 sovereign European member states. It was created by the **Maastricht Treaty (1993)**.



## Objective:

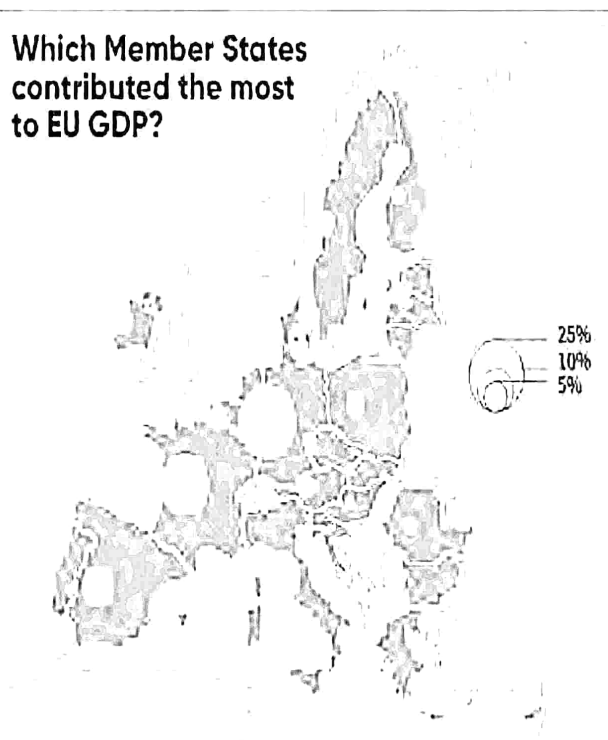
- ❖ To promote peace, follow the EU's values and improve the wellbeing of nations.
- ❖ Establish an internal market
- ❖ Protect and improve the quality of the environment



## Members:

GERMANY		CZECH REPUBLIC	
FRANCE		PORTUGAL	
ITALY		GREECE	
SPAIN		HUNGARY	
NETHERLANDS		SLOVAKIA	
POLAND		LUXEMBOURG	
SWEDEN		BULGARIA	
BELGIUM		CROATIA	
AUSTRIA		LITHUANIA	
IRELAND		SLOVENIA	
DENMARK		LATVIA	
FINLAND		ESTONIA	
ROMANIA		CYPRUS	
MALTA			

**Which Member States contributed the most to EU GDP?**



## Pepper it With

- SAFTA , Most Favoured Nation clause

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is the main objective of the commitment made by EFTA regarding investments in India?  
(a) Increase the stock of FDI by USD 50 billion  
(b) Increase the stock of FDI by USD 100 billion  
(c) Increase the stock of FDI by USD 150 billion  
(d) Increase the stock of FDI by USD 200 billion
2. How many direct employments does EFTA aim to facilitate in India through its investments?  
(a) 500,000                      (b) 1 million                      (c) 1.5 million                      (d) 2 million
3. Which of the following is NOT covered under EFTA's market access offer?  
(a) Non-agri products                      (b) Processed Agricultural Products (PAP)  
(c) Agricultural products                      (d) Gold
4. Which sectors' sensitivity is not related to PLI has been taken into consideration while extending offers?  
(a) Automotive                      (b) Textile  
(c) Pharma, medical devices & processed food                      (d) Construction
5. What do the services offers from EFTA include?  
(a) Better access through traditional methods only  
(b) Better access through physical delivery of Services  
(c) Better access through digital delivery of Services (Mode 1)  
(d) Better access through governmental agreements only
6. Which professional services are covered under the TEPA provisions for Mutual Recognition Agreements?  
(a) Legal services                      (b) Engineering services  
(c) Nursing, chartered accountants, architects, etc. (d) IT services
7. Which country has a high standard for IPR and contributes to India's robust IPR regime?  
(a) Norway                      (b) Iceland                      (c) Liechtenstein                      (d) Switzerland
8. What does EFTA stand for?  
(a) European Free Trade Association                      (b) European Financial Trade Agreement  
(c) European Foreign Trade Association                      (d) European Financial Transaction Agreement
9. When was the EFTA established?  
(a) 1945                      (b) 1950                      (c) 1960                      (d) 1975
10. Which of the following countries is NOT a member of EFTA?  
(a) Iceland                      (b) Sweden                      (c) Norway                      (d) Switzerland

**Current Affairs March 2024**

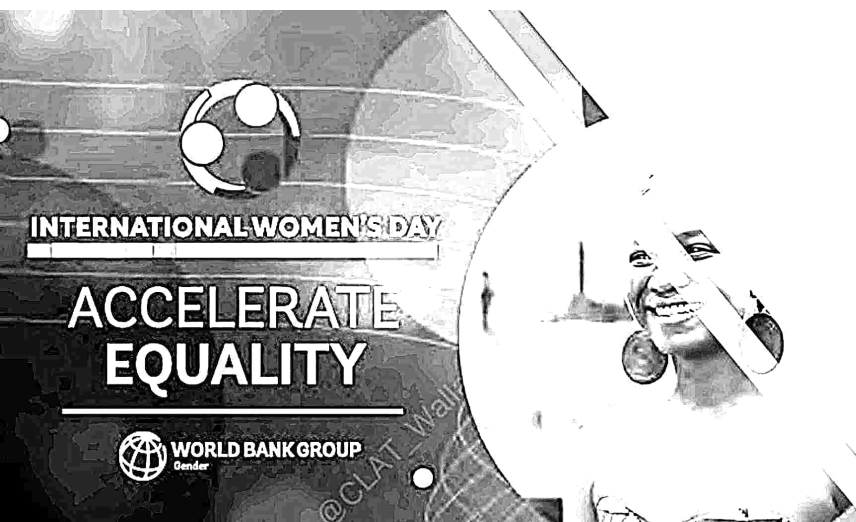
11. Which act empowers the Central Government to notify the Foreign Trade Policy?  
(a) Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999  
(b) Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992  
(c) Customs Act, 1962  
(d) Export-Import Bank of India Act, 1981
12. What are the four pillars of the new FTP approach?  
(a) From incentive to tax addition  
(b) Greater trade obstruction through technology  
(c) Export demotion through isolation  
(d) Focus on emerging areas- E-commerce
13. What is the main objective of an FTA?  
(a) Increase trade barriers  
(b) Enhance trade through reducing or eliminating trade barriers  
(c) Promote economic isolationism  
(d) Focus on regional trade only
14. Which category of FTAs involves the reduction or elimination of tariffs on goods from certain countries?  
(a) Preferential Trade Agreement  
(b) Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement  
(c) Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement  
(d) All of the above
15. What is the opposite of the concept of free trade?  
(a) Trade liberalization  
(b) Trade protectionism  
(c) Trade globalization  
(d) Trade harmonization
16. Which of the following is NOT a member of the European Economic Area (EEA)?  
(a) Iceland  
(b) Liechtenstein  
(c) Norway  
(d) Switzerland
17. What does TEPA stand for?  
(a) Transnational Economic Partnership Agreement  
(b) Transatlantic Economic Partnership Agreement  
(c) Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement  
(d) Textile and Export Promotion Agreement
18. What is the purpose of Mutual Recognition Agreements under TEPA?  
(a) To harmonize professional standards across countries  
(b) To facilitate easier trade in goods  
(c) To streamline customs procedures  
(d) To promote cultural exchange

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19. What do FTAs aim to achieve in terms of trade?
- (a) Increase trade barriers
  - (b) Decrease trade barriers
  - (c) Promote economic isolationism
  - (d) Focus on regional trade only
20. What type of trade barriers do FTAs primarily target?
- (a) Physical barriers
  - (b) Legal barriers
  - (c) Tariff and non-tariff barriers
  - (d) Currency barriers

Scan the code  
to download  
the answer key  
of this month's  
magazine.





## Women's Day and the World Bank Report

### Why in News?

Recently, the World Bank (WB) Group has released a report titled-Women, Business and the Law 2024, presenting in-depth analysis of the challenges obstructing women's entry into the global workforce, hindering their ability to contribute to prosperity for themselves, their families and their communities.

### Explained:

Every year, the World Bank recognizes International Women's Day by highlighting the importance of gender equality for global development. Their views align with the ongoing #AccelerateEquality initiative. This program emphasizes closing the gender gap and empowering women and girls. Recent reports from the World Bank paint a troubling picture. The "Women, Business and the Law 2023" report found that 2.4 billion women of working age do not have equal economic opportunities. Furthermore, by 2022 there will be a sharp decline in gender-related legislative change worldwide.

The World Bank recognizes this as a missed opportunity. Research consistently shows that achieving gender equality leads to significant economic empowerment. When women face fewer barriers, economies are stronger, poverty is reduced, and societies are more cohesive. The World Bank itself is committed to accelerating equality. Launched earlier this year, their 2024-30 Gender Policy Update outlines their plans to support women's leadership and entrepreneurship, and ultimately promote a more inclusive and prosperous world.

### Way to marks:

#### What is Women Business and Law 2024 Report?

- Women, Business and the Law 2024 is the tenth in a series of annual studies measuring the enabling environment for women's economic opportunity in 190 economies.
- This edition of the report updates the Women, Business and the Law 1.0 index of eight indicators, structured around women's interactions with the law as they begin, progress through, and end their careers: Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pension.
- Women, Business and the Law 2.0 sets a new frontier for measuring the environment for women's economic inclusion across three pillars: legal frameworks, measuring laws; supportive frameworks, measuring policy mechanisms to implement laws; expert opinions, shedding light on experts' perception of women's outcomes.
- Women, Business and the Law 2.0 also introduces two new indicators: Safety, measuring frameworks addressing violence against women, and Childcare, measuring frameworks for the availability, affordability and quality of childcare.





### Key highlights of the report

- **Legal Frameworks Index:** Among the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) high-income economies, 11 scored 90 or above, with Italy leading at 95, followed by New Zealand and Portugal with 92.5. Notably, high-income economies have an average score of 75.4.

Upper-middle-income economies follow closely, with an average score of 66.8. The gap in scores between the highest- and lowest scoring economies is most pronounced in high-income economies, with a substantial difference of 75 points.

- **Women Enjoy Fewer Legal Rights than Men:** Women around the world enjoy only 64% of the legal protections that men do, when legal differences involving violence and childcare are taken into account. This is even lower than the previous estimate of 77%.
- **Gap Between Legal Reforms and Actual Outcomes for Women:** 98 economies have enacted legislation mandating equal pay for women for work of equal value.

Yet only 35 economies, fewer than one out of every five, have adopted pay-transparency measures to address the pay gap.



- **Women's Safety:** The greatest weakness is in women's safety, with the global average score being just 36. Women have barely a third of the necessary legal protections against domestic violence, sexual harassment, child marriage, and femicide.

Although 151 economies have laws in place prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace, just 39 have laws prohibiting it in public spaces. This often prevents women from using public transportation to get to work.

- **Childcare:** Only 78 economies, fewer than half, provide some financial or tax support for parents with young children. Only 62 economies—fewer than a third—have quality standards governing childcare services, without which women might think twice about going to work while they have children in their care.

**How did India Perform in Women, Business and the Law 2024 Report?**

- India's rank has marginally improved to 113, with a score of 74.4%. While the country's score has remained constant since 2021, its ranking witnessed a decline from 122 in 2021 to 125 in 2022 and further to 126 in the 2023 index.
- Indian women have just 60% of the legal rights compared to men, slightly below the global average of 64.2%.
- However, India outperformed its South Asian counterparts, where women have only 45.9% of the legal protections enjoyed by men.
- When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement and constraints related to marriage, India got a full score.
- India receives one of its lowest scores in the indicator evaluating laws impacting women's pay.
- When it comes to supportive frameworks, India scored higher than both the global and South Asian averages.

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

- International women's day is celebrated across the world on 8<sup>th</sup> march as a focal point in the women's right movement and focusses on a variety of issues such as the gender equality, reproductive rights, violence and abuse etc.
- The first International women's day was celebrated in the year 1911.
- The UN theme for the 2024 women's day is “invest in women: Accelerate progress.”

**Major Initiatives Taken for Women in India:**

- Beti bachao beti padhao scheme ensures survival, protection and education of girl education. The scheme aims to address the declining sex ratio in some states such as in Haryana.
- **Mission Shakti scheme:**
- Launched for a period of 5 years in 2022. It is an integrated women empowerment programme launched as an umbrella scheme for the safety, security and empowerment of women.

**Components:**

- **Sambal:** for safety and security of women. It consists of one stop center, women helpline, beti bachao beti padhao with a new component of nari Adalat – a form of alternate dispute resolution.
- **Samarthya:** for the empowerment of women it consists of the erstwhile schemes such as ujjwala, swadhar greh etc. In addition, the existing schemes of National creche scheme for children of working mothers and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana yojana under the umbrella scheme of Integrated child services ICDS have now been included in Samarthya. A new component of Gap funding for economic empowerment has also been added in this scheme.

**Maternity benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017:**

- It was originally passed to regulate the employment of women in “certain establishments” for the period before and after childbirth and to provide for maternity benefit and certain other benefits.
- It amended Section 5 of the erstwhile Act to allow 26 weeks of paid leave after childbirth, although only to biological mothers and 12 weeks for the surrogate and adoptive mothers
- Protection of women from sexual harassment (POSH) act, 2013:
- The Act aims to create a safe and conducive work environment for women and provide protection against sexual harassment.

- The PoSH Act defines sexual harassment to include unwelcome acts such as physical contact and sexual advances, a demand or request for sexual favours, making sexually coloured remarks, and any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.
- The act broadened the scope of Vishakha guidelines given by the SC in 1997.
- Vishakha guidelines defined the sexual harassment and imposed three obligations on the institutions of prohibition, prevention and redressal.
- Sukanya samridhi scheme:
- SSY is a savings scheme launched in 2015 under the Government of India's "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" campaign, which aimed to promote the education of girl children.
- Mahila Samman Nidhi: It's a one time small savings scheme of the GOI
- Available for a period of 2 years upto 2025 and will offer deposit facility of upto 2lakh.

#### **Current scenario of Women in India:**

- Education:
- Female literacy rate of India is 66% as compared to 80% in males.
- The GER of women at primary level increased 104% in 2021-22
- The GER at higher secondary level was 58.2 % in 2021-22.
- Women make up only 28% of the workforce in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths).
- The GOI has been ramping up efforts to remove gender inequality by various initiatives such as Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI), Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement Through Nurturing (KIRAN) etc.

#### **Health:**

- Sex ratio (total number of girls per 1000 boys) at birth is 943 as per the census 2011.
- At the adolescent age, more than 60% of the girls are anaemic.
- Maternal mortality rates (death of mother per lakh live births) is 97 in India.
- The GOI has launched many schemes to improve the situation of health among women such as Janani Suraksha Yojana under the National Health Mission, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana etc.
- **Related news:** The constitution (106<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act, 2023, reserves one third of all seats for women in Lok Sabha, State Legislative assemblies and the Legislative Assembly of the NCR Delhi, including those reserved for SCs and STs.

#### **Pepper it With**

- Proposal to increase the age of child marriage for women, International conventions for the Women empowerment in India.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is the focus of the Women Business and Law 2024 Report?  
(a) Women's political participation (b) Women's economic opportunity  
(c) Women's healthcare access (d) Women's educational attainment
2. How many indicators are included in the Women Business and Law 2.0 index?  
(a) Six (b) Seven (c) Eight (d) Nine
3. Which of the following is NOT one of the indicators in the Women Business and Law 2.0 index?  
(a) Mobility (b) Global Warming (c) Entrepreneurship (d) Safety
4. What is the average score of high-income economies in the Legal Frameworks Index?  
(a) 60.4 (b) 75.4 (c) 80.4 (d) 90.4
5. What percentage of legal protections do women enjoy compared to men, according to the report?  
(a) 45% (b) 60% (c) 64% (d) 77%
6. How many economies have enacted legislation mandating equal pay for women for work of equal value?  
(a) 50 (b) 75 (c) 98 (d) 120
7. Which indicator received one of the lowest scores for India in the report?  
(a) Mobility (b) Pay (c) Safety (d) Entrepreneurship
8. What is the theme of the UN for International Women's Day 2024?  
(a) Empower Women, Empower Humanity (b) Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress  
(c) Break the Bias: Equality for All (d) Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow
9. Which scheme aims to ensure the survival, protection, and education of girl children in India?  
(a) Janani Suraksha Yojana (b) Mahila Samman Nidhi  
(c) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (d) Mission Shakti
10. What does the Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment Act, 2013 aim to achieve?  
(a) Regulate the employment of women in certain establishments  
(b) Create a safe work environment and protect against sexual harassment  
(c) Provide maternity benefits to working women  
(d) Ensure financial support for women entrepreneurs
11. What is the sex ratio at birth in India according to the 2011 Census?  
(a) 943 (b) 953 (c) 963 (d) 973

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12. Which initiative aims to provide financial support to parents with young children in India?  
(a) Sambal (b) Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme  
(c) Samarthyam (d) Mission Shakti
13. What percentage of the Indian workforce in STEM fields comprises women?  
(a) 15% (b) 28% (c) 40% (d) 55%
14. What is the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in India?  
(a) 67 (b) 77 (c) 87 (d) 97
15. How many economies provide financial or tax support for parents with young children?  
(a) 50 (b) 78 (c) 100 (d) 150
16. What is the primary focus of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme?  
(a) Maternal health (b) Women's empowerment  
(c) Child education and survival (d) Women's safety
17. Which act reserves one-third of all seats for women in various legislative bodies in India?  
(a) Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment Act  
(b) Maternity Benefit Amendment Act  
(c) Constitution (106th Amendment) Act  
(d) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Act
18. What is the focus of the GATI initiative launched by the Indian government?  
(a) Gender equality in education (b) Financial literacy for women  
(c) Gender advancement in research institutions (d) Safety and security for women
19. Which initiative aims to provide small savings opportunities for women in India?  
(a) Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme (b) Janani Suraksha Yojana  
(c) Mission Shakti (d) Mahila Samman Nidhi
20. What percentage of women in India are anaemic at the adolescent age?  
(a) 30% (b) 40% (c) 50% (d) More than 60%



March 2024

**TOPIC**  
in **NEWS**

## Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23

### Why in News?

For the 1st time in about 11 years, the Government released the broad findings of the All – India Household Consumption Expenditure Survey. The survey was carried out between August 2022 and July 2023.

#### Explained:

The expenditure a household does shows a lot of things about the house i.e. the level of income of the household, the rate of inflation in the area, the level of comfort and amenities in the house. The expenditure also provide the government with a direction as to which area the government needs to work on and in which sector of employment there is a decrease/increase in the income level in the society like the recent survey states that agricultural household is having more income than a common rural household showing that agriculture is a comparatively better source of income in rural areas and GOI needs to target on the other sectors in the rural economy.

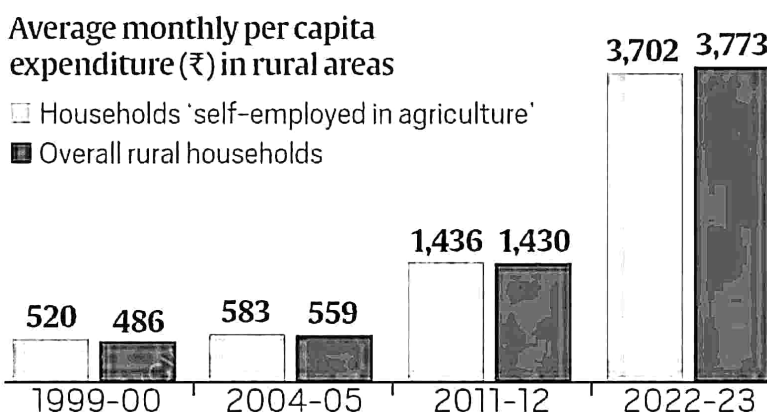
Thus, in order to get these kinds of facts and inferences, to take targeted actions, government collects data using the consumption expenditure survey.

#### Way to marks:

Consumption Expenditure has increased by over 2.5 Times from 2011-12 levels in Current Prices and the Growth is Faster in Rural India than Urban India.

The Last Survey on Consumer Expenditure was conducted in the 68<sup>th</sup> Round (July 2011 to June 2012).

### CONSUMPTION IN RURAL AREAS



**Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)**

- **Conducted by:** " National Statistical Office" (NSO) under "Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
  - Since 1972, it has been conducted every 5 years.
  - **2017 – 18 Survey:** Not Released citing Data Quality Issues.
- **Aim:** To generate Estimates of Household Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE)
- **Coverage:** The Whole of the Indian Union except a Few Inaccessible Villages in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **Consumption Basket:** Food Items, Consumables and Services Items, Durable Goods.
- **Estimates of MCEP:** It is based on Modified Mixed Reference Period (MMRP)

**MPCE**  
 Measure of the  
 Average Spending  
 of a Person in a  
 Month on various  
 Goods and  
 Services.

**Key Highlights of the Survey**
**Average Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE)**

- Average MPCE in Indian Households rose by 33.5% since 2011 – 12 in Urban Households to ₹3,510.
  - Rural India's MPCE saw a 40.42% increase over the Same Period to hit ₹2,008.
- By adding the Imputed Cost of Free Items, the Average MPCE stood at Rs 3,860 in Rural Areas and Rs 6,521 in Urban Areas.

**MMRP**  
 Household Consumer  
 Expenditure on Edible Oil,  
 Egg, Fish, Meat, Vegetables,  
 Fruits, Spices, Beverages, Processed  
 Food, Refreshments, Pan, Tobacco  
 and Intoxicants for a Reference  
 Period of the "Last 7 Days"  
 and for All Other Items,  
 recorded for the Same  
 Reference Period as in  
 case of MRP.

**Share of Expenditure on Food**

- Proportion of Spending on Food has dropped to 46.4% (Rs 1750) for Rural Households from 52.9% in 2011-12, while their Urban India spent just 39.2% (Rs 1750) of their Overall Monthly Outgoes on Food compared with 42.6% incurred 11 years earlier.
  - Rural Households' Spending on Food has dropped below 50% of their Total Expenditure for the 1<sup>st</sup> Time Ever.
  - Consumption of High-Value Items such as Eggs, Fish, Meat and Fruits has increased, especially in Rural Areas.

**Consumption Expenditure on Non-Food Items**

- Consumption Expenditure on Non-Food Items in Rural India (54%) and Urban India (61%) in 2022-23.

**Average MPCE of Bottom 5% of Rural Population and of Urban Population**

- Richest 5% spend 8 to 10 times more than the Poorest 5%.
- Bottom 5% of Rural Population has an Average MPCE of Rs 1373, while it is Rs 2001 for Bottom 5% of Urban Population.
- Top 5% of the Rural and Urban Population has an Average MPCE of Rs 10,501 and Rs 20,824, respectively.

Year	Rural	Urban
	% share of food in MPCE	% share of food in MPCE
1999-2000	59.46	48.06
2004-05	53.11	40.51
2011-12	52.9	42.62
2022-23	46.38	39.17

- MPCE of Top 5% of Rural Population is 7.65 times more than its Bottom 5%
- MPCE of Top 5% of Urban Population has an MPCE of over 10 times its Bottom 5%.

Difference in Average MPCE between Rural and Urban Households

- Average MPCE between Rural and Urban Households has narrowed to 71.2% in 2022-23 compared with 83.9% in 2011-12.

**Income Disparity**

- Richest 20% of Population account for nearly 46.2% of Total Consumption Expenditure.
- Bottom 20% account for Only 8.8% of the Total Expenditure.

Comparison among States

- MPCE is the Highest in Sikkim for both Rural (₹7,731) and Urban Areas (₹12,105).
- It is the Lowest in Chhattisgarh, where it was ₹2,466 for Rural Households and ₹4,483 for Urban Household Members.

**Pepper it With**

- Various economic survey in India , Indian economy and world economy headwinds

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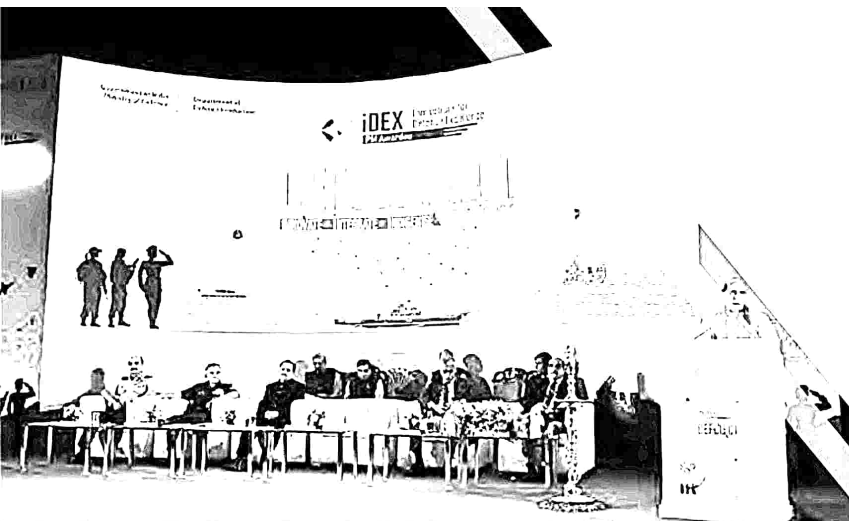


**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Who conducts the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) in India?  
(a) Ministry of Finance  
(b) Ministry of Rural Development  
(c) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation  
(d) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
2. How often is the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) conducted in India?  
(a) Every year                      (b) Every two years      (c) Every three years      (d) Every five years
3. What is the primary aim of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)?  
(a) To measure poverty levels  
(b) To estimate GDP growth  
(c) To generate estimates of household consumption expenditure  
(d) To analyze employment trends
4. What is the coverage of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)?  
(a) Entire Indian Union                      (b) Selected metropolitan cities  
(c) Rural areas only                      (d) Urban areas only
5. Which reference period is used to estimate Household Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE)?  
(a) Calendar year                      (b) Financial year  
(c) Modified Mixed Reference Period (MMRP)      (d) Rolling reference period
6. How much has the average Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) increased in rural India since 2011-12?  
(a) 20%                      (b) 30%                      (c) 40%                      (d) 50%
7. What proportion of spending on food is observed in rural households in 2022-23?  
(a) 46.4%                      (b) 52.9%                      (c) 39.2%                      (d) 42.6%
8. Which category of food items has seen increased consumption in rural areas?  
(a) Grains  
(b) Vegetables  
(c) High-value items like eggs, fish, meat, and fruits  
(d) Dairy products
9. What percentage of consumption expenditure is spent on non-food items in rural India?  
(a) 46%                      (b) 54%                      (c) 61%                      (d) 70%

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10. How much more does the richest 5% spend compared to the poorest 5% in rural areas?  
(a) 5 times                      (b) 7 times                      (c) 8 times                      (d) 10 times
11. In which state is the MPCE the highest for rural households?  
(a) Bihar                      (b) Sikkim                      (c) Uttar Pradesh                      (d) Chhattisgarh
12. What is the MPCE in Sikkim for urban areas?  
(a) ₹7,731                      (b) ₹10,501                      (c) ₹12,105                      (d) ₹20,824
13. Which state has the lowest MPCE for urban households?  
(a) Sikkim                      (b) Bihar                      (c) Chhattisgarh                      (d) Uttar Pradesh
14. How much has the difference in average MPCE between rural and urban households narrowed to in 2022-23 compared to 2011-12?  
(a) 50%                      (b) 60%                      (c) 70%                      (d) 80%
15. What percentage of total consumption expenditure is accounted for by the richest 20% of the population?  
(a) 30%                      (b) 40%                      (c) 50%                      (d) 60%
16. How much of the total expenditure is accounted for by the bottom 20% of the population?  
(a) 5%                      (b) 8.8%                      (c) 10%                      (d) 15%
17. What is the MPCE of the bottom 5% of the urban population?  
(a) ₹1,373                      (b) ₹2,001                      (c) ₹7,731                      (d) ₹10,501
18. How many economies provide some financial or tax support for parents with young children?  
(a) 50                      (b) 78                      (c) 100                      (d) 150
19. What percentage of legal protections do women enjoy compared to men, according to the report?  
(a) 45%                      (b) 60%                      (c) 64%                      (d) 77%
20. What is the sex ratio at birth in India according to the 2011 Census?  
(a) 943                      (b) 953                      (c) 963                      (d) 973



## DefConnect 2024

### Why in News?

The Ministry of Defence has organised DefConnect 2024, aimed at promoting Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Self-Reliance in Defense Production.

#### Explained:

DefConnect 2024, hosted by the Ministry of Defence, serves as a dynamic platform to bolster innovation, entrepreneurship, and self-reliance in defense production. This strategic initiative convenes stakeholders from diverse sectors, including industry leaders, academia, and budding entrepreneurs, to catalyze advancements in defense technology. Through collaborative efforts and knowledge-sharing sessions, DefConnect fosters a culture of innovation, driving the development of cutting-edge solutions to address evolving defense challenges.

By emphasizing collaboration and fostering a spirit of innovation, DefConnect 2024 plays a pivotal role in strengthening India's defense ecosystem. The event showcases emerging technologies, facilitates partnerships, and encourages entrepreneurial ventures, ultimately contributing to the nation's goal of achieving self-sufficiency in defense manufacturing.

#### Way to marks:

#### Key Highlights: Launch of Initiatives

ADITI (Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX) Scheme

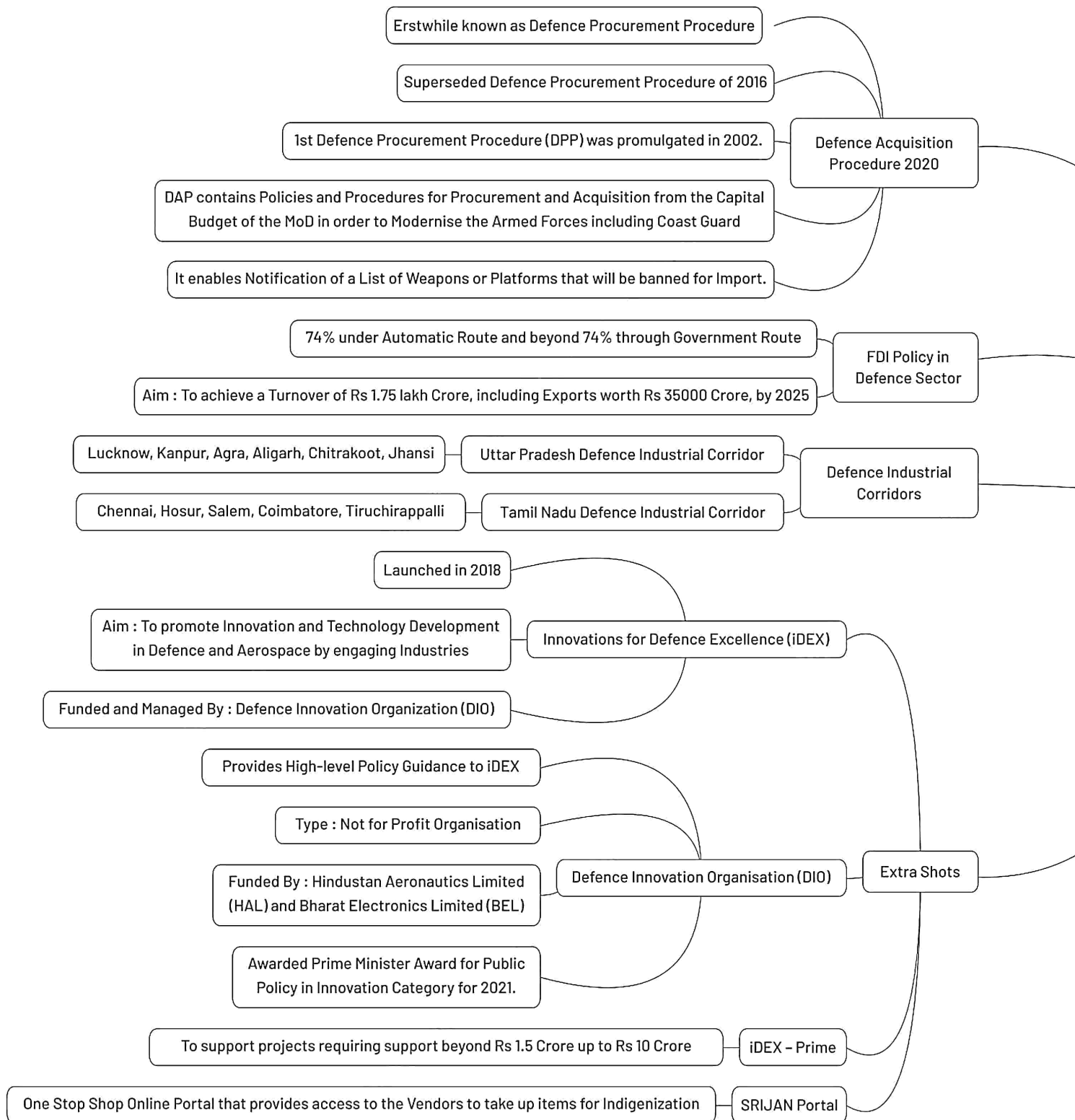
- Start-ups are eligible to receive Grant-in-Aid of up to Rs 25 Crore for their Research, Development and Innovation Endeavours in Defence Technology.
- **Financial Assistance:** Rs 750 Crore (2023 – 24 to 2025 – 26)
- **Nodal Agency:** iDEX (Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence)
- In the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of ADITI, 17 Challenges – Indian Army (3), Indian Navy (5), Indian Air Force (5), Defence Space Agency (4) - have been launched.

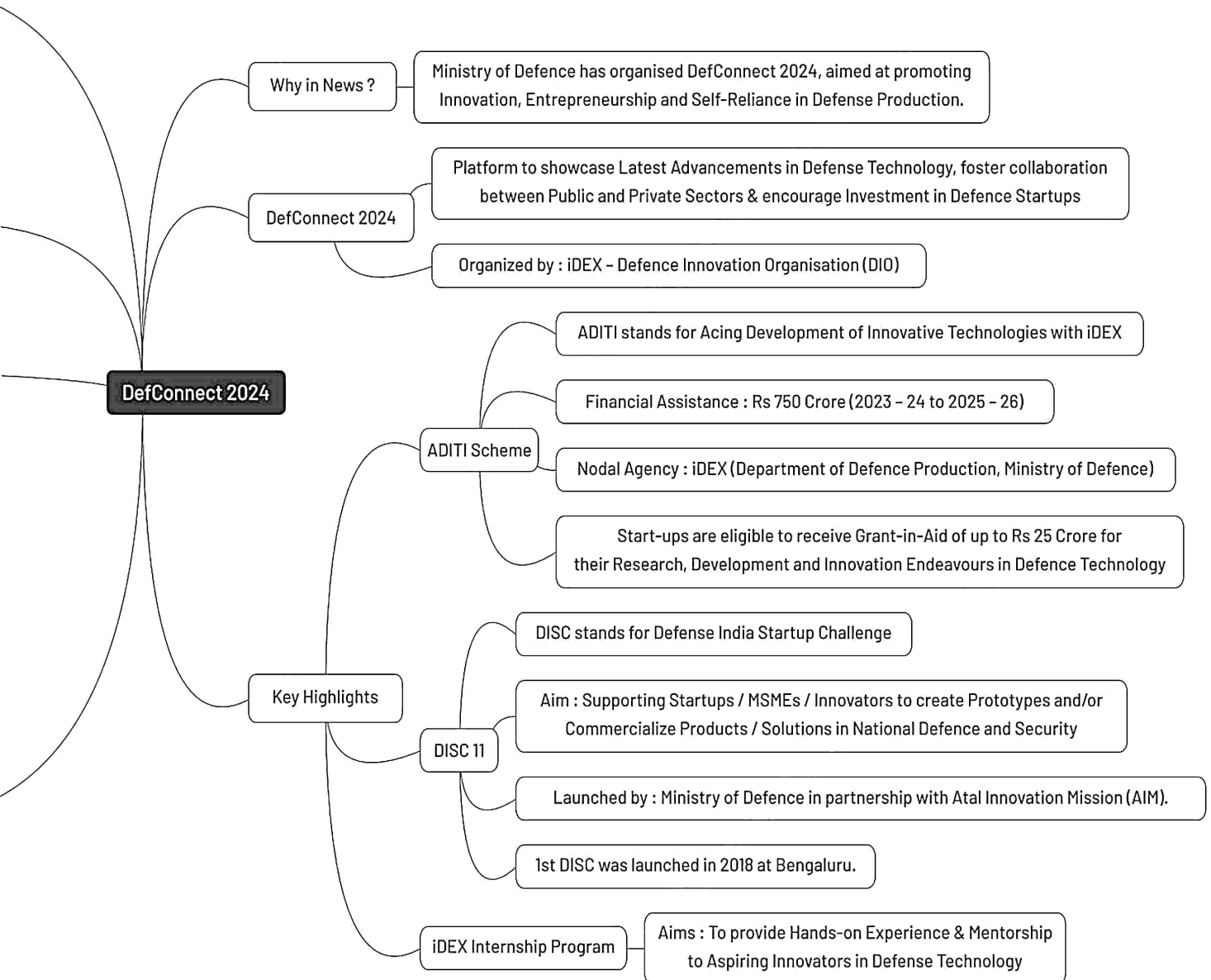
#### DefConnect 2024

- Platform to showcase Latest Advancements in Defense Technology, foster collaboration between Public and Private Sectors & encourage Investment in Defence Startups
- **Organized by :** iDEX – Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)

DISC 11 (Defense India Startup Challenge)

- **Aim:** Supporting Startups / MSMEs / Innovators to create Prototypes and/or Commercialize Products / Solutions in National Defence and Security.





- 1<sup>st</sup> DISC was launched in 2018 at Bengaluru.
- **Launched by:** Ministry of Defence in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).

## iDEX Internship Program

- **Aims:** To provide Hands-on Experience & Mentorship to Aspiring Innovators in Defense Technology.

**Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020**

- Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) (erstwhile Defence Procurement Procedure or DPP), 2020 was released by Ministry of Defence (MoD).
  - 2020 Policy superseded Defence Procurement Procedure of 2016.
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) was promulgated in 2002.
- DAP contains Policies and Procedures for Procurement and Acquisition from the Capital Budget of the MoD in order to Modernise the Armed Forces including Coast Guard.
  - It enables Notification of a List of Weapons or Platforms that will be banned for Import.
  - It focuses on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Defence Manufacturing and Indigenization of the Manufacturing Prices.
- **Procurement Categories:** Buy (Indian – Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured), Buy (Indian), Buy and Make (Indian), Buy (Global - Manufacture in India) and Buy (Global).
  - It increases the Indigenous Content (IC) requirement for All Projects from 40% to 50% earlier, depending on the category, to 50% to 60%.
  - Only Under Procurement through Buy (Global), Foreign Vendors can have 30% IC from Indian Companies.

**Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)**

- Launched in 2018.
- **Aim:** To promote Innovation and Technology Development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries.
- **Funded and Managed By:** Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)

**Defence Innovation Organisation**

- **Type:** Not for Profit Organisation
- **Funded By:** Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)
- **Provides High – level Policy Guidance** to iDEX.
- **Awarded PM Award for Public Policy in Innovation Category** for 2021.

**FDI Policy in Defence Sector**

- 74% under Automatic Route and beyond 74% through Government Route.
- **Aim:** To achieve a Turnover of Rs 1.75 lakh Crore, including Exports worth Rs 35000 Crore, by 2025
- **National Security Clause:** FDI in the Defence Sector shall be subject to Scrutiny on the Ground of National Security and the Government reserves the Right to Review Any Foreign Investment in the Defence Sector that may affect National Security.

**Extra Shots**

- **iDEX – Prime:** To support projects requiring support beyond Rs 1.5 Crore up to Rs 10 Crore.
- **SRIJAN Portal:** One Stop Shop Online Portal that provides access to Vendors to take up items for Indigenization.

**Defence Industrial Corridors**

- India has inaugurated 2 Defence Industrial Corridors.
- **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (6):** Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Aligarh, Chitrakoot, Jhansi
- **Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor (5):** Chennai, Hosur, Salem, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli

**Pepper it With :** • SIPRI report of arms trade , India's Indigenous defence equipment's /weapons produced recently

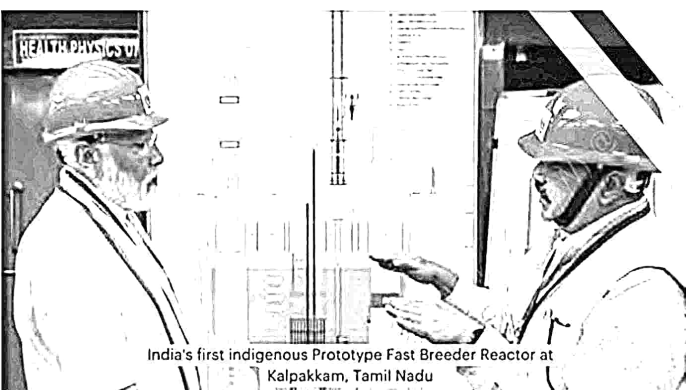
## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What does ADITI stand for in the context of defense technology?
  - (a) Advanced Defense Innovation Technology Initiative
  - (b) Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX
  - (c) Advanced Defense Integration Technology Initiative
  - (d) Advancement in Defense Information Technology Infrastructure
2. How much financial assistance is allocated to the ADITI scheme from 2023-24 to 2025-26?
  - (a) Rs. 500 Crore
  - (b) Rs. 750 Crore
  - (c) Rs. 1,000 Crore
  - (d) Rs. 1,500 Crore
3. Who is the nodal agency for the ADITI scheme?
  - (a) Ministry of Space
  - (b) Atal Innovation Mission
  - (c) Department of Defence Production
  - (d) Ministry of Science and Technology
4. What is the aim of the DISC 11 initiative?
  - (a) Promoting agricultural innovations
  - (b) Supporting defense technology startups
  - (c) Enhancing space exploration capabilities
  - (d) Fostering environmental sustainability projects
5. When was the 1st DISC initiative launched?
  - (a) 2015
  - (b) 2016
  - (c) 2017
  - (d) 2018
6. Which ministry launched the DISC 11 initiative in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission?
  - (a) Ministry of Defence
  - (b) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
  - (c) Ministry of Science and Technology
  - (d) Ministry of Home Affairs
7. What is the primary aim of the iDEX Internship Program?
  - (a) Providing agricultural training
  - (b) Offering mentorship in defense technology
  - (c) Supporting financial startups
  - (d) Enhancing medical research
8. What is the main focus of the Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020?
  - (a) Modernizing education systems
  - (b) Enhancing healthcare infrastructure
  - (c) Procurement and acquisition for defense modernization
  - (d) Promoting tourism initiatives
9. How many defense procurement categories are mentioned in the DAP 2020?
  - (a) Four
  - (b) Five
  - (c) Six
  - (d) Seven

**Current Affairs March 2024**

10. What is the aim of achieving a turnover of Rs. 1.75 lakh Crore by 2025 associated with?  
(a) Agriculture sector (b) Defense sector  
(c) Information technology sector (d) Automotive sector
11. How many defense industrial corridors has India inaugurated?  
(a) One (b) Two (c) Three (d) Four
12. Which state is part of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor?  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Karnataka (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Tamil Nadu
13. How many cities are included in the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor?  
(a) Three (b) Four (c) Five (d) Six
14. What percentage of Indigenous Content (IC) requirement has been increased in defense projects according to DAP 2020?  
(a) From 30% to 40% (b) From 40% to 50% (c) From 50% to 60% (d) From 60% to 70%
15. What is the total grant-in-aid offered to startups under the ADITI scheme?  
(a) Up to Rs. 10 Crore (b) Up to Rs. 15 Crore (c) Up to Rs. 20 Crore (d) Up to Rs. 25 Crore
16. Which department under the Ministry of Defence is responsible for overseeing the ADITI scheme?  
(a) Department of Defence Finance (b) Department of Defence Research and Development  
(c) Department of Defence Production (d) Department of Defence Personnel
17. What is the primary focus of DISC 11 initiative?  
(a) Enhancing educational infrastructure (b) Promoting space exploration  
(c) Fostering innovation in defense and security (d) Supporting agricultural startups
18. How many challenges were launched in the 1st edition of ADITI?  
(a) 10 (b) 15 (c) 20 (d) 17
19. Who is the partner of Ministry of Defence for the DISC 11 initiative?  
(a) Atal Innovation Mission (b) National Innovation Foundation  
(c) NITI Aayog (d) Ministry of Science and Technology
20. What does DAP stand for in the context of defense procurement?  
(a) Defence Acquisition Policy (b) Defence Acquisition Process  
(c) Defence Acquisition Procedure (d) Defence Acquisition Protocol





## Indigenous Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)

### Why in News?

Prime Minister witnessed the initiation of Core Loading of India's indigenous 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Madras Atomic Power Station, Kalpakkam.

This marked India's entry into the vital 2nd Stage of the India's 3 – Stage Nuclear Programme.

### Explained:

How does a nuclear reactor work –

Let's break down: inside the reactor, atoms of Uranium are used. These atoms are having three important things inside them as you have learned in class 10th i.e. electron, proton and neutron. Other than neutrons, other two have positive or negative charge in them which if used can cause other reactions in the reactor. Therefore, the reactor uses the neutrons for its work. These neutrons are bombarded and split into parts called as nuclear fission with the help of Uranium. This kind of splitting of neutrons create heat which is used to make electricity.

Nuclear reactors need fuel, just as cars need gas in order to move forward. This however is not the case with the reactor as it can create its own source of power. Fuel for nuclear reactor is Uranium and Plutonium.

How it creates its own fuel - When the neutron is bombarded with the help of uranium it also creates plutonium from Uranium which can be used further as a fuel for the reactor. For this reason they are called as giants which creates there food by themselves.

### Way to marks:

#### Salient Feature of the Reactor

- Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR) will initially use the Uranium-Plutonium Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel.
- Uranium – 238 “Blanket” surrounding “Fuel Core” will undergo Nuclear Transmutation to Produce More Fuel, thus earning the name “Breeder”.
- Use of Thorium – 232, which in itself is Not a Fissile Material, as a Blanket is also envisaged in this stage.
- By Transmutation, Thorium will create Fissile Uranium – 233 which will be used as Fuel in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage.

#### India's Three – Stage Nuclear Program

“Homi J Bhabha” designed the “3 – Stage Programme”.

#### PFBR

- *PFBR is a Machine that Produces More Nuclear Fuel than it Consumes.*
- **Designed By:** Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (Kalpakkam)
- **Constructed & Operated by:** Bharatiya Nabhikiya
  - Government approved Creation of Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Ltd (BHAVINI) in 2003.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Stage (Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors – PHWRs)

- Use Natural Uranium (U – 238), which contains Minuscule Amounts of U – 235 as the Fissile Material.
  - Heavy Water (Deuterium Oxide) as Both Moderator and Coolant.
  - Primary Purpose: To produce Plutonium – 239 as a Byproduct from Uranium Fuel.

#### Extra Shots

*In 2019, the DAE proposed building 4 more FBRs of 600 MWe Capacity each – 2 in Kalpakkam from 2021 and 2 from 2025, with sites to be selected.*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage (Fast Breeder Reactors – FBRs)

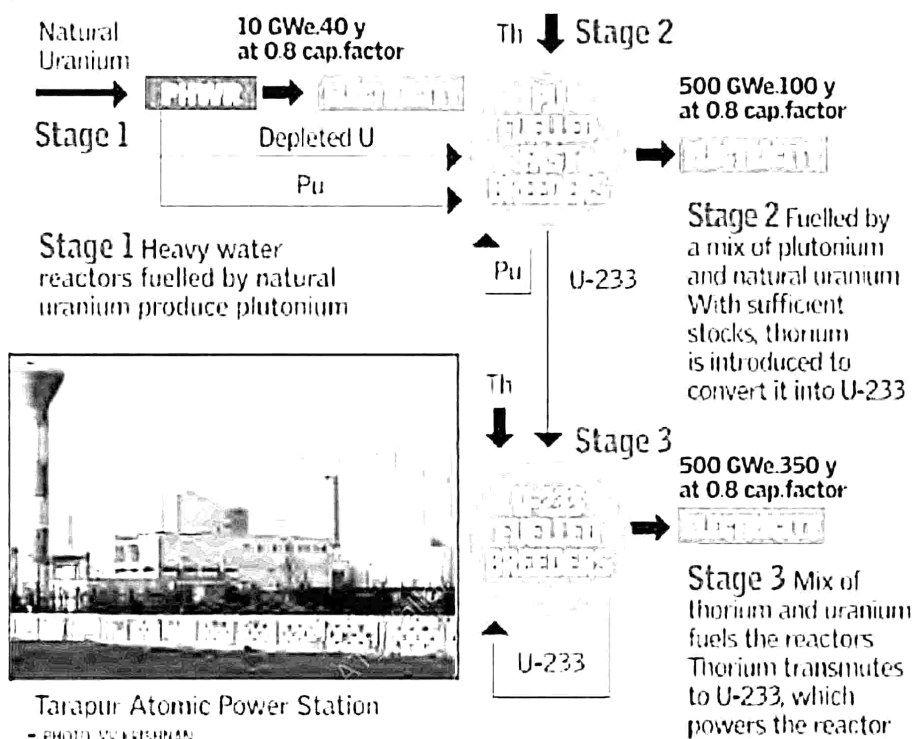
- Produce More Fissile Material than they Consume by utilizing a Fast Neutron Spectrum.
  - In this stage, Plutonium – 239 produced in the 1<sup>st</sup> Stage is used as Fuel along with U – 238 to produce Energy, U – 233 and more Pu – 239.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage (Advanced Heavy Water Reactors – AHWRs)

- Pu – 239 will be combined with Thorium – 232 (Th – 232) in reactors to Produce Energy and U – 233.

## INDIA'S THREE-STAGE NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

Homi Bhabha envisioned India's nuclear power programme in three stages to suit the country's low uranium resource profile



### 1<sup>st</sup> Stage (Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors – PHWRs)

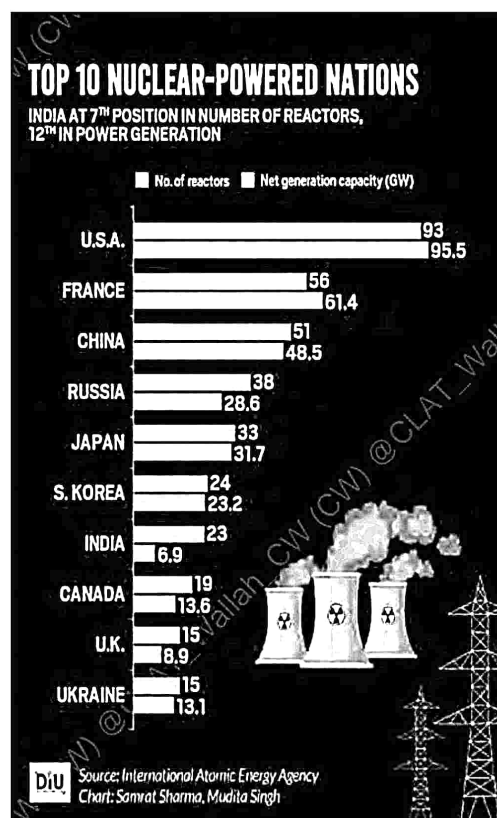
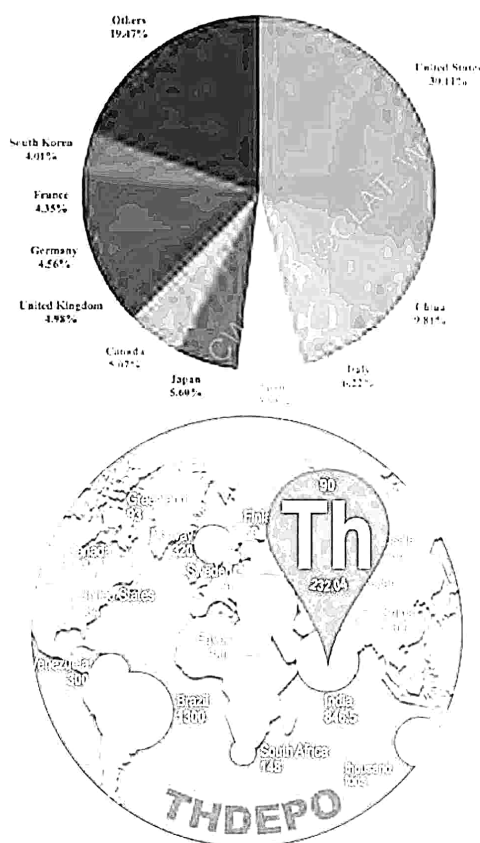
- Use Natural Uranium (U–238), which contains Minuscule Amounts of U–235 as the Fissile Material.
  - Heavy Water (Deuterium Oxide) as Both Moderator and Coolant.
  - Primary Purpose: To produce Plutonium–239 as a Byproduct from Uranium Fuel.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage (Fast Breeder Reactors – FBRs)

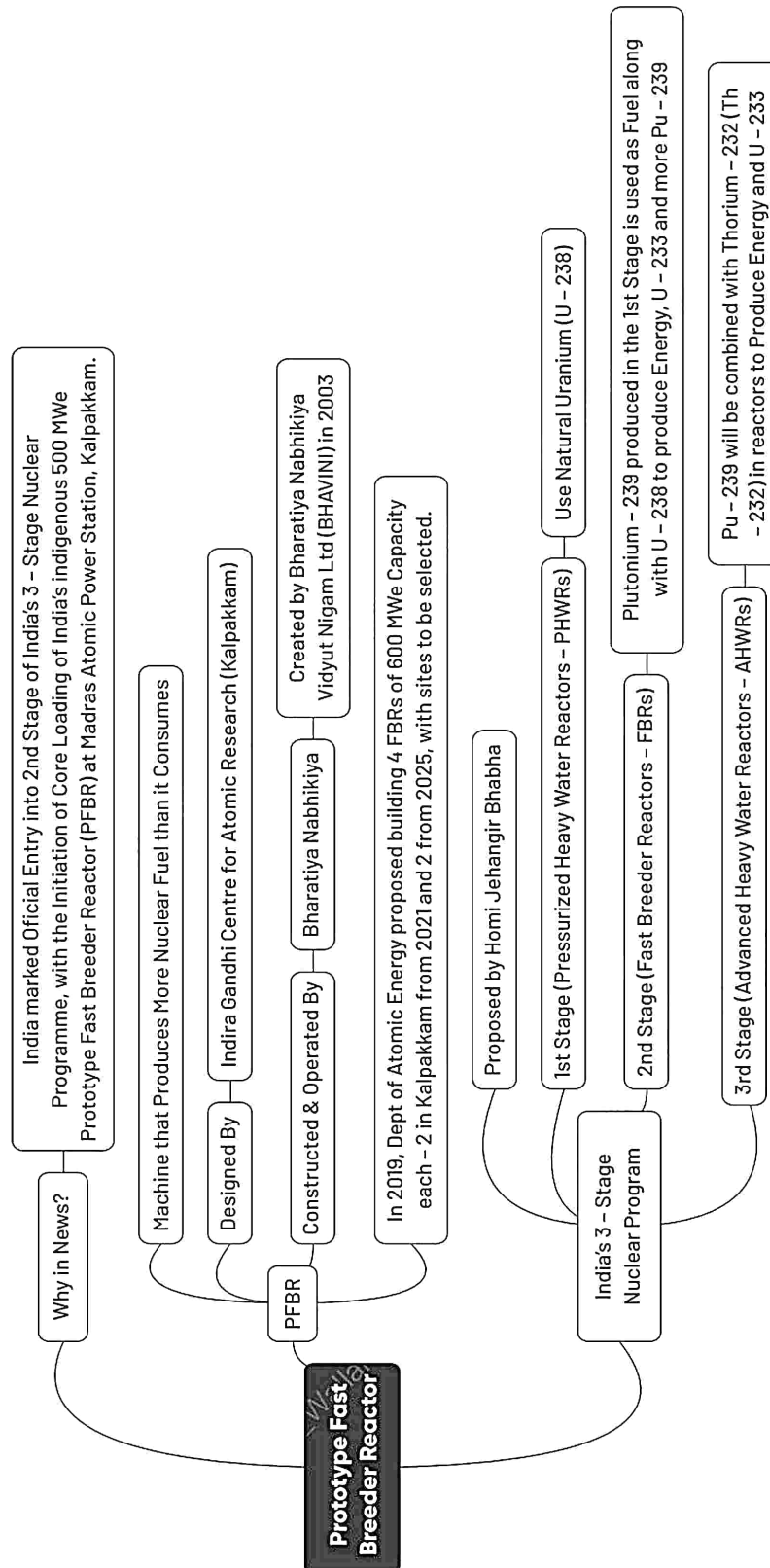
- Produce More Fissile Material than they Consume by utilizing a Fast Neutron Spectrum.
  - In this stage, Plutonium–239 produced in the 1<sup>st</sup> Stage is used as Fuel along with U–238 to produce Energy, U–233 and more Pu–239.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage (Advanced Heavy Water Reactors – AHWRs)

- Pu–239 will be combined with Thorium–232 (Th–232) in reactors to Produce Energy and U–233.



**Pepper it With** • Kakrapar nuclear plant and Kundankulam nuclear plants issue, India and its international treaties for Uranium import.



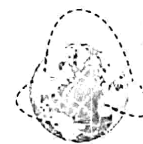
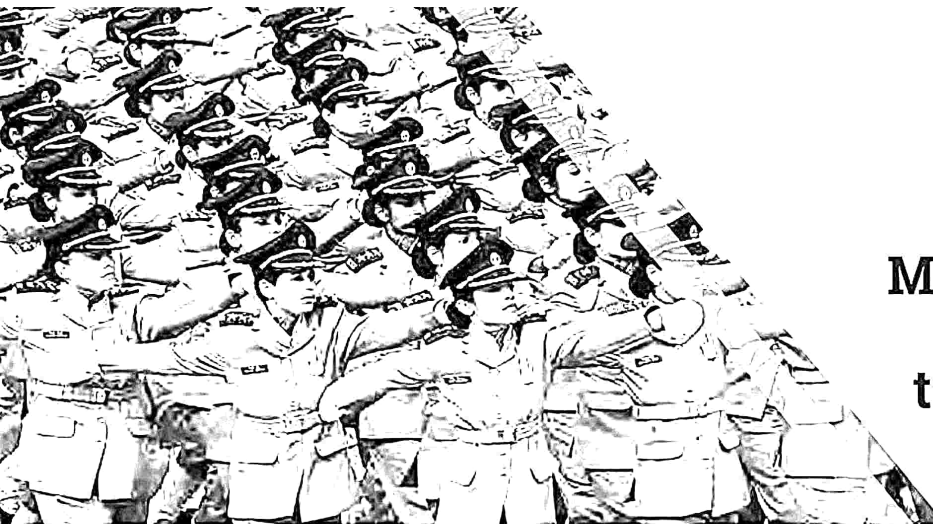
**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What type of fuel does the Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR) initially use?  
(a) Uranium (b) Plutonium (c) Mixed Oxide (d) Thorium
2. What process does Uranium-238 undergo in the FBR to produce more fuel?  
(a) Fission (b) Fusion (c) Transmutation (d) Combustion
3. Who designed India's Three-Stage Nuclear Program?  
(a) Homi J Bhabha (b) APJ Abdul Kalam (c) Vikram Sarabhai (d) CV Raman
4. What is the primary purpose of the first stage of India's nuclear program?  
(a) Produce energy (b) Produce plutonium (c) Produce thorium (d) Produce uranium
5. Which material is used as both moderator and coolant in the first stage reactors?  
(a) Water (b) Heavy water (c) Graphite (d) Liquid sodium
6. In which stage of the nuclear program is more fissile material produced than consumed?  
(a) First stage (b) Second stage (c) Third stage (d) Fourth stage
7. Who designed the PFBR?  
(a) CV Raman (b) Homi J Bhabha  
(c) APJ Abdul Kalam (d) Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research
8. Which organization operates the PFBR?  
(a) ISRO (b) BARC  
(c) DRDO (d) Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Ltd (BHAVINI)
9. What does PFBR stand for?  
(a) Plutonium Fusion Breeder Reactor (b) Pressurized Fast Breeder Reactor  
(c) Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (d) Power Fusion Breeder Reactor
10. How many more FBRs did the DAE propose building in 2019?  
(a) 1 (b) 2 (c) 3 (d) 4
11. When did the Indian government approve the creation of Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Ltd (BHAVINI)?  
(a) 1990 (b) 2000 (c) 2003 (d) 2010
12. Where is the PFBR constructed and operated?  
(a) Tarapur (b) Kalpakkam (c) Mumbai (d) Bangalore

13. What is the primary purpose of the second stage of India's nuclear program?  
(a) Produce energy      (b) Produce plutonium   (c) Produce thorium      (d) Produce uranium
14. What material is used as a blanket in the third stage of India's nuclear program?  
(a) Uranium      (b) Plutonium      (c) Thorium      (d) Neptunium
15. What does MOX stand for in the context of nuclear fuel?  
(a) Mixed Oxide      (b) Metallic Oxygen   (c) Monoxide Xenon      (d) Multivalent Oxide

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March 2024

**TOPIC**  
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## Marriage Can't be Grounds to Sack Women from Military

### Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) has directed the Ministry of Defence to pay Rs 60 lakh in Compensation to a Former Permanent Commissioned Officer in the Military Nursing Service (MNS).

It is ruled that the Officer was “Wrongly” released from Service in 1988 on grounds of her Marriage.

### Explained:

Picture a former nurse who had been in military nursing service. In the year 1988, she was made to resign from her work simply for getting married. It had been an old policy that stated that any of the married nurses couldn't continue working in the army. However, this rule was abolished by the authorities in 1995.

Consequently, this nurse has decided to sue the military for asking her to leave her job just because she was married. And guess what? The court agreed with her! They said it wasn't fair for her to be forced out of work because of marrying someone. Therefore, Rs 60 lakh were directed by the Supreme Court towards compensating for losses incurred due to wrongful termination of employment on account of marriage. This is a major victory for fairness and equality at workplace which indicates that outdated policies can be challenged and changed positively.

### Way to marks:

#### Key Facts of the Case

- Former Permanent Commissioned Officer of the MNS, was released from Employment in 1988 on grounds of her Marriage, as stipulated by Army Instruction No 61 of 1977 titled “Terms and Conditions of Service for the Grant of Permanent Commissions in the Military Nursing Service.”
  - It was later withdrawn by a letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> Aug, 1995.
- Clause 11 dealt with the Termination of an Appointment on certain grounds.
- These included Being pronounced by a Medical Board to be Unfit for Further Service in the Armed Forces”; Getting Married; Misconduct; Breach of Contract or if Services are Found Unsatisfactory.”
- In 2016, she sought recourse through the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT), established under Armed Forces Tribunal Act of 2007 to Adjudicate Disputes related to Commission, Appointments, Enrollment and Conditions of Service.

#### Extra Shots

- *Only All Women Corps of the Armed Forces*
- *Integral Part of Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS), encompasses Army Medical Corps (AMC) and Army Dental Corps (ADC).*
- *Military Nurses marched in the 2024 Republic Day parade for the First Time.*

- AFT deemed her termination "illegal" and directed her Reinstatement with Back Wages.
- The Central Government contested this ruling by moving the Supreme Court in the case titled "Union of India & Others vs Ex Lt Selina John".
- As of Aug 2023, over 7,000 women personnel are serving in the Indian Army followed by 809 in the Indian Air Force and 1306 in the Navy.
- The SC stated that Her Release from the Service was "Wrong and illegal".
  - The SC rejected the Centre's Argument, based on a Rule in Force at the time.
    - Such Rule was Ex – Facie manifestly Arbitrary, as Terminating Employment because the Woman has got married is a Coarse Case of Gender Discrimination and Inequality.

#### **Policy Framework to Recruit Women Military Officers**

- Women Officers were initially inducted into the Indian Army under the Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES) in 1992.
- Under WSES, they served for 5 year Periods in certain streams, like Army Education Corps and Corps of Engineers.
  - However, they faced restrictions on certain roles, such as Infantry and Armored Corps.
- In 2006, WSES was replaced by the Short Service Commission Scheme, which allowed Women Officers the option to switch from WSES to SSC.
  - Men under SSC were commissioned for 10 years, extendable up to 14 years.
  - Men in SSC have an option to opt for a PC.

#### **How has the SC acted in Favour of Women Officers in the Armed Forces?**

Union of India v. Lt Cdr Annie Nagaraja Case, 2015

- In 2015, 17 Women Officers who had joined Indian Navy as Short Service Commissioned (SSC) Officers filed Writ Petitions before Delhi High Court.
  - These officers were Not Considered for the Grant of Permanent Commissions (PCs) and were subsequently Discharged from Service.
  - In 2020, the SC held that Serving Women Short Service Commission Officers in the Indian Navy were entitled to Permanent Commission at par with their Male Counterparts.

Secretary, Ministry of Defence vs Babita Puniya Case, 2020

- The Case was first filed in the Delhi HC by Women Officers in 2003 and the HC awarded Permanent Commissions to Women Officers in All Branches where they were serving in 2010.
  - SC upheld Demands of Women in the SSC, stating that seeking a Permanent Commission (PC) or a Full – Length Career was "Justified".
- Before the ruling, Only Male Officers on Short Service Commission (SSC) could opt for PC after 10 years of Service, leaving women unable to qualify for a Government Pension.
  - The Court's Decision brought Women Officers in 10 Streams of the Army at par with Men.

Priyanka Tyagi v Union of India Case, 2024

- SC underscored the Necessity for the Central Government to ensure that Eligible Women Officers receive Permanent Commission in Indian Coast Guard.

**Pepper it With** ● Integrated Theatre Commands , concept of Agniveers.



**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Which Army Instruction stipulated the termination of service for married women officers in the Military Nursing Service?  
A) Army Instruction No. 51 of 1975                      B) Army Instruction No. 61 of 1977  
C) Army Instruction No. 71 of 1979                      D) Army Instruction No. 81 of 1981
2. When was the Army Instruction No. 61 of 1977 withdrawn?  
A) August 9, 1993    B) August 9, 1994  
C) August 9, 1995    D) August 9, 1996
3. Under which clause of Army Instruction No. 61 of 1977 was the termination of service on the grounds of marriage stipulated?  
A) Clause 9                      B) Clause 10                      C) Clause 11                      D) Clause 12
4. In which year did the former Permanent Commissioned Officer seek recourse through the Armed Forces Tribunal?  
A) 2014                      B) 2015                      C) 2016                      D) 2017
5. Which Act established the Armed Forces Tribunal?  
A) Armed Forces Tribunal Act of 2005                      B) Armed Forces Tribunal Act of 2006  
C) Armed Forces Tribunal Act of 2007                      D) Armed Forces Tribunal Act of 2008
6. What was the name of the case in which the Central Government contested the Armed Forces Tribunal's ruling?  
A) Union of India & Others vs Ex Lt Selina John  
B) Union of India & Others vs Ex Capt Selina John  
C) Union of India & Others vs Ex Maj Selina John  
D) Union of India & Others vs Ex Col Selina John
7. As of August 2023, how many women personnel were serving in the Indian Army?  
A) 6,500                      B) 7,000                      C) 7,500                      D) 8,000
8. Which scheme initially inducted women officers into the Indian Army in 1992?  
A) Women Officers Entry Scheme (WOES)                      B) Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES)  
C) Women Short Service Scheme (WSSS)                      D) Women Permanent Commission Scheme (WPCS)
9. In which year was the WSES replaced by the Short Service Commission Scheme for women officers?  
A) 2004                      B) 2005                      C) 2006                      D) 2007

**Current Affairs March 2024**

10. What was the duration of service for women officers under the Short Service Commission Scheme?  
A) 5 years                      B) 7 years                      C) 10 years                      D) 14 years
11. In which case did the Supreme Court hold that serving women Short Service Commission Officers in the Indian Navy were entitled to Permanent Commission at par with their male counterparts?  
A) Union of India v. Lt Cdr Annie Nagaraja Case  
B) Secretary, Ministry of Defence vs Babita Puniya Case  
C) Priyanka Tyagi v Union of India Case  
D) None of the above
12. In which year did the Delhi High Court award Permanent Commissions to Women Officers in all branches where they were serving?  
A) 2008                      B) 2009                      C) 2010                      D) 2011
13. How many streams of the Army were opened for Permanent Commissions to women officers after the Secretary, Ministry of Defence vs Babita Puniya Case?  
A) 8                      B) 9                      C) 10                      D) 11
14. In which case did the Supreme Court underscore the necessity for the Central Government to ensure that eligible women officers receive Permanent Commission in the Indian Coast Guard?  
A) Union of India v. Lt Cdr Annie Nagaraja Case  
B) Secretary, Ministry of Defence vs Babita Puniya Case  
C) Priyanka Tyagi v Union of India Case  
D) None of the above
15. According to the Supreme Court, terminating employment because a woman has got married is a case of:  
A) Gender discrimination                      B) Inequality  
C) Both A and B                      D) Neither A nor B
16. In which year was the Armed Forces Tribunal Act enacted?  
A) 2005                      B) 2006                      C) 2007                      D) 2008
17. As of August 2023, how many women personnel were serving in the Indian Air Force?  
A) 709                      B) 809                      C) 909                      D) 1009
18. As of August 2023, how many women personnel were serving in the Indian Navy?  
A) 1106                      B) 1206                      C) 1306                      D) 1406

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19. What was the outcome of the Priyanka Tyagi v Union of India Case, 2024?
- (a) Central government ordered to deny permanent commission to eligible women officers.
  - (b) Central government ordered to ensure permanent commission for eligible women officers in the Indian Coast Guard.
  - (c) Eligible women officers barred from serving in the Indian Coast Guard.
  - (d) Central government ordered to terminate service of eligible women officers.
20. What did the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) deem the termination of the officer's service?
- (a) Legal
  - (b) Unlawful
  - (c) Justified
  - (d) Fair

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March 2024

**TOPIC**  
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## Belgium Recognises Ecocide as a Crime

### Why in News?

The Federal Parliament of Belgium has made history by becoming the 1st Country in the European Continent to recognise "Ecocide" as a National as well as an International Crime.

The Law targets Individuals in positions of Decision-making Power and Corporations, aiming to Prevent and Punish severe Environmental Degradation such as Extensive Oil Spills.

### Explained:

The general destruction or impairment of the environment, including ecosystems that arise from human activities is termed as ecocide. This kind of harm to nature occurs at a huge scale and results from such things as pollution, deforestation or oil spills.

A good example is when businesses discharge toxic substances into rivers; this may end up killing fish and other animals present in water. Another instance is where forests are cut without any replanting which destroys many plants' and animals' homes leading to biodiversity loss.

Ecocide has both environmental consequences and impacts on people's lives causing problems such as climate change, natural calamities, depletion of resources among others. The recognition that ecocide is a serious issue highlights the importance of taking better care of our planet by making environmentally friendly choices instead of harmful ones.

### Way to marks:

#### Key Facts of the Case

#### Ecocide

"Unlawful or Wanton Acts committed with Knowledge that there is a Substantial Likelihood of Severe and either widespread or long-term Damage to the Environment being caused by those acts". – Stop Ecocide Foundation

- Ecocide, derived from Greek and Latin, translates to "Killing One's Home or Environment".
- It is considered a Form of Environmental Crime.
  - It is often associated with significant Negative Impacts on Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Human Well – Being.

#### Extra Shots

- **PM:** Alexander De Croo
- **Capital:** Brussels
- **Linguistic Regions:** Flemish (Dutch)-speaking Flanders & French-speaking Wallonia.
- Known as "Cockpit of Europe" because it is where Largest Number of European Battles have taken place in history.

- **Aim:** To hold Individuals and Corporations Accountable for their Actions and to prevent further Environmental Degradation.
- Ecocide is a Crime in 12 Countries.

#### **Rome Statute of ICC & Ecocide**

- In 2010, United Nations' International Criminal Court (ICC) officially acknowledge Ecocide as International Crime.
  - In 1970, Arthur Galston was the first to draw a connection b/w Environmental Devastation & Genocide.
  - He made this link when addressing the US Military's Utilization of Agent Orange, an herbicide, during the Vietnam War.
- Rome Statute of ICC addresses 4 Major Offenses: Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes, Crime of Aggression.
  - War Crimes is Sole Statute that can hold a Wrongdoer accountable for Environmental Destruction, but only if it is Intentionally Caused during times of Armed Conflict.
- India has neither signed nor ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

#### **SC's Judgment on Need of Recognition of Ecocide as Crime**

- *Chandra CFS & Terminal Operators Pvt Ltd vs Commissioner of Customs (2015)*
- *TN Godavarman Thirumulpad vs Union Of India & Ors (1997)*

#### **Extra Shots: India's Environment Law**

- *Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986*
- *WildLife (Protection) Act 1972*
- *Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act 2016*
- *Forest Conservation Act 1980 & its 2023 Amendment.*

#### **Pepper it With**

- Indian roads in north east and forest destruction , Government measures to control ecocide.

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**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is ecocide?  
(a) Environmental crime (b) Destruction (c) Conservation (d) Preservation
2. What does ecocide aim to prevent?  
(a) Environmental degradation (b) Industrial growth  
(c) Urbanization (d) Agricultural expansion
3. How many countries consider ecocide a crime?  
(a) 12 (b) 20 (c) 30 (d) 40
4. When did the United Nations officially acknowledge ecocide as an international crime?  
(a) 2010 (b) 2000 (c) 1990 (d) 1980
5. Who was the first to draw a connection between environmental devastation and genocide?  
(a) Arthur Galston (b) Rachel Carson (c) Al Gore (d) Jane Goodall
6. What is the primary aim of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court?  
(a) Addressing major offenses (b) Environmental protection  
(c) Economic development (d) Social justice
7. Which of the following is NOT one of the four major offenses addressed by the Rome Statute?  
(a) Environmental destruction (b) Genocide  
(c) War crimes (d) Crimes against humanity
8. Which statute can hold a wrongdoer accountable for environmental destruction during times of armed conflict?  
(a) War crimes (b) Genocide  
(c) Crimes against humanity (d) Crime of aggression
9. Has India ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court?  
(a) No (b) Yes (c) Maybe (d) Unknown
10. What is the literal translation of "ecocide" from Greek and Latin?  
(a) Killing one's home (b) Destroying nature  
(c) Environmental crime (d) Conservation effort
11. Who coined the term "ecocide"?  
(a) Unknown (b) Arthur Galston (c) Rachel Carson (d) Greta Thunberg

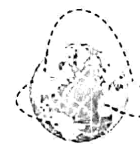
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12. Which court officially recognized ecocide as an international crime?  
(a) International Criminal Court (b) International Court of Justice  
(c) European Court of Human Rights (d) African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
13. What does the Rome Statute primarily address?  
(a) International crimes (b) Civil disputes (c) Domestic laws (d) Trade agreements
14. Which offense within the Rome Statute can hold individuals accountable for environmental destruction?  
(a) War crimes (b) Crimes against humanity  
(c) Genocide (d) Crime of aggression
15. How many countries have criminalized ecocide?  
(a) 12 (b) 20 (c) 30 (d) 40
16. When did ecocide become recognized as an international crime?  
(a) 2010 (b) 2000 (c) 1990 (d) 1980
17. Who addressed the US military's use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War?  
(a) Arthur Galston (b) Rachel Carson (c) Al Gore (d) Jane Goodall
18. What is the primary goal of ecocide laws?  
(a) Holding individuals and corporations accountable  
(b) Promoting economic growth  
(c) Encouraging environmental destruction  
(d) Supporting industrialization
19. What is the connection between ecocide and environmental degradation?  
(a) Ecocide causes environmental degradation (b) Ecocide prevents environmental degradation  
(c) No connection exists (d) Ecocide accelerates environmental preservation
20. What type of crime is ecocide considered?  
(a) Environmental (b) Economic (c) Political (d) Social



## 13<sup>th</sup> WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ABU DHABI - UAE

2024



March 2024

**TOPIC**  
in **NEWS**  
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# WTO 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference

## Why in News?

The 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) of WTO was organized in Abu Dhabi from 26 – 29 Feb, 2024.

It will be chaired by Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi (Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the United Arab Emirates).

### Explained:

World Trade Organization (WTO) is an international institution that regulates trade globally between its members to ensure smooth and fair flows of good, services and capital. The principles of the WTO include non-discrimination, transparency and competition on equal terms with the aim of ensuring economic growth and development around the world.

The heart of the system in the WTO is its dispute settlement system, which is a vital mechanism for resolving trade disputes among member countries. In case of disagreements over trade policies or practices, countries can take their claims to be settled by the WTO. In this process, there are normally consultations held between parties to get a solution that is acceptable to both sides. The Appellate Body at WTO gives them room for appeal against decisions made by a panel. If no mutually agreed resolution is found at this stage, then a panel has been put up to hear out the case and make proposals accordingly; parties may then challenge these recommendations if they wish. In doing so, it guarantees that any conflicts on business grounds are dealt with through due process under established rules towards maintaining predictability within global trading systems as well as justice in what constitutes fair-trade practices.

### Way to marks:

#### WTO 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference Highlights

##### Service Domestic Regulations Outcome

- It will be applied on a “Most Favoured Nation” Principle, meaning that they will benefit All WTO Members.
- As per WTO, it will help to Reduce Services Trade Costs by 10% for Lower – Middle Income Economies and 14% for Upper-Middle Income Economies, with Overall Savings of USD 127 billion.
- By 2032, Global Real Income is projected to increase by at least 0.3%, representing USD 301 billion and Global Service Exports are expected to rise by 0.8%, amounting to USD 206 billion.

##### *Appellate Body of WTO*

- *Established in 1995.*
- *Standing Body of 7 Persons appointed by DSB for 4 years term.*
- *It hears appeals from Reports issued by Panels in Disputes brought by WTO Members.*
- *Appellate Body Seat: Geneva (Switzerland)*



**E – Commerce Tariff Moratorium Extended**

- WTO Members agreed to extend Moratorium on e – Commerce Tariffs for 2 More Years, until the MC14.
  - India, Indonesia & South Africa had signaled their opposition to renewing e – Commerce Moratorium, but supported it in the end, after persuasion from the United Arab Emirates.
  - Moratorium prevents WTO Members from imposing Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions, a policy in place since 1998.

**Restoration of Appellate Body**

- India stressed the Restoration of Appellate Body, which has been inactive since Dec 2019.

**Opposed IFD**

- India and South Africa blocked a Key Proposal led by China at WTO, known as "Investment Facilitation Development Agreement" (IFD).

**IFD & Why does India oppose it?**

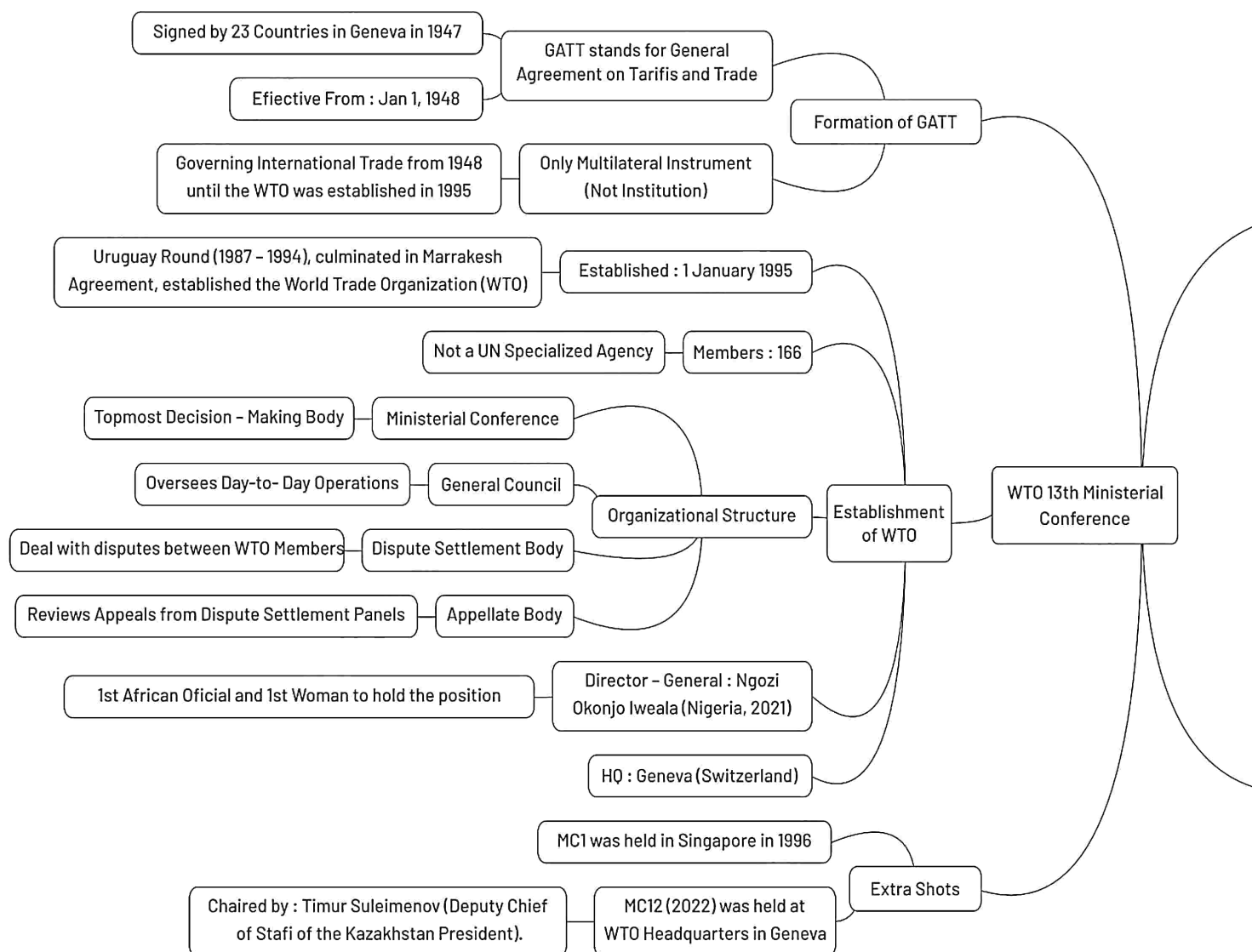
- *Proposed in 2017*
- *Aim: To streamline Investment Procedures and facilitates Cross – Border Investments.*
- *Criticism: Potentially Favours Countries heavily reliant on Chinese Investments and those with Sovereign Wealth Funds.*
- *India argued that IFD falls Outside the Scope of the WTO, as it is Not strictly a Trade Issue beyond the scope of the Marrakesh Agreement.*

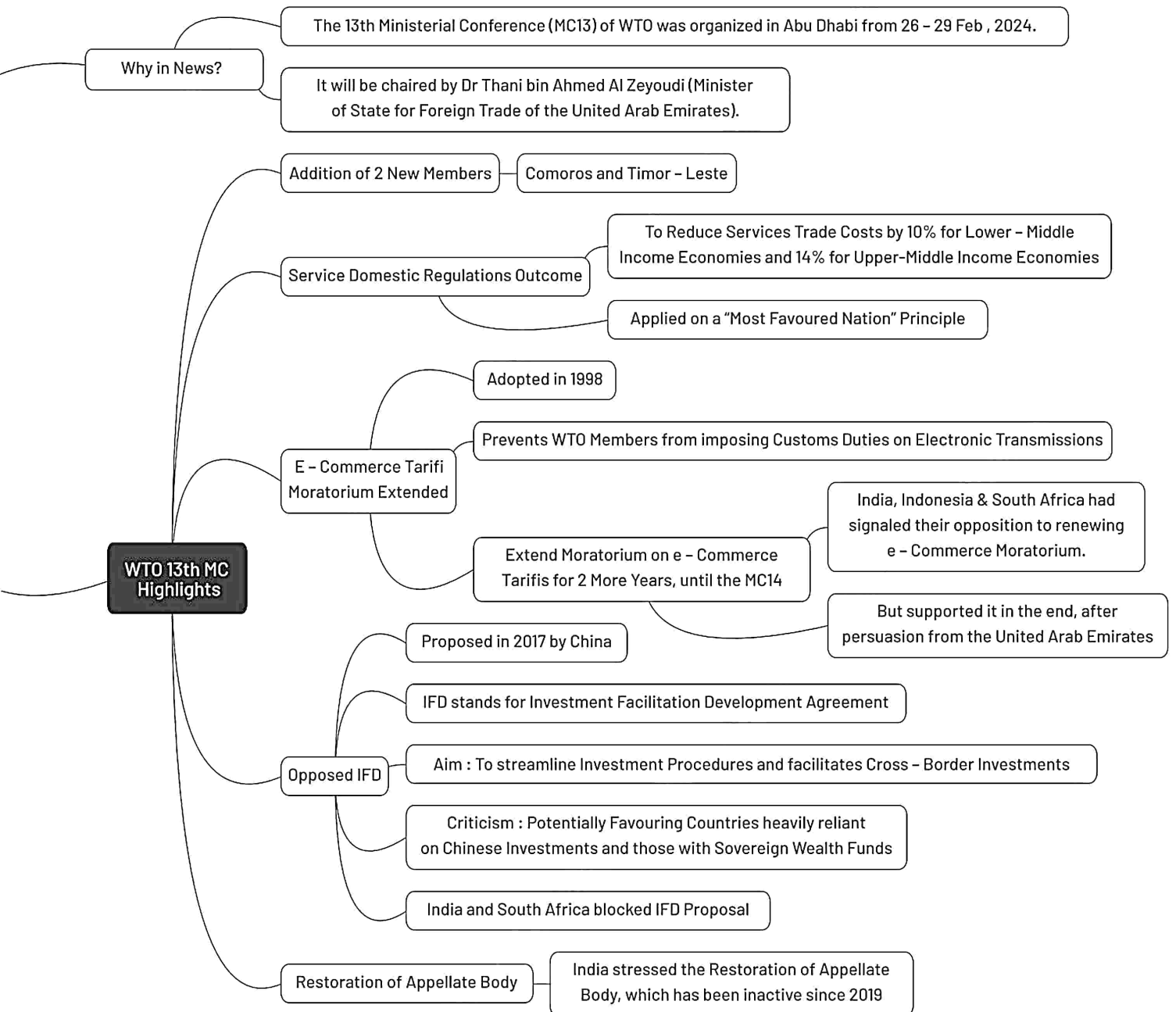
**Evolution of WTO**

- *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was signed by 23 Countries in Geneva in 1947.*
- *Effective From: Jan 1, 1948*
- *GATT was Only Multilateral Instrument (Not Institution).*
- *Governing International Trade from 1948 until the WTO was established in 1995.*
- *Uruguay Round (1987 – 1994), culminated in Marrakesh Agreement, established the World Trade Organization (WTO).*
- *Established: 1 January 1995*
- *Members: 166*
- *WTO is Not a UN Specialized Agency.*
- *Director – General of WTO: Ngozi Okonjo Iweala (Nigeria, 2021)*
  - *1<sup>st</sup> African Official and 1<sup>st</sup> Woman to hold the position.*
- *HQ: Geneva (Switzerland)*

**Pepper it With**

- India and US dispute on Solar Panels , Stalled dispute settlement System of WTO.





**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What principle will be applied to the Service Domestic Regulations Outcome?  
(a) Least Developed Country Principle (b) Most Favoured Nation Principle  
(c) Bilateral Trade Principle (d) Reciprocity Principle
2. According to the WTO, how much are service trade costs expected to reduce for lower-middle-income economies?  
(a) 5% (b) 10% (c) 15% (d) 20%
3. Until which Ministerial Conference has the e-Commerce Tariff Moratorium been extended?  
(a) MC12 (b) MC13 (c) MC14 (d) MC15
4. Which countries initially opposed renewing the e-Commerce Moratorium?  
(a) India, Indonesia & South Africa (b) USA, UK & Australia  
(c) China, Japan & Germany (d) Brazil, Mexico & Canada
5. What is the purpose of the e-Commerce Moratorium?  
(a) Imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions  
(b) Blocking online transactions  
(c) Regulating internet access  
(d) Preventing customs duties on electronic transmissions
6. Since when has the Appellate Body of the WTO been inactive?  
(a) December 2018 (b) December 2019 (c) December 2020 (d) December 2021
7. Which country led the proposal for the "Investment Facilitation Development Agreement" (IFD) at the WTO?  
(a) India (b) China (c) South Africa (d) United Arab Emirates
8. What was the stance of India and South Africa regarding the IFD proposal?  
(a) They supported it (b) They opposed it (c) They initiated it (d) They negotiated it
9. What is the projected increase in global real income by 2032 as a result of the Service Domestic Regulations Outcome?  
(a) USD 127 billion (b) USD 301 billion (c) USD 206 billion (d) USD 0.3 billion
10. How much are global service exports expected to rise by 2032 due to the Service Domestic Regulations Outcome?  
(a) 0.3% (b) 0.8% (c) 1.5% (d) 2.0%

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11. Who persuaded India, Indonesia, and South Africa to support the extension of the e-Commerce Tariff Moratorium?  
(a) China (b) United States  
(c) United Arab Emirates (d) European Union
12. What was India's stance on the restoration of the Appellate Body at the WTO?  
(a) Supported it (b) Opposed it (c) Negotiated it (d) Initiated it
13. Which type of agreement did India and South Africa block at the WTO?  
(a) Investment Facilitation Development Agreement (IFD)  
(b) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)  
(c) Environmental Protection Agreement (EPA)  
(d) Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA)
14. What is the primary objective of the e-Commerce Tariff Moratorium?  
(a) Encouraging customs duties on electronic transmissions  
(b) Reducing internet access  
(c) Preventing customs duties on electronic transmissions  
(d) Promoting online regulations
15. Who conducted the WTO 13th Ministerial Conference?  
(a) United Nations (b) European Union  
(c) World Trade Organization (d) G20
16. What is the primary purpose of the Service Domestic Regulations Outcome?  
(a) Increase service trade costs (b) Reduce service trade costs  
(c) Regulate service exports (d) Impose tariffs on services
17. Which income group of economies is expected to benefit the most from the reduction in service trade costs?  
(a) High-income economies (b) Upper-middle-income economies  
(c) Lower-middle-income economies (d) Low-income economies
18. Who provided opposition to the renewal of the e-Commerce Moratorium?  
(a) United States (b) India (c) European Union (d) China
19. How much is the projected reduction in service trade costs for upper-middle-income economies?  
(a) 5% (b) 10% (c) 14% (d) 20%
20. What is the estimated overall savings due to the reduction in service trade costs as per the WTO?  
(a) USD 127 billion (b) USD 206 billion (c) USD 301 billion (d) USD 500 billion



## Thailand's Concern over India's Agriculture Subsidy

### Why in News?

Recently, Thailand's Ambassador to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) accused India of Exporting Rice at Unfairly Low Prices funded by Government Subsidy. .

Thailand stated that India's Public Distribution System (PDS), under which the Government procures Essential Food Items from Producers and Sells them to the Public at Low Rates, is Not for the People but for “Capturing” the Export Market.

### Explained:

The Public Distribution System (PDS) is a government-run program in many countries, providing subsidized essential food items to low-income households. While crucial for ensuring food security and alleviating poverty, PDS operations can distort international markets and raise concerns under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. Heavy subsidies on agricultural production or distribution through PDS can lead to artificially low domestic prices, these grains are then sold in international market making it difficult for local producers in importing country to compete with subsidized imports on the global market. This can disrupt international trade, as subsidized exports flood foreign markets, undercutting local producers and distorting global prices.

Under WTO regulations, such distortions caused by PDS subsidies may face scrutiny and challenge through dispute settlement mechanisms. Under the World Trade Organization (WTO), subsidies are categorized into green, amber, and blue subsidies. Green subsidies, aimed at sustainable development and environmental conservation, are generally permitted. Amber subsidies, which directly affect production and trade by distorting prices, are subject to reduction commitments. Examples include price support and export subsidies. Blue subsidies, considered less trade-distorting, are allowed under specific conditions outlined in the WTO Agreement on Agriculture. They include programs aimed at limiting production or preventing surpluses, such as land retirement schemes.

Thus, Indian trade is much highly subsidized which breaks the limits of the highest permissible subsidy allowed under WTO.

### Way to marks:

#### Thailand's Concerns Regarding India's Agriculture Subsidy

Trade Distortion and Impact on Global Food Prices

- Thailand views India's Public Stockholding Programme (PSH) as Highly Subsidised, distorting Global Food Prices.

- Subsidized Agricultural Production can lead to Overproduction and Lower Prices, making it difficult for Unsubsidized Competitors like Thailand to compete in the Global Market.

#### Violation of WTO Regulations

- India's breach of the "De Minimis Limit" for Rice Subsidies is a violation of WTO Regulations.
- This breach not only affects the Competitive Landscape but also undermines the Principles of Fair Trade established by the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture.
- The WTO norms say that the Support given should be within 10% De Minimis Limit.
  - India informed the WTO that the Value of its Rice Production in 2019-20 was USD 46.07 billion while it gave Subsidies worth USD 6.31 billion or 13.7%, as against the permitted 10%.

#### **Cairns Group**

- *Established: 1986 (Cairns, Australia)*
- *Members: 19 Agricultural Exporting Countries, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Pakistan, and New Zealand.*
- 1. *India is Not a Member of Cairns Group.*
- *Stance: Advocates for Liberalization of Agricultural Trade*

#### Desire for Agricultural Trade Liberalization

- As part of the Cairns Group, Thailand advocates for Agricultural Trade Liberalization.

#### **India's Concerns Related to WTO Subsidy Norm**

#### Comparison with Developed Countries

- India emphasises the stark difference between Subsidies it provides to Farmers compared to Developed Countries like the US and EU (European Union).
  - While India's Subsidy per Farmer is Relatively Low at USD 300, the Subsidies provided by the US and EU can be as high as USD 40,000 per Farmer.

#### **WTO's Peace Clause**

- *As an Interim Measure, WTO Members agreed on a mechanism called "Peace Clause" in Dec 2013 and pledged to negotiate Permanent Solution.*
- *Under Peace Clause, WTO Members agreed to Refrain from challenging Any Breach in the Prescribed Ceiling by a Developing Nation at Dispute Settlement Forum of WTO.*
- *This clause will stay till a Permanent Solution is found to Food Stockpiling Issue.*

#### Breach of De Minimis Limit

- India acknowledges that it breached 10% De Minimis Limit for Subsidies, which triggered the "Peace Clause" established in 2013.
  - However, India has questioned the way Subsidies are calculated at the WTO, saying it is calculated at a Fixed and Outdated 1986-88 Price, which Overestimates the Subsidy.
  - India is seeking to change it at the WTO Negotiations on Agriculture.

#### **G – 33 Group**

- *Established: 2003*
- *Members: 48 Developing Countries (Originally 33) including India, China, Cuba.*
- *Stance: Advocates for Special Treatment for Developing Countries in Agricultural Trade Negotiations.*

#### Need for Permanent Solution

- India, along with a Group of Developing Countries, advocates for a Permanent Solution regarding Public Stockholding for Food Grains.
- **Aim:** To provide Greater Flexibility to Developing Countries in providing Farm Support without facing challenges for Breaching Subsidy Levels.

# WTO AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE (AoA)

WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) is a key part of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and is one of the three main pillars of the WTO.

## FEATURES

- Market access (Promote market access for agricultural products by reducing trade barriers)
- Domestic support (Subsidy Boxes are included in this)
- Export subsidies (Reduce the use of export subsidies, which can distort trade)

## SUBSIDY BOXES

### Amber Box Subsidies:

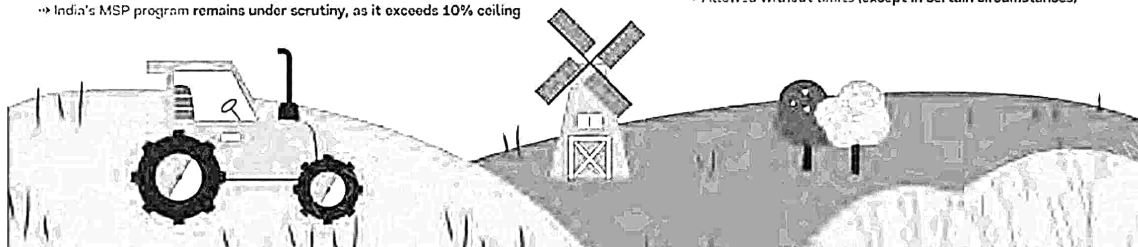
- Can distort international trade by making a country's products cheaper in comparison to those of other countries
- Examples: Subsidies for inputs such as fertilisers, seeds, electricity, irrigation, and Minimum Support Price (MSP)
- Amber box is used for all domestic support measures that are deemed to distort production and trade
- As a result, the signatories are required to commit to reducing domestic supports that fall into the amber box
- Members who do not make these commitments must keep their amber box support within 5-10% of their value of production. (De Minimis Clause)
  - 10% for developing countries
  - 5% for developed countries
- India's MSP program remains under scrutiny, as it exceeds 10% ceiling

### Blue box Subsidies:

- "Amber box with conditions" — designed to reduce distortion
- Any support that would normally be in the amber box is placed in the blue box if it requires farmers to limit production
- These subsidies aim to limit production by imposing production quotas or requiring farmers to set aside part of their land
- At present there are no limits on spending on blue box subsidies

### Green Box Subsidies:

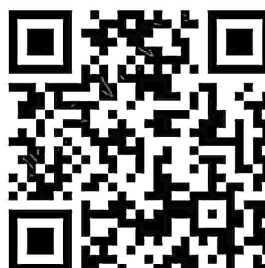
- Domestic support measures that don't cause trade distortion or at most cause minimal distortion
- These subsidies are government funded without any price support to crops
- Also include environmental protection and regional development programmes
- Allowed without limits (except in certain circumstances)



## Pepper it With

- Agricultural Exports of India , International Rice research institute , Golden Rice.

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**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is Thailand's primary concern regarding India's agricultural subsidy policies?  
(a) Overproduction of rice (b) Underproduction of rice  
(c) Distortion of global food prices (d) Unfair competition in the local market
2. Which Indian government scheme is accused by Thailand of distorting global rice prices?  
(a) Public Stockpile of Rice Scheme (PSH) (b) Essential Food Items Procurement Scheme (EFIPS)  
(c) Market Price Stabilization Scheme (MPSS) (d) Agricultural Production Subsidy Scheme (APSS)
3. What is the primary concern raised by Thailand regarding India's Public Stockholding Programme (PSH)?  
(a) Violation of environmental regulations (b) Violation of labor laws  
(c) Violation of WTO regulations (d) Violation of import/export laws
4. According to Thailand, what is the consequence of India's highly subsidized agricultural production?  
(a) Decreased rice production in India (b) Increased rice production in India  
(c) Distortion of global rice prices (d) Decreased rice consumption in India
5. What does India claim regarding the subsidies it provides to farmers compared to developed countries like the US and EU?  
(a) Indian subsidies are higher than those of the US and EU  
(b) Indian subsidies are relatively low compared to those of the US and EU  
(c) Indian subsidies are irrelevant compared to those of the US and EU  
(d) Indian subsidies are non-existent compared to those of the US and EU
6. How does India justify breaching the 10% De Minimis Limit for subsidies?  
(a) India argues that the De Minimis Limit is outdated  
(b) India claims that the De Minimis Limit unfairly favors developed countries  
(c) India states that the De Minimis Limit does not apply to agricultural subsidies  
(d) India denies breaching the De Minimis Limit
7. What triggered the "Peace Clause" established in 2013 according to India?  
(a) Breach of environmental regulations (b) Breach of labor laws  
(c) Breach of WTO subsidy regulations (d) Breach of import/export laws
8. What does India advocate for regarding public stockholding for food grains?  
(a) Temporary suspension (b) Permanent solution  
(c) Decrease in subsidies (d) Increase in subsidies

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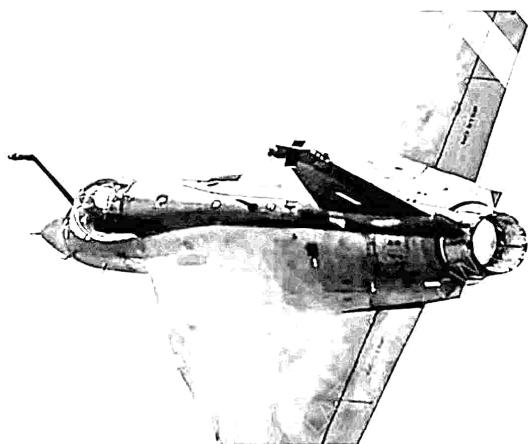
9. What is the primary aim of India's advocacy for a permanent solution regarding public stockholding for food grains?
  - (a) To provide greater flexibility to developed countries
  - (b) To provide greater flexibility to developing countries
  - (c) To restrict trade with other countries
  - (d) To increase subsidies for farmers
10. Which organization has accused India of exporting rice at unfairly low prices?
  - (a) United Nations
  - (b) European Union
  - (c) World Trade Organization
  - (d) Cairns Group
11. What does Thailand allege regarding India's Public Distribution System (PDS)?
  - (a) It benefits the Indian public
  - (b) It benefits the international market
  - (c) It is ineffective
  - (d) It is under government control
12. How does Thailand claim India's agricultural subsidies affect rice exports?
  - (a) They decrease rice exports
  - (b) They increase rice exports
  - (c) They have no effect on rice exports
  - (d) They fluctuate rice exports
13. What does Thailand argue about India's breach of the De Minimis Limit for rice subsidies?
  - (a) It is justified
  - (b) It is a violation of WTO regulations
  - (c) It is a form of trade liberalization
  - (d) It is beneficial for global food security
14. What is the primary concern raised by India regarding the calculation of subsidies at the WTO?
  - (a) It favors developing countries
  - (b) It is outdated
  - (c) It is too complex
  - (d) It is too lenient
15. How does India compare its subsidies to those provided by developed countries?
  - (a) India's subsidies are higher
  - (b) India's subsidies are lower
  - (c) India's subsidies are irrelevant
  - (d) India's subsidies are the same
16. What does India advocate for regarding agricultural trade liberalization?
  - (a) Temporary suspension
  - (b) Permanent solution
  - (c) Increase in subsidies
  - (d) Decrease in subsidies
17. Which organization does India support as part of the Cairns Group?
  - (a) United Nations
  - (b) World Bank
  - (c) World Trade Organization
  - (d) International Monetary Fund
18. What does Thailand accuse India of regarding the global rice market?
  - (a) Unfair competition
  - (b) Fair competition
  - (c) Overproduction
  - (d) Underproduction

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19. How does India justify breaching the De Minimis Limit for rice subsidies?
- (a) It claims the limit is too strict
  - (b) It argues that the limit does not apply to rice subsidies
  - (c) It states that the calculation method is flawed
  - (d) It denies breaching the limit
20. What is the primary aim of Thailand's concerns regarding India's agriculture subsidy?
- (a) Increase in rice production
  - (b) Decrease in rice production
  - (c) Ensuring fair trade practices
  - (d) Expansion of government control

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## India's Indigenous Fifth-gen Fighter Jet Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft

### Why in News?

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has cleared a Rs 15,000 crore project to design and develop the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), India's fifth-generation multirole fighter jet.

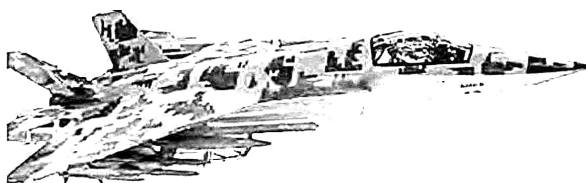
#### Explained:

India is situated in a place where it can face a two front war in the long term. In such a situation the country requires strong growth of its arsenal and fighter jets so as to tackle the situation. Currently India is in a situation where its indigenous fighter jets only have Light combat aircrafts with it which are having its own limitations like it cannot carry heavy warheads load, have a limited capacity to fly a distance etc.

Thus, the project, in order to produce more indigenous fighter jets and decrease our cost of aircraft. [As currently we purchase these jets from other countries which costs us a lot in long term like Purchase of 36 Rafale jets at a cost of 59000 cr.] India is moving towards a complete overhaul of its indigenous system and so we have started the above programme.

#### Way to marks:

##### **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)**



- AMCA is India's fifth-generation fighter multirole fighter jet.
- This aircraft will be bigger than other fighters in the Indian Air Force inventory.
- The aircraft will put India in a select group of nations that have their own fifth-generation fighter aircraft.
- Organisations involved
- The Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) under the DRDO will be the nodal agency for executing the programme and designing the aircraft.
  - The Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) is a government agency that designs and develops the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) program for India's Air Force and Navy. The ADA is part of the Department of Defence Research and Development (DR&D) of India's Ministry of Defence.
- It will be manufactured by state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
  - Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is a public sector aerospace and defense company in India. It was established on December 23, 1940 in Bengaluru, and is one of the world's oldest and largest aerospace and defense manufacturers.

### Features

- **Stealth:** The 25-tonne twin-engine aircraft will have advanced stealth features to avoid detection by enemy radar.
- **Fuel & Weapons:** The aircraft will have a large, concealed internal fuel tank of 6.5-tonne capacity, and an internal weapons bay for a range of weapons, including indigenous weapons, to be buried in its belly.
- **Engine:** The AMCA Mk1 variant will have the US-built GE414 engine of the 90 kilonewton (kN) class.
- The more advanced AMCA Mk2 will fly on the more powerful 110kN engine.
- This will be developed indigenously by DRDO's Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE) in collaboration with a foreign defence major.

### Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)

- CCS is a cabinet committee of the GoI that acts as the apex body when it comes to the appointments of the officials in the national security bodies.
  - It also makes all the important decisions on defence policy and expenditure and, generally, all matters of India's security.
  - The Committee is chaired by the Prime Minister of India.

### About Cabinet Committees :

- They are an organizational device to lessen the enormous workload of the Cabinet. They facilitate an in-depth examination of policy issues and effective coordination. They are based on the principles of division of labour and effective delegation.
- The Prime Minister constitutes Standing Committees of the Cabinet and sets out the specific functions assigned to them. He can add or reduce the number of committees.
- They are primarily extra constitutional in nature and are not mentioned in the Constitution.
- Presently, there are eight Cabinet Committees which are :  
 Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committee on Accommodation, Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, Cabinet Committee on Political affairs, Cabinet Committee on Security, Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth, Cabinet Committee on Employment & Skill Development.

### Fifth-generation fighter jets



- These are designed to carry out a range of missions, such as air-to-air combat and ground attack.
- They have plain surfaces, specially shaped exhaust nozzles, and engines located in the plane's body to hide heat signatures.
- They also have special radars to detect the aircraft's own radar emissions.

- Only a few countries have built a fifth-generation stealth fighter aircraft.
- The list of the aircraft currently in service includes the F-22 Raptor and F-35A Lightning II of the US, the Chinese J-20 Mighty Dragon, and the Russian Sukhoi Su-57.

**Other Fighter jets of India :**

- Rafale jet which was acquired from France
- Light Combat Aircraft designed by Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL).
- Multi role Fighter Aircraft which is under the Make in India Initiative.
- Sukho 30mk procured from Russia.

**Pepper it With**

- Bofors scam , Indian Airforce decreasing squadron with high level of attrition in the Aircrafts.

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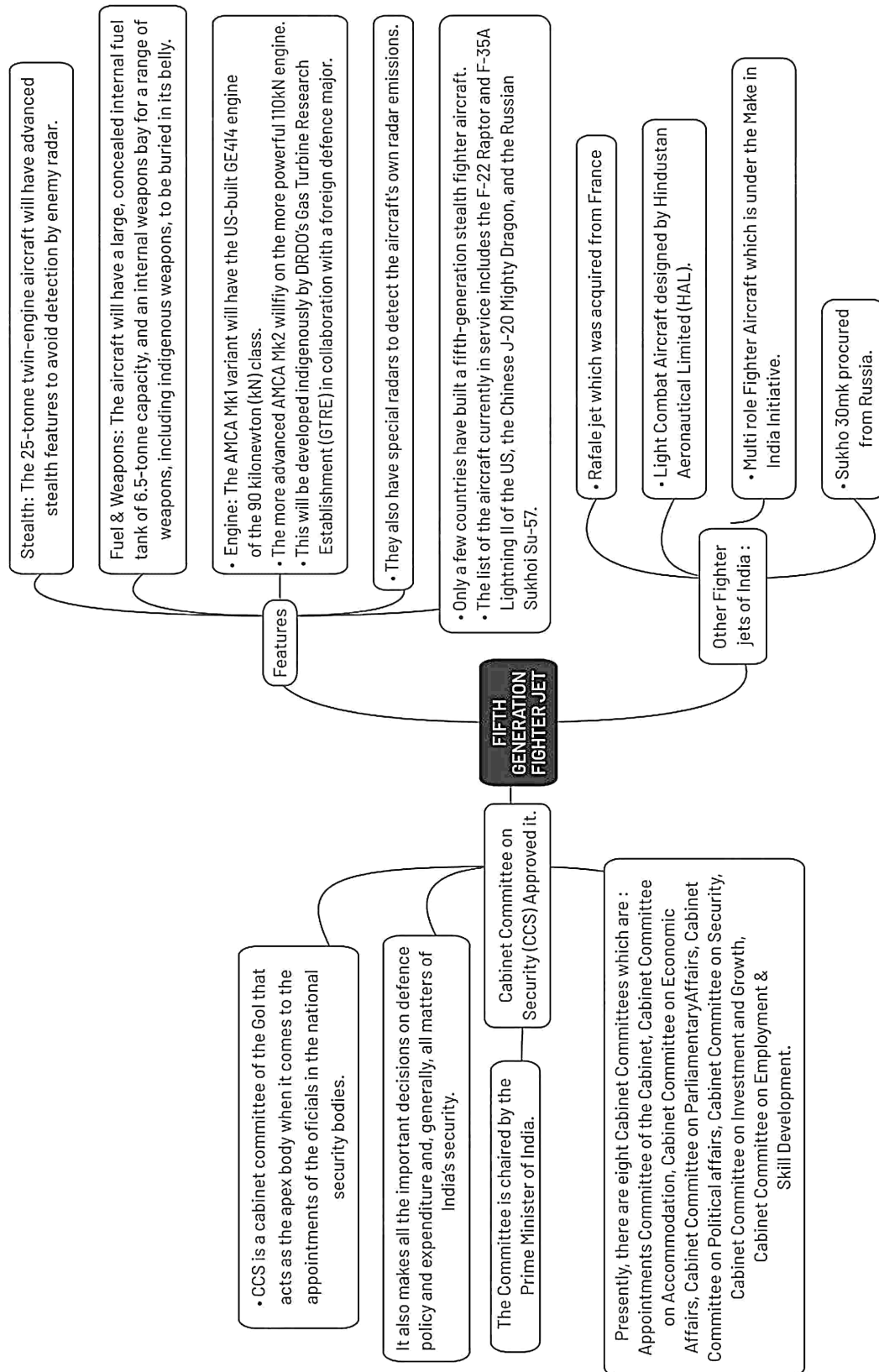
**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)?  
(a) India's fourth-generation fighter jet (b) India's fifth-generation fighter multirole fighter jet  
(c) India's third-generation fighter jet (d) India's sixth-generation fighter jet
2. Which organization is the nodal agency for executing the AMCA program and designing the aircraft?  
(a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)  
(b) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)  
(c) Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)  
(d) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
3. Which company will manufacture the AMCA?  
(a) Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) (b) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)  
(c) Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) (d) Reliance Defence Limited (RDL)
4. What is one of the key features of the AMCA related to avoiding detection by enemy radar?  
(a) Large external fuel tanks (b) Advanced radar systems  
(c) Low Flying Orbit (d) High-speed capabilities
5. Which engine will power the AMCA Mk1 variant?  
(a) GE414 engine (b) GE404 engine (c) F414 engine (d) F404 engine
6. What is the role of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)?  
(a) Making decisions on defense policy and expenditure  
(b) Overseeing economic affairs  
(c) Managing political affairs  
(d) Appointing officials in national security bodies
7. How many Cabinet Committees are presently active in India?  
(a) 5 (b) 6 (c) 7 (d) 8
8. What are fifth-generation fighter jets primarily designed for?  
(a) Air-to-ground combat (b) Ground attack only  
(c) Air-to-air combat and ground attack (d) Reconnaissance missions
9. What is one feature that distinguishes fifth-generation fighter jets from previous generations?  
(a) High speed (b) Low cost (c) Stealth technology (d) Maneuverability
10. Which country is not among the few that have built a fifth-generation stealth fighter aircraft?  
(a) China (b) India (c) United States (d) Russia

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11. What is the name of the fighter jet acquired from France by India?  
(a) F-22 Raptor (b) J-20 Mighty Dragon  
(c) Rafale (d) Su-57
12. Who designed the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)?  
(a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)  
(b) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)  
(c) Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)  
(d) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
13. What is the primary mission of the Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft under the Make in India initiative?  
(a) Air-to-air combat (b) Ground attack  
(c) Multi-role capabilities (d) Reconnaissance
14. Which country is the manufacturer of the Sukhoi 30mk procured by India?  
(a) United States (b) China (c) Russia (d) France
15. What is the main purpose of the Cabinet Committees?  
(a) Reduce the workload of the Cabinet (b) Oversee legislative affairs  
(c) Conduct foreign diplomacy (d) Coordinate international trade agreements
16. Which organization is responsible for designing and developing the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) program?  
(a) DRDO (b) ADA (c) ISRO (d) HAL
17. What is the primary function of the Standing Committees of the Cabinet?  
(a) Coordinate economic policies (b) Conduct foreign relations  
(c) Examine policy issues in-depth (d) Monitor defense expenditures
18. Which committee acts as the apex body for appointments in national security bodies?  
(a) Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (b) Cabinet Committee on Security  
(c) Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (d) Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs
19. What distinguishes the AMCA Mk2 from the Mk1 variant?  
(a) Engine power (b) Stealth capabilities (c) Weaponry (d) Size
20. What is the primary advantage of stealth features in fifth-generation fighter jets?  
(a) Increased maneuverability (b) Enhanced visibility  
(c) Reduced radar detection (d) Higher speed capabilities





## INDIA INDONESIA



# Mou Signed Between RBI and The Bank Of Indonesia

## Why in News?

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Bank Indonesia (BI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishing a framework to promote the use of local currencies (the Indian Rupee (INR) and the Indonesian Rupiah (IDR)) for cross-border transactions.
  - Earlier in 2023 India and Malaysia announced that they will settle trade in INR in addition to other currencies.

## Explained:

Trading in individual currency has been a major motto of Government in the current environment. This has lead us to make practises such as trading in individual currency with many of our neighbouring countries. Regional currency trading provides individual countries with several key benefits.

First, it reduces exchange rate risk by protecting businesses from currency fluctuations, providing stability and confidence in the local market. This position encourages investment and encourages economic growth in in the country. Second, local currencies reduce the cost of doing business, making domestic products and services more globally competitive. By eliminating currency conversion, businesses can increase their trade competitiveness and potentially increase exports, improving the country's balance of trade Overall , regional currency trading enables individual countries to exert greater economic control, leading to stability, lower costs and increased competitiveness around the world.

## Way to marks:

### Key highlights of MOU

- The primary objective of the MoU is to facilitate bilateral transactions in INR and IDR, covering all current account transactions, permissible capital account transactions, and other economic and financial transactions as mutually agreed upon by both countries.
- The framework enables exporters and importers to invoice and pay in their respective domestic currencies, thereby fostering the development of an INR-IDR foreign exchange market. This approach optimizes costs and settlement time for transactions.





### India-Indonesia Relations

- **Commercial Relations:**
  - Indonesia has emerged as the second largest trading partner of India in the ASEAN region.
  - Bilateral trade has increased from USD 4.3 billion in 2005-06 to USD 38.84 billion in 2022-23.
- **Political Relations:**
  - Both countries were chief supporters of independence for Asian and African countries, leading to the Bandung Conference of 1955 and the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961.
  - Since India adopted the 'Look East Policy' in 1991, there has been rapid development in bilateral relations.
  - Both countries are members of G20, East Asia Summit and the United Nations.
- **Cultural Relations:**
  - The Hindu, Buddhist and later Muslim faiths travelled to Indonesia from the shores of India. The stories from the great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata form a source of Indonesian folk art and dramas.
  - There are approximately 100,000 people of Indian origin in Indonesia, mainly located in Greater Jakarta, Medan, Surabaya, and Bandung.

### Related terms:

#### Internationalisation of Rupee :

- Internationalization of rupees is a process that involves increasing use of the local currency in cross-border transactions.
- It involves promoting the rupee for import and export trade and then other current account transactions followed by its use in capital account transactions.

### Efforts for the Internationalisation of the Rupee

- **Liberalisation of Capital Markets:**  
India increased the availability of rupee-denominated financial instruments, such as bonds (Masala Bond) and derivatives, to enhance the rupee's appeal.
  - **Promotion of Digital Payment Systems:**
    - Initiatives like the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) have facilitated digital transactions in rupees.
- Recently, Sri Lanka and Mauritius have adopted UPI.

**Vostro account**

Vostro account is an account that a domestic bank holds for a foreign bank in the domestic bank's currency i.e rupee.

**How does the Vostro account function?**

When an Indian importer wants to make a payment to a foreign trader in rupees, the amount will be credited to this Vostro account.

Similarly, when an Indian exporter has to be paid for goods and services in rupees, this Vostro account will be deducted and the amount credited to the exporter's regular account

- **Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs):**

- India permitted authorized banks from 18 countries

(Ex. Russia and Malaysia) to open Special Vostro

Rupee Accounts (SVRAs) for settling payments in rupees at market-determined exchange rates.

- **Currency Swap Agreements:** Signed by the RBI with several countries (Ex. Japan, Sri Lanka and SAARC members) enables the exchange of rupee and foreign currency between respective central banks, bolstering the international usage of the rupee.
- **Bilateral Trade Agreements:** The government's signing of bilateral trade agreements with other countries has facilitated greater cross-border trade and investment, promoting the use of the rupee in international transactions

**Pepper it With**

- UPI and its working around the world, Capital Account convertibility in India.

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**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is the primary objective of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Indonesia?
  - (a) Facilitate bilateral transactions in USD and IDR
  - (b) Enhance cultural exchange programs
  - (c) Foster the development of an INR-IDR foreign exchange market
  - (d) Strengthen political relations between the two countries
2. Which country has emerged as the second largest trading partner of India in the ASEAN region?
  - (a) Thailand
  - (b) Indonesia
  - (c) Vietnam
  - (d) Malaysia
3. What was the bilateral trade between India and Indonesia in 2022-23?
  - (a) USD 4.3 billion
  - (b) USD 20 billion
  - (c) USD 38.84 billion
  - (d) USD 50 billion
4. What is the primary goal of the Internationalisation of the Rupee?
  - (a) Increasing use of foreign currencies in India
  - (b) Promoting the use of the rupee in cross-border transactions
  - (c) Decreasing the value of the rupee in international markets
  - (d) Encouraging the use of gold as a standard currency
5. What is a Vostro account?
  - (a) An account that a foreign bank holds for a domestic bank
  - (b) An account that a domestic bank holds for a foreign bank
  - (c) A type of digital payment system
  - (d) A special type of bond issued by the Indian government
6. How does a Vostro account function in international transactions?
  - (a) It facilitates digital payments between individuals
  - (b) It holds funds for foreign banks in their local currency
  - (c) It enables currency exchange at market-determined rates
  - (d) It supports cross-border trade agreements
7. What are Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs) used for?
  - (a) Facilitating bilateral trade agreements
  - (b) Settling payments in rupees at market-determined exchange rates
  - (c) Promoting cultural exchange programs
  - (d) Supporting digital payment systems

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8. What is the role of Currency Swap Agreements in the internationalisation of the rupee?
  - (a) They enable the exchange of rupee and foreign currency between respective central banks
  - (b) They facilitate currency exchange for tourists
  - (c) They regulate the value of the rupee in international markets
  - (d) They promote the use of cryptocurrencies in international transactions
9. Which initiative has facilitated digital transactions in rupees?
  - (a) Unified Payments Interface (UPI)
  - (b) Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs)
  - (c) Currency Swap Agreements
  - (d) Liberalisation of Capital Markets
10. What is the significance of the "Look East Policy" in India-Indonesia relations?
  - (a) It led to the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement
  - (b) It resulted in rapid development in bilateral relations between India and Indonesia
  - (c) It focused on economic development within India
  - (d) It strengthened political relations between India and Indonesia
11. Which historical event involved both India and Indonesia as chief supporters?
  - (a) Formation of the United Nations
  - (b) Bandung Conference of 1955
  - (c) Independence of India from British rule
  - (d) Treaty of Versailles
12. How many countries have authorized banks to open Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs)?
  - (a) 12
  - (b) 15
  - (c) 18
  - (d) 20
13. What is the primary role of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)?
  - (a) Overseeing economic affairs
  - (b) Making decisions on defense policy and expenditure
  - (c) Conducting foreign diplomacy
  - (d) Managing cultural exchange programs
14. Which organization designed and developed the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) program?
  - (a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
  - (b) Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)
  - (c) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
  - (d) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
15. What is the primary function of the Standing Committees of the Cabinet?
  - (a) Conducting foreign relations
  - (b) Examine policy issues in-depth
  - (c) Monitoring defense expenditures
  - (d) Overseeing legislative affairs
16. How do exporters and importers benefit from the MoU between India and Indonesia?
  - (a) They can invoice and pay in their respective domestic currencies
  - (b) They can only use USD for transactions
  - (c) They receive subsidies from the government
  - (d) They face increased costs and settlement times

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17. What is the purpose of promoting the use of the rupee in cross-border transactions?
- (a) To increase the value of foreign currencies
  - (b) To decrease the value of the rupee
  - (c) To optimize costs and settlement time for transactions
  - (d) To encourage the use of gold as a standard currency
18. Which countries are involved in the Currency Swap Agreements with India?
- (a) Russia and China
  - (b) Japan and Sri Lanka
  - (c) United States and Canada
  - (d) United Kingdom and Australia
19. How has the bilateral trade agreement contributed to the internationalisation of the rupee?
- (a) By regulating the value of the rupee in international markets
  - (b) By increasing cross-border trade and investment
  - (c) By promoting the use of foreign currencies in India
  - (d) By discouraging digital payment systems
20. What is the significance of the stories from the great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata in Indonesia?
- (a) They form a source of Indonesian folk art and dramas
  - (b) They are used to promote tourism in India
  - (c) They have no cultural significance in Indonesia
  - (d) They are taught in Indonesian schools as part of the curriculum

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## Revamped Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance Scheme and UCPMP 2024

### Why in News?

- The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, announces the Revamped Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance Scheme (RPTUAS).

#### Explained:

The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) under the Department of Drugs and Pharmaceuticals has introduced an updated version of the Pharmaceutical Technology Development Assistance Scheme (RPTUAS). This program is designed to help the pharmaceutical industry improve its technology in order to meet global standards. By improving their technology, pharmaceutical companies can produce high-quality drugs, benefiting both industry and consumers.

Apart from RPTUAS, DoP has also unveiled the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024. The code provides guidelines for pharmaceutical companies to ensure sound marketing practices. It aims to prevent misleading promotions and promote ethical standards in the pharmaceutical market. Implementation of the UCPMP will enhance industry trust among consumers and healthcare providers, ultimately leading to better healthcare product and service decisions.

#### Way to marks:

- It aims to upgrade the technological capabilities of the pharmaceutical industry in alignment with global standards.
- Additionally, the DoP released the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024. The code aims to ensure responsible marketing practices and curb misleading promotional activities.

#### Explained

##### Key Features

- **Broadened Eligibility Criteria:**
  - Expanded eligibility beyond Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to include any pharmaceutical manufacturing unit with a turnover of less than Rs 500 crores.
- **Flexible Financing Options:** Introduces subsidies on a reimbursement basis, offering more flexibility than the traditional credit-linked approach.
- **Comprehensive Support for Compliance:** Supports a wide range of technological upgrades in line with revised Schedule-M and World Health Organization (WHO)- Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) standards, including HVAC systems, testing laboratories, clean room facilities, etc.

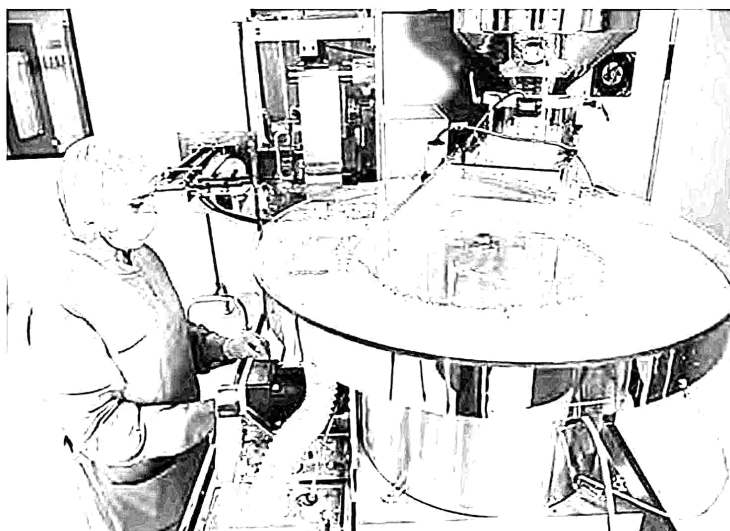


- **Dynamic Incentive Structure:** Offers incentives based on turnover, ranging from 20%, 15%, and 10% of investment under eligible activities for turnovers less than Rs. 50.00 crore, Rs. 50.00 to less than Rs. 250.00 crore, and Rs. 250.00 to less than Rs. 500.00 crore, respectively.
- **State Government Scheme Integration:** Allows integration with state government schemes to provide additional top-up assistance.
- **Enhanced Verification Mechanism:** Implements a robust verification mechanism through a Project Management Agency to ensure transparency and accountability.

#### Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance (PTUAS) Scheme

PTUAS helps drug companies upgrade their facilities to produce medicines that meet global standards. It was launched in July 2022.

- Incentives under the Scheme:
- Interest Subvention:
  - Up to a maximum of 5% per annum (6% for units owned and managed by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) of interest subvention for the loan component eligible under the scheme, capped at Rs. 10 crore.



#### Pharmaceutical Industry in India

##### Industry Scenario:

- The Economic Survey 2022-23 mentions that India is ranked 3rd worldwide in the production of pharma products by volume and 14th by value.
- The nation is the largest provider of generic medicines globally, occupying a 20% share in global supply by volume, and is the leading vaccine manufacturer globally.
- India supplies over 50% of Africa's requirement for generics, 40% of generic demand in the US and 25% of all medicine in the UK.

- India also accounts for approximately 60% of global vaccine demand. 70% of WHO's vaccines are sourced from India.

**Schemes Related to the Pharma Sector:**

- Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks Scheme.
- Pharmaceutical & Medical Devices Promotion and Development Scheme (PMPDS).
- Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for pharmaceuticals.
- National Medical Device Policy 2023.

**What are Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)?**

- GMP is a system for ensuring that products are consistently produced and controlled according to quality standards.
- It is designed to minimize the risks involved in any pharmaceutical production that cannot be eliminated through testing the final product.
  - WHO (World Health Organization) has established detailed guidelines for GMP. Many countries have formulated their own requirements for GMP based on WHO GMP.
  - The GMP system was first incorporated in India in 1988 in Schedule M of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, and the last amendment was done in June 2005. WHO-GMP standards are now part of the revised Schedule M.

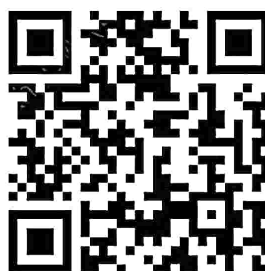
**About WHO:**

- World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations' specialized agency for Health was founded in 1948 and has currently 194 member states, headquartered in Geneva.
- It is an inter-governmental organization and works in collaboration with its member states usually through the Ministries of Health.

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**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is the primary aim of the Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance (PTUAS) Scheme?  
(a) To promote bulk drug parks  
(b) To provide incentives for pharmaceutical marketing practices  
(c) To assist drug companies in upgrading their facilities  
(d) To regulate compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)
2. Which minister is responsible for overseeing the Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance (PTUAS) Scheme?  
(a) Minister of Finance  
(b) Minister of Health and Family Welfare  
(c) Minister of Commerce and Industry  
(d) Minister of Pharmaceuticals
3. What is the main objective of the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024?  
(a) To broaden eligibility criteria for pharmaceutical companies  
(b) To provide flexible financing options for the pharmaceutical industry  
(c) To ensure responsible marketing practices and curb misleading promotional activities  
(d) To integrate state government schemes with central government schemes
4. Which agency implements a robust verification mechanism for the PTUAS Scheme?  
(a) World Health Organization (WHO)  
(b) Project Management Agency  
(c) Ministry of Pharmaceuticals  
(d) Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA)
5. What is the maximum interest subvention provided under the PTUAS Scheme for the loan component?  
(a) 3% per annum  
(b) 5% per annum  
(c) 7% per annum  
(d) 10% per annum
6. According to the Economic Survey 2022-23, where does India rank worldwide in the production of pharmaceutical products by volume?  
(a) 1st  
(b) 2nd  
(c) 3rd  
(d) 4th
7. What percentage of global vaccine demand is accounted for by India?  
(a) 30%  
(b) 40%  
(c) 50%  
(d) 60%
8. Which country is the largest provider of generic medicines globally?  
(a) China  
(b) India  
(c) United States  
(d) Russia
9. What is the main purpose of the Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks Scheme?  
(a) To promote the production of generic medicines  
(b) To encourage the development of medical devices  
(c) To establish parks for recreational drug use  
(d) To promote the production of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs)

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10. What is the function of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in the pharmaceutical industry?  
(a) To maximize profits for pharmaceutical companies  
(b) To ensure consistent quality in pharmaceutical production  
(c) To promote competition among pharmaceutical manufacturers  
(d) To regulate drug pricing in the market
11. When were WHO-GMP standards first incorporated into Indian regulations?  
(a) 1965                      (b) 1975                      (c) 1988                      (d) 1995
12. What is the primary purpose of the National Medical Device Policy 2023?  
(a) To regulate pharmaceutical marketing practices  
(b) To promote the production of medical devices  
(c) To enhance pharmaceutical technology upgradation  
(d) To establish uniform codes for pharmaceutical industry
13. Which organization is responsible for setting detailed guidelines for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)?  
(a) Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA)                      (b) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
(c) World Health Organization (WHO)                      (d) Indian Medical Association (IMA)
14. What percentage of the global supply of generics does India occupy by volume?  
(a) 10%                      (b) 20%                      (c) 30%                      (d) 40%
15. Which scheme provides subsidies on a reimbursement basis for pharmaceutical technology upgradation?  
(a) Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks Scheme  
(b) Pharmaceutical & Medical Devices Promotion and Development Scheme  
(c) Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for pharmaceuticals  
(d) Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance (PTUAS) Scheme
16. What is the main focus of the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024?  
(a) Regulation of pharmaceutical exports                      (b) Promotion of pharmaceutical research  
(c) Ensuring responsible marketing practices                      (d) Encouraging pharmaceutical innovation
17. What is the main purpose of the Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for pharmaceuticals?  
(a) To provide incentives for marketing activities  
(b) To promote the production of medical devices  
(c) To enhance pharmaceutical exports  
(d) To encourage domestic manufacturing of pharmaceutical products

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18. How does the PTUAS Scheme support compliance with international standards?
  - (a) By providing subsidies for marketing expenses
  - (b) By offering incentives for hiring international consultants
  - (c) By assisting in the upgrade of facilities to meet GMP standards
  - (d) By funding research and development projects
19. What is the role of the Ministry of Pharmaceuticals in the pharmaceutical industry?
  - (a) Regulating drug pricing
  - (b) Promoting responsible marketing practices
  - (c) Overseeing drug manufacturing standards
  - (d) Encouraging pharmaceutical research and development
20. What percentage of interest subvention is provided for units owned and managed by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the PTUAS Scheme?
  - (a) 3% per annum
  - (b) 5% per annum
  - (c) 6% per annum
  - (d) 10% per annum

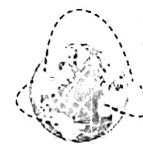
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## International Arms Transfer Report By SIPRI

### Why in News?

The latest data on international arms transfers has been released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). As per this report, India was the world's top arms importer between 2019-2023

#### Explained:

The report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on arms provides a comprehensive analysis of global arms trade and military expenditure. It offers insights into the trends, patterns, and dynamics shaping the international arms market. The SIPRI report tracks the flow of major conventional weapons and assesses the levels of military spending by countries worldwide.

One of the key aspects of the SIPRI report is its examination of arms transfers between countries and regions, highlighting the main suppliers and recipients of arms, as well as the types of weapons being traded. This information is crucial for understanding geopolitical dynamics and potential security risks. Additionally, the report sheds light on trends in military expenditure, revealing how much countries invest in defense and the factors driving these investments.

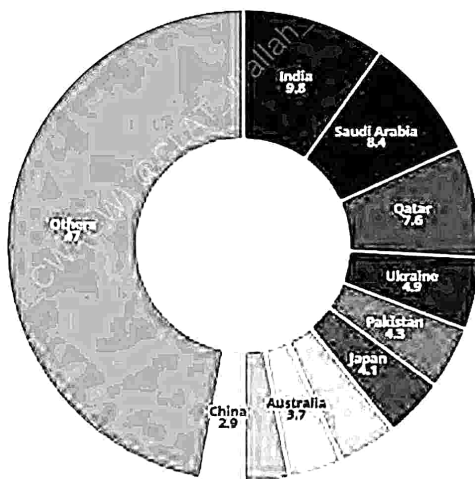
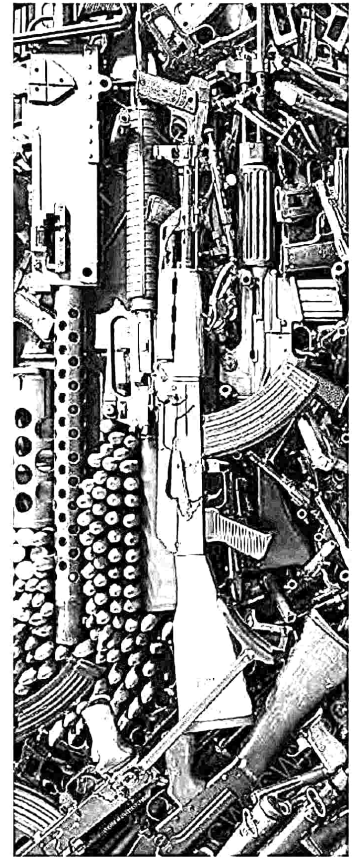
#### Way to marks:

#### Key Highlights of the report

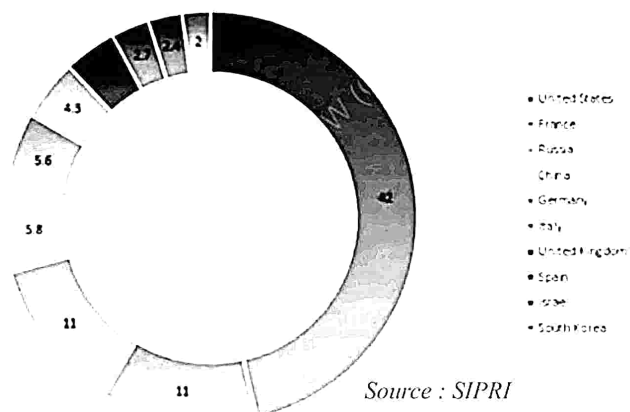
- India continues as the world's largest arms importer despite ongoing efforts to bolster its defense-industrial base.
  - Between 2019 and 2023, the country accounted for a significant 9.8% of the total global arms imports.
- Steady increase in arms import
  - 4.7% increase in India's arms imports between 2014-18 and 2019-23.
  - This growth is partially attributed to emergency procurements made in response to the prolonged military standoff with China.
- Changing Dynamics in Arms Suppliers
  - Russia (historically been India's primary weapons supplier), still accounted for 36% of its arms imports.
  - However, this trend is shifting, with India increasingly diversifying its sources to include Western countries and domestic manufacturers.



- The report highlights that the period between 2019-23 marked the first five-year span since 1960-64 where Russian deliveries comprised less than half of India's arms imports.
- Growing Role of Western Suppliers
  - France and the United States are emerging as key suppliers to India, collectively accounting for 46% of its arms imports.
  - This trend is expected to continue with significant contracts in the pipeline, such as India's procurement of 31 armed MQ-9B Sky Guardian drones from the US and 26 Rafale-M fighters from France.
- Global Arms Trade Landscape
  - Top importers : India is followed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Ukraine, Pakistan, Japan, Egypt, Australia, South Korea, and China.
  - Top exporters : United States leads with a 42% share, followed by France and Russia.
- China's Dominance in Supplying Pakistan
  - China plays a pivotal role as the primary arms supplier to Pakistan, with a substantial 61% of its exports directed towards Islamabad.
  - Additionally, China exports 11% of its arms to Bangladesh, further solidifying its influence in the region.



Share of Global Arms Exports (2019-2023)  
Source: SIPRI, March, 2024



#### Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

- It is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- Established in 1966, SIPRI is based in Stockholm, Sweden. It is regularly ranked among the most respected think tanks worldwide.

**Its mission is to:**

- undertake research and activities on security, conflict and peace;
- provide policy analysis and recommendations;
- facilitate dialogue and build capacities;
- promote transparency and accountability

**Government of India's Initiative for the Defence Sector****About the Strategic Partnership (SP) model:**

- The Strategic Partnership (SP) model is a defense manufacturing model that aims to increase the private sector's participation in domestic defense manufacturing. The model involves collaboration between a foreign original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and an Indian company to produce weapons systems, aircraft, submarines, or tanks for the Indian armed forces.

**Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020**

- Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) (erstwhile Defence Procurement Procedure or DPP), 2020 was released by Ministry of Defence (MoD).
  - 2020 Policy superseded Defence Procurement Procedure of 2016.
  - 1st Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) was promulgated in 2002.
- DAP contains Policies and Procedures for Procurement and Acquisition from the Capital Budget of the MoD in order to Modernise the Armed Forces including Coast Guard.
  - It enables Notification of a List of Weapons or Platforms that will be banned for Import.
- It focuses on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Defence Manufacturing and Indigenization of the Manufacturing Prices.

**DI Policy in Defence Sector**

- 74% under Automatic Route and beyond 74% through Government Route.
- **Aim :** To achieve a Turnover of Rs 1.75 lakh Crore, including Exports worth Rs 35000 Crore, by 2025
- **National Security Clause :** FDI in the Defence Sector shall be subject to Scrutiny on the Ground of National Security and the Government reserves the Right to Review Any Foreign Investment in the Defence Sector that may affect National Security.

**Related news:****Arms Exports from India:**

In the FY 2022-23, defence production in India crossed 1 lakh cr. and defence exports amounted to Rs. 16000 cr.

- PSUs exports Arms and Ammunition, Weapon Spares, Chemicals & Explosives, Parachutes, Leather and Clothing items to more than 30 countries worldwide e.g. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Germany, Belgium, Turkey, Egypt, Oman, Israel, Kenya, Nigeria, Botswana, Chile, Suriname and United States.
- The deal with the Philippines, signed in January 2022, focuses on the supply of the shore-based anti-ship variant of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile. This underscores the global demand for India's advanced defence capabilities and establishes the country as a reliable partner in the international arms market.

**Pepper it With** • CTBT report and India's rejection to sign the treaty, START treaty.

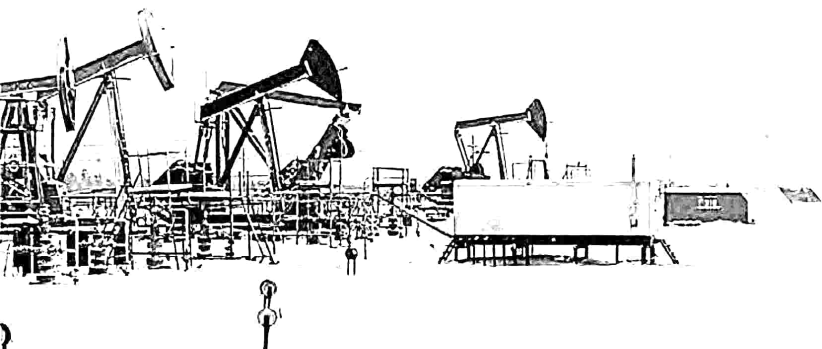


**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What percentage of the total global arms imports did India account for between 2019 and 2023?  
(a) 6.7% (b) 9.8% (c) 12.3% (d) 15.6%
2. What factor contributed to the increase in India's arms imports between 2014-18 and 2019-23?  
(a) Decreased military expenditures (b) Enhanced defense-industrial base  
(c) Prolonged military standoff with China (d) Reduction in global arms trade
3. Which country historically served as India's primary weapons supplier?  
(a) France (b) United States (c) Russia (d) China
4. What percentage of India's arms imports did Russia account for between 2019 and 2023?  
(a) 20% (b) 30% (c) 36% (d) 50%
5. Which countries collectively accounted for 46% of India's arms imports?  
(a) Russia and China (b) France and China  
(c) France and the United States (d) Russia and the United States
6. Which institute released the report on global arms imports?  
(a) Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)  
(b) United Nations Security Council  
(c) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)  
(d) North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
7. What is China's role in supplying arms to Pakistan?  
(a) Secondary supplier (b) Tertiary supplier (c) Primary supplier (d) Minimal supplier
8. Who is responsible for setting detailed guidelines for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)?  
(a) World Trade Organization (WTO)  
(b) International Standards Organization (ISO)  
(c) Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)  
(d) World Health Organization (WHO)
9. Which policy aims to increase the private sector's participation in domestic defense manufacturing?  
(a) Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 (b) National Medical Device Policy 2023  
(c) Strategic Partnership (SP) model (d) Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP)
10. What is the primary objective of the Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020?  
(a) To promote arms exports (b) To regulate arms imports  
(c) To modernize the armed forces (d) To restrict foreign direct investment (FDI)

**Current Affairs March 2024**

11. What is the target turnover set for the defence sector by 2025, according to the Defence Industry (DI) Policy?  
(a) Rs.50,000 Crore      (b) Rs.1.25 lakh Crore      (c) Rs.1.75 lakh Crore      (d) Rs.2.5 lakh Crore
12. Under the DI Policy, what percentage of FDI in the Defence Sector is permitted under the Automatic Route?  
(a) 49%      (b) 51%      (c) 74%      (d) 100%
13. Which country leads in arms exports with a 42% share?  
(a) France      (b) Russia      (c) United States      (d) China
14. In which fiscal year did India's defence production cross 1 lakh crore, with defence exports reaching Rs. 16000 crore?  
(a) 2020-21      (b) 2021-22      (c) 2022-23      (d) 2023-24
15. What was the focus of the deal signed with the Philippines in January 2022?  
(a) Supply of armed drones      (b) Transfer of missile technology  
(c) Joint military exercises      (d) Collaboration in cybersecurity
16. Which organization is based in Stockholm, Sweden, and is dedicated to research into conflict and armaments?  
(a) SIPRI      (b) NATO      (c) WHO      (d) IAEA
17. What is the primary mission of SIPRI?  
(a) Research into healthcare      (b) Conflict resolution  
(c) Research into armaments and disarmament      (d) Environmental conservation
18. What is the objective of the Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks Scheme?  
(a) To increase arms exports  
(b) To promote pharmaceutical research  
(c) To establish parks for recreational drug use  
(d) To promote the production of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs)
19. What is the role of the National Security Clause in the Defence Industry (DI) Policy?  
(a) To promote national security interests  
(b) To restrict foreign investments  
(c) To review foreign investments affecting national security  
(d) To streamline defence exports
20. Which country is the largest importer of arms according to the provided report?  
(a) Saudi Arabia      (b) India      (c) China      (d) Pakistan



# Global Methane Tracker 2024

## Why in News?

Methane emissions from fuel use in 2023 were close to being the highest ever at 120 million tonnes (Mt), according to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) Global Methane Tracker 2024.

### Explained:

The Methane Emissions Monitor report provides a comprehensive assessment of global methane emissions, using advanced monitoring techniques such as satellite data and ground measurements to quantify its impact on climate change. Reporting Regulators, Helps industry and environmental organizations prioritize mitigation strategies. Methane being a greenhouse gas which is 4 times more greenhouse capacity than CO<sub>2</sub> makes it very important to track it at large. The report raises awareness of the urgent need to address methane emissions and facilitates the transition to sustainable practices. Ultimately, the report plays an important role in accelerating global efforts to curb methane emissions and reduce their negative climate impacts.

### Way to marks:

#### About Global Methane Tracker

- It is an annual report released by the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- It is based on the most recently available data on methane emissions from the energy sector and incorporates new scientific studies, measurement campaigns, and information collected from satellites.

### Highlights of Global Methane Tracker 2024:

- Methane emissions from fuel use in 2023 were close to being the highest ever at 120 million tonnes (Mt). This is a small rise compared to 2022.
- Bioenergy, a form of renewable energy generated by plant and animal waste, caused another 10 million tons of emissions.
- Of the 120 Mt of methane that escaped into the atmosphere, around 80 million tons of methane emissions came from just 10 countries, The United States leads in methane emissions from oil and gas operations, and is “closely followed” by Russia. China, on the other hand, leads in emissions from coal operations.
- While studies suggested emissions are falling in some regions, overall emissions remain far too high to meet the world's climate goals.
- The world needs to slash methane emissions from fossil fuels by 75 percent by 2030 to achieve the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C.

- The IEA estimated that this goal would require about \$170 billion in spending. This is less than 5 percent of the income generated by the fossil fuel industry in 2023.

**Why is methane sometimes considered as more dangerous than CO<sub>2</sub>?**

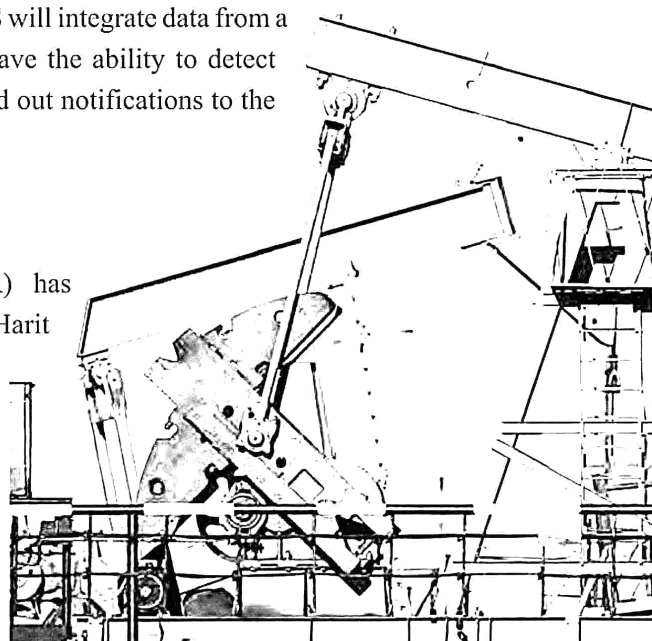
- Methane is a GHG, which is responsible for 30% of the warming since preindustrial times, second only to CO<sub>2</sub>. While CO<sub>2</sub> remains in the atmosphere for much longer than methane, methane is roughly 25 times more powerful at trapping heat in the atmosphere, and has an important short-term influence on the rate of climate change.
- **What is the International Energy Agency (IEA)?**  
It is an autonomous inter-governmental organisation within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) framework. It works with governments and industry to shape a secure and sustainable energy future for all. It is made up of 31 member countries, 13 association countries, and 5 accession countries.
  - India became the Associate partner of IEA in 2017 and is not a full member.
  - Other reports of IEA includes Oil Market report, World Energy Outlook report.etc

**Global Initiatives :**

- **Global Methane Pledge:**  
At the Glasgow climate conference (UNFCCC COP 26) in 2021, nearly 100 countries had come together in a voluntary pledge, referred to as the Global Methane Pledge, to cut methane emissions by at least 30% by 2030 from the 2020 levels.
- **Global Methane Initiative (GMI):**
  - GMI is a voluntary government and an informal international partnership having members from 45 countries including the US and Canada.
  - The forum has been created to achieve the reduction in global anthropogenic methane emissions through partnerships among the developed and the developing countries having economies in transition
- **Methane Alert and Response System (MARS):** MARS will integrate data from a large number of existing and future satellites that have the ability to detect methane emission events anywhere in the world, send out notifications to the relevant stakeholders to act on it.

**India's Initiatives :**

- **Harit Dhara' (HD):**  
Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed an anti-methanogenic feed supplement 'Harit Dhara' (HD), which can cut down cattle methane emissions by 17-20% and can also result in higher milk production.
- **India Greenhouse Gas Program:**
  - The India GHG Program led by WRI India (non-profit organization), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and The Energy and Resources



Institute (TERI) is an industry-led voluntary framework to measure and manage greenhouse gas emissions.

- The programme builds comprehensive measurement and management strategies to reduce emissions and drive more profitable, competitive and sustainable businesses and organisations in India.
- Bharat Stage VI norms implemented across the country.

**What is Methane?**

- Methane is the simplest hydrocarbon, consisting of one carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms (CH<sub>4</sub>).
- It is flammable and is used as a fuel worldwide.
- Methane is powerful greenhouse gas.
- Methane has more than 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over the first 20 years of its lifetime in the atmosphere.
- It has a shorter lifespan in the atmosphere compared to carbon dioxide.
- The common sources of methane are oil and natural gas systems, agricultural activities, coal mining, and wastes.

**Pepper it With**

- Cryosphere and Methane emission, Rice production and pollution in India.

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**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is the primary source of methane emissions from the energy sector?  
(a) Oil and natural gas systems (b) Coal mining  
(c) Agricultural activities (d) Bioenergy
2. Which organization releases the Global Methane Tracker annually?  
(a) World Bank  
(b) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
(c) International Energy Agency (IEA)  
(d) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
3. What is the estimated percentage of methane emissions from the top 10 emitting countries?  
(a) 50% (b) 60% (c) 70% (d) 80%
4. Which country leads in methane emissions from coal operations?  
(a) United States (b) Russia (c) China (d) India
5. According to the IEA, what percentage of methane emissions reduction is required by 2030 to meet the Paris Agreement goal?  
(a) 50% (b) 60% (c) 70% (d) 75%
6. What is the estimated spending required to achieve the methane emissions reduction goal by 2030?  
(a) \$100 billion (b) \$150 billion (c) \$170 billion (d) \$200 billion
7. Methane is approximately how many times more powerful at trapping heat in the atmosphere compared to carbon dioxide?  
(a) 10 times (b) 20 times (c) 25 times (d) 30 times
8. Which conference saw the voluntary pledge to cut methane emissions by at least 30% by 2030?  
(a) UN Climate Change Conference (COP 25) (b) Kyoto Protocol Summit  
(c) Copenhagen Summit (d) Glasgow Climate Conference (COP 26)
9. What is the primary objective of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI)?  
(a) Promote renewable energy (b) Achieve reduction in global methane emissions  
(c) Enhance agricultural productivity (d) Reduce deforestation
10. Which Indian initiative aims to measure and manage greenhouse gas emissions in industries?  
(a) Bharat Stage VI norms (b) Harit Dhara (HD)  
(c) India Greenhouse Gas Program (d) Methane Alert and Response System (MARS)

Current Affairs **March** 2024

11. What is the primary component of methane?  
(a) Carbon dioxide      (b) Oxygen      (c) Hydrogen      (d) Carbon
12. Which term describes a renewable energy generated by plant and animal waste that causes methane emissions?  
(a) Hydroelectricity      (b) Solar energy      (c) Bioenergy      (d) Wind energy
13. Methane has more than how many times the warming power of carbon dioxide over the first 20 years of its lifetime in the atmosphere?  
(a) 50 times      (b) 60 times      (c) 70 times      (d) 80 times
14. What is the lifespan of methane in the atmosphere compared to carbon dioxide?  
(a) Longer      (b) Shorter      (c) Equal      (d) Varies
15. What is the primary source of methane emissions from the agricultural sector?  
(a) Livestock digestion      (b) Paddy fields      (c) Fertilizer use      (d) Crop residues
16. Which organization developed the anti-methanogenic feed supplement 'Harit Dhara' (HD)?  
(a) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)  
(b) International Energy Agency (IEA)  
(c) World Resources Institute (WRI)  
(d) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
17. Methane emissions from which sector are primarily responsible for the 30% of warming since preindustrial times?  
(a) Industrial sector      (b) Transportation sector  
(c) Energy sector      (d) Agricultural sector
18. What is the primary objective of the Methane Alert and Response System (MARS)?  
(a) Reduce methane emissions from agriculture      (b) Detect methane emissions events worldwide  
(c) Implement methane mitigation strategies      (d) Enhance global methane monitoring
19. How many countries are members of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI)?  
(a) 25      (b) 35      (c) 45      (d) 55
20. Which greenhouse gas is responsible for the second-highest warming since preindustrial times, after carbon dioxide?  
(a) Methane      (b) Nitrous oxide      (c) Ozone      (d) Water vapor



March 2024

**TOPIC**  
in NEWS  
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# Human Development Index

## Why in News?

India has moved up a rank on the global Human Development Index (HDI), according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report 'Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarised world' released on March 13.

### Explained:

The Human Development Index (HDI) serves as a tool, for evaluating the welfare and progress of a nation's population. By taking into account factors it offers a comprehensive perspective on human advancement that goes beyond mere economic advancements. These factors encompass life expectancy from birth, educational attainment (measured by years of schooling for children and average years of schooling for adults).

Put simply the HDI indicates how effectively a country is addressing the health, education and standard of living of its citizens. It enables us to compare nations and identify areas requiring enhancement to ensure a quality of life for all. A higher HDI rating signifies good living conditions and opportunities for individuals, within that nation.

### Way to marks:

#### Highlights of the recent report

- The report stated that while India ranked 135 in 2021, it had moved up to 134 in 2022, placing the country in the medium human development category.
- A total of 193 countries were ranked in 2022 and 191 countries in 2021.
- In 2022, India saw improvements across all HDI indicators – life expectancy, education and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.
- Life expectancy rose from 67.2 to 67.7 years, expected years of schooling reached 12.6, mean years of schooling increased to 6.57 and GNI per capita saw an increase from \$6,542 to \$6,951.
  - According to census 2011, India's literacy rate is 73%
  - National Family Health Survey, literacy rate is 79%
- While the country has moved up in 2022, it is still behind its South Asian neighbours, such as Bangladesh (129th), Bhutan (125th), Sri Lanka (78th) and China (75th).

#### India's progress in reducing gender inequality

- India has also shown progress in reducing gender inequality and ranks 108 out of 166 countries in the Gender Inequality Index (GII) 2022.



- The GII measures gender inequalities in three key dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market.
- The country's GII value of 0.437 is better than the global average of 0.462 and the South Asian average of 0.478.
- India's performance in reproductive health is better than other countries in the medium human development group or South Asia.
- India's adolescent birth rate in 2022 was 16.3 (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19), an improvement from 17.1 in 2021.
- However, India also has one of the largest gender gaps in the labour force participation rate—a 47.8 percentage points difference between women (28.3%) and men (76.1%).

## HDI

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX



**LIFE EXPECTANCY  
AT BIRTH**



**AVERAGE EDUCATION  
LEVEL**









**STANDARD OF LIVING  
(GNP PER CAPITA)**

#### About Human Development Index

- The Index was developed by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq and is now used to assess a country's development as part of the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report.

Along with HDI, HDR also presents:

- Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI),
- Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI),
- Gender Inequality Index (GII) since 2010 and
- Gender Development Index (GDI) since 2014, a measure of a country's average achievements in three dimensions of human development:
  - A long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth;
  - knowledge, as measured by mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling; and
  - a decent standard of living, as measured by GNI per capita in PPP terms in US\$.
- This is expressed as a value between 0 and 1. The higher a country's human development, the higher its HDI value.
- The HDI also embodies Amartya Sen's “capabilities” approach to understand human well-being, which emphasizes the importance of ends (like a decent standard of living) over means (like income per capita).
- Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been publishing the Human Development Report every year.

Rank	Country	HDI Value	Change from 2021	Rank	Country	HDI Value	Change from 2021
1	 Switzerland	0.967	↑ 0.001	2	 Norway	0.966	↑ 0.001
3	 Iceland	0.959	↑ 0.001	4	 Hong Kong, China (SAR)	0.956	↑ 0.001
5	 Denmark	0.952	↑ 0.001	5	 Sweden	0.952	↑ 0.001

**About UNDP:**

- The UNDP is a United Nations agency tasked with helping countries eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth and human development.
- UNDP was established in 1966 by the General Assembly of the United Nations.
- It is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from member nations and is headquartered in New York, USA.

**Gross National Income:**

Gross national income (GNI) is a statistic that measures the total value added claimed by a country's residents over a period of time. It's also known as gross national product (GNP).

**Pepper it With**

- Different laws for Women and Child Development, NFHS - 5

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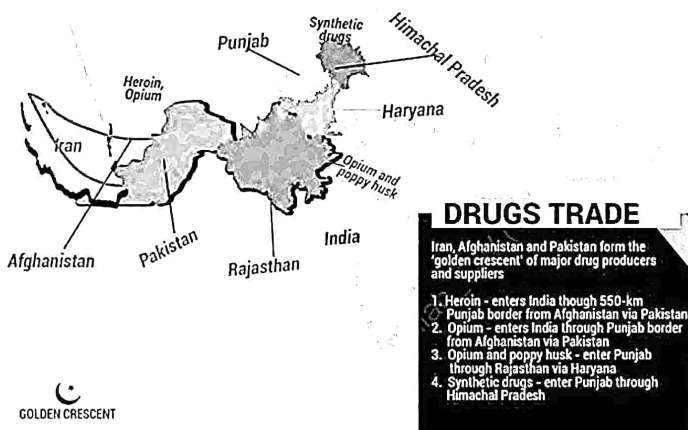


**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Who developed the Human Development Index (HDI)?  
(a) Amartya Sen                      (b) Mahbub ul Haq                      (c) Kofi Annan                      (d) Ban Ki-moon
2. Which organization publishes the Human Development Report annually?  
(a) World Bank  
(b) International Monetary Fund (IMF)  
(c) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
(d) World Health Organization (WHO)
3. What are the three dimensions of human development measured by the HDI?  
(a) Health, wealth, happiness                      (b) Life expectancy, education, income  
(c) Happiness, education, equality                      (d) Health, education, equality
4. How is the HDI value expressed?  
(a) Between 0 and 10                      (b) Between 0 and 100                      (c) Between 0 and 1                      (d) Between 1 and 10
5. Which country ranked 134th in the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2022?  
(a) India                      (b) Bangladesh                      (c) Sri Lanka                      (d) Bhutan
6. What is the main measure of reproductive health in the Gender Inequality Index (GII)?  
(a) Maternal mortality ratio                      (b) Adolescent birth rate  
(c) Contraceptive prevalence rate                      (d) Percentage of women in parliament
7. Which country has one of the largest gender gaps in the labour force participation rate, according to the provided information?  
(a) China                      (b) Sri Lanka                      (c) Bhutan                      (d) India
8. Which index measures gender inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market?  
(a) Human Development Index (HDI)  
(b) Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)  
(c) Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)  
(d) Gender Inequality Index (GII)
9. What does GNI stand for?  
(a) Gross Natural Income                      (b) Gross National Investment  
(c) Gross National Index                      (d) Gross National Income
10. Who emphasized the "capabilities" approach in understanding human well-being?  
(a) Mahbub ul Haq                      (b) Amartya Sen                      (c) Kofi Annan                      (d) Ban Ki-moon

**Current Affairs March 2024**

11. How many countries were ranked in the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2022?  
(a) 190 (b) 191 (c) 192 (d) 193
12. What is the literacy rate according to the census 2011 in India?  
(a) 63% (b) 73% (c) 83% (d) 93%
13. Which organization developed the anti-methanogenic feed supplement 'Harit Dhara' (HD)?  
(a) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)  
(b) International Energy Agency (IEA)  
(c) World Resources Institute (WRI)  
(d) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
14. What is the rank of India in the Gender Inequality Index (GII) among 166 countries?  
(a) 98 (b) 108 (c) 118 (d) 128
15. When was the UNDP established?  
(a) 1956 (b) 1966 (c) 1976 (d) 1986
16. What does MPI stand for?  
(a) Multidimensional Poverty Index (b) Multidimensional Progress Index  
(c) Multidimensional Performance Index (d) Multidimensional Prosperity Index
17. Which dimension of human development does GNI per capita measure?  
(a) Health (b) Education (c) Wealth (d) Happiness
18. Which index measures inequality in human development based on disparities in education, health, and income?  
(a) Human Development Index (HDI)  
(b) Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)  
(c) Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)  
(d) Gender Inequality Index (GII)
19. Which region does India belong to in terms of HDI category?  
(a) High human development (b) Medium human development  
(c) Low human development (d) Very high human development
20. Which organization is headquartered in New York, USA, and is entirely funded by voluntary contributions from member nations?  
(a) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
(b) International Monetary Fund (IMF)  
(c) World Bank  
(d) World Health Organization (WHO)



# International Narcotics Control Board 2023 Report

## Why in News?

Recently, the International Narcotics Control Board in its 2023 Annual Report, highlighted that online Drug Trafficking has increased the availability of drugs on the illicit market.

### Explained:

Online drug trafficking refers to the illegal sale and distribution of drugs through the internet. It involves individuals or organized groups using various online platforms, such as the dark web, social media, or encrypted messaging apps, to buy and sell illicit substances. This digital marketplace provides anonymity and accessibility, making it attractive to both sellers and buyers seeking to avoid detection by law enforcement.

Through sophisticated encryption techniques and discreet packaging methods, online drug traffickers can evade traditional detection methods, posing significant challenges for authorities. Moreover, the global nature of the internet allows for cross-border transactions, complicating law enforcement efforts further. The rise of online drug trafficking has necessitated innovative approaches from authorities, including enhanced cybersecurity measures and international cooperation to combat this illicit trade effectively.

### Way to marks:

#### Key highlights of the report

- Regional Drug Supply Trends:
  - In Afghanistan, illicit opium poppy cultivation and heroin production declined dramatically.
  - The opioid crisis continues to have serious consequences in North America with the number of deaths that involve synthetic opioids other than methadone continuing to increase, reaching more than 70,000 in 2021.
  - South Asia appears to be increasingly being targeted for the trafficking of methamphetamine illicitly manufactured in Afghanistan to Europe and Oceania.
  - Pacific island States have transformed from solely transit sites along drug trafficking routes to destination markets for synthetic drugs.
- Exploitation of Online Platforms:
 

Criminals are exploiting legitimate e-commerce platforms, social media, and other online platforms for drug trafficking

**Initiatives taken by India to curb the menace of drugs :**

- **The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985:** It prohibits a person from producing, possessing, selling, purchasing, transporting, storing, and/or consuming any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.
- **National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction:** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has prepared a plan for Drug Demand Reduction for 2018-25.
- **Nasha Mukht Bharat Campaign (NMBA):** NMBA was launched in 2020 to tackle the issue of Substance Abuse and a vision to make India drug-free.

**International Treaties and Conventions to Combat Drug Menace: India is a signatory of the following international treaties and conventions:**

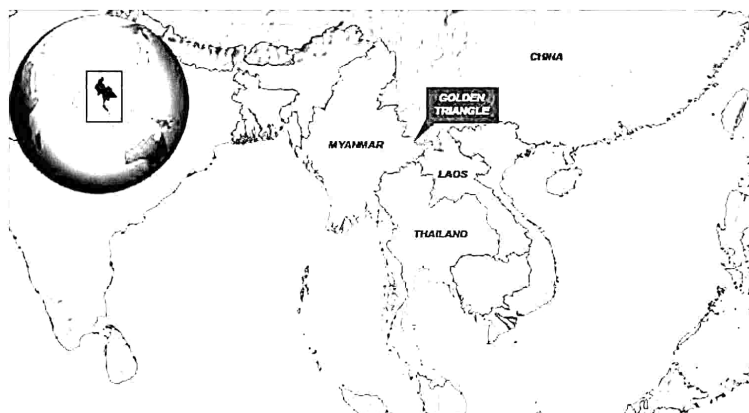
- United Nations (UN) Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
- UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)
- UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)
- UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) 2000

**International Narcotics Control Board**

- The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) is the independent and quasi-judicial monitoring body for the implementation of the United Nations international drug control conventions.
- It was established in 1968 in accordance with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961.
- Its secretariat is located in Vienna, Austria.
- India's Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), cooperates with the INCB.

**Narcotics Control Bureau**

- It was constituted by the Government of India in 1986 under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.
- It is the apex coordinating agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
  - Satya Narayan Pradhan is the Director General of NCB.
- The National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances is based on Article 47 of the Indian Constitution which directs the State to endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption, except for medicinal purposes, of intoxicating drugs injurious to health.



**Pepper it With** • SC judgements on Drugs, Marijuana legalization issue.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. When was the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act enacted in India?  
(a) 1971 (b) 1985 (c) 2000 (d) 2010
2. Which ministry in India prepared the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction?  
(a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (b) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
(c) Ministry of Home Affairs (d) Ministry of External Affairs
3. What was the year of the launch of the Nasha Mukh Bharat Campaign in India?  
(a) 2010 (b) 2015 (c) 2020 (d) 2025
4. Which international treaty aims to combat illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances?  
(a) United Nations Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)  
(b) United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)  
(c) United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)  
(d) United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000)
5. In which year was the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) established?  
(a) 1950 (b) 1968 (c) 1975 (d) 1980
6. Where is the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) located?  
(a) Geneva, Switzerland (b) New York, USA (c) Vienna, Austria (d) Brussels, Belgium
7. Who is the Director General of India's Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)?  
(a) Rakesh Asthana (b) Satya Narayan Pradhan  
(c) Amit Shah (d) Rajnath Singh
8. Which article of the Indian Constitution directs the State to endeavor to bring about prohibition of the consumption of intoxicating drugs?  
(a) Article 41 (b) Article 47 (c) Article 51 (d) Article 61
9. What is the primary focus of the United Nations (UN) Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)?  
(a) Demand reduction (b) Supply reduction  
(c) International cooperation (d) Legalization of narcotics
10. Which agency in India is responsible for coordinating efforts under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985?  
(a) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) (b) Enforcement Directorate (ED)  
(c) Intelligence Bureau (IB) (d) Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

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11. Who is responsible for preparing the National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in India?  
(a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (b) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
(c) Ministry of Home Affairs (d) Ministry of External Affairs
12. Which region has seen a decline in illicit opium poppy cultivation and heroin production, according to the provided information?  
(a) North America (b) South Asia  
(c) Pacific island States (d) Afghanistan
13. Which type of opioids have contributed to the increasing number of deaths in North America?  
(a) Opium (b) Heroin (c) Synthetic opioids (d) Methadone
14. Which region is increasingly targeted for the trafficking of methamphetamine manufactured in Afghanistan?  
(a) North America (b) South Asia (c) Europe (d) Oceania
15. What role do Pacific island States play in the drug trafficking scenario according to the provided information?  
(a) Source countries (b) Transit sites only (c) Destination markets (d) Enforcement hubs
16. How are criminals exploiting legitimate e-commerce platforms for drug trafficking?  
(a) Selling drugs openly (b) Using encrypted communication  
(c) Concealing drugs in legitimate shipments (d) Hiding drug-related content in plain sight
17. Which of the following is not a dimension measured by the Gender Inequality Index (GII)?  
(a) Reproductive health (b) Education (c) Employment (d) Labour market
18. What is the value of India's Gender Inequality Index (GII) compared to the global average?  
(a) Better than the global average (b) Same as the global average  
(c) Worse than the global average (d) Not mentioned in the information provided
19. In which year was the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) adopted?  
(a) 1961 (b) 1971 (c) 1988 (d) 2000
20. What is the primary purpose of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)?  
(a) Implementing drug legalization policies  
(b) Enforcing drug control measures  
(c) Monitoring implementation of international drug control conventions  
(d) Promoting drug consumption for medicinal purposes

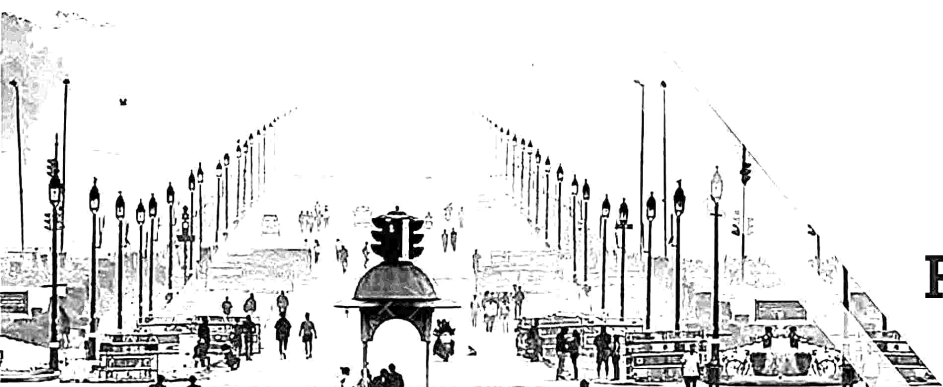




March 2024

**TOPIC**  
in **NEWS**  
○○○○○

# World Air Quality Report 2023



## Why in News?

Delhi was identified as the capital city with the poorest air quality, according to a new report by World Air Quality Report 2023.

### Explained:

The World Air Quality Report is an annual assessment that provides insights into the air quality levels across various regions worldwide. It collects data from thousands of air quality monitoring stations and compiles information on key pollutants such as particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulfur dioxide (SO2), and ozone (O3). By analyzing this data, the report highlights the severity of air pollution in different cities and countries, identifying areas with the highest levels of pollution and those making progress in improving air quality.

This report serves as a valuable tool for policymakers, researchers, and the public to understand the health impacts of air pollution and formulate strategies to mitigate its effects. It raises awareness about the importance of implementing measures to reduce emissions from sources such as vehicles, industrial activities, and energy production. Additionally, the World Air Quality Report underscores the need for international cooperation to address transboundary air pollution and protect public health on a global scale.

### Way to marks:

#### About World Air Quality Report 2023

- It is published by the Swiss organisation IQAir.
- It included data from 7,812 locations in 134 countries, regions, and territories.



**Highlights:**

- With an average air annual particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) concentration of 54.4 micrograms per cubic metre, India had the third worst air quality.
- India was better than only two of its neighbouring countries, Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- While Bangladesh remained the most polluted country in the world, with an average PM2.5 concentration of 79.9 micrograms per cubic metre, Pakistan was second, with a level of 73.7.
- It also identified Delhi as the most polluted capital city in the world for the fourth consecutive time.
- Bihar's Begusarai was termed the world's most polluted metropolitan area.
- Ten out of the top 11 most polluted cities in the world are from India, the other being Lahore in Pakistan.
- 96 percent of the Indian population experiences PM2.5 levels more than seven times the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline.

**Particulate Matter (PM):**

- It is made of solid particles and liquid droplets in the air.

**National Air Quality Index (AQI):**

- Launched by the central government in 2014 as part of the Swachh Bharat campaign, the AQI was to help simplify the common understanding of pollution.
- The AQI transforms complex air quality data of various pollutants into a single number (index value), nomenclature and colour.
- The pollutants measured include PM 10, PM 2.5, Nitrogen Dioxide, Ozone, Carbon, etc. The colour-coded AQI index helps the public and the government understand the condition of the air and what subsequent measures are to be taken to combat the situation, based on its severity.
- **Commission for air quality management (CAQM)** : The Commission is a statutory body which was first formed by an ordinance in October 2020.
  - Restricting activities influencing air quality.
  - Investigating and conducting research related to environmental pollution impacting air quality, preparing codes and guidelines to prevent and control air pollution,
  - Issuing directions on matters including inspections, or regulation which will be binding on the concerned person or authority

**Causes of pollution in Delhi:**

- **Stubble Burning:** Farmers in Punjab and Haryana burn crop residues to clear their fields for the next season. This produces a lot of smoke and particulate matter that gets carried by the wind to Delhi and other parts of north India.

**Government initiatives to combat pollution In Delhi:**

- **Bio-Decomposer:** A solution developed by PUSA institute that helps farmers decompose the crop residue in their fields without burning it. The government provides free spraying of bio-decomposer in Delhi's farmlands.[Questions Asked in CLAT 2023]
- Happy seeder(HS):

- It is a tractor-operated machine developed by the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) in collaboration with Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).
- Happy seeder is used for in-situ management of paddy stubble (straw).
- Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP):
  - GRAP is a set of emergency measures that kick in to prevent further deterioration of air quality once it reaches a certain threshold in the Delhi-NCR region.
  - It was approved by the Supreme Court in 2016 after the Supreme Court's order in the matter of M. C. Mehta vs. Union of India (2016) and notified in 2017.

Category	Ambient Particulate Matter (PM) Concentration	Measures
Moderate to Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM 2.5 between 61-120 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> <li>• PM10 between 101-350 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforce pollution control in thermal power plants</li> <li>• Mechanized sweeping on roads</li> <li>• Ban on firecrackers</li> <li>• Stop garbage burning</li> </ul>
Very Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM2.5 between 121- 250 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> <li>• PM10 between 351-430 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop use of diesel generator sets</li> <li>• Increase bus and metro services and increasing frequency of metro service</li> <li>• Stop use of coal/firewood in hotels and open eateries</li> </ul>
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM2.5 more than 250 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> <li>• PM10 more than 430 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase frequency of mechanized sweeping of road and sprinkling of water on roads</li> <li>• Close brick kilns, Hot Mix plants, Stone Crushers</li> <li>• Shut down Badarpur power plant</li> <li>• Introduce concessional rates to encourage off-peak travel in public transport.</li> </ul>
Severe+ or Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM2.5 of or more than 300 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> <li>• PM10 of or 500 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math> (persist for 48 hours or more)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop entry of diesel trucks into Delhi (except essential commodities)</li> <li>• Stop construction activities</li> <li>• Introduce odd and even scheme</li> <li>• Shutting of schools</li> </ul>

### Pepper it With

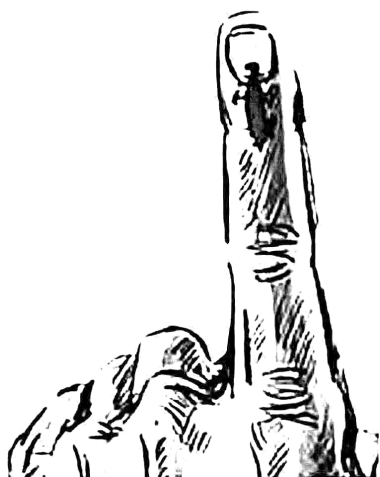
- Green Crackers, SC judgements for pollution in India.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Who publishes the World Air Quality Report?
  - (a) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
  - (b) World Health Organization (WHO)
  - (c) International Air Quality Organization (IAQO)
  - (d) IQAir
2. In which year was the National Air Quality Index (AQI) launched in India?
  - (a) 2010
  - (b) 2014
  - (c) 2016
  - (d) 2020
3. Which country had the highest average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration according to the World Air Quality Report 2023?
  - (a) India
  - (b) Bangladesh
  - (c) Pakistan
  - (d) China
4. Which Indian city was identified as the most polluted capital city in the world in the report?
  - (a) Mumbai
  - (b) New Delhi
  - (c) Kolkata
  - (d) Chennai
5. What is the primary pollutant measured by the National Air Quality Index (AQI)?
  - (a) Carbon monoxide
  - (b) Nitrogen dioxide
  - (c) Particulate Matter (PM)
  - (d) Sulfur dioxide
6. Which body was responsible for the formation of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)?
  - (a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
  - (b) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
  - (c) Ministry of Home Affairs
  - (d) Ministry of Science and Technology
7. What is the primary purpose of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)?
  - (a) Environmental research
  - (b) Issuing directions on air pollution control
  - (c) Wildlife conservation
  - (d) Urban planning
8. What is the primary cause of pollution in Delhi during certain seasons?
  - (a) Industrial emissions
  - (b) Vehicle emissions
  - (c) Stubble burning
  - (d) Construction activities
9. What solution has been developed by the PUSA institute to help farmers decompose crop residue without burning it?
  - (a) Happy Seeder
  - (b) Bio-Decomposer
  - (c) Crop Rotator
  - (d) Stubble Harvester

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10. Who developed the Happy Seeder machine?  
(a) Punjab Agricultural University (b) Indian Institute of Technology  
(c) Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (d) Indian Council of Agricultural Research
11. When was the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) approved by the Supreme Court?  
(a) 2010 (b) 2014 (c) 2016 (d) 2020
12. What is the primary purpose of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)?  
(a) Emergency medical response (b) Disaster management  
(c) Pollution control measures (d) Traffic management
13. How many locations were included in the data for the World Air Quality Report 2023?  
(a) 7,812 (b) 13,476 (c) 10,234 (d) 6,543
14. Which country had the third-worst air quality according to the World Air Quality Report 2023?  
(a) China (b) India (c) Pakistan (d) Bangladesh
15. Which region has been increasingly targeted for trafficking methamphetamine illicitly manufactured in Afghanistan?  
(a) North America (b) South Asia (c) Europe (d) Oceania
16. What percentage of the Indian population experiences PM2.5 levels more than seven times the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline?  
(a) 76% (b) 84% (c) 92% (d) 96%
17. Which metropolitan area in Bihar was termed the world's most polluted according to the World Air Quality Report 2023?  
(a) Patna (b) Gaya (c) Muzaffarpur (d) Begusarai
18. Which pollutant is primarily responsible for the formation of Particulate Matter (PM)?  
(a) Carbon dioxide (b) Nitrogen dioxide (c) Sulfur dioxide (d) Carbon monoxide
19. Which country had the second-highest average PM2.5 concentration according to the World Air Quality Report 2023?  
(a) India (b) Bangladesh (c) Pakistan (d) China
20. Which organization is responsible for publishing the World Air Quality Report?  
(a) World Health Organization (WHO)  
(b) International Air Quality Organization (IAQO)  
(c) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
(d) IQAir



# One Nation One Election

## Why in News?

- The high-level committee headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind has recommended simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies as the first step, and holding municipal and panchayat polls within 100 days of the general election in the next phase.
  - Apart from Kovind, the panel also has members including Home Minister Amit Shah, former leader of the opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, former finance commission chairman N K Singh, former Lok Sabha secretary general Subhash Kashyap and senior advocate Harish Salve.

## Explained:

"One Nation One Election" proposes synchronizing India's parliamentary, state assembly, and local body elections, aiming to reduce election frequency and enhance governance efficiency. Advocates argue it would save time, resources, and alleviate voter fatigue, while critics cite challenges like constitutional amendments, term alignment, and federalism concerns. Implementing this concept necessitates political consensus, constitutional amendments, and logistical planning to align disparate election cycles. While it could streamline the electoral process and improve governance, careful consideration of democratic principles and federalism is crucial to ensure its successful implementation without undermining regional diversity or democratic norms.

## Way to marks:

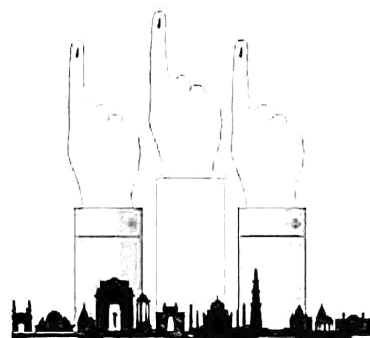
### Main Suggestions of the panel

#### Simultaneous election by 2029

- The panel recommended amending the Constitution so elections for the Lok Sabha, all state assemblies and local bodies can be held by 2029.

#### Amending the Constitution (two steps)

- In all, 18 amendments to the Constitution and other statutes have been suggested.
- In the first step, simultaneous elections will be held to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- To achieve synchronisation at the first step, the government should take a one-time step where they pick a specific date after a Lok Sabha election.
- After this date, the terms of all state assemblies that have elections will end along with Parliament's term.



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- To effect these changes, the panel has recommended amendments to Article 83 (duration of Houses of Parliament) and Article 172 (duration of State legislatures) of the Constitution.
- For this, no ratification by the states will be required for the constitutional amendment.
- In the second step, elections to municipalities and the panchayats will be synchronised with elections to Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.
- This will be done in such a way that local body elections are held within 100 days of the elections to Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.
- This will require ratification by not less than one-half of the states.

### Insertion of Article 324A

- The committee recommended an Article 324A, which states that Parliament may make a law to ensure that elections to municipalities and panchayats be held together with General Elections.

### Single electoral roll and election ID

- To make single electoral roll and electoral photo identity cards for use in elections to all the three tiers of government, the committee recommended that Article 325 of the Constitution be amended.
- Then only, Election Commission of India can prepare a single electoral roll and election ID in consultation with the State Election Commissions.
- These amendments will require ratification by not less than one-half of the states.

### In case of hung house

- In the event of a hung House, a no-confidence motion, or any such event, fresh elections should be held to constitute the new Lok Sabha or state Assembly for the unexpired term of the House.

### Meeting logistics requirement

- The committee suggests that the Election Commission of India should plan ahead with State Election Commissions for things like manpower, polling staff, security forces, and voting machines to ensure fair elections across all levels of government at the same time.

### Rejected the Germany model of bringing no-confidence motion against a government

- The committee rejected the concept of constructive vote of no-confidence, which is the model in Germany.
- In this model, to bring a no-confidence motion against a government, a positive vote of confidence in an alternate leader or government is required.
- The committee said that the prevailing Parliamentary practice in this regard is appropriate and does not require any change.
- Making a motion of no confidence by the Members of Parliament is not only their right, but also their responsibility. The Committee would not like to dilute this feature of the Indian Parliamentary system.



**Simultaneous Elections History**

1. The idea of simultaneous elections in India was first proposed by the Election Commission in 1983, but it was the norm until 1967.
2. The first simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha (House of People) and all State Legislative Assemblies were held in 1951-52.
3. This practice continued in the subsequent general elections held in 1957, 1962, and 1967.
4. However, the cycle got disrupted due to the premature dissolution of some Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969.
5. In 1970, the Lok Sabha itself was dissolved prematurely, and fresh elections were held in 1971. Only the first three Lok Sabhas enjoyed their full five-year terms until 1970.

**Simultaneous elections are held in other countries as well:**

- In South Africa, elections for national and provincial legislatures are held simultaneously every five years, while municipal elections are held two years later.
- In Sweden, elections for the national legislature (Riksdag), provincial legislature/county council (Landsting), and local bodies/municipal Assemblies (Kommunfullmaktige) are held on a fixed date (second Sunday in September) every four years.
- In Britain, the Fixed-term Parliaments Act, 2011, was passed to provide stability and predictability to the British Parliament and its tenure.

**Model Code of Conduct**

1. The MCC traces its roots back to the 1960 Kerala Assembly elections, where a 'Code of Conduct' for politicians was established by the State administration.
2. Initially shared during the 1962 Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission of India (ECI) disseminated the code to all recognized political entities and state governments, garnering widespread adherence.
3. MCC is not enforceable or the person violating it cannot be punished for its violation in any manner.





**Central Idea behind One Nation, One Election?**

- The central idea behind One nation, One election is to synchronize the timing of Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections across all States to reduce the frequency of polls throughout the country.
- This concept was the practice till 1967, but it was disrupted due to various reasons such as defections, dismissals, and dissolutions of government.
- The cycle was first broken in 1959 after the Centre invoked Article 356 to dismiss the then-Kerala government.
- Subsequently, due to defections and counter-defections between parties, several Legislative Assemblies dissolved post-1960, which eventually led to separate polls for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- The idea of conducting simultaneous elections was advocated in 1999 by the Law Commission headed by BP Jeevan Reddy.

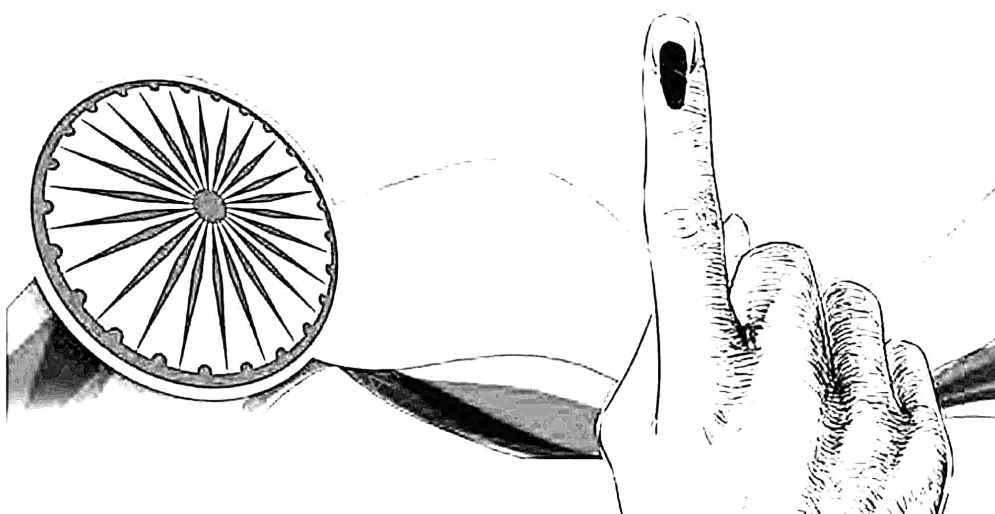
**The Chief election Commissioner of India is Shri Rajiv Kumar and on 14th march 2024, two Election commissioners were appointed: Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.**

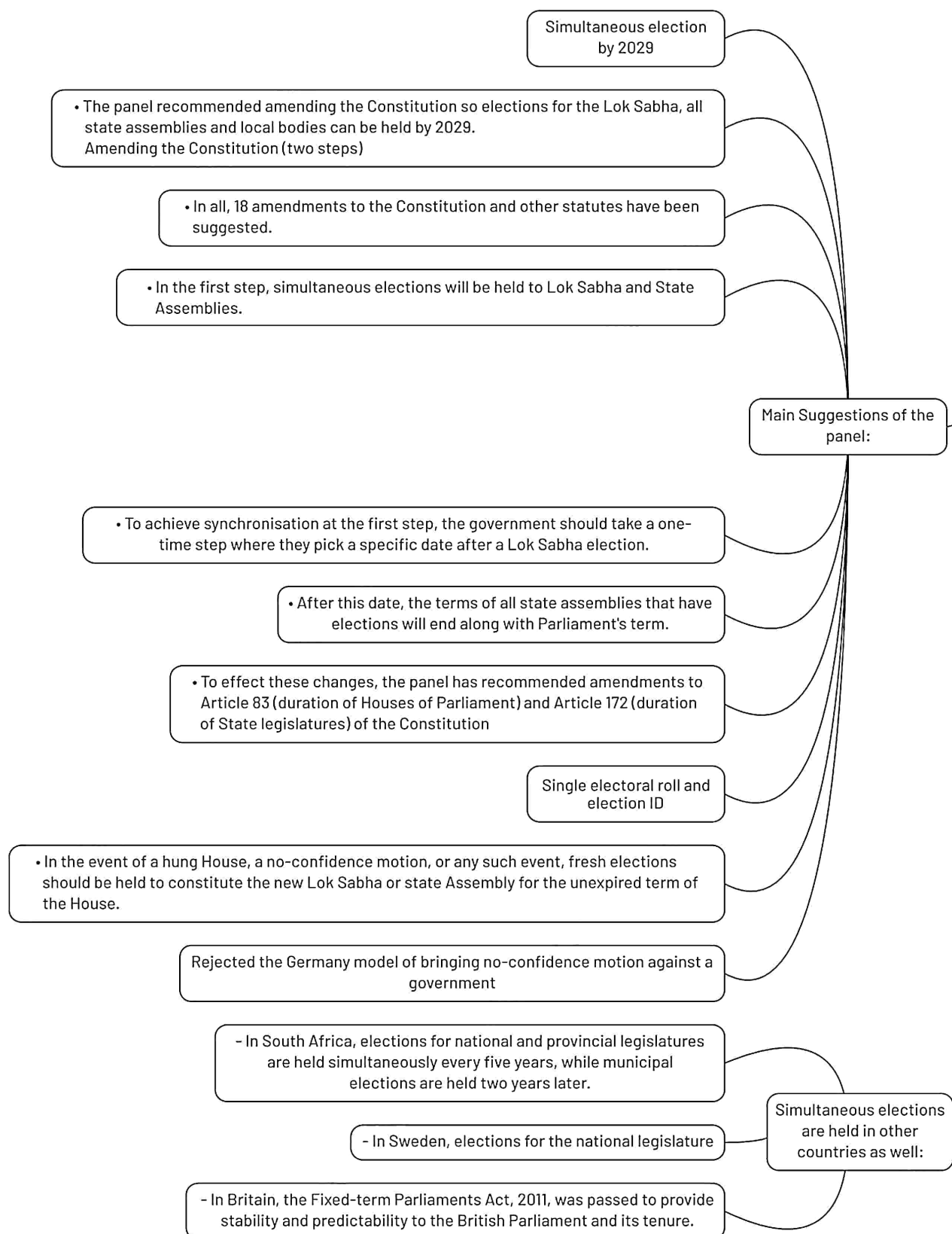
**Some more facts related to elections in India :**

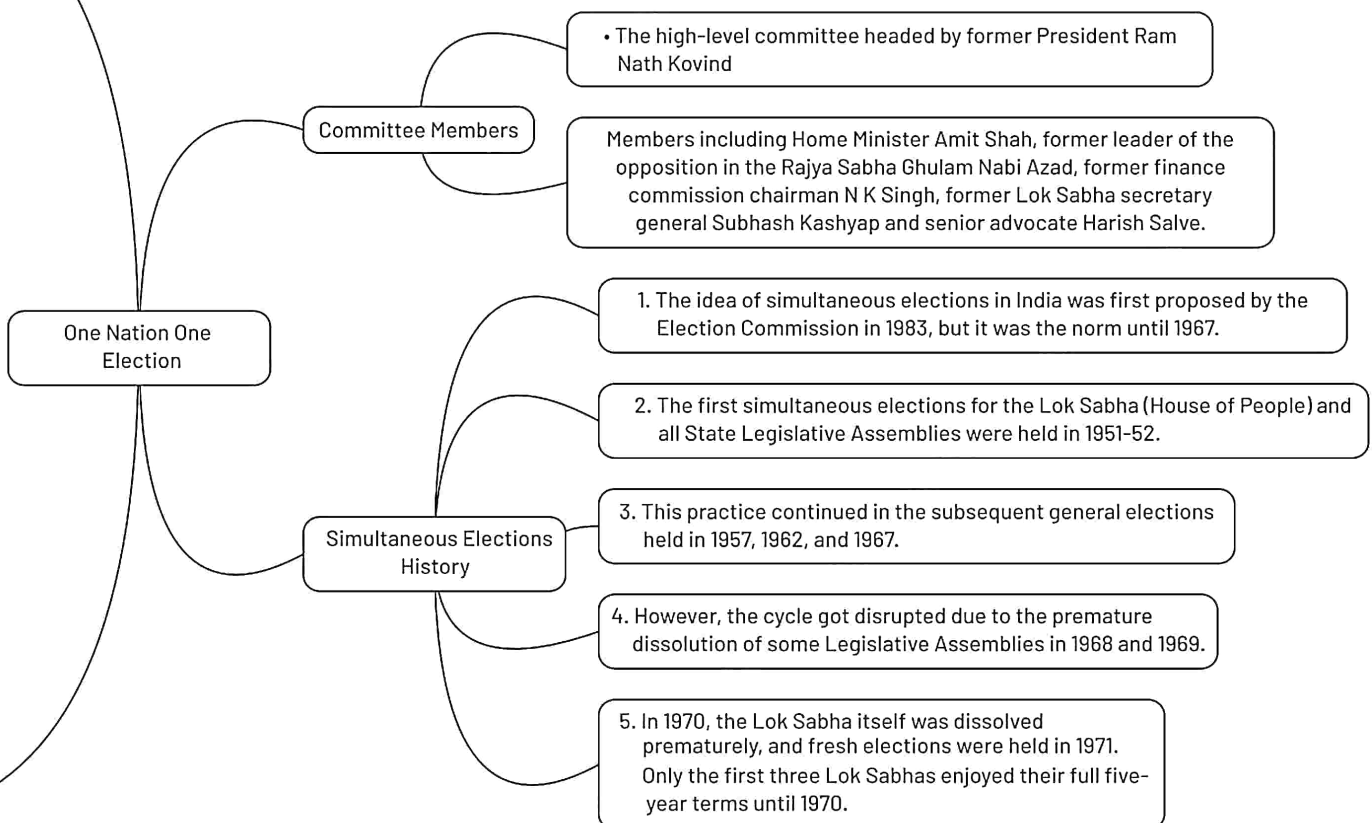
- Articles 324 through 329 of Part XV of the Constitution cover election-related provisions.
- The Election Commission (EC) of India is the sole organization that has been given the authority under Article 324 of the Indian Constitution.
- In India, the First Past the Post system of elections is followed in elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- The First Past the Post System is also known as the simple majority system or plurality system. In this voting system, the candidate with the most votes in a constituency is declared elected.

**Pepper it With**

- NOTA , EVM and Voting in India , Rahul Gandhi's recent Disqualification.





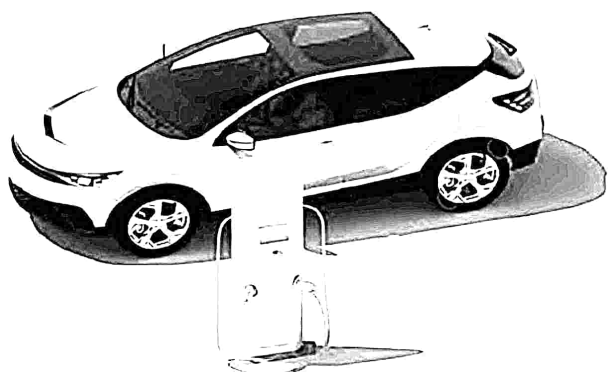


**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. When was the idea of simultaneous elections in India first proposed by the Election Commission?  
(a) 1983 (b) 1970 (c) 1951 (d) 1999
2. How many amendments to the Constitution and other statutes were suggested by the panel for implementing simultaneous elections?  
(a) 15 (b) 18 (c) 20 (d) 22
3. Which article of the Constitution covers the election-related provisions?  
(a) Article 324A (b) Article 83 (c) Article 325 (d) Article 356
4. Who is the Chief Election Commissioner of India as of March 14, 2024?  
(a) Shri Gyanesh Kumar (b) Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu  
(c) Shri Rajiv Kumar (d) Shri BP Jeevan Reddy
5. Which country follows the Fixed-term Parliaments Act, 2011, to provide stability to its Parliament?  
(a) South Africa (b) Sweden (c) Britain (d) India
6. When were the first simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies held?  
(a) 1971 (b) 1967 (c) 1951 (d) 1957
7. Which committee rejected the concept of constructive vote of no-confidence for India?  
(a) Law Commission (b) Election Commission  
(c) Panel on Simultaneous Elections (d) Constitution Amendment Committee
8. What is the central idea behind One Nation, One Election?  
(a) To conduct elections only for Lok Sabha  
(b) To synchronize the timing of Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections  
(c) To have multiple elections throughout the year  
(d) To abolish State Assembly elections
9. Who was appointed as Election Commissioners on March 14, 2024?  
(a) Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu  
(b) Shri Rajiv Kumar and Shri Gyanesh Kumar  
(c) Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Shri BP Jeevan Reddy  
(d) Shri Rajiv Kumar and Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu
10. Which model of bringing no-confidence motion against a government was rejected by the committee?  
(a) French model (b) German model (c) American model (d) British model

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11. How many steps are involved in amending the Constitution for simultaneous elections?  
(a) 1 (b) 2 (c) 3 (d) 4
12. Which article of the Constitution covers the duration of Houses of Parliament?  
(a) Article 324 (b) Article 83 (c) Article 172 (d) Article 356
13. When was the cycle of simultaneous elections first disrupted in India?  
(a) 1970 (b) 1967 (c) 1968 (d) 1969
14. In which year was the Lok Sabha dissolved prematurely, leading to fresh elections?  
(a) 1970 (b) 1967 (c) 1968 (d) 1971
15. Which system of elections is followed in India for Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies?  
(a) Proportional Representation (b) Preferential Voting  
(c) First Past the Post (d) Single Transferable Vote
16. How many states' ratification is required for certain constitutional amendments related to simultaneous elections?  
(a) Not less than two-thirds (b) Not less than one-half  
(c) All states (d) Not less than three-fourths
17. What does the Fixed-term Parliaments Act, 2011, aim to provide in Britain?  
(a) Stability to Parliament (b) Flexibility in election dates  
(c) Unlimited terms for MPs (d) Direct election of the Prime Minister
18. Who advocated the idea of conducting simultaneous elections in 1999?  
(a) Law Commission (b) Election Commission  
(c) Parliament (d) President of India
19. How many amendments to the Constitution and other statutes have been suggested by the panel for implementing simultaneous elections?  
(a) 15 (b) 18 (c) 20 (d) 22
20. When was the cycle of simultaneous elections first disrupted in India?  
(a) 1970 (b) 1967 (c) 1968 (d) 1969



# New Electric Vehicle Policy 2024

## Why in News?

In a significant development, the Government of India has greenlit a strategic policy aimed at positioning India as a prime manufacturing hub for electronic vehicles (e-vehicles).

### Explained:

The Electric Vehicles (EV) policy aims to accelerate the adoption and manufacturing of electric vehicles in India through incentives, infrastructure development, and regulatory measures. It includes subsidies and tax breaks to incentivize consumers and manufacturers, along with funding for charging infrastructure expansion. Additionally, the policy emphasizes research and development support, regulatory standards, and skill development initiatives to foster innovation and ensure a skilled workforce. Public awareness campaigns also play a crucial role in educating the public about the benefits of electric vehicles and addressing concerns such as range anxiety. Overall, the EV policy strives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance energy security, and promote sustainable transportation options in India.

### Way to marks:

- The new EV policy aligns with India's climate goals of reducing emissions intensity by 45% by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.

### Highlights of the Policy

- No limit on maximum Investment
- Timeline for manufacturing: 3 years for setting up manufacturing facilities in India, and to start commercial production of e- vehicles, and reach 50% domestic value addition (DVA) within 5 years at the maximum.
- Domestic value addition (DVA) during manufacturing: A localization level of 25% by the 3rd year and 50% by the 5th year will have to be achieved
- The customs duty of 15% (as applicable to CKD units) would be applicable on vehicle of minimum CIF value of USD 35,000 and above for a total period of 5 years subject to the manufacturer setting up manufacturing facilities in India within a 3-year period.
- The duty foregone on the total number of EV allowed for import

### Make in India

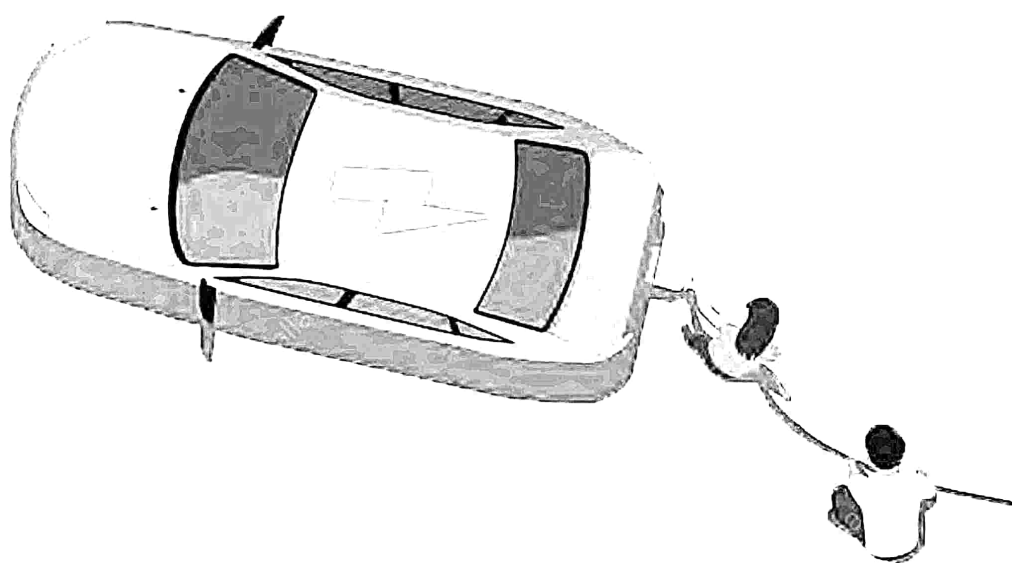
1. Launched in 2014, Make in India aims to transform the country into a leading global manufacturing and investment destination.
2. It is being led by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
3. Make In India has **substantial accomplishments across 27 sectors under Make in India 2.0** which include strategic sectors of manufacturing and services as well.

would be limited to the investment made or ₹6484 Cr (equal to incentive under PLI scheme) whichever is lower. A maximum of 40,000 EVs at the rate of not more than 8,000 per year would be permissible if the investment is of USD 800 Mn or more. The carryover of unutilized annual import limits would be permitted.

- The Investment commitment made by the company will have to be backed up by a bank guarantee in lieu of the custom duty forgone
- The Bank guarantee will be invoked in case of non-achievement of DVA and minimum investment criteria defined under the scheme guidelines

#### **The EV market in India**

- The Indian EV market is witnessing rapid growth, with EV sales surging by over 45% in 2024 despite regulatory changes.
- Total EV registrations surpassed 1.5 million units by the end of 2023, a significant increase from just over 1 million in the previous year.
- The growth in EV registrations has elevated India's overall EV market penetration to 6.3%, indicating significant progress in EV adoption.
- Indian automakers are making substantial investments in electrification, encouraged by the government's plan to eventually phase out subsidies.
- The Indian EV market is witnessing rapid growth, with EV sales surging by over 45% in 2024 despite regulatory changes.
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- Indian automakers are making substantial investments in electrification, encouraged by the government's plan to eventually phase out subsidies.



**Other Initiatives Related to Electric Vehicles in India**

- Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS) 2024: The Indian government has introduced the EMPS 2024 to promote the purchase of electric two-wheelers (e2W) and three-wheelers (e3W). With a budget of Rs 5 billion, it will replace the FAME-2 scheme and will be effective from April to July 2024, with the possibility of being replaced or extended thereafter.
- National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Storage: The aim of the mission is to drive strategies for transformative mobility and Phased Manufacturing Programmes for electric vehicles, electric vehicle Components and Batteries.
- EV30@30 campaign: India is among a handful of countries that support the global EV30@30 campaign, which aims for at least 30% of new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030.
- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Automobile and Auto Components.
- National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP).
  - FAME India is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan.
  - The scheme's main objective is to encourage the adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles by offering upfront incentives on purchase.

**Phase I:**

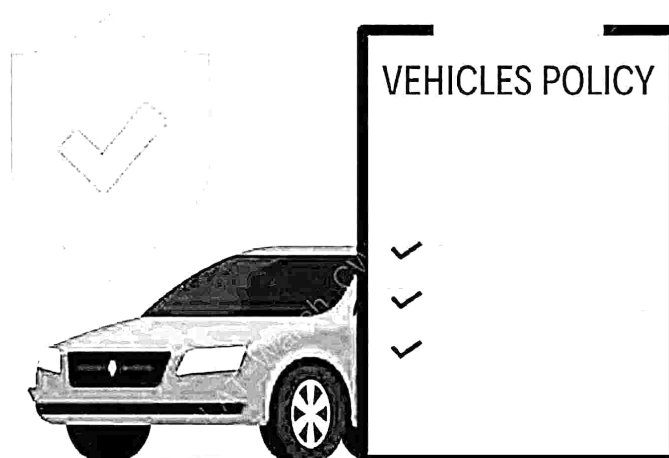
Started in 2015 and was completed on 31st March 2019, with an outlay of Rs 895 crore.

**Phase-II:**

Started on April 1, 2019, with a total budget of Rs. 10,000 crore.

**Pepper it With**

- Lithium triangle and India's recent agreement , Lithium reserves in Jammu and Kashmir.





**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. What is the minimum investment required under the policy?  
(a) Rs. 2,000 crore      (b) Rs. 3,000 crore      (c) Rs. 4,150 crore      (d) Rs. 5,000 crore
2. Is there a limit on maximum investment?  
(a) Yes      (b) No  
(c) Limit is Rs. 10,000 crore      (d) Limit is USD 1 billion
3. What is the timeline for setting up manufacturing facilities in India and starting commercial production of e-vehicles?  
(a) 2 years      (b) 3 years      (c) 4 years      (d) 5 years
4. What is the domestic value addition (DVA) requirement within 5 years?  
(a) 25%      (b) 40%      (c) 50%      (d) 60%
5. What is the customs duty applicable on imported e-vehicles of minimum CIF value of USD 35,000 and above?  
(a) 10%      (b) 15%      (c) 20%      (d) 25%
6. For how many years is the customs duty of 15% applicable?  
(a) 3 years      (b) 4 years      (c) 5 years      (d) 6 years
7. What is the maximum number of EVs that can be imported if the investment is USD 800 million or more?  
(a) 30,000      (b) 35,000      (c) 40,000      (d) 45,000
8. Is the carryover of unutilized annual import limits permitted?  
(a) Yes      (b) No  
(c) Depends on the investment amount      (d) Depends on the domestic value addition
9. What is the investment commitment required to be backed up by?  
(a) Bank guarantee      (b) Corporate guarantee  
(c) Government guarantee      (d) No guarantee required
10. When will the bank guarantee be invoked?  
(a) If the minimum investment criteria is not met  
(b) If the domestic value addition criteria is not met  
(c) If either the minimum investment or domestic value addition criteria are not met  
(d) The bank guarantee will not be invoked

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11. What was the growth rate of EV sales in India in 2024?  
(a) 35% (b) 40% (c) 45% (d) 50%
12. What was the total number of EV registrations in India by the end of 2023?  
(a) 1 million (b) 1.2 million (c) 1.5 million (d) 1.8 million
13. What is India's overall EV market penetration as of the end of 2023?  
(a) 4% (b) 5% (c) 6.3% (d) 7%
14. Which scheme is being introduced to promote the purchase of electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers?  
(a) FAME-3 (b) EMPS 2024 (c) NEMMP (d) PLI scheme
15. What is the budget for the EMPS 2024 scheme?  
(a) Rs. 3 billion (b) Rs. 4 billion (c) Rs. 5 billion (d) Rs. 6 billion
16. What is the aim of the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Storage?  
(a) To promote electric vehicle adoption  
(b) To drive strategies for transformative mobility and manufacturing programs for EVs  
(c) To provide subsidies for EV purchase  
(d) To set up charging infrastructure
17. What is the target of the EV30@30 campaign, which India supports?  
(a) 20% of new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030  
(b) 25% of new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030  
(c) 30% of new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030  
(d) 35% of new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030
18. Which scheme is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP)?  
(a) FAME India (b) EMPS 2024 (c) PLI scheme (d) EV30@30 campaign
19. When did Phase I of the FAME India scheme start?  
(a) 2013 (b) 2014 (c) 2015 (d) 2016
20. What was the total budget for Phase II of the FAME India scheme?  
(a) Rs. 5,000 crore (b) Rs. 7,500 crore (c) Rs. 10,000 crore (d) Rs. 12,000 crore



## Arvind Kejriwal Arrested

### Why in News?

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal was arrested on 21st march 2024 by ED officials in excise policy case.

#### Explained:

In November 2021, the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government introduced a new excise policy that privatized liquor retail sales. However, it faced allegations of corruption, cartelization, and nepotism in issuing liquor licenses. It was alleged that licenses were awarded to companies linked to AAP leaders and their relatives. Following the Lieutenant Governor's recommendation, the ED launched a probe into the alleged irregularities, leading to the arrest of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and others and currently Arvind Kejriwal.

The controversy tarnished the AAP's image and led to a political battle with the BJP, which accused the party of corruption. The AAP alleged misuse of central agencies by the BJP. Amid the ED probe, the Delhi government was forced to roll back the excise policy, marking a significant setback for the party that projected itself as a crusader against corruption.

#### Way to marks:

##### Timeline of events

- In November 2021, the Delhi liquor policy was introduced.
- **July 2022:** The allegations in the Delhi excise policy scam arose out of a report submitted by Delhi Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena pointing to alleged procedural lapses in the formulation of the policy.
- **February 2023:** Former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia was arrested by the CBI and was lodged in Tihar jail.
- **March 2023:** The ED told Delhi court that the alleged proceeds of crime amounted to more than Rs 292 crores. After this, other persons involved in the case were also arrested and ED summoned Mr. Arvind Kejriwal 9 times and finally arrested him on 21<sup>st</sup> march 2024.

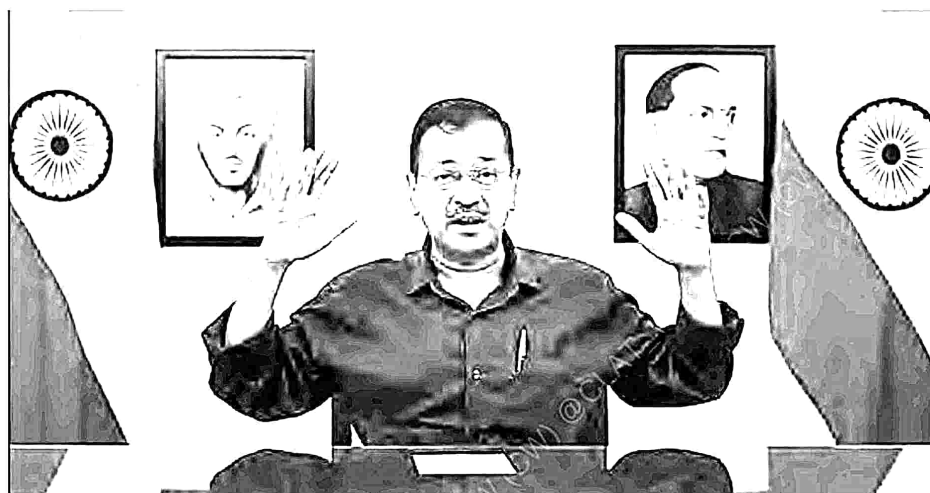
##### What Was Delhi Liquor Policy 2021-22?

- Back in 2021, the AAP government had initiated a series of changes in its liquor excise policy launched in 2021. These adjustments included lowering the legal drinking age from 25 to 21 years, the cessation of government-owned liquor stores with the issuance of store operation licenses to private entities, separate registration criteria for different liquor brands, taking into account factors such as pricing and sales performance in areas outside of Delhi.

- It also proposed a significant increase in the annual liquor vending license fee, raising it from Rs 8 lakh to Rs 75 lakh.
- The Delhi government withdrew from the liquor retail business, granting licenses to 849 private vendors through competitive bidding.
- However, the government announced the rollback of the excise policy. This move was in response to allegations of corruption and favoritism in the licensing process.

#### **Earlier Arrest of Sitting CM**

- On July 25, 1997, Bihar CM Lalu Prasad was served an arrest warrant in the fodder scam. He stepped down from his post, made his wife Rabri Devi the CM.
- JMM chief and Hemant's father Shibu Soren was convicted in December 2006 – when he was Union minister in the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government – in a case of conspiracy to kidnap and murder his private secretary Shashi Nath Jha.
- The first former CM to have been arrested was then AIADMK chief late J Jayalalithaa in 1996
- Jayalalithaa also became the first CM to have been convicted in a disproportionate assets case by a Bengaluru court in 2014. She faced disqualification as an MLA, losing the CM's post following her conviction.
- On January 31 this year, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) executive president Hemant Soren was forced to step down as the Jharkhand CM just before he was arrested by the ED in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.



#### **No immunity to CM**

According to the law, under Article 361, the President of India and governors are immune from civil and criminal proceedings during their term. However, this protection doesn't extend to prime ministers and chief ministers.

**What does the Constitutional or legal provision say?**

1. No provision prohibits him from continuing as CM– According to constitutional experts, no constitutional or legal provision exists to prevent him from continuing. According to the rules, he loses his position only–
  - (a) If he loses the majority in the House
  - (b) His party asks him to step down
  - (c) He resigns from the position
2. Conviction required for disqualification– According to section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, conviction is necessary for disqualification. Since Kejriwal hasn't been convicted, he can legally stay in office. However, governing from prison presents practical challenges.
3. Practical challenges– Practical issues may arise as he would be required to lead Cabinet meetings, consult with colleagues on decisions, and review minutes for approval. However, in jail, he would be subject to the jail manual, which could pose difficulties.

**What do the court judgments say?**

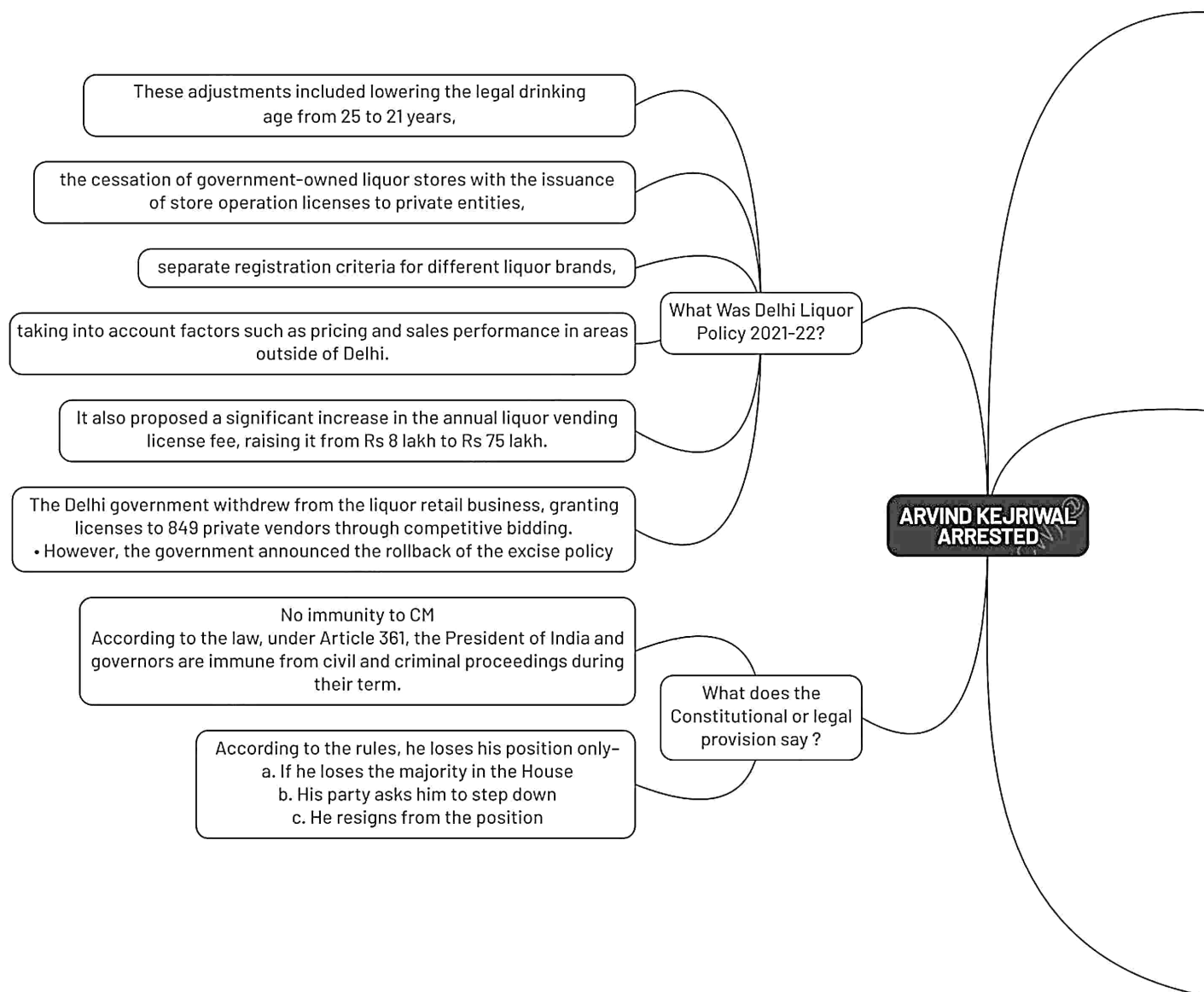
Manoj Narula versus Union of India– In the case of Manoj Narula versus Union of India, the Supreme Court ruled that constitutional morality, good governance, and constitutional trust are fundamental criteria for holding public office.

**State's Earnings from Liquor**

- Alcohol is a subject in the State list under the seventh schedule of the Indian Constitution.
  - The state legislature has exclusive power to levy taxes on subjects enumerated in the State List,
- Liquor contributes a considerable amount to the exchequers of all states and Union Territories (UTs) except Gujarat and Bihar, both of which have enforced prohibition.
  - Andhra Pradesh announced prohibition in 2019, however, sale of the liquor has been allowed with “prohibition tax”.
- States levy excise duty on manufacture and sale of liquor.
  - Excise duty is basically a production tax. It is imposed on manufactured items in India that are meant for domestic consumption.
- States also charge special fees on imported foreign liquor, transport fee, and label & brand registration charges.
- The Reserve Bank of India published the report 'State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2019-20' in September 2019.
  - It shows that state excise duty on alcohol accounts for around 10-15% of Own Tax Revenue of a majority of states.

**How are the UTs Administered in India?**

- Part VIII (Articles 239 to 241) of the Constitution deals with the Union Territories.
- UTs in India are administered by the President through an administrator appointed by him/her. The administrator is not elected but rather a representative of the President.
- In some UTs, such as Delhi and Puducherry, the administrator holds significant powers, including the ability to make laws and regulations for the UT.



### Timeline of Events

In November 2021, the Delhi liquor policy was introduced.

July 2022: Delhi excise policy scam arose out of a report submitted by Delhi Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena

February 2023: Former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia was arrested by the CBI and was lodged in Tihar jail.

• March 2023: The ED told Delhi court that the alleged proceeds of crime amounted to more than Rs 292 crores.

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The first former CM to have been arrested was then AIADMK chief late J Jayalalithaa in 1996

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States also charge special fees on imported foreign liquor, transport fee, and label & brand registration charges

**Special Provisions for Delhi:**

- The Union Territories of Delhi (in 1992) is provided with a legislative assembly and a Council of Ministers headed by a Chief Minister.
- The legislative assembly of National Capital Territory of Delhi also has these powers with the exception that Entries 1, 2 and 18 (public order, police and land respectively) of the List II are not within the legislative competence of the legislative assembly.

**Enforcement Directorate:**

Investigation Agency	Features
<b>Enforcement Directorate</b>	<p>The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) is a multi-disciplinary organization mandated with investigation of offences of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws.</p> <p>It functions under the Department of Revenue of the Ministry of Finance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the a premier financial investigation agency of the Government of India.</li> </ul> <p>Enforcement Directorate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The statutory functions of the Directorate include enforcement of following Acts:</li> </ul> <p>Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (COFEPOSA)</p> <p>Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA)</p> <p>Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA)</li> </ul>

**Note:**

In November 2021, the President of India promulgated two ordinances allowing the Centre to extend the tenures of the directors of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate from two years to up to five years.

**PMLA, 2002:**

- It is a criminal law enacted to prevent money laundering and to provide for confiscation of property derived from, or involved in, money-laundering and related matters.
  - Money laundering is the process of making large amounts of money generated by criminal activity, such as drug trafficking or terrorist funding, appear to have come from a legitimate source.
- The provisions of this act are applicable to all financial institutions, banks (Including RBI), mutual funds, insurance companies, and their financial intermediaries.
- The PMLA was enacted in response to India's global commitment (Vienna Convention) to combat the menace of money laundering.

**Pepper it With** • Article 356 , Delhi Power Tussle .



**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. When was the Delhi liquor policy introduced?  
(a) November 2020      (b) November 2021      (c) July 2022      (d) February 2023
2. Who submitted a report pointing to alleged procedural lapses in the formulation of the Delhi excise policy?  
(a) Delhi Chief Minister      (b) Delhi Chief Secretary  
(c) Lieutenant Governor      (d) The CBI
3. In which month and year was former Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia arrested?  
(a) November 2022      (b) February 2023      (c) July 2023      (d) March 2023
4. According to the ED, what was the alleged amount of proceeds of crime in the Delhi excise policy case?  
(a) Rs. 192 crore      (b) Rs. 242 crore      (c) Rs. 292 crore      (d) Rs. 342 crore
5. When was Arvind Kejriwal arrested in the case?  
(a) 21st March 2023      (b) 21st March 2024      (c) 22nd March 2023      (d) 22nd March 2024
6. What was the legal drinking age proposed in the Delhi liquor policy 2021-22?  
(a) 18 years      (b) 21 years      (c) 23 years      (d) 25 years
7. How many private vendors were granted licenses through competitive bidding in the policy?  
(a) 749      (b) 799      (c) 849      (d) 899
8. Who was the first former Chief Minister to have been arrested?  
(a) Lalu Prasad Yadav      (b) J Jayalalithaa      (c) Hemant Soren      (d) Shibu Soren
9. In which year was J Jayalalithaa convicted in a disproportionate assets case?  
(a) 2012      (b) 2013      (c) 2014      (d) 2015
10. When was Hemant Soren forced to step down as the Jharkhand CM?  
(a) December 2022      (b) January 2023      (c) January 2024      (d) February 2024
11. According to constitutional experts, when does a CM lose their position?  
(a) If they lose the majority in the House      (b) If their party asks them to step down  
(c) If they resign from the position      (d) All of the above
12. According to the Representation of the People Act, 1951, what is necessary for disqualification?  
(a) Arrest      (b) Conviction  
(c) Charges being framed      (d) None of the above

**Current Affairs March 2024**

13. In which case did the Supreme Court rule on constitutional morality and good governance for holding public office?  
(a) Manmohan Singh vs Union of India (b) Manoj Narula vs Union of India  
(c) Arvind Kejriwal vs Union of India (d) Delhi Excise Policy vs Union of India
14. Which state list does alcohol fall under in the Indian Constitution?  
(a) Union List (b) State List (c) Concurrent List (d) None of the above
15. What percentage of Own Tax Revenue of a majority of states comes from excise duty on alcohol?  
(a) 5-10% (b) 10-15% (c) 15-20% (d) 20-25%
16. Which part of the Indian Constitution deals with Union Territories?  
(a) Part VII (b) Part VIII (c) Part IX (d) Part X
17. In which year was the Union Territory of Delhi provided with a legislative assembly and a Council of Ministers?  
(a) 1990 (b) 1991 (c) 1992 (d) 1993
18. What was the maximum tenure of the directors of the CBI and ED before the 2021 ordinances?  
(a) 2 years (b) 3 years (c) 4 years (d) 5 years
19. What does PMLA stand for?  
(a) Prevention of Money Laundering Act (b) Prohibition of Money Laundering Act  
(c) Prevention of Monetary Losses Act (d) Prohibition of Monetary Activities Act
20. In response to which convention was the PMLA enacted?  
(a) Palermo Convention (b) Vienna Convention (c) Hague Convention (d) Geneva Convention

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# Fact Check Unit

## Why in News?

The Supreme Court on March 21 stayed the Union's notification of the Fact-Check Unit (FCU) under the and Digital Media Ethics Information Amendment Rules 2023 (IT Amendment Rules 2023) Technology (Intermediary Guidelines Code).

### Explained:

The Press Information Bureau (PIB) under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting set up a Fact Check Unit in 2019 to counter misinformation and fake news. The unit verifies information circulating on digital platforms and debunks false claims related to government policies and activities. However, concerns have been raised about the unit's independence, impartiality, and transparency as a government agency. Critics argue that it may be biased towards defending the government's stance, leading to selective fact-checking and limited credibility.



Additionally, the unit's methodology and criteria for determining misinformation are not entirely clear. Its scope is primarily focused on information related to the central government, while misinformation at regional and local levels may not be adequately addressed. Building public trust remains a challenge for the PIB Fact Check Unit, given the perception of the PIB as a government mouthpiece and the potential for political influence on its operations.

### Way to marks:

- Government of India has notified the PIB's Fact-Check Unit (PIB-FCU) under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) as the fact check unit of the Central Government.
- In 2023, the Centre amended the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
- The matter was taken up by Bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra.

### History of Fact Check Unit Case

- Writ petitions challenging FCU provisions filed by Association of Indian Magazines, Kunal Kamra, and others before Bombay High Court.
- Union Government undertakes not to constitute FCU based on petitions, accepted by Bombay HC, acting as an effective stay against amendment.
- Bombay HC schedules final hearing for July 6 and 7, 2023, judgment reserved on September 29, 2023, with

Solicitor-General stating undertaking to continue until judgment.

- On January 31, 2024, split verdict delivered, matter directed to Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bombay HC for reference to third Judge.
- Solicitor-General lacks instructions to continue undertaking indefinitely; Division Bench notes disagreement on interim relief issue, referred to third Judge on February 8, 2024.
- Third Judge rejects interim relief sought by Petitioners, refuses to stay FCU formation during pendency of petitions on March 11, 2024.
- Division Bench passes Order dated March 13, 2024, rejecting interim relief sought by Petitioners.
- Petitioners approach Supreme Court, arguing prima facie case and balance of convenience favoring them, citing irreparable harm if FCU constituted.
- Matter listed for March 21, 2024; Union Government notifies Press Information Bureau as FCU on March 20, 2024, in absence of stay.

#### **Issue with FCU**

The establishment of the proposed Fact-Checking Unit (FCU), as outlined in the 2023 Amendment to the IT Rules 2021, would grant authority to assess online information accuracy and determine its accessibility. Intermediaries failing to remove flagged content risk losing safe harbor protections under Section 79 of the IT Act and Rule 7 of the IT Rules 2021. This raises concerns about potential limitations on the autonomy of the free press within the Indian internet landscape.

#### **About PIB Fact Check Unit**

**Legal Backing:** The PIB Fact Check Unit's mandate has its origin from the IT Rules of 2021, which state that social media sites risk losing legal liability protections if they fail to address detected misinformation swiftly.

**Statutory body:** The Union Electronics and Information Technology Ministry has designated the FCU as a statutory body within the Press Information Bureau.

**Powers of FCU:** The FCU has the authority to identify what it perceives to be wrong information about the Central government and its agencies on social media sites.

#### **Key Highlights of the PIB Fact Check Unit**

##### **Function of PIB Fact Check Unit**

**Determination of Information:** The unit will determine whether internet information about the Central Government is accurate or not.

**Identification of Fake Content:** The body will be able to identify government-related content on online platforms like Facebook and Twitter as “fake” or “misleading”.

#### **Mandate of the PIB Fact Check Unit**

**Removal of Content:** Content flagged by the unit must be removed if they want to keep their 'safe harbour,' which is legal immunity from third-party content.

**Blocking of URL:** Social media platforms must remove such posts, and internet service providers must block URLs to such content.

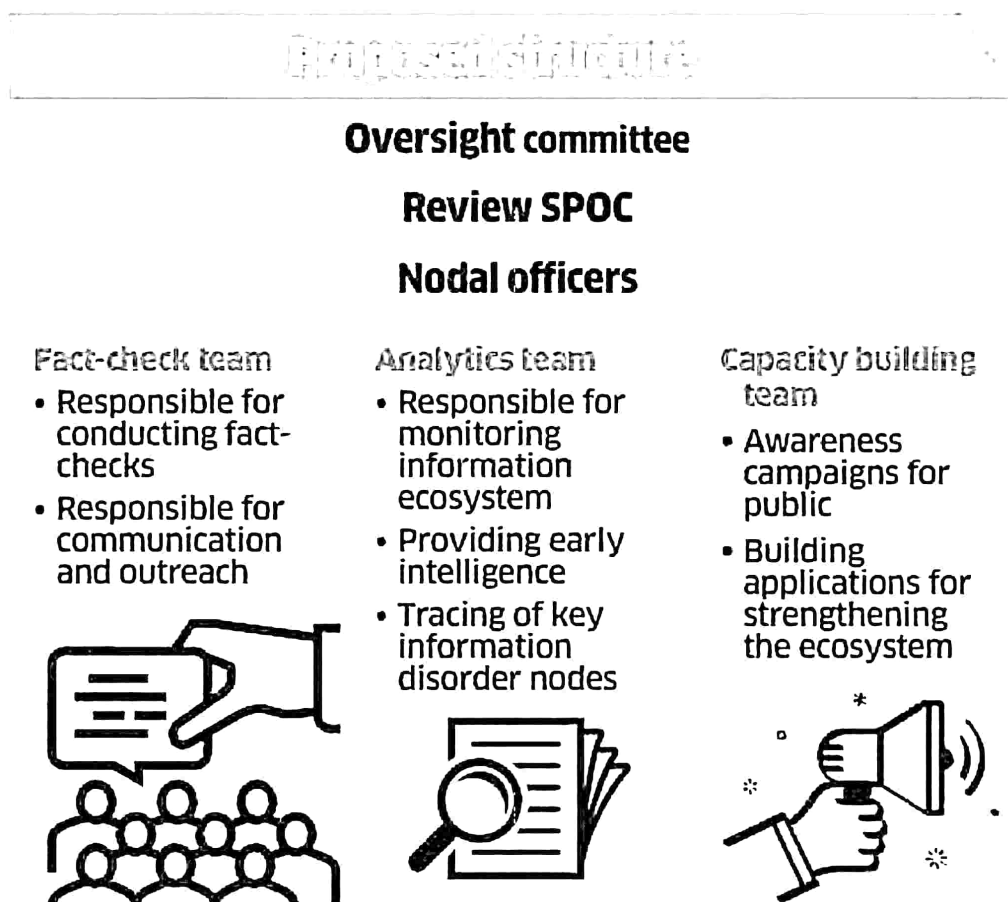
### Operational Framework

**Reporting Authority:** The Unit reports to the Principal Director General of the PIB, who also serves as the Government of India's Principal Spokesperson.

**Headed by:** The unit is headed by a senior director general/additional director general level officer of the Indian Information Service (IIS) and its day-to-day operations are handled by IIS officers at various levels.

### Fact Check Mechanism

**Handling Queries:** Users submit requests via WhatsApp, email, or a web portal, which are handled as 'Queries' by the Unit.



**Process of Verification:** Actionable Queries for the Government of India are thoroughly verified utilising official sources and technological tools.

**Fact Check Publication:** Verified information is categorized as Fake, Misleading, or True and shared on the Unit's social media platforms to raise awareness.

**IT Rules, 2021:**

- **Mandates Social Media to Exercise Greater Diligence:**  
Broadly, the IT Rules (2021) mandate social media platforms to exercise greater diligence with respect to the content on their platforms.
- **Establish a Grievance Officer:**
  - They are required to establish a grievance redressal mechanism and remove unlawful and unfitting content within stipulated time frames.
- **Ensuring Online Safety and Dignity of Users:**
- **Educating Users about the Privacy Policies:**

**Information Technology Amendment Rules, 2023:**

- **Obligatory for Intermediaries:**
  - No platform can allow harmful unapproved online games and their advertisements.
  - They should not share false information about the Indian government, as confirmed by a fact-checking unit.
  - An online intermediary – including social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter and internet service providers like Airtel, Jio and Vodafone Idea – should make “reasonable efforts” to not host content related to the Central Government that is “identified as fake or misleading” by a “fact check unit” that may be notified by the IT Ministry.
- **Self-Regulatory Bodies:**
  - Platforms providing online gaming will have to register with a Self-Regulatory Body (SRB) that will determine whether or not the game is “permissible.”
- **Losing Safe Harbour:**
  - If any piece of information is marked as fake by the upcoming fact check unit, intermediaries will be required to take it down, failing which they would risk losing their safe harbour, which protects them from litigation against third-party content.

<p>पत्र सूचना कार्यालय</p>  <p>पत्र सूचना कार्यालय PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU भारत सरकार</p>	
<b>Agency overview</b>	
<b>Formed</b>	June 1919; 104 years ago
<b>Headquarters</b>	National Media Centre, New Delhi
<b>Minister responsible</b>	Anurag Thakur, I&B Minister
<b>Agency executive</b>	Ms Sheyphali B Sharan , IIS, Director General
<b>Website</b>	pib.gov.in

**Pepper it With**

- Press freedom index , BBC controversy in 2023.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Which ministry has notified the PIB's Fact-Check Unit (PIB-FCU) as the fact check unit of the Central Government?
  - (a) Ministry of Home Affairs
  - (b) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
  - (c) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
  - (d) Ministry of Law and Justice
  
2. In which year did the Centre amend the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules?
  - (a) 2021
  - (b) 2022
  - (c) 2023
  - (d) 2024
  
3. Which court's bench headed by the Chief Justice of India heard the matter related to the Fact Check Unit case?
  - (a) Supreme Court
  - (b) Delhi High Court
  - (c) Bombay High Court
  - (d) None of the above
  
4. Who filed writ petitions challenging the FCU provisions before the Bombay High Court?
  - (a) Association of Indian Magazines and Kunal Kamra
  - (b) Social media platforms
  - (c) News broadcasters
  - (d) Internet service providers
  
5. On which date was the split verdict delivered by the Bombay High Court in the Fact Check Unit case?
  - (a) December 31, 2023
  - (b) January 31, 2024
  - (c) February 28, 2024
  - (d) March 31, 2024
  
6. Which judge rejected the interim relief sought by the petitioners and refused to stay the FCU formation during the pendency of petitions?
  - (a) Chief Justice of Bombay High Court
  - (b) Third Judge
  - (c) Division Bench
  - (d) None of the above
  
7. When did the Union Government notify the Press Information Bureau as the FCU?
  - (a) March 20, 2023
  - (b) March 20, 2024
  - (c) April 20, 2023
  - (d) April 20, 2024
  
8. What is the primary concern raised regarding the establishment of the proposed Fact-Checking Unit (FCU)?
  - (a) Potential limitations on the autonomy of the free press
  - (b) Increased censorship of online content
  - (c) Violation of freedom of speech and expression
  - (d) All of the above

**Current Affairs March 2024**

9. Which section of the IT Act and rule of the IT Rules 2021 provide safe harbor protections to intermediaries?  
(a) Section 78 and Rule 6 (b) Section 79 and Rule 7  
(c) Section 80 and Rule 8 (d) Section 81 and Rule 9
10. What is the legal backing for the PIB Fact Check Unit's mandate?  
(a) IT Rules of 2021 (b) IT Act of 2000  
(c) Press Council of India Act (d) None of the above
11. What is the designation of the officer who heads the PIB Fact Check Unit?  
(a) Senior Director General/Additional Director General  
(b) Principal Director General  
(c) Secretary  
(d) Joint Secretary
12. How can users submit queries to the PIB Fact Check Unit?  
(a) WhatsApp, email, or a web portal (b) Phone call  
(c) Postal mail (d) In-person visit
13. How does the PIB Fact Check Unit categorize the verified information?  
(a) True or False (b) Fake, Misleading, or True  
(c) Verified or Unverified (d) Accurate or Inaccurate
14. What is the primary mandate of the IT Rules, 2021, regarding social media platforms?  
(a) Exercise greater diligence with respect to the content on their platforms  
(b) Remove all harmful content  
(c) Provide user data to the government  
(d) Restrict political content
15. What are the intermediaries required to do under the IT Amendment Rules, 2023, regarding online games?  
(a) Not allow harmful unapproved online games and their advertisements  
(b) Register with a Self-Regulatory Body for online games  
(c) Both (a) and (b)  
(d) None of the above
16. What will happen if an intermediary fails to remove content marked as fake by the fact check unit?  
(a) They will be fined (b) They will risk losing their safe harbor protection  
(c) Their website will be blocked (d) None of the above
17. Which index measures press freedom globally?  
(a) Freedom House Index (b) Press Freedom Index  
(c) Democracy Index (d) Global Peace Index



Current Affairs **March 2024**

18. In which year did the BBC face controversy in India regarding a documentary on Prime Minister Narendra Modi?  
(a) 2021                                      (b) 2022                                      (c) 2023                                      (d) 2024
19. What is the primary objective of the IT Rules, 2021, regarding user privacy?  
(a) Educating users about privacy policies                                      (b) Ensuring online safety and dignity of users  
(c) Both (a) and (b)                                      (d) None of the above
20. What is the primary purpose of the Self-Regulatory Body (SRB) for online gaming platforms?  
(a) Determine whether a game is permissible or not  
(b) Regulate advertisements for online games  
(c) Ensure fair gameplay  
(d) All of the above

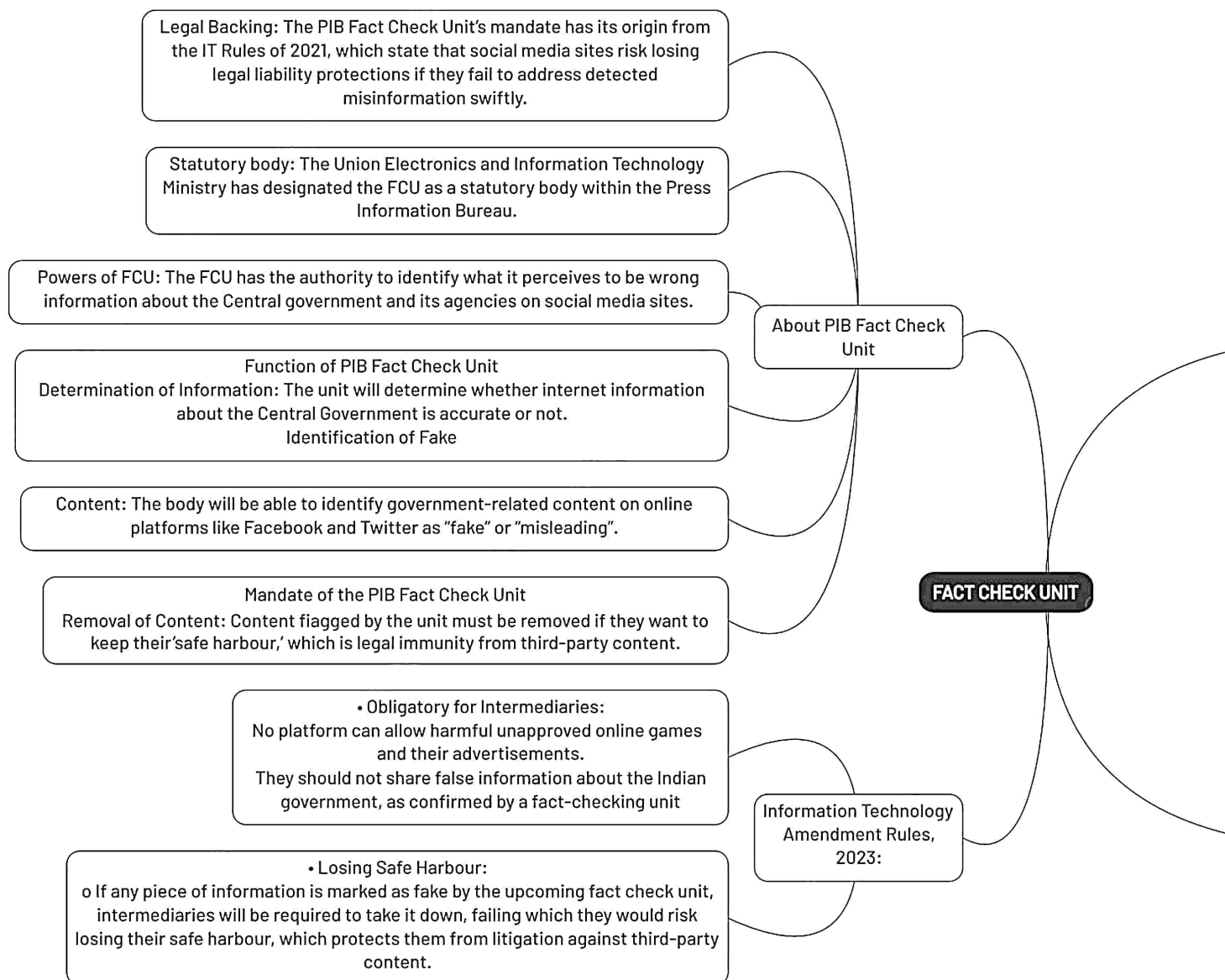
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• The matter was taken up by Bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra.

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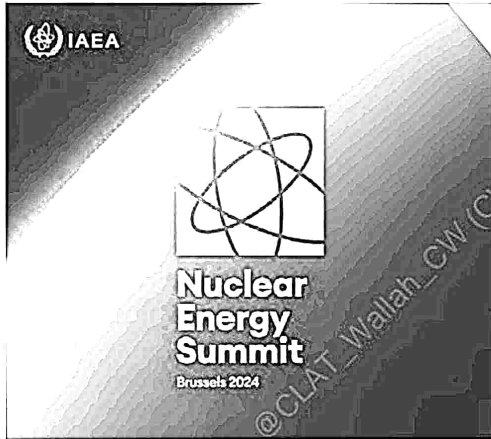
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- Third Judge rejects interim relief sought by Petitioners, refuses to stay FCU formation during pendency of petitions on March 11, 2024.

- Division Bench passes Order dated March 13, 2024, rejecting interim relief sought by Petitioners.

- Petitioners approach Supreme Court, arguing prima facie case and balance of convenience favoring them, citing irreparable harm if FCU constituted.

- Matter listed for March 21, 2024; Union Government notifies Press Information Bureau as FCU on March 20, 2024, in absence of stay.



# Nuclear Energy Summit

## Why in News?

Brussels (Belgium) hosted the first-ever Nuclear Energy Summit. It was co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Belgium and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

### Explained:

The Nuclear Energy Summit is an international event that brings together global leaders, policymakers, industry experts, and stakeholders to discuss and promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It aims to facilitate cooperation, address challenges related to nuclear safety, security, and non-proliferation, and explore innovative technologies. The summit covers topics like nuclear waste management, climate change mitigation, and the future of nuclear technology.

Different countries take turns hosting the summit, which results in joint statements, action plans, or initiatives aimed at strengthening international cooperation and advancing responsible nuclear energy use. While the summit holds significance for addressing critical nuclear issues, it also faces criticism from groups opposing nuclear power due to safety, environmental, and proliferation concerns.

### Way to marks:

#### Nuclear Energy Summit

- This Summit is an initiative in collaboration with the IAEA's 'Atoms4Netzero' programme.
  - Atoms4NetZero is an IAEA initiative that supports efforts by Member States to harness the power of nuclear energy in the transition to net zero.
  - Launched during COP27, this initiative provides decision makers with data-driven energy scenario modelling.
  - It is part of the multilateral approach to decarbonisation.
- Theme of summit : Sustainable Development and Clean Energy Transition

#### About Nuclear Energy

- Nuclear energy is a form of energy that is released from the nucleus, or core, of atoms.
- Nuclear energy is known for its high energy density, meaning that a relatively small amount of nuclear fuel can produce a large amount of energy.
- There are two primary methods of harnessing nuclear energy:
  - **Nuclear Fission:** This is the process of splitting the nucleus of an atom into two smaller nuclei, releasing a large amount of energy in the process.

- **Nuclear Fusion:** This is the process of combining the nuclei of two light atoms to form a heavier nucleus.
- Nuclear power emits four times less carbon than solar farms or other renewable sources such as wind, hydropower, and geothermal.
- Nuclear power has the capacity to supply uninterrupted energy irrespective of geographical constraints making it a crucial component of the wider renewable energy mix.
- Nuclear power plants also have low operating costs, smaller land imprint and a longer life cycle compared to all the other renewable energy sources.

#### Status of Nuclear Energy in India

- Nuclear energy is the fifth-largest source of electricity in India, contributing about 2% of the country's total electricity generation.
- India currently has over 22 nuclear reactors in 7 power plants across the country, which together produce 6,780 MW of nuclear power.
  - Of these reactors, 18 are Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) and 4 are Light Water Reactors (LWRs).
- In January 2021, the Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP-3), India's first 700 MWe unit and the biggest indigenously developed variant of the PHWR, was connected to the grid.

Nuclear Power Plants in India - Operational			
Name of Nuclear Power Station	Location	Operator	capacity
Kakrapar Atomic Power Station - 1993	Gujarat	NPCIL	440
(Kalpakkam) Madras Atomic Power Station - 1984	Tamil Nadu	NPCIL	440
Narora Atomic Power Station- 1991	Uttar Pradesh	NPCIL	440
Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant -2000	Karnataka	NPCIL	880
Rajasthan Atomic Power Station - 1973	Rajasthan	NPCIL	1,180
Tarapur Atomic Power Station - 1969	Maharashtra	NPCIL	1,400
Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant - 2013	Tamil Nadu	NPCIL	2,000

#### Atoms4NetZero

- Atoms4NetZero is an IAEA initiative that supports efforts by Member States to harness the power of nuclear energy in the transition to net zero.

#### International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

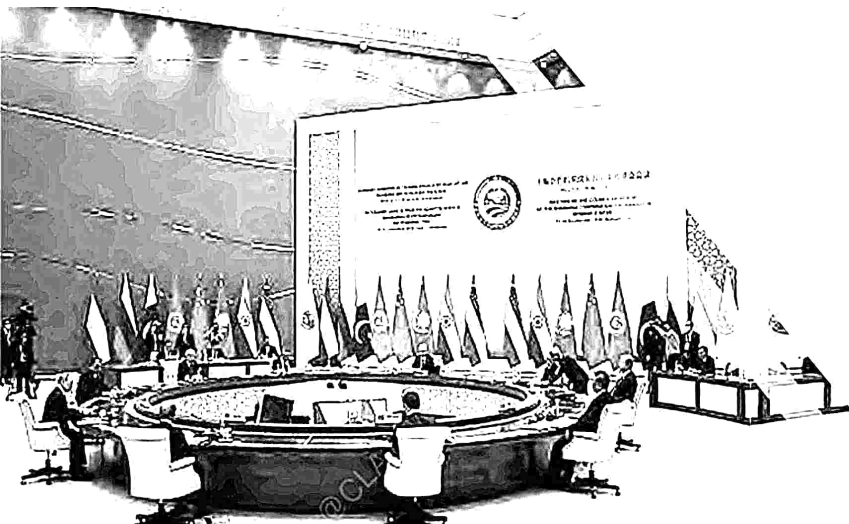
- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is an intergovernmental organization that promotes the peaceful use of nuclear energy and prevents its use for military purposes, including nuclear weapons. The IAEA was founded on July 29, 1957, and is an autonomous organisation within the UN system
- **Headquarter:** Vienna, Austria.
- **Membership:** 178 Member States
- **Head :** Director General Rafael Grossi

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Which organization's programme is the 'Atoms4Netzero' initiative?  
(a) United Nations (b) International Energy Agency  
(c) International Atomic Energy Agency (d) World Nuclear Association
2. What is the primary objective of the 'Atoms4Netzero' programme?  
(a) To promote nuclear disarmament  
(b) To support the use of nuclear energy in the transition to net zero  
(c) To regulate the safe transportation of nuclear materials  
(d) To provide nuclear security training
3. During which COP was the 'Atoms4Netzero' initiative launched?  
(a) COP25 (b) COP26 (c) COP27 (d) COP28
4. What is the theme of the summit related to the 'Atoms4Netzero' programme?  
(a) Sustainable Development and Clean Energy Transition  
(b) Nuclear Safety and Security  
(c) Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology  
(d) Nuclear Non-Proliferation
5. Which of the following is NOT a method of harnessing nuclear energy?  
(a) Nuclear Fission  
(b) Nuclear Fusion  
(c) Nuclear Combustion  
(d) All of the above are methods of harnessing nuclear energy
6. Which process involves splitting the nucleus of an atom into two smaller nuclei?  
(a) Nuclear Fission (b) Nuclear Fusion (c) Nuclear Reaction (d) Nuclear Decay
7. Compared to other renewable energy sources, nuclear power emits \_\_\_\_\_ less carbon.  
(a) two times (b) three times (c) four times (d) five times
8. Which of the following is an advantage of nuclear power plants?  
(a) Low operating costs (b) Smaller land imprint  
(c) Longer life cycle (d) All of the above
9. What percentage of India's total electricity generation is contributed by nuclear energy?  
(a) 1% (b) 2% (c) 3% (d) 4%

Current Affairs **March 2024**

10. How many nuclear reactors are currently operational in India?  
(a) 18 (b) 20 (c) 22 (d) 24
11. Which of the following is NOT a type of nuclear reactor operational in India?  
(a) Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (b) Light Water Reactor  
(c) Fast Breeder Reactor (d) Boiling Water Reactor
12. KAPP-3, India's first 700 MWe nuclear reactor unit, is which variant of the PHWR?  
(a) Indigenously developed (b) Imported from Russia  
(c) Imported from the USA (d) Imported from France
13. Where is the headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) located?  
(a) Geneva, Switzerland (b) Vienna, Austria (c) New York, USA (d) Paris, France
14. How many Member States are part of the IAEA?  
(a) 150 (b) 165 (c) 178 (d) 193
15. Who is the current Director General of the IAEA?  
(a) Yukiya Amano (b) Rafael Grossi (c) Fatima Zahra (d) Mohamed ElBaradei
16. Which of the following is NOT a function of the IAEA?  
(a) Promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy  
(b) Preventing the use of nuclear energy for military purposes  
(c) Developing nuclear weapons  
(d) Regulating the safe transportation of nuclear materials
17. What is the name given to the process of combining the nuclei of two light atoms to form a heavier nucleus?  
(a) Nuclear Fission (b) Nuclear Fusion (c) Nuclear Reaction (d) Nuclear Decay
18. Which type of nuclear reactor is KAPP-3, India's first 700 MWe unit?  
(a) Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (b) Light Water Reactor  
(c) Fast Breeder Reactor (d) Boiling Water Reactor
19. Which of the following is an advantage of nuclear power?  
(a) Uninterrupted energy supply irrespective of geographical constraints  
(b) High energy density  
(c) Low operating costs  
(d) All of the above
20. When was the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) founded?  
(a) July 29, 1947 (b) July 29, 1957 (c) July 29, 1967 (d) July 29, 1977



# Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Startup Forum

## Why in News?

The fourth edition of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Startup Forum was organized on 19th March 2024 in New Delhi.

### Explained:

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Startup Forum is an initiative aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and promoting innovation among the member nations of the SCO. It serves as a platform for startups, entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers to collaborate, exchange ideas, and explore opportunities within the SCO region.

The forum focuses on various aspects of the startup ecosystem, including funding opportunities, technology transfer, intellectual property rights, and the creation of a conducive environment for startups to thrive. It encourages cross-border collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the development of joint projects and ventures among the SCO member states. By facilitating networking and partnerships, the SCO Startup Forum aims to unlock the entrepreneurial potential of the region and contribute to economic growth and technological advancement.

### Way to marks:

#### About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Startup Forum

- It is a platform for the stakeholders from the startup ecosystems from all SCO Member States to interact and collaborate.
- It aims to create multilateral cooperation and engagement for startups among the SCO Member States.
- India will host the second meeting of the Special Working Group for Startups and Innovation (SWG) in November 2024 and SCO Startup Forum 5.0 in January 2025.
- Previously, Startup India had organized various initiatives for SCO Member states including:
  - **SCO Startup Forum 1.0:** The SCO Startup Forum in 2020 laid the foundation for multilateral cooperation and engagement for startups among the SCO Member States.
  - **SCO Startup Forum 2.0:** The two-day Forum was held virtually in 2021 through a customized platform representing the Indian culture in augmented reality.
  - **SCO Startup Forum 3.0:** DPIIT organised the first ever physical SCO Startup Forum in 2023 for the SCO Member States.
- **1st Meeting of the SWG:** The first Meeting of the SCO Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation (SWG), permanently chaired by India, was organised on the theme 'Growing from Roots' in 2023.



### Startup India Initiative

- It is a flagship initiative of the Government of India intended to catalyse start up culture with the objective of supporting entrepreneurs, building a robust startup ecosystem and transforming India into a country of job creators instead of job seekers
  - It was launched on 16 January 2016 under the ministry of Commerce and Industry
  - Minister of Commerce and Industry:** Shri Piyush Goyal.

ЎРЛИК ТАШКИЛОТИГА А'ЗО ДАВЛАТЛАР  
 ЎРЛИК КЕНГАШИ ЎЙ'ЎЛИШИ  
 15-16 сентябр, Самарқанд

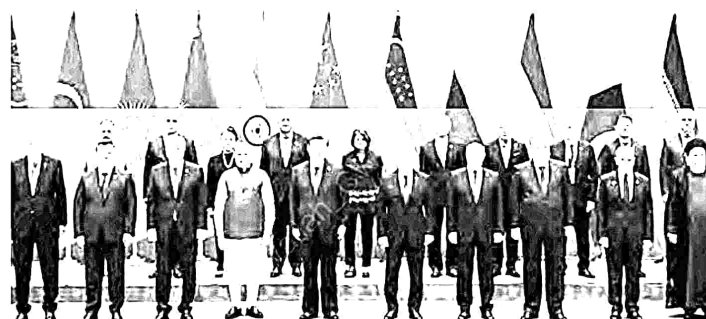
СОВЕТА ПЛАВ ГОСУДАРСТВ-ЧЛЕНОВ  
 И ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА  
 сентябрь 2022 года, Самарканд



上海合作组织成员

(2022年9月15-16)

MEETING OF THE C  
 OF THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION  
 15-16 September



### Shanghai Cooperation Organization

- SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organization.
- It was founded in 1996 by the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan in order to build mutual trust among Member States, to disarm the border regions and to encourage regional cooperation under the name "Shanghai Five".
- It's a political, economic and military organization aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region, created in 2001.
  - Secretary General:** Zhang Ming
- Presently, the SCO has 9 member states which are:** China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

#### Structure:

- Heads of State Council:** The supreme SCO body which decides its internal functioning.
- Heads of Government Council:** Approves the budget, considers and decides upon issues related to economic spheres of interaction within SCO.
- Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs:** Considers issues related to day-to-day activities.
- Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS):** Established to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- SCO Secretariat:** Beijing.
- Official language:** Russian and Chinese.

**Pepper it With** • China Pakistan relations and CPEC , Fukushima Nuclear Plant

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. When was the Startup India initiative launched?  
(a) 2014                      (b) 2015                      (c) 2016                      (d) 2017
2. Who is the Minister of Commerce and Industry under whose leadership the Startup India initiative was launched?  
(a) Shri Narendra Modi    (b) Shri Amit Shah        (c) Shri Piyush Goyal    (d) Shri Rajnath Singh
3. What is the main objective of the Startup India initiative?  
(a) To promote traditional industries  
(b) To support entrepreneurs and build a robust startup ecosystem  
(c) To encourage job seekers  
(d) To establish government-controlled businesses
4. When did the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) start its foundation under the name "Shanghai Five"?  
(a) 1992                      (b) 1994                      (c) 1996                      (d) 1998
5. How many member states are there in the SCO currently?  
(a) 7                          (b) 8                          (c) 9                          (d) 10
6. Who is the Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)?  
(a) Xi Jinping                (b) Vladimir Putin        (c) Zhang Ming            (d) Narendra Modi
7. Which country is not a member of the SCO?  
(a) India                      (b) Pakistan                (c) Japan                    (d) Russia
8. What is the main aim of the SCO?  
(a) To promote global trade  
(b) To maintain peace, security, and stability in the region  
(c) To dominate military operations  
(d) To establish a single currency for member states
9. Which council of the SCO approves the budget and considers issues related to economic spheres of interaction within the organization?  
(a) Heads of State Council                      (b) Heads of Government Council  
(c) Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs    (d) Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)

Current Affairs **March 2024**

10. What is the official language of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)?  
(a) English (b) Mandarin (c) Russian and Chinese (d) Arabic
11. When did India host the first physical SCO Startup Forum?  
(a) 2020 (b) 2021 (c) 2022 (d) 2023
12. Who is the permanent chair of the SCO Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation (SWG)?  
(a) China (b) Russia (c) India (d) Kazakhstan
13. Which edition of the SCO Startup Forum was held virtually in 2021?  
(a) 1.0 (b) 2.0 (c) 3.0 (d) 4.0
14. What was the theme of the first Meeting of the SCO Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation (SWG)?  
(a) Growing from Roots (b) Innovation and Sustainability  
(c) Building the Future (d) Startups for All
15. Who will host the second meeting of the Special Working Group for Startups and Innovation (SWG) in November 2024?  
(a) China (b) Russia (c) India (d) Pakistan
16. What is the aim of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Startup Forum?  
(a) To promote traditional businesses  
(b) To support startups and innovation among SCO Member States  
(c) To establish government-controlled startups  
(d) To encourage job seekers
17. Which organization organizes the SCO Startup Forum?  
(a) United Nations (b) Startup India  
(c) Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (d) World Economic Forum
18. What is the primary objective of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) within the SCO?  
(a) To combat terrorism, separatism, and extremism  
(b) To promote regional trade agreements  
(c) To establish diplomatic relations between member states  
(d) To facilitate cultural exchanges
19. Which country is the current chair of the Heads of State Council of the SCO?  
(a) China (b) India (c) Russia (d) Pakistan
20. In which city is the SCO Secretariat located?  
(a) Moscow (b) Beijing (c) New Delhi (d) Islamabad



March 2024

**TOPIC**  
in **NEWS**



## NEWS IN SHORT

### Obelisks- a new form of life

- Scientists at Stanford University have identified a new, remarkably simple form of life, which they have named "obelisks."
- These obelisks bridge the gap between viruses and viroids in terms of complexity by adding a new category to the existing spectrum of life forms.
- Obelisks were identified through an extensive analysis of RNA sequences from bacteria in the human gut, using next-generation sequencing (NGS) technology.
- Obelisks exhibit highly symmetrical, rod-like structures resembling the iconic monuments (Obelisk).
- Their genetic sequences are approximately 1,000 nucleotides long, with no detectable similarities to known biological agents.

### Bharat Tex 2024

- It is the largest global textile event in India, concluded at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi,
- It was inspired by the 5F Vision- - Farm to fibre; fibre to factory; factory to fashion; fashion to foreign- of the Prime Minister of India.
- The event was organised by a consortium of 11 Textile Export Promotion Councils and supported by the Ministry of Textiles.
- Bharat Tex served as a launchpad for initiatives like the 'Innovative Business Practices and Economic

Models in the Textile Value Chain in India' (IndiaTex) and Textile Grand Innovation Challenge, aiming to drive innovation and sustainability in the textile industry.

- IndiaTex is a four-year UN Environment Programme project that aims to accelerate the transition of the Indian textile sector towards circularity.

### India's 1<sup>st</sup> National Dolphin Research Centre

- India's inaugural National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) marks a significant milestone in the conservation efforts for the endangered Gangetic dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*).
- NDRC is located strategically near the Ganga River in Patna, Bihar. Bihar is home to around half of the estimated 3,000 Gangetic dolphins in India.
- The centre aims to be a hub for comprehensive research on various aspects of Gangetic dolphins, including behaviour, survival skills, and causes of mortality.
- The Ganges river dolphin, discovered in 1801, historically inhabits the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

### Hydrogen fuel cell ferry boat

- Prime Minister of India flagged off India's first indigenously built hydrogen fuel cell ferry boat in virtual.

- The vessel has been built at the Cochin Shipyard.
- It will make urban mobility smooth and easy through inland waterways.
- The vessel's flagging off was a key component of a major program that involved the foundation stone laid for a ₹17,300-crore project, including the outer harbour at the V.O. Chidambaranar Port.
- The V.O. Chidambaranar Port is the first Green Hydrogen Hub Port of the country and the projects include a desalination plant, hydrogen production and bunkering facility.
- The hydrogen cell-powered inland waterway vessel launched under the Harit Nauka initiative.
- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways unveiled the Harit Nauka guidelines for inland vessels in January 2024.
- As per the guidelines, all states have to make efforts to use green fuels for 50% of inland waterways-based passenger fleets in the next one decade, and 100% by 2045.
- This is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as per the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.

#### **Mission Utkarsh**

The Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Women and Child Development have partnered to enhance the nutrition of adolescent girls through Ayurveda interventions as a part of Mission Utkarsh.

Under Mission Utkarsh, 15 central ministries or departments will work to elevate districts at the bottom, to state and national averages.

The objective is to combat anaemia and work towards achieving an "Anaemia Mukta Bharat" (Anaemia Free India).

Anaemia is a medical condition characterised by a deficiency of red blood cells or haemoglobin in the blood, leading to reduced oxygen-carrying capacity

In the first phase, the focus will be on improving the anaemic status of adolescent girls (14-18 years) in five aspirational districts of five states namely Assam (Dhubri), Chhattisgarh (Bastar), Jharkhand (Paschimi Singhbhum), Maharashtra (Gadchiroli), and Rajasthan (Dhaulpur).

#### **New chairperson of Lokpal**

- The former Supreme Court Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar was appointed as the chairperson of Lokpal.
- The post was vacant for nearly two years.
- The chairperson and members of the Lokpal are appointed by the President after obtaining the recommendations of a Selection Committee having the Prime Minister as its chairperson.
- Apart from a chairperson, the Lokpal can have eight members, four judicial and four non-judicial.
- Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose was the first Lokpal of India, appointed in 2019.

#### **New Geographical Indications (GI) tags**

- The traditional crochet lace craft of Narasapur in Andhra Pradesh, Majuli masks and manuscript painting in Assam, Cuttack Rupa Tarakasi (Silver Filigree) have received a Geographical Indications (GI) tag to preserve their unique identity, enhancing their cultural significance and safeguarding against decline.
- These GI tags aim to rejuvenate and promote traditional crafts, ensuring their continued legacy and heritage preservation.
- Narasapur crochet lace craft- The craft involves transforming thin cotton threads into intricate artefacts using delicate crochet needles of varying sizes. Artisans use a single crochet hook to create loops and interlocking stitches, forming delicate lace patterns.

- Majuli masks are intricately crafted masks made by hand using traditional techniques. The handmade masks are traditionally used to depict characters in bhaonas (a traditional form of entertainment, with religious messages), or theatrical performances with devotional messages under the neo-Vaishnavite tradition.
- The masks can depict gods, goddesses, demons, animals and birds — Ravana, Garuda, Narasimha, Hanuman, Varaha Surpanakha all feature among the masks.
- Majuli Manuscript Paintings- These are a form of religious art closely linked to the island's Vaishnavite culture, centred around worship.
- One of the earliest examples of this art form is attributed to Srimanta Sankardev, depicting the Adya Dasama of the Bhagwat Purana in Assamese. It continues to be practised in every sattrā in Majuli.
- Majuli Manuscript Painting are inspired by the Pala school of Painting art
- Cuttack Rupa Tarakasi (Silver Filigree)- Filigree is ornamental work especially of fine wire of gold, silver, or copper applied chiefly to gold and silver surfaces.

### **INS Jatayu**

- INS Jatayu, formerly Naval Detachment Minicoy, is commissioned as an upgraded naval base on Minicoy Island in the Lakshadweep archipelago.
- It will operate under the operational control of the Naval Officer in Charge (Lakshadweep), Southern Naval Command.
- The base enhances the operational reach of the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean, bolstering its capabilities for anti-piracy, anti-narcotics, and surveillance operations.
- It is Situated in Minicoy which is the southernmost atoll of the Lakshadweep archipelago.
- INS Jatayu strategically overlooks vital Sea Lines of

Communications (SLOCs), strengthening India's maritime presence in the region.

### **New AI model- Claude 3**

- The Artificial Intelligence (AI) start-up Anthropic announced its latest family of AI models called Claude 3.
- The family includes three state-of-the-art AI models in the ascending order of capabilities – Claude 3 Haiku, Claude 3 Sonnet, and Claude 3 Opus.
- Anthropic is an OpenAI rival started by former leaders at the ChatGPT maker. While OpenAI has closely tied itself to its business partner Microsoft, Anthropic's primary cloud computing partner is Amazon.
- Claude is a group of Large Language Models (LLMs) developed by Anthropic.
- LLMs are a specific class of generative AI models that are trained to understand and generate human-like text.
- The chatbot is capable of handling text, voice messages, and documents.
- The chatbot is capable of generating faster, contextual responses compared to its peers.
- Among the new releases, Claude 3 Opus is the most powerful model, Claude 3 Sonnet is the middle model that is capable and price competitive, and Claude 3 Haiku is relevant for any use case that requires instant responses.

### **Chakshu and the Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP)**

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) introduced two initiatives, Chakshu and the Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP), to combat spam and fraud calls through the Sanchar Saathi portal.
- Chakshu (meaning eyes) is accessible at [sancharsaathi.gov.in/sfc](https://sancharsaathi.gov.in/sfc), facilitating citizens to report suspicious communications- various types of fraud, including those related to bank accounts, payment

wallets, SIM cards, gas and electricity connections, KYC updates, impersonation, and sextortion.

- The DIP is a secure and integrated platform created by the DoT for curbing the misuse of telecom resources and data through intelligence sharing and information exchange among the stakeholders covering a wide spectrum of telecom service providers, law enforcement agencies (LEAs), banks and financial institutions.
- DIP would be a non-public data-sharing resource for “Telecom Service Providers (TSPs), LEAs, banks and financial institutions, social media platforms, identity document issuing authorities etc.

#### **India's first underwater transportation tunnel**

- The Prime Minister inaugurated the Kolkata Metro's Esplanade-Howrah Maidan section, marking the inauguration of India's first underwater transportation tunnel.
- The section, passing below the Hooghly River, showcasing the nation's engineering prowess hosts the deepest Metro station (the Howrah metro station at 30 metres) in India.
- The Hooghly River-
  - It is also known as the Bhagirathi-Hoogly and Kati-Ganga Rivers- it is one of the significant rivers in West Bengal.
  - It is a distributary or arm of the Ganges River, about 260 km long.
  - It is formed in Murshidabad, where Ganga splits into two parts – while the part flowing through Bangladesh is called the Padma. The other part is the Hooghly.

#### **World Poverty Clock**

- According to the latest data from the World Poverty Clock, India has successfully reduced the proportion of its population living in 'extreme poverty' to below 3%.
- It signifies a substantial step towards accomplishing

the first of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations, with the target year of 2030.

- The World Poverty Clock tracks real-time poverty estimates until 2030 for almost all countries, monitoring progress toward ending extreme poverty.
- The Clock shows the worldwide number of people in extreme poverty, sorting them by age, gender, and rural or urban residency, capturing both those escaping poverty and those falling into it every second.
- The escape rate calculates the current rate of poverty reduction in the world.
- It is backed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

#### **AI teacher robot in India- 'Iris'**

- A school in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala has unveiled a groundbreaking innovation in education with the introduction of India's first Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) teacher robot named 'Iris'.
- Generative AI refers to deep-learning models that can generate high-quality text, images, and other content based on the data they were trained on.
- In August 2023, India inaugurated its first-ever AI school in Kerala.'
- Iris' is developed in collaboration with Makerlabs Edutech, to transform traditional teaching methods through personalised learning experiences for students.
- It is equipped with voice assistant and IRIS engages students in interactive learning activities.
- IRIS responds to user queries, provides explanations, and delivers educational content through personalised interactions.
- With a 4-wheel chassis and 5 degrees of freedom (DoF) movements, IRIS can move freely and engage in hands-on learning activities.

- IRIS promises to enhance learning outcomes and inspire students in new ways, ushering in a future where AI complements traditional teaching methods.

#### **Pi- The world's 'friendliest' chatbot**

- It is powered by the new Inflection-2.5 large language model (LLM), has emerged as a breakthrough in conversational AI technology, offering deep and meaningful interactions.
- Pi, developed by Inflection AI, a California-based company, offers empathetic, helpful, and safe conversations, setting it apart from other chatbots.
- Inflection 2.5 is an upgrade to a large language model (LLM) created by Inflection AI.
- Inflection 2.5 allows Pi to access and process information from the real-time web, providing users with up-to-date answers to questions.
- Inflection 2.5, competes with leading LLMs like GPT-4 while using only 40% of its computational power for training.
- Unlike ChatGPT and Gemini, Pi is designed as a companion rather than a personal assistant, offering support, intelligence, and companionship.

#### **Sabarmati Ashram Redevelopment Project**

- On the 94th anniversary of the Dandi March, the foundation for the Sabarmati Ashram Redevelopment Project was laid in Ahmedabad.
- The Sabarmati Ashram Redevelopment Project is a Rs 1,200 crore initiative to restore, conserve, and rebuild the original Sabarmati Ashram founded by Mahatma Gandhi.
- Sabarmati Ashram was founded in 1917 by Mahatma Gandhi- situated on the western bank of the Sabarmati River, near the village of Juna Vadaj in Ahmedabad.
- The ashram served as a base for Mahatma Gandhi's socio-political activities and experiments with truth and non-violence.
- The Dandi March (24-day march) commenced from the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad on March 12, 1930, with Mahatma Gandhi leading.

- On April 6, 1930, Gandhi symbolically broke the salt law by picking up a handful of salt from the shores of Dandi, starting the civil disobedience movement against the British salt monopoly.

#### **PM- SURAJ**

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the 'Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan and Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan' (PM-SURAJ) national portal online aimed at offering credit support to the marginalized segments of society.
- The 'PM-SURAJ' national portal aims to uplift the most marginalized sections of society and provide credit assistance to one lakh entrepreneurs from disadvantaged communities.
- It is implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and its departments.
- The portal serves as a one-stop point where people from disadvantaged sections of society can apply for and monitor the progress of all loan and credit schemes already available to them.

#### **'ETHANOL 100'**

- The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas launched 'ETHANOL 100' at select 183 retail outlets in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, New Delhi, and Tamil Nadu.
- ETHANOL 100 is a revolutionary automotive fuel that consists of 100% ethanol.
- It is a biofuel produced from renewable sources such as corn, sugarcane, or other plant materials.
- ETHANOL 100 is aimed at reducing dependence on fossil fuels, promoting sustainability, and contributing to a cleaner environment by lowering greenhouse gas emissions compared to traditional gasoline.
- The initiative aligns with the vision to achieve 20% ethanol blending (E20) by 2025-26, reducing import dependency and boosting the agriculture sector.





## AWARDS

### Pritzker Architecture Prize 2024

- Japanese architect Riken Yamamoto was declared the winner of the prestigious 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize, often called the "Architecture Nobel".
- This award is the highest international honour in the field. Yamamoto is the ninth laureate from Japan.
- The prize was established by Jay A Pritzker and his wife Cindy in 1979 to honour living architects whose work demonstrates talent, vision, and commitment to humanity and the built environment.
- Riken Yamamoto's architectural vision prioritises family and community, with a focus on the visible and tangible aspects of architecture.
- Balkrishna Doshi, is the first Indian architect to win a Pritzker Prize (2018). His renowned work is the Aranya Low-Cost Housing Complex, located in the city of Indore. The complex connects a community through a cluster of buildings stitched together by a network of courtyards and pathways.

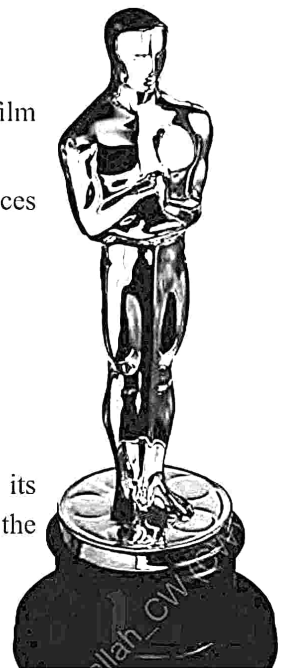


Riken Yamamoto

### 96<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards

#### 1. The Academy Awards-

- They also known as the Oscars. They are awards for artistic and technical merit for the film industry.
- They are presented annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).
- It is the oldest worldwide entertainment awards ceremony.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Academy Awards were held in 1929.
- The second ceremony in 1930 was the first one broadcast by radio.
- The 1953 ceremony was the first one televised.
- It is also the oldest of the four major annual American entertainment awards; its equivalents – the Emmy Awards for television, the Tony Awards for theater, and the Grammy Awards for music – are modeled after the Academy Awards.



**2. India at Oscars**

- Bhanu Athaiya became the first Indian in 1983 to win an Academy Award for designing the costumes for *Gandhi*.
- In 1992, legendary Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray was bestowed with an Honorary Academy Award, becoming the only Indian to date to receive the honour.
- Resul Pookutty and A. R. Rahman won the Academy Award for Best Sound Mixing and Best Original Score, respectively, for the 2008 British film *Slumdog Millionaire*.
- A.R. Rahman also won for Best Original Song alongside lyricist Gulzar for the song "Jai Ho", becoming the first Indian to date to have won more than one Academy Award.
- At 95<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards- The song Naatu Naatu from the hit Telugu-language film *RRR* made history by becoming the first Indian film song to win an Oscar. India won a second Oscar in the same year for *The Elephant Whisperers* which won in the Best Documentary Short film category.

**3. The list of Oscar winners at the 96<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards-**

- Best picture- *Oppenheimer*
- Best actor in a leading role- Cillian Murphy, *Oppenheimer*
- Best actress in a leading role- Emma Stone, *Poor Things*
- Best director- Christopher Nolan, *Oppenheimer*
- Best supporting actor- Robert Downey Jr, *Oppenheimer*
- Best supporting actress- Da'Vine Joy Randolph, *The Holdovers*
- Best adapted screenplay- *American Fiction*
- Best original screenplay- *Anatomy of a Fall*
- Best animated featured film- *The Boy and the Heron*
- Best animated short- *War is Over! Inspired by the Music of John & Yoko*
- Best international feature- *The Zone of Interest*, United Kingdom
- Best documentary feature- *20 Days in Mariupol*
- Best documentary short- *The Last Repair Shop*
- Best original score- *Oppenheimer*
- Best original song- *What Was I Made For?*, *Barbie*
- Best cinematography- *Oppenheimer*



March 2024

**TOPIC**  
*in NEWS*

## IMPORTANT

### Dates

#### World Wildlife Day (WWD)- 3<sup>rd</sup> March

- Every year on 3rd March, the day celebrates the vast array of wild animals and plants on our planet and raise awareness about the threats they face.
- **The 2024 theme is:** Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation.
- It highlights the growing role of technology - tracking endangered species and monitoring illegal wildlife trade, in protecting wildlife and for safeguarding biodiversity.
- On 20th December 2013, during the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), 3rd March was established as WWD.
- This date commemorates the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973.

#### International Women's Day – 8<sup>th</sup> March

- The day is an annual celebration observed on 8th March every year, dedicated to honouring the achievements of women and advocating for gender equality worldwide.
- The day is a reminder of the progress made towards women's rights and the ongoing challenges that women still face in many aspects of life.
- The celebration's origin lies in the labour movements of Europe and North America. The first International Women's Day was held in March 1911.
- It was celebrated for the first time by the United Nations in 1975.
- Theme for the year 2024: Inspire Inclusion



#### Shaheed Diwas- 23<sup>rd</sup> March

- The day commemorates the three iconic freedom fighters – Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar – who were martyred by the British Government.
- Their most notable action was the bombing of the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi on April 8, 1929, accompanied by the iconic slogan “Inquilab Zindabad” (Long Live the Revolution).

- Subsequently, they were arrested and charged with murder, leading to their eventual execution on March 23, 1931.
- Their sacrifice became a rallying cry for the independence movement, inspiring countless others to join the struggle against colonial rule.
- This date commemorates the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973.

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magazine.



## JUST IN ONE-LINE

1. Google DeepMind has launched Genie AI (Artificial Intelligence), a new model that can generate interactive video games from just a text or image prompt.
2. The Samudra Laksamana (Bilateral Maritime Exercise) between India and Malaysia was recently concluded off the coast of Visakhapatnam. The other exercises between India and Malaysia are Exercise Udarashakti (Air Force) and Exercise Harimau Shakti (Army).
3. MILAN 2024 is the 12th edition of the biennial Multilateral Naval Exercise held at Visakhapatnam, under the aegis of Eastern Naval Command. The central aim of MILAN is to enhance professional interaction between friendly navies and gain experience in multilateral large-force operations at sea.
4. The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has named a new marine species of head-shield sea slug with ruby red spot which was discovered along the coasts of West Bengal and Odisha, after President Droupadi Murmu, named *Melanochlamys droupadi*.
5. Archaeologists from the Public Research Institute of History, Archaeology, and Heritage (PRIHAH) have unearthed two ancient temples dating back to the Badami Chalukyan period, along with a rare inscription, in Mudimanikyam village of Nalgonda district, Telangana.
6. The 'e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi' (Digital Gateway) of Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) was launched to leverage technology for easing farmers' warehousing logistics and ensuring fair prices for their produce.
7. Dry Ice is the solid form of carbon dioxide, is commonly used as a cooling agent for food products like ice cream, frozen desserts etc. But it poses a significant health risk if not handled properly. It sublimates into carbon dioxide gas, which, if inhaled in large quantities, can lead to breathlessness (hypercapnia) and other serious complications.
8. The 'Holistic Progress Card' (HPCs) have been devised by Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH), a standard-setting body under the NCERT, for the foundational stage (Classes 1 and 2), preparatory stage (Classes 3 to 5) and middle stage (Classes 6 to 8), as per suggestions by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

9. The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has recently uncovered fascinating insights into the universe's history by capturing the oldest-known dead galaxy, which ceased star formation approximately 13 billion years ago, 700 million years after the Big Bang event that gave rise to the universe.
10. The foundation stone of the second rocket launchport of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at Kulasekarapattinam in Tamil Nadu was laid down. The existing launch facilities include the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR (Sriharikota Range) in Sriharikota.
11. India will start manufacturing the common antibiotic Penicillin G in 2024, three decades after India's last plant shut down. Penicillin G is the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) used in manufacturing several common antibiotics.
12. Kerala has launched a government-owned OTT platform called CSpace, aimed at promoting quality films with artistic and cultural value. CSpace, emphasised its role in promoting Malayalam cinema and culture
13. The borders between Israel and Lebanon have been under intensified attack by Hezbollah. The border between Israel and Lebanon, known as the "Blue Line," was set by the United Nations in 2000 after Israel withdrew its military from southern Lebanon. It's not an official international border but a demarcation line.
14. Argentina (President Javier Milei) has decided not to join the BRICS bloc of developing economies, despite being scheduled to join.
15. The maritime security exercise 'Sea Defenders-2024' was held between the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) at Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
16. Iran, Russia, and China began a joint naval drill in the Gulf of Oman. The drill, called "Marine Security Belt 2024"- includes warships and aviation, is their fourth joint military exercise since 2019.
17. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs plans to collaborate with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to deploy V-SAT (very small aperture terminal) stations on a pilot basis for approximately 80 tribal villages in Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Maharashtra.
18. India's 1st Green Hydrogen Plant in the Stainless Steel Sector is located at Jindal Stainless Limited, Hisar. It is the world's first off-grid green hydrogen plant dedicated to the stainless steel industry.
19. The Election Commission of India has announced Para Archer and Arjuna Awardee, Sheetal Devi (winner of 2 gold and 1 silver medal in the Asian Para Games 2022) as its National Person with Disabilities (PwD) Icon.
20. The Indian Army contingent participated in the 10th edition of Joint Military Exercise "LAMITIYE-2024" with the Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF). LAMITIYE, meaning 'Friendship' in Creole language (one of the official languages in the Seychelles), has been a biennial training event since 2001.

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## This image shows a full page of primary-ruled paper. It features multiple sets of three horizontal dashed lines, which are commonly used in elementary school writing practice to guide letter height and placement. The lines are evenly spaced across the entire page, providing a template for handwriting exercises. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

## This image shows a full page of a handwriting practice worksheet. It consists of multiple rows of horizontal dashed lines spaced evenly apart, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The background is plain white, and there are no other markings or text on the page.

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# CLAT 2024 RESULT

CLATNO.1



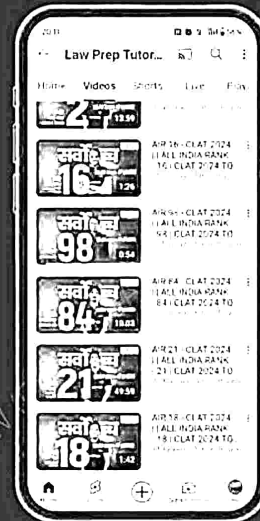
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**CLAT 2022**



**Rishabh Shivani**

**CLAT 2019**



**Saumya Singh**

**CLAT 2017**



**Rajat Maloo**

**CLAT 2025/26**

**OFFLINE**

8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL

**ONLINE**

9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> APRIL



and many more...

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