

# OFFICERS' PULSE

Issue no. 12 | 15th August to 21st August, 2021



**AT A GLANCE  
& IN DEPTH.**

## **COVERAGE.**

The Hindu

The Indian Express

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Polity and Social Issues

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# News @ a glance

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# News @ a glance

## POLITY

### 1) Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act

#### Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPD) Act, 2016

- The Act fulfills the obligations to the **United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**, to which India is a signatory and subsequently ratified the same on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2007.

#### Disabilities covered

- Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
- The types of disabilities have been increased from **existing 7 to 21** and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities.

#### Rights and entitlements

- All Government institutions of **higher education** and those getting aid from the Government are required to **reserve at least 5% of seats** for persons with benchmark disabilities.
- **4% reservation** for persons with benchmark disabilities is to be provided in **posts of all Government establishments** with differential quotas for different forms of disabilities.
- **Incentives to employers in the private sector** are to be given who provide 5% reservation for persons with benchmark disability. **Special employment exchanges** for the PWD are to be set up.

#### Establishment of Authorities

- Broad based **Central & State Advisory Boards on Disability** are to be set up to serve as apex policy making bodies at the Central and State level.
- The Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and the State Commissioners will act as regulatory bodies and Grievance Redressal agencies and also monitor implementation of the Act.

#### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has recently issued a notification saying that Section 34 of the RPD Act, which provides for 4% reservation in jobs for PwD in government establishments, **would not apply to all categories of posts of IPS, the Indian Railway Protection Force Service and police forces of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep and Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.**
- The Ministry also issued another notification making a **distinction between combat and non-combat roles in the security forces.** The Ministry **exempted all combat posts** in the Border Security Force, the Central Reserve Police Force, the Central Industrial Security Force, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, the Sashastra Seema Bal and the Assam Rifles **from the non-discrimination and reservation provisions of the RPD Act.**
- Many rights groups have criticised the move saying it goes against the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. They said that exemptions should be granted only in cases of combatant roles in keeping with the intent and spirit of the RPD Act.
- One rights activist said there were many roles that PwD could fill within police forces and exempting all categories of roles was wrong.

#### Related Information

##### Status of the disabled

- The Delhi High Court had cited the abysmally **low literacy and employment rates** among persons with disabilities.
- The 2001 Census put the **illiteracy rate** among the disabled at **51%** which was much higher than the general population figure.
- Also there was similar evidence of their **inadequate representation in employment** too.

### Initiatives for welfare of Disabled Persons

- As per the Census 2011, there are 2.68 crore persons with disabilities (Divyangjans) in the country. The Government of India has started various initiatives to empower India's divyang population in many ways.

### Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)

- It was launched in 2015 by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) as a nation-wide Campaign for **achieving universal accessibility** for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). It aims at providing equal opportunity to PwDs to participate in all the aspects of life and live independently.
- The Accessible India Campaign comprises of the following three components:
  - Built Environment Accessibility:** It aims to provide an accessible physical environment for everyone. To achieve this, measures need to be undertaken to eliminate obstacles and barriers to indoor and outdoor facilities including schools, medical facilities, and workplaces.
  - Transportation System Accessibility:** It focuses on providing persons with disabilities an equal right to travel and use public and private transportation infrastructure with dignity and independence.
  - Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility:** Access to information refers to all information. This can range from actions such as being able to read price tags, to physically enter a hall, to participate in an event, to read a pamphlet with healthcare information, to understand a train timetable, or to view webpages.

### Other important initiatives

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the **National Job Portal for Persons with Disabilities** ([www.disabilityjobs.gov.in](http://www.disabilityjobs.gov.in)) in 2015. Divyangjans can apply through the portal for jobs, skill training, scholarships, education loans and self-employment loans.
- The **Swavlamban Health Insurance Scheme** for PwDs was launched with the objective of providing affordable health insurance to Persons with Disabilities.
- Another scheme of the DEPwD is the **Unique Disability Identification Project**

started in 2016-17. The UDID card will be the single document of identification, verification of the Divyangjans for availing various benefits in future.

- Under the **Assistance to Disabled persons for purchasing/fitting of aids/appliances (ADIP) scheme**, funds are released to various implementing agencies to assist the needy persons with disabilities in procuring modern, standard aids and appliances.
- The **Deen Dayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)**, executed by DePwD provides grant-in-aid to NGOs/voluntary organisations for projects aimed at rehabilitation of Divyangjans.

## 2) Lok Adalat

### About Lok Adalat

- Lok Adalat (people's courts) is a body established by the government to settle disputes through **conciliation and compromise**.
- Lok Adalat is an **alternative method of dispute resolution**. It is a forum where **disputes or cases pending in the court of law or at the pre-litigation stage** are settled amicably.
- Lok Adalats have been given **statutory status** under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**.
- Under the Act, the **award made by the Lok Adalats is deemed to be a decree of a civil court** and is **final and binding** on all parties and **no appeal lies against such an award** before any court of law.
- If the parties are not satisfied with the award of the Lok Adalat, though there is **no provision for an appeal against such an award**, they are **free to initiate litigation** by approaching the court of appropriate jurisdiction by filing a case by following the required procedure, in exercise of their right to litigate.

### No judicial role

- The persons deciding the cases in the Lok Adalats are called the **Members of the Lok Adalats**, they have the **role of statutory conciliators** only and **do not have any judicial role**; therefore they can only persuade the parties to come to a conclusion for settling the dispute outside the court in the Lok Adalat and shall not pressurize or coerce any of the parties to

compromise or settle cases or matters either directly or indirectly.

- The Lok Adalat **shall not decide the matter so referred at its own instance**, instead the same would be decided on the basis of the compromise or settlement between the parties. The members shall assist the parties in an independent and impartial manner in their attempt to reach amicable settlement of their dispute.

#### Nature of Cases to be Referred to Lok Adalat

- Any case pending before any court.
- Any dispute which has not been brought before any court and is likely to be filed before the court.
- Provided that any matter relating to an **offence not compoundable** under the law **shall not be settled in Lok Adalat**.
- *Compoundable offences are those that can be compromised, i.e. the complainant can agree to take back the charges levied against the accused, whereas, non - compoundable offences are the more serious offences in which the parties cannot compromise.*

#### How to Get the Case Referred to the Lok Adalat for Settlement?

- The **State Legal Services Authority or District Legal Services Authority** as the case may be on receipt of an application from any one of the parties at a pre-litigation stage may refer such matter to the Lok Adalat for amicable settlement of the dispute for which notice would then be issued to the other party.

#### Composition of Lok Adalats

- The Lok Adalat is **presided over by a sitting or retired judicial officer as the chairman**, with **two other members, usually a lawyer and a social worker**.
- The **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** along with other Legal Services Institutions (such as State Legal Services Authority, District Legal Services Authority, Taluk Legal Services Committee) conducts Lok Adalats at different levels.

#### National Lok Adalat

- National Level Lok Adalats are held for at regular intervals where on a single day Lok Adalats are held throughout the country, in all the courts right from the Supreme Court till the Taluk Levels wherein cases are disposed off in huge numbers.

#### Permanent & Mobile Lok Adalat

- **Permanent Lok Adalats** have been set up as permanent bodies with a **Chairman and two members** for providing compulsory pre-litigative mechanism for conciliation and settlement of cases **relating to Public Utility Services** like transport, postal, telegraph etc.
- **Mobile Lok Adalats** are also organized in various parts of the country which travel from one location to another to resolve disputes in order to facilitate the resolution of disputes through this mechanism.

#### Need of Lok Adalat

- India now has almost **4 crore pending cases** spanning the Supreme Court, various high courts and the numerous district and subordinate courts, according to written replies submitted by the **Ministry of Law and Justice** in Parliament.
- Thus, traditional Courts in India have become **infamous for delays** and its **rigid procedural rules and expensiveness** of litigation processes.
- The Lok Adalat was conceptualized due to the drawbacks of the Indian legal system to provide **efficient, effective, and low cost justice**.
- The evolution of this concept was a part of the plan to **relieve the heavy burden on the Courts**.

#### Advantages

- The Lok Adalat is **not bound by rigid procedural aspects of Criminal Procedure Code**.
- There is **no court fee** payable when a matter is filed in a Lok Adalat. If a matter pending in the court of law is referred to the Lok Adalat and is settled subsequently, the court fee originally paid in the court on the complaints/petition is also **refunded back to the parties**.
- Lok-Adalat provides **fast and inexpensive remedy** with legal status.

#### Why in News?

- National Lok Adalat is set to be held across India on September 11.

#### Related Information

##### About NALSA

- The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) is a **statutory body** constituted under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987** to provide free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society and to

organize Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes.

- It came into force in 1995.
- It was enacted by the Parliament to give effect to **Article 39 A of the Constitution of India** which guarantees free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society to ensure that they are not denied access to justice by reason of economic or other disability.
- The NALSA is headed by the **Chief Justice of India as its Patron-in-Chief, the second senior most judge of the Supreme Court is the Executive Chairman.**

#### Regional Bodies

- In every State, the **State Legal Services Authority** has been constituted to give effect to the policies and directions of the NALSA and to give free legal services to the people and conduct Lok Adalats in the State.
- The State Legal Services Authority is headed by the **Chief Justice of the respective High Court** who is the Patron-in-Chief of the State Legal Services Authority.
- In every District, the **District Legal Services Authority** has been constituted to implement Legal Services Programmes in the District. The District Legal Services Authority is situated in the District Courts Complex in every District and chaired by the **District Judge of the respective district.**

### 3) Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019

#### About the Act

- The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 makes all declaration of talaq, including in written or electronic form, to be **void** (i.e. not enforceable in law) and **illegal**.
- It defines talaq as **talaq-e-biddat or any other similar form of talaq pronounced by a Muslim man resulting in instant and irrevocable divorce.**
- **Offence and penalty:** The Act makes declaration of talaq-e-biddat a **cognizable offence**, attracting up to three years' imprisonment with a fine. (A cognizable

offence is one for which a police officer may arrest an accused person without warrant)

- The Act provides that the Magistrate **may grant bail** to the accused. The bail may be granted only after hearing the woman (against whom talaq has been pronounced), and if the Magistrate is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for granting bail.
- The offence may be **compounded** (i.e. the parties may arrive at a compromise) by the Magistrate upon the request of the woman (against whom talaq has been declared).
- **Allowance:** A Muslim woman against whom talaq has been declared, is entitled to seek subsistence allowance from her husband for herself and for her dependent children. The amount of the allowance will be determined by the Magistrate.
- **Custody:** A Muslim woman against whom such talaq has been declared, is entitled to seek custody of her minor children.

#### Why in News?

- The Delhi High Court has granted anticipatory bail to a man accused of pronouncing triple talaq on his wife.
- The man argued that the allegations were false and fabricated as the woman was still his legally wedded wife.

### 4) Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2021

#### What is the Bill about?

- The Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2021 replaces the Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance, 2021 that sought to **dissolve eight tribunals that functioned as appellate bodies** to hear disputes under various statutes, and **transferred their functions to existing judicial forums such as a civil court or a High Court.**
- The provisions in the ordinance regarding conditions of service and tenure of Tribunal Members and Chairpersons were **struck down by the Supreme Court** in July 2021 over its lack of compliance with past Supreme Court judgements on Tribunals. However, the same provisions re-appeared in the Tribunal Reforms Bill.
- It also proposes **changes in the process of appointment of certain other tribunals.**

## EIGHT TRIBUNALS DISSOLVED VIA BILL

| Act under which Tribunal was setup  | Abolished tribunal                                 | Where disputes are heard after abolition   |
|---|--|--|
| The Cinematograph Act, 1952   | Film Certification Appellate Tribunal              | High Court   |
| The Trade Marks Act, 1999   | Intellectual Property Appellate Board              | High Court   |
| The Copyright Act, 1957   | Intellectual Property Appellate Board              | Commercial Division of High Court  |
| The Customs Act, 1962   | Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal | High Court   |
| The Patents Act, 1970   | Intellectual Property Appellate Board              | High Court   |
| The Airports Authority of India Act, 1994                                     | Airports Appellate Tribunal                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Central government (disposal of properties on airport premises left by unauthorised occupants)</li> <li>■ High Court (appeals against eviction orders)</li> </ul> |
| The Control of National Highways (Land & Traffic) Act, 2002                   | The National Highways Tribunal                     | Civil Court  |
| The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 | Intellectual Property Appellate Board              | High Court   |

### What are these changes?

- While the Bill provides for **uniform pay and rules for the search and selection committees across tribunals**, it also provides for **removal of tribunal members**. It states that the **central government** shall, on the **recommendation of the Search-cum-Selection Committee**, remove from office any Chairperson or a Member, who—
  1. has been adjudged as an insolvent; or
  2. has been convicted of an offence which involves moral turpitude; or
  3. has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as such Chairperson or Member; or
  4. has acquired such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially his functions as such Chairperson or Member; or
  5. has so abused his position as to render his continuance in office prejudicial to the public interest.

- Chairpersons and judicial members of tribunals are **former judges of High Courts and the Supreme Court**. While the move brings **greater accountability on the functioning of the tribunals**, it also **raises questions on the independence of these judicial bodies**.
- In the **Search-cum-Selection Committee for state tribunals**, the Bill brings in the Chief Secretary of the state and the Chairman of the Public Service Commission of the concerned state who will have a vote and Secretary or Principal Secretary of the state's General Administrative Department with no voting right. The **Chief Justice of the High Court**, who would head the committee, will not have a casting vote.

### What are the tribunals that are being dissolved?

- Among the key ones are the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT) under the Cinematograph Act, 1952; the Intellectual Property Appellate Board under

the Copyrights Act, 1957; and the Customs Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal.

- The government has said that analysis of data of the last three years has shown that tribunals in several sectors have **not necessarily led to faster justice delivery and they are also at a considerable expense to the exchequer**. This has led to the decision to rationalise the functioning of tribunals, a process that it began in 2015.
- India now has **16 tribunals** including the National Green Tribunal, the Armed Forces Appellate Tribunal, the Debt Recovery Tribunal among others.

#### **What happens to cases pending before the tribunals dissolved?**

- These cases will be **transferred to High Courts or commercial civil courts immediately**.
- Legal experts have been divided on the efficacy of the government's move. While on

the one hand, the cases might get a **faster hearing and disposal** if taken to High Courts, experts fear that the **lack of specialisation in regular courts** could be detrimental to the decision-making process.

- For example, the FCAT exclusively heard decisions appealing against decisions of the censor board, which requires expertise in art and cinema.

#### **Why in News?**

- The Supreme Court has challenged the government to produce material showing its reasons for introducing the Tribunal Reforms Bill of 2021, which abolishes several appellate tribunals and revives provisions of an ordinance struck down by the Supreme Court, in the Parliament.

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# ENVIRONMENT

## 1) White Bellied Heron

### About

- The White-bellied Heron is a **very rarely found species being found in Arunachal Pradesh.**
- This bird has a **large blackish bill, 15-18 cm long, and is mostly dark greyish, with a white throat, a white belly, and a bent neck.**
- It is the **second-largest heron** in the world, with adults standing at well over a metre tall.
- This species is part of the bird family Ardeidae, which includes herons, bitterns and egrets and this family diverged from all other bird families 51.6 million years ago in the Paleogene period.
- The white-bellied heron is found in the **wetlands of tropical and subtropical forests in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas of India and Myanmar.**
- It usually feeds by standing in **fast flowing rivers** and also uses slow moving streams and grassy marshes.
- Its recent known distribution is in **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, northeast Bangladesh, Bhutan.**

### IUCN Status

- It has been listed as **Critically Endangered** on the IUCN Red List since 2007, because the global population is estimated at **less than 250** mature individuals and it is threatened by disturbance and **habitat degradation.**

### Protection under Wildlife Protection Act 1972

- Under the **Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, it is placed under **Schedule I** giving **highest legal protection** to the species.

### Why in News ?

- Scientists have found that loss of habitat is forcing the White-bellied Heron to lead an isolated lifestyle deep inside forests, and further pushing this critically endangered bird towards extinction.
- Their isolation prevented these birds from learning about new sites and food sources from fellow foragers, which could have enhanced chances of their survival.

## 2) Net Zero Emissions

### Context

- The idea of net zero emissions has got a lot of traction among global climate negotiators over the last year and some agreement on it is expected at the **UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow** in November.

### What is net zero?

- It means the **aggregate carbon emissions** of a country should be zero on a given date.
- It is primarily **carbon neutrality.**
- A country can achieve negative emissions, if **removal and absorption exceed the actual emissions.**
- Eg: If a country emits a certain amount of carbon every year, it will have to offset it through **forest absorption or carbon capturing or buying carbon credits.**
- **Bhutan and Suriname** are the only two countries in the world whose **net emissions are less than carbon absorption** capability because of their green cover and very little population.

### Significance of moving towards Net Zero Emissions

- Earlier, the discussions focussed on **emission-reduction targets** by 2050 or 2070 for rich countries, whose unregulated emissions over several decades are responsible for global warming and consequent climate crisis which resulted in countries realising that emission reduction will not work, and countries will have to work towards carbon neutrality.
- Net zero is mandatory to achieve the **Paris Climate Agreement target** of not allowing the planet's temperature to rise beyond 2 degrees Celsius by the turn of the century.
- According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), reaching net zero for greenhouse gas emissions is a requirement to **stabilise human-induced global temperature** at any level.

### How many countries have committed to net zero?

- As of now, **137 of 192 countries** that are part of the UN Climate Convention and representing **80% of global emissions** have committed to net zero emissions targets.

- They include the **world's two largest emitters, the USA and China.**
- Eg: **China** has a net zero target of **2060**, Germany and Sweden have opted for 2045; Iceland and Austria 2040; Finland has opted for 2035; and Uruguay has set 2030 as the target year and most countries including the **USA have opted for 2050.**
- The **third biggest emitter, India is yet to announce** a net zero target year.

#### **Why is India opposing the idea?**

- India believes that agreeing to net zero would **slow down its economic growth and hamper its poverty alleviation programmes.**
- It also believes that net zero **negates the concept of common but differentiated responsibility** of the UN Climate Convention to deal with the climate crisis because in net zero, every country has an **equal responsibility** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and is **not equitable.**
- Net zero will impact **India's use of coal for electricity** and as of now, thermal power contributes 60% of India's needs.
- India also emphasised on the issue that net zero is not possible without the **transfer of clean technology patents** to the developing and underdeveloped world to

help them faster transition to a cleaner economy.

- Eg: **Europe** has moved away from fossil fuel to a cleaner and greener economy as a result to meet the net zero target would not be very investment intensive.
- It also claims the **Green Climate Fund** set up in 2016 with a promise to **share green technologies** with the developing world has not been able to do much as the rich countries have not provided the promised US\$ 100 billion by 2020.

#### **Additional Details**

##### **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**

- GCF is a unique **global platform to respond to climate change** by investing in low-emission and climate-resilient development.
- It was established by **194 governments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in developing countries**, and to help vulnerable societies adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.
- Given the urgency and seriousness of this challenge, GCF is mandated to make an ambitious contribution to the united global response to climate change.

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# ECONOMY

## 1) RoDTEP scheme

### Background

- **Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS)** was introduced under **Foreign Trade Policy of India (FTP 2015-20)**, as a part of Exports from India Scheme.
- The scheme provides **incentive in the form of duty credit scrip** to exporters to compensate for their losses on payment of duties. The scrips can be **transferred or used for payment of a number of duties including the basic customs duty**.
- In 2019, a World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute resolution panel ruled that MEIS was **not in compliance with the global trade norms**.
- Additionally, many exporters had persistently complained that the MEIS scheme doesn't offset all the taxes.

### RoDTEP scheme

- To address these issues, the government introduced the **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme** with a view to give a boost to the country's outbound shipments.
- The government announced that whatever taxes, or duties or local levies imposed by the Centre, State or local governments that are not getting refunded through any other scheme, will be done through RoDTEP in a way that is **compliant with the WTO norms**.
- It is proposed to **digitally refund to exporters**, duties and taxes levied at the Centre, State and local levels.
- The RoDTEP scheme will **replace the Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS)** in a phased manner.

### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has announced guidelines and rates of the RoDTEP scheme for 8555 export items for a cost of ₹12500 crore to the exchequer.
- Though the scheme for exporters which replaced the ongoing Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) came into effect on 1 January, the rates had not been finalized yet.
- The RoDTEP rates will vary from **0.5-4.3% of export value** and will include sectors

like marine, agriculture, leather, gems and jewellery, automobile, plastics, electrical, electronics and machinery.

- However, **exporters in sectors like steel, pharmaceuticals, chemicals have been kept out of the scheme. Products manufactured or exported at export-oriented units and special economic zones** have been excluded from the scheme for the time being.

### Mechanism

- RoDTEP has created a mechanism to reimburse such central, state and local taxes, which are not being refunded under any other scheme. The refund would be credited to an exporter's ledger account with the customs, and will be used to pay basic customs duty on imported goods.
- The **credits can also be transferred to other importers**. The rebate will have to be claimed as a percentage of the Freight On Board value of exports.
- A **monitoring and audit mechanism**, with an information technology-based risk management system has been put in place to physically verify the records of the exporters.

## 2) Financial Inclusion Index

### What's in the news?

- The Reserve Bank of India has created a **composite Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index) to capture the extent of financial inclusion across the country**.

### Parameters

- The FI Index captures information on **various aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging between 0 and 100**, where 0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100 indicates full financial inclusion.
- The FI Index comprises **three broad parameters** (weights indicated in brackets):
  1. **Access** (35 per cent),
  2. **Usage** (45 per cent), and
  3. **Quality** (20 per cent).
- Each of these consists of various dimensions, which are computed based on a number of indicators.

- The index, which has been **constructed without any 'base year'** and as such reflects cumulative efforts of all stakeholders over the years towards financial inclusion, is responsive to ease of access, availability and usage of services, and quality of services.
- A unique feature of the index is the **Quality parameter** that captures the **quality aspect of financial inclusion as reflected by financial literacy, consumer protection, and inequalities and deficiencies in services.**
- The RBI announced that the index will be published **annually** in July every year. It has been conceptualised as a comprehensive index incorporating details

of banking, investments, insurance, postal as well as the pension sector in consultation with government and respective sectoral regulators.

#### **Present Status**

- The first reading of the RBI's annual Financial Inclusion Index for the period ended March 2021 has come in at **53.9**, a little over the halfway mark, with 100 being the full financial inclusion score.
- It implies that **India is only at the halfway point in meeting financial inclusion goals.**
- The central bank said the FI Index reading for the period ended March 2017 was 43.4.

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# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## 1) UNHRC

### About UNHRC

- The Human Rights Council is an **inter-governmental body within the United Nations system**.
- The Council's mandate is to promote "universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all" and "address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and make recommendations thereon."
- It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year.
- The Council was created by the **United Nations General Assembly** in **2006**. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- The headquarters of UNHRC is in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- **Membership**
- The Council is made of **47 Member States**, which are elected by the majority of members of the General Assembly of the United Nations through **direct and secret ballot**.
- The Council's Membership is based on **equitable geographical distribution**.
- Members of the Council serve for a period of **three years** and are **not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms**.

### Why in News?

- The United Nations Human Rights Council is set to hold a Special Session on the situation in Afghanistan to address serious human rights concerns after the Taliban takeover.

## 2) UNITE Aware

### About UN Peacekeeping Forces

- The United Nations Peacekeeping Forces are employed by the UN to maintain or re-establish peace in an area of armed conflict.
- The UN may engage in conflicts between states as well as in struggles within states. The UN acts as an impartial third party in order to prepare the ground for a settlement of the issues that have provoked armed conflict.

- The UN Peacekeeping Forces may **only be employed when both parties to a conflict accept their presence**.
- The Peacekeeping Forces are subordinate to the leadership of the United Nations. They are normally deployed as a consequence of a **UN Security Council** decision. However, on occasion, the initiative has been taken by the **General Assembly**.
- Operational control belongs to the **Secretary-General and his secretariat**.

### Two kinds

- There are two kinds of peacekeeping operations – **unarmed observer groups** and **lightly-armed military forces**. The latter are only allowed to employ their weapons for self-defence.
- The observer groups are concerned with gathering information for the UN about actual conditions prevailing in an area.
- The military forces are entrusted with more extended tasks, such as keeping the parties to a conflict apart and maintaining order in an area.
- The first UN peacekeeping mission was a team of observers deployed to the Middle East in 1948, during the **1948 Arab-Israeli War**.

### Why in News?

- Presiding over a United Nations Security Council open debate on technology and peacekeeping, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced the rollout of a technological platform in partnership with the U.N., 'UNITE Aware', to help enhance the safety of U.N. peacekeepers.
- UNITE Aware is a **situational awareness software programme** that will utilise modern surveillance technology for real time threat assessments to peacekeepers and help them enhance their security.
- This will access live video and satellite imagery, and in very volatile circumstances can also deliver early warnings to peacekeepers. It can also record data on critical incidents and events and follow daily operational activities. Using the platform, the entire peacekeeping operation can be visualised, coordinated, and monitored on a real time basis.

- India has developed the technology platform in partnership with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Operational Support.

#### **Contribution of India**

- India, as a major contributing nation to U.N. peacekeeping activities, has been keen on using its month-long UNSC Presidency to prioritise peacekeeping. Recently, the Security Council adopted a resolution that paid tribute to peacekeepers and asked member-states that had hosted them to bring to justice those who had killed or committed acts of violence against them.
- India, which has 5,000 of its personnel deployed across nine missions, has lost 175 soldiers over the decades.
- India has consistently been **among the top troop contributing nations to the U.N.**
- In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an **all-women contingent** to a UN peacekeeping mission.
- The country has so far participated in 51 of the 71 missions and contributed over 2 lakh personnel.

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# DEFENCE

## 1) Gallantry Awards

### About the awards

- **Gallantry Awards** have been **instituted by the Government of India** to honour the acts of bravery and sacrifice of the **officers/personnel of the Armed Forces, other lawfully constituted Forces and civilians**. These gallantry awards are **announced twice in a year** - first on the occasion of the **Republic Day** and then on the occasion of the **Independence Day**.
- **Order of precedence** of these awards is the Param Vir Chakra, the Ashoka Chakra, the Mahavir Chakra, the Kirti Chakra, the Vir Chakra and the Shaurya Chakra.
- **All the gallantry awards** may be awarded **posthumously**.

### Gallantry Awards are classified into two Categories

- Gallantry in the Face of Enemy (First Category)
- Gallantry Other than in the Face of Enemy (Second Category)
- First Category of Gallantry Awards Comprises of the following Awards

1) Param Vir Chakra (PVC)

2) Mahavir Chakra (MVC)

3) Vir Chakra

- Second Category of Gallantry Awards Comprises of the following Awards

1) Ashok Chakra

2) Kirti Chakra

3) Shaurya Chakra

### Eligibility

- The following categories of persons shall be eligible for the Param Vir Chakra, the Maha Vir Chakra and the Vir Chakra:
- Officers and men and women of all ranks of the Naval, Military and Air Forces, of any of the Reserve Forces, of the Territorial Army, Militia and of any other lawfully constituted Armed Forces.
- Matrons, Sisters, Nurses and the Staff of the Nursing Services and other Services pertaining to Hospitals and Nursing, and Civilians of either sex serving regularly or temporarily under the orders, directions or

supervision of any of the above-mentioned Forces.

### Conditions of Eligibility:

- The **Param Vir Chakra** is awarded for **most conspicuous bravery** or some daring or **pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice**, in the presence of the enemy, whether on land, at sea, or in the air.
- The **Maha Vir Chakra** is awarded for acts of **conspicuous gallantry in the presence of the enemy** whether on land, at sea or in the air.
- The **Vir Chakra** is awarded for **acts of gallantry in the presence of the enemy**, whether on land or at sea or in the air.
- The following categories of persons shall be eligible for the Ashoka Chakra, the Kirti Chakra and the Shaurya Chakra:
- Officers and men and women of all ranks of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, of any of the Reserve Forces, of the Territorial Army, Militia and of any other lawfully constituted forces.
- Members of the Nursing Services of the Armed Forces.
- Civilian citizens of either sex in all walks of life and members of Police Forces including Central Para-Military Forces and Railway Protection Force.
- Conditions of Eligibility:
- The Ashoka Chakra is awarded for **most conspicuous bravery** or some act of daring or **pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice otherwise than in the face of the enemy**.
- The Kirti Chakra is awarded for **conspicuous gallantry otherwise than in the face of the enemy**.
- The **Shaurya Chakra** is awarded for **gallantry otherwise than in the face of the enemy**.

### Why in News:

- Nine military personnel were awarded the Shaurya Chakra, the third highest peacetime gallantry award.

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# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Clarification:

Due to technical error the Pulse 10 S&T were published in Pulse 11. However, the S&T topics for Pulse 11 were also present in that version. We regret the error.

## 1) Smog tower

### What is smog?

- **Smog** is **air pollution** that **reduces visibility**.
- It was first described over 5 decades ago as a **mixture of smoke and fog**, hence the name "smog"—but today it has a more specific definition and composition.
- Smog is **made up of many chemicals including nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>x</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs)**, but the **two main components** of smog are **particulate matter (PM)** and **ground-level ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)**.
- **PM** stands for **particulate matter** (also called particle pollution): the term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air.
- Particle pollution includes:
  - 1) **PM<sub>10</sub>** : inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller; and
  - 2) **PM<sub>2.5</sub>** : fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.
- Today, most of the smog we see is **photochemical smog**. Photochemical smog is **produced** when **sunlight reacts** with **nitrogen oxides and at least one volatile organic compound (VOC)** in the atmosphere. Nitrogen oxides come from car exhaust, coal power plants, and factory emissions. VOCs are released from gasoline, paints, and many cleaning solvents. When sunlight hits these chemicals, they form airborne particles and ground-level ozone which appears as smog.

### What is a smog tower?

- A smog tower is a structure with **numerous layers of filters that catch tiny dust particles (particulate matter)**, which acts as a **large-scale air purifier**.
- The air is **sucked into the tower via fans** at the top, **processed** through **filters**, and finally discharged near the ground.
- **Carbon nanofibres** are a crucial component of the large-scale filters in these towers.
- A smog tower would **lower 50% of the particulate matter load** in an area of 1 kilometre in the wind's direction, as well as 200 metres along the tower's sides and against the wind's direction.
- It may also **lower particulate matter of 10 micrometres (PM<sub>10</sub>) by up to 45 percent** in an open field in calm weather, and **PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels by up to 25 percent in a 20-meter radius** surrounding the tower.

### Why in News?

- The Chief Minister of Delhi is set to inaugurate the city's first "smog tower" to help purify polluted air.

### Need for a smog tower in delhi

- The **World Air Quality report** by Swiss technology company IQAir has named **Delhi** as the **world's most polluted capital in 2021**.
- During **winter, pollution levels in Delhi rise considerably**, reaching roughly ten times the WHO's recommended levels. This is worrisome as the city's sources of emissions — construction, industrial, and vehicular pollution are very constant.
- Smoke from **stubble-burning** in northwest states exacerbates the situation, which is **exacerbated by unfavourable climatic** circumstances such as calm breezes, cold temperatures, and fewer sunny days at the onset of winter.

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## ART AND CULTURE

### 1) August 14

#### Why in News:

- The **Prime Minister** of India declared **August 14 will be observed as 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day'** to acknowledge the pain undergone by Indians due to the partition of India in 1947.

#### News in detail

- The PM said that the day (**August 14**), shall be remembered for **India's partition into two countries, India and Pakistan**, would remind Indians of the need to remove the poison of social divisions.
- The PM also mentioned that the Partition day **keeps reminding us** of the **need** to remove the **poison of social divisions, disharmony** and **further strengthen the spirit of oneness, social harmony** and **human empowerment**.

#### Notification from the Ministry of Home Affairs

- The **Home Ministry** said the **people of India, while celebrating "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav"**, will **salute those sons and daughters of the country** who had to sacrifice their lives during the partition of India.

#### What is Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav?

- **Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav** is a series of events to be **organised by the Government of India** to commemorate the **75th Anniversary of India's Independence**.
- The Prime Minister reiterated **five pillars** i.e. **Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolves at 75** as guiding force for moving forward keeping dreams and duties as inspiration.

### 2) Maharaja Ranjit Singh

#### Who is he?

- Ranjit Singh **unified the Sikh empire** by overpowering the feuding Misl (confederacies).
- He is known for his accomplishment in **liberating Lahore (his capital) from Afghan invaders**, and subsequently he was **given the title Lion of Punjab (Sher-e-Punjab)**.

- The erstwhile Mughal provinces of Lahore and Multan, as well as a portion of Kabul and all of Peshawar, were all part of Ranjit Singh's trans-regional empire (which spanned multiple kingdoms).
- His state's boundaries extended from Ladakh in the northeast to the Khyber Pass (the path used by foreign monarchs to attack India) in the northwest, and from Panjnad in the south to the Indus, where the five rivers of Punjab met (The five rivers are the Beas, Ravi, Sutlej, Chenab and Jhelum, all of which are tributaries of the river Indus).

#### Accomplishments

- Ranjit Singh was known for **governing in a just and secular manner**.
- In his darbar, **both Hindus and Muslims were granted significant positions**.
- By coating Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar in gold, he transformed it into the Golden Temple.
- He is also credited with **establishing the Hazoor Sahib gurudwara** at Nanded, Maharashtra, where Guru Gobind Singh is buried.
- He **possessed the Koh-i-Noor diamond** from Shuja Shah Durrani of Afghanistan, which he left to Jagannath Temple in Puri, Odisha.
- He **merged the traditional Khalsa army with modern military innovations**. Maharaja Ranjit Singh **allowed men from different religions and races to serve in his army** and his government in various positions of authority. He also **used a huge number of European officers** to teach his forces, particularly French officers. He assigned the task of modernising his army to French General Jean Franquis Allard.

#### Important treaties signed by him

##### Treaty of Amritsar (1809)

- It was a **treaty struck between** Charles T. Metcalfe, who represented the **British East India Company, and Ranjit Singh**.
- The **immediate reason for the treaty was Napoleon's Treaty of Tilsit with Russia (1807) and Ranjit's attempt to put the Cis-Sutlej states under his rule**. The British want a defensive treaty against

France, as well as control over Punjab from the Sutlej River.

- The border of Ranjit's holdings was set largely along the line of the Sutlej River by the treaty.
- Although the terms of the treaty prevented Singh from any further territorial expansion south of the Sutlej, they also permitted him complete freedom of action to the north of it. This enabled him to extract tribute from less powerful chieftains, including Jats and other Sikhs, and ultimately to gain control of areas such as Peshawar and Kashmir. The unification of these territories, which was aided by him Westernising his armies, formed the Sikh empire that lasted until British subjugation in 1849.

#### Why in News?

- A nine-foot-tall bronze statue of the **first ruler of the Sikh Empire, Maharaja Ranjit Singh** was vandalised at the Lahore Fort in Pakistan's Punjab province.

### 3) Sharia

#### What is Sharia?

- Sharia/Shariat is a **religious law** forming **part of the Islamic tradition.**

- It is **derived from** the religious precepts of **Islam, particularly the Quran and the hadith.**
- The "**Muslim Personal Law**" is based upon the **Shariat** when it comes to personal issues (marriage, divorce, inheritance, custody of children, etc).

#### Shariat And India

- **Muslims in India** are **governed** by the **Muslim Personal Law** which came into force in 1937.
- The Act lays out that **in matters of personal dispute the State shall not interfere.**

#### Issues

- There have been previous instances when the issue of protection of women's rights as part of the broader fundamental rights came into **conflict** with religious rights. Example: **Triple talaq act.**

#### Why in News?

- The Taliban has announced that there will be Sharia law in Afghanistan.

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# PIB ANALYSIS

## 1) Ubharte Sitaare Fund

### What's in the news?

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has launched an ambitious 'Ubharte Sitaare Fund' (USF) for export-oriented firms and startups.
- The Fund aims at **arranging funds for promotion of micro, small and medium companies**. The fund has been set up by **Exim Bank and SIDBI**.
- The fund is expected to identify Indian enterprises with potential advantages by way of technology, products or processes along with export potential, but which are currently underperforming or unable to tap their latent potential to grow.
- Some of the objectives of the fund include enhancing India's competitiveness in select sectors through finance and extensive handholding support, identifying and nurturing companies having differentiated technology, products or processes, and enhancing their export business.
- In her Budget speech last year, Sitharaman had mentioned that MSMEs are vital to keep the wheels of economy moving. They also create jobs, innovate and are risk takers.

## 2) Universal Service Obligation Fund

### About USOF

- In 2003, the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) was set up by **The Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003** which gave its **statutory status**.
- The main aim of USOF is to **provide access to telecom services in a non-discriminatory manner to people in the rural and remote areas** at affordable and reasonable prices, thereby **bridging the rural-urban digital divide**.
- It also aims at equitable distribution of the fruits of the telecom/digital revolution and fair allocation of national resources via targeted subsidies.

### Foundational Pillars of USOF

- **Availability**: the level of service should be the same for all users in their place of work or residence, at all times and without geographical discrimination

- **Affordability**: for all users, the price of the service should not be a factor that limits service access
- **Accessibility**: all subscribers should be treated in a non-discriminatory manner with respect to the price, service and quality of the service, in all places, without distinction of race, sex, religion, caste etc.

### UAL

- USOF inflow comes from the collection of **Universal Access Levy (UAL)** through the license fee charged on licensees of the Department of Telecommunications @ **5% of the adjusted gross revenue (AGR)**.
- For commercially non-viable rural and remote areas, USOF provides subsidy support in the form of **Net Cost or Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** to incentivize telecom service providers.
- It should be noted that USOF is a **non-lapsable fund**, i.e., the unspent amount under a targeted financial year does not lapse and is accrued for next years' spending.

### Project funded by USOF

#### BharatNet

- BharatNet is a project of national importance which aims to provide **Broadband Connectivity to all the 2.5 lakhs (approx.) Gram Panchayats**.
- The entire project is being funded by **Universal service Obligation Fund**.
- The project is implemented by **Bharat Broadband Network Ltd (BBNL)**, a special purpose vehicle set up under the Department of Telecommunications.
- The objective is to facilitate the delivery of e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-banking, Internet and other services to rural India.

### Other Projects funded by USOF include

- Comprehensive Telecom Development plan (CTDP) for North East Region
- Comprehensive Telecom Development plan (CTDP) for Islands
- Providing Mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas
- Providing Mobile services in Aspirational & Uncovered villages

### Why in News?

- For making available high quality and high speed internet access to the States of North Eastern Region of the country, Universal Service Obligation Fund has signed an Agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) for hiring of 10 Gbps International Bandwidth for Internet Connectivity to Agartala from Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited (BSCCL), Bangladesh via Cox Bazar/Kuakata.

### 3) SAMVAD

#### About the Program

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development launched the project called SAMVAD (Support, Advocacy and Mental Health Interventions for Children in Vulnerable Circumstances and Diseases) which is aimed at **mental health outreach for children who are abandoned and orphaned, child survivors of trafficking, or in conflict with law.**

- Launched in 2020, the project is led by the **National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS)** and is being run in **collaboration with Panchayati Raj Ministry.**
- It aims at enhancing child and adolescent psychosocial well-being, particularly of children in difficult circumstances, through promotion of integrated approaches to mental health and protection.

#### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched the 2nd phase of the SAMVAD program recently.
- The project is providing a coping mechanism for children in distress by **training close to 1 lakh stakeholders** comprising Child Protection Functionaries, tele-counsellors, educators, law professionals among others.

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# News in Depth

## AIR NEWS

### 1) Defence India Startup Challenge

#### What's in the news?

- Defence minister Rajnath Singh has launched the fifth edition of Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC 5.0) under Innovations for Defence Excellence - Defence Innovation Organisation (iDEX-DIO).
- The challenge is meant to **achieve self-reliance and foster innovation and technology development in the defence and aerospace sectors.**
- The launch of DISC 5.0 comes three years after the launch of DISC 1.0. iDEX initiative was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2018.
- The launch of DISC 5.0 is a massive leap towards leveraging the startup ecosystem to develop India's defence technologies, equipment design and manufacturing capabilities.
- It will encourage startups to become more attuned to innovative concepts and inculcate the approach of creative thinking in India's budding entrepreneurs.

#### About iDEX-DIO

- In order to engage smaller enterprises, startups and innovators to supply the Indian military with innovative and ingenious technological solutions, the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework was formulated and approved by the Ministry of Defence.
- iDEX is funded and managed by the **"Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)"** formed as a **"not for profit" company** as per Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013 for this purpose.
- iDEX-DIO with the primary objective of self-reliance and indigenization in the Defence & aerospace sector of the country

bolsters the **"Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan"** of the Government.

### 2) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

#### About PMKVY

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is the flagship scheme of the **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship** implemented by **National Skill Development Corporation.** The scheme was launched in 2015.
- The objective of this programme is to **enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training** that will help them in securing a better livelihood.
- Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under **Recognition of Prior Learning.**
- Skill training is based on the **National Skill Qualification Framework** and industry led standards.

#### Objectives of PMKVY

- To impart industry-related skills to the unemployed youth and school/college dropout
- To provide financial and placement assistance to trained candidates

#### PMKVY has three key components

- **Short Term Training (STT):** Under this component, training is given to unemployed youths or school/college dropouts in line with the National Skills Qualification Framework.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning:** Under this module, assessment and certification is given to applicants with existing skills or a prior learning experience.
- **Special Projects:** This module has been designed to create a platform that facilitates training for special job roles in government, corporate or industrial bodies

### Why in News?

- Indian Railways is set to train 3,500 unemployed youths from next month under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

### Related Information

#### About NSQF

- The National Skills Qualifications Framework is a **competency-based framework** that **organizes all qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude.**
- These levels, graded from one to ten, are defined in terms of learning outcomes which the learner must possess regardless of whether they are obtained through formal, non-formal or informal learning. NSQF in India was notified in **2013.**
- Under NSQF, the learner can acquire the **certification for competency** needed at any level through **formal, non-formal or informal learning.** In that sense, the NSQF is a **quality assurance framework.**

#### About NSDC

- National Skill Development Corporation is a **not-for-profit public limited company** incorporated in 2008.
- NSDC was set up by the **Ministry of Finance** as a **Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.** The **Government of India** through the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship **holds 49% of the share capital** of NSDC, while the **private sector has the balance 51%** of the share capital.
- NSDC acts as a catalyst in skill development by providing funding to enterprises, companies and organizations that provide skill training.
- Its mandate is also to enable a support system which focuses on quality assurance, information systems and train the trainer academies either directly or through partnerships.

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## THE HINDU EDITORIALS

### 1) The message from the IPCC report

GS-2 Important International Institutions  
GS-3 Environmental Pollution & Degradation

#### NEWS

- Equitable cumulative emission targets and not net zero is the key to achieving the Paris Agreement's temperature goals.

#### CONTEXT

- Recently the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**, has released a report titled '**Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis**'.

#### SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES IN THE REPORT

- A major scientific advance in this report is the **use of multiple lines of evidence** (through precise technical methods).
- It has helped to pin down the values and trends of key climatic variables with more accuracy, and narrow their range of uncertainties.
- The **value of equilibrium climate sensitivity** is now pinned down to the range of 2.5°C to 4.0°C, with a best estimate of 3°C.
- *Value of equilibrium climate sensitivity is the measure of how a specified increase in carbon dioxide concentration translates into long-term surface temperature rise.*

#### FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

- A significant section of the report reinforces what is already well known, but with **updated numbers, higher accuracy and specific regional assessments, including South Asia.**
- Global surface temperature is now **higher by 1.07°C since the pre-industrial era.**
- The **impact of climate change on the atmosphere, oceans and land is unmistakably of human origin** and this impact is picking up pace.
- There is **no part of the inhabited world that is now untouched by the impact of global warming.** Carbon dioxide is the dominant source of warming.
- **Aerosols contribute to reducing the impact of warming by other greenhouse gases**, by almost a third.

- Methane reduction, while needed overall, is particularly significant only as the **drastic reduction of aerosols actually leads to an increase in warming.**
- The report expectedly projects an **increase in climate extremes due to global warming, with heat waves, extreme rainfall events and occurrence of extreme sea levels all expected to intensify and be more frequent.**

#### MAJOR FINDING OF THE REPORT

- A major finding of the report is that **air pollution reduction and steep climate change mitigation are not complementary goals but require independent efforts over the short and medium term.**
  - This is particularly important as the claims of such a linkage have been used to argue that India, for instance, must cease the use of coal immediately, despite its continuing importance as the key element of the country's energy security.
- While massive campaigns mounted on net zero have been led by the developed countries, the report asserts the conclusion from past reports and scientific literature reports.
  - 1) It has made clear that **reaching net zero was not the determining factor for the world to limit itself to a 1.5°C, or 2°C, or indeed any specific temperature increase.**
  - 2) Instead it is the **cumulative emissions in reaching net zero that determine the temperature rise.**

#### INDIA Vs GLOBAL EMISSIONS

- **India has contributed less than 5% of global cumulative emissions to date, with per capita annual emissions a third of the global average.**
- India is also the **only nation among the G20 with commitments under the Paris Agreement that are even 2°C warming-compatible.**
- Thus, India with annual emissions at 3 billion tonnes in carbon dioxide equivalent terms, even if it manages to cease its emissions for the next 30 years, while others emissions remaining the same, can buy the world only less than two years of

additional time for meeting the Paris Agreement temperature goals.

### CONCLUSION

- The limitations of the remaining carbon budget for 1.5°C are so stringent that they cannot be met by promises of net zero 30 years from now.
- **With the present pace of emission the world is set to cross the 1.5°C limit within 10-15 years.**
- The need of the hour is to:
  - 1) **focus on definite cumulative emission targets** keeping equity and historical responsibility in view,
  - 2) **immediate emission reductions by the developed countries** with phase-out dates for all fossil fuels,
  - 3) **massive investment in new technologies** and their deployment,
  - 4) a serious push to the **mobilisation of adequate climate finance.**
- **This is the message that the IPCC report has sent to this year's climate summit and the world.**

## 2) More feed, better productivity

**GS-1 Agricultural Resources; GS-3 Growth & Development, Economics of Animal-Rearing**

### CONTEXT

- A major **stumbling block** faced by **Indian farmers** is related to the **lack of affordable good quality feed and fodder for livestock.**
- A study by the **Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute** has observed that for every 100 kg of feed required, India is short of 23.4 kg of dry fodder, 11.24 kg of green fodder, and 28.9 kg of concentrate feed.

### CONCERNS

- Inadequate availability of affordable good quality feed and fodder for livestock causes following challenges:
- **Milk productivity-** Indian livestock's milk productivity is 20%-60% lower than the global average.
- **Low output-** On breaking down the input costs, it is found that feed constitutes 60%-70% of milk production costs.

### GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVE

**National Livestock Mission**

- The National Livestock Mission (NLM) commenced from **2014-15.**
- The Mission is designed to **cover all the activities required to ensure quantitative and qualitative improvement in livestock production systems and capacity building of all stakeholders.**
- The Mission will **cover everything relevant to improvement of livestock productivity** and support projects and initiatives required for that purpose.
- The mission is formulated with the **objective of sustainable development of the livestock sector, focusing on improving availability of quality feed and fodder.**
- It is implemented throughout the country.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SCHEME

- The significance of the scheme is underscored by the fact that **livestock is the major source of cash income for about 13 crore marginal farmers** and is an **insurance in the event of crop failure.**
- As about 200 million Indians are involved in dairy and livestock farming, **the scheme is important from the perspective of poverty alleviation.**

### DRAWBACKS IN THE SCHEME

- When the NLM was launched in 2014, it **focused on supporting farmers in producing fodder from non-forest wasteland/grassland, and cultivation of coarse grains.**
- However, **this model could not sustain fodder availability due to lack of backward and forward linkages in the value chain.**

### REVISED SCHEME

- Considering the drawbacks of NLM, **the Mission has been revised** to make the programme focus primarily **on assistance towards seed production and the development of feed and fodder entrepreneurs.**
  - 1) The government has recently **announced the sub-mission under NLM i.e. Sub-Mission on Fodder and Feed.**
  - 2) It now **provides for 50% direct capital subsidy to the beneficiaries under the feed and fodder entrepreneurship programme and 100% subsidy on fodder seed production** to identified beneficiaries.
- Sub-Mission on Fodder and Feed**

- The Sub-Mission **intends to create a network of entrepreneurs** who will make silage (the hub) and sell them directly to the farmers (the spoke).
- **Silage** is a type of fodder made from green foliage crops which have been preserved by acidification, achieved through fermentation.
- **Private entrepreneurs, self-help groups, farmer producer organisations, dairy cooperative societies, and Section 8 companies (NGOs)** can avail themselves of the benefits under this scheme.
- The scheme will also **provide 50% capital subsidy up to ₹50 lakh towards project cost** to the beneficiary for infrastructure development and for procuring machinery for value addition in feed such as hay/silage/total mixed ration.
- The scheme can be **used for covering the cost of infrastructure/machinery** such as bailing units, harvester, chaff cutter, sheds, etc.

#### ANTICIPATED BENEFITS FROM THE REVISED SCHEME

- The revised scheme has been designed with the **objectives of increasing productivity, reducing input costs, and doing away with middlemen.**
- The recent revision is premised on the idea that the **funding of the hub will lead to the development of the spoke.**
- The large-scale production **of silage will bring down the input cost for farmers** since silage is much cheaper than concentrate feed.
- Studies have indicated that by growing fodder crops, **better earnings** are made then in the case of common cereals like wheat and rice.

#### CONCLUSION

- A major challenge in the feed sector emanates from the fact that good quality green fodder is only available for about three months during the year. So, the ideal solution would be to ferment green fodder and convert it into silage.
- Under the fodder entrepreneurship programme, farmers will receive subsidies and incentives to create a consistent supply chain of feed throughout the year.
- With the assistance under this scheme, farmers should be able to grow the green fodder between two crop seasons and

entrepreneurs can then convert it into silage and sell it at nearby markets ensuring affordable quality fodder to dairy farmers.

- **Since India has a livestock population of 535.78 million, an effective implementation of this scheme will play a major role in increasing the return on investment for our farmers.**

### 3) Keeping an eye on China's expanding nuclear stack

**GS-2 India and its Neighbourhood, Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests; GS-3 Nuclear Technology**

#### CONTEXT

- Recently, more evidence has emerged that the People's Republic of China (PRC) is expanding the size of its nuclear arsenal by building more missile silos.

#### CONCERNS

- The source of concern is over:
- **The scope and prospective size of the PRC's nuclear capabilities**
- The construction of the nuclear missile silo field in Xinjiang region in western China indicates the **PRC is fielding a larger nuclear force based on fixed land-based capabilities.**
- The site is believed to host 110 silos.
- This development comes against the backdrop of evidence that **China had built a site with 120 silos in the arid region of Yumen, in the Gansu province.**

#### Rate and extent

- Chinese nuclear forces stand at **roughly anywhere between 250 to 350 nuclear warheads according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) as well as the Federation of American Scientists (FAS).**

#### POSSIBLE REASONS BEHIND CHINA'S ACT

- The most likely reason behind the current expansion of China's nuclear arsenal is:
  - 1) **increase the survivability of its arsenal against a first strike from their nuclear adversaries**, most prominently the United States.
  - 2) Washington, which possesses a larger arsenal, stands at 3,800 warheads, and paired with its growing missile defence capabilities poses a threat to Chinese retaliatory nuclear forces.

- However, other countries too loom large in China's nuclear expansion such as Russia and India.

#### POSSIBILITY OF MISLEAD

- There are possibilities that the current silo-based missile expansion being undertaken by the PRC can be misleading to conceal the number of missiles tipped with nuclear warheads in its possession.

#### SURVIVABILITY AGAINST FIRST STRIKE STRATEGY

- Land-based nuclear capabilities also enable the Chinese to present a nuclear adversary with a larger menu of targets to strike. Thus, **exhausting a large number of the enemy's missiles in a first strike.**

1) Indeed, some of the decoy silos are meant to absorb and exhaust a part of the enemy's first strike nuclear forces.

2) Thus, the **larger the target list for any potential opponent, the greater the chances of China's arsenal surviving a first strike** thereby boosting the credibility of China's nuclear deterrent.

- In all probability, the PRC is expanding its nuclear forces if not to match the larger nuclear forces fielded by the Americans and the Russians, but sufficient to withstand a first strike and then execute a retaliatory attack that would defeat the adversary.

#### IMPROVING ITS MISSILE SYSTEM

- China's nuclear tipped ballistic missiles forces, whether land-based or sea-based, have certainly **improved in quantity and quality.**
- The PRC's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) capabilities and Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) capabilities in the form of the Dongfeng-41 (DF-41) and the DF-26, respectively, are its most potent land-based missile systems.

#### IMPACT OF CHINESE NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENTS

##### Globally:

- The latest development of silos presents a grim and disturbing set of consequences for the world and India.
- The PRC has refused to enter any tripartite arms control negotiations with Americans and Russians that could forestall the deployment of a more numerically robust nuclear arsenal.

- It seems that the current build-up by Chinese nuclear development is considered as a **necessity by China to bridge the nuclear asymmetries it faces vis-à-vis Washington and Moscow.**

##### India:

- The growth in China's nuclear arsenal **might not have an immediate impact on India, but its development of land-based nuclear silos in the Xinjiang province is cause to worry, given the region's proximity to India.**
- Also, it is likely to have an **impact on the ongoing boundary stand-off between the two countries in Eastern Ladakh.**
- Fixed land-based nuclear capabilities gives China coercive leverage in consolidating its territorial gains in Depsang, Demchok and Gogra-Hotsprings.

#### CONCLUSION

- The strategic balance between China and India is unlikely to be altered because of the Chinese nuclear expansion, but **New Delhi needs to keep a close eye on its neighbour and work on enhancing its own strategic capabilities.**

## 4) Back to basics

### GS-2 Education, Issues Relating to Development

#### CONTEXT

- Recently, the preliminary report of a **nationwide survey conducted by Lego Foundation in Denmark** stated that **students give importance to peer interactions, good teachers, fun learning content and knowledge gained from experimental approaches.**
- Also, UNICEF says that **children want to go back to school.**
- Hence, it can be assumed that these aspirations hold true for Indian children, but the question arises- how prepared are we to send children back to school?

#### CONCERNS

- According to various estimates, **the pandemic and lockdowns have led to an alarming drop-out rate from schools, migration of children from private to government schools due to inability to pay fees, increased abuse at home, inadequate nutrition, etc.**

- Experts claim that for adults to unlearn and relearn is a very expensive and time-consuming process. Thus, **if the foundation of education is weak, any effort at a later stage to strengthen it will only yield suboptimal results.**

#### **FACTORS THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED**

- The major factors that need to be addressed at the foundational level:

##### **Nutrition:**

- UNICEF has raised the issue of nutrition.
- According to UNICEF, children depending on their age group and gender, need to consume 1,000-3,200 calories per day.
- Hence, India's mid-day meal scheme can play vital in addressing nutritional needs of children.

##### **Foundational skills:**

- **The UNDP Human Development Report 2019** states that-
  - 1) **Students who fall behind may struggle, if the level of classroom instruction is considerably above their learning level.**
  - 2) **The problems are exacerbated at higher grades, if students are automatically promoted to the next grade without having acquired foundational skills.**
- The recently introduced **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, is inflicted with similar issues:
  - While the policy proposes pedagogical freedom to the teacher, the **content-heavy curriculum forces instructionist rather than constructivist engagements in the classroom.**
  - As a result, students simply consume what they are taught; they don't become creators.
  - Hence, there is a need for **supporting slower foundational development while focusing on the essentials.** This will allow for **deeper and more meaningful learning.**

##### **Skilled teachers:**

- The National Education Policy (NEP), 1986 said, **"The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society, hence it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers".**
- Yet, the NEP 2020 has entrusted the intellectual development of kindergarten children from underprivileged sections to matriculation-pass Anganwadi teachers and helpers.

- Anganwadi teachers will not be able to fulfil the task of developing underprivileged kindergarten students into creators simply because they lack the expertise to do so.
- Further, the proposal to upgrade their skills using online methods is grossly inadequate.
- Adequate steps are needed to enhance the skills of the teachers entrusted with the intellectual development of kindergarten children, specially from underprivileged sections. Focus should be given on developing critical thinking in the child.

##### **Quality of education in rural areas:**

- If India wants to achieve 2030 Sustainable Development Goal for Education, it needs to work on a war footing.
- Current solutions appear to be designed in the cloud without adequate exposure to the ground. It will have to acknowledge that EdTech is a resource of the privileged. While learning higher-order cognitive skills requires time and personal support.
- One way to solve this problem is to **mobilise students in higher education to contribute three to six months in government-sponsored programmes by working in the most remote and underdeveloped areas to educate children and teachers.**
- **Private companies could also sponsor mentorship programmes** where employees spend about a month on the field.
- Such initiatives will have a transformative effect on all the participants involved.

#### **CONCLUSION**

- **The ability to successfully satisfy Sustainable Development Goal 4 will depend on the priority afforded to school education, focussing on foundational skill of the child and related issues.**

### **5) The Abraham Accords as India's West Asia bridge**

**GS-2 Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and agreements involving India**

#### **CONTEXT**

- The recent visit by the Indian Air Force chief to Israel offers a window to **study how New Delhi is taking advantage of the Abraham Accords deal signed between**

### **Israel and a consortium of Arab States led by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2020.**

#### **ABRAHAM ACCORDS**

- The Abraham Accords are a **joint statement between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States**, reached on August 13, 2020.
- Subsequently, the term was used to **refer collectively to agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates** (the Israel–United Arab Emirates normalization agreement) and **Bahrain**, respectively (the Bahrain–Israel normalization agreement).
- The statement marked the first public normalization of relations between an Arab country and Israel since that of Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

#### **DEEPENING COOPERATION**

- Starting from the relatively low-key staging visit to Saudi Arabia conducted by the IAF in 2015, to **hosting visiting Iranian naval warships in 2018, defence of the critical waterways in and around the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea and the extended Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**, India has increased its strategic footprint in West Asia.
- In December 2020, **Indian Army chief, General M.M. Naravane, visited the UAE and Saudi Arabia, becoming the first chief of the Indian Army to do so.**
- India has also recently conducted the **'Zayed Talwar' naval exercises with the UAE** off the coast of Abu Dhabi, further deepening the fast-developing strategic cooperation between the two countries.
- According to reports, an **Indian contingent of the Indian Air Force (IAF) will visit Israel in October to take part in multilateral military exercises.**
- The above examples show the pacy developments on the defence front between India and the West Asian region.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ACCORD FOR INDIA**

- New Delhi had welcomed the Accords, highlighting its support for mechanisms that offer peace and stability in the region.
- The signing of the Accords has removed a significant strategic obstacle for New Delhi, i.e. **trapeze wire delicate balancing act India has had to play out between the Arab Gulf and Israel over the decades.**

#### **PERSISTING CHALLENGES**

#### **Saudi Arabia:**

- To a certain extent, the Accords, from the UAE's perspective, were to make sure the emirate along with its international centres of trade such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi do not become targets between Jerusalem and Tehran.
- However, not all Arab States have been on board with the geopolitical shifts the Accords have pushed through.
- Despite a lot of effort from Israel, Saudi Arabia has maintained a distance from this arrangement.
- More recently, Riyadh has praised the Accords, but said that the resolution of the Palestinian State remains at the forefront of its requirements.

#### **Iran:**

- There are **multiple obstacles to the India-Iran bilateral relations led by U.S. sanctions against Iran** and the **general tensions between Israel, the Gulf and Iran via proxy battles in theatres such as Yemen, Syria and beyond.**
- Recently, as **tensions between Iran, Israel and the United States flared up in the Persian Gulf**, as a result, the **Indian Navy orchestrated Operation Sankalp**, which saw Indian warships escort on an average 16 Indian-flagged vessels a day.

#### **The Iran link:**

- **Iran, as part of India's 'West Asia' construct, will also play a significant part in India's outreach in the months to come as the crisis in Afghanistan deepens.**
- New Delhi used Iranian airspace and facilities when evacuating its diplomatic staff from Kandahar in July showcases a level of strategic commonality, interest and play on certain issues in the region.
- Considering this, connectivity projects such as **Chabahar Port and Chabahar-Zahedan rail project** amongst others remain critical.

#### **One- sided decisions of India:**

- Despite India's arguable successes in a 'non-alignment' approach in West Asia, it has taken one-sided decisions in the past.
- It had **trained Iraqi Air Force cadets on MiG aircraft in Tikrit between 1958 and 1989** and also maintained good relations with former President Saddam Hussein.
- This can be seen as a critical part of India's energy security thinking.

- But, the **rationale behind such thinking has not seen a significant change** as India still imports more than 80% of its annual oil requirements, much of it from Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

#### CONCLUSION

- India's strategic play in West Asia will be reflective of its economic growth, and its increasingly important place in the global order.
- **Hence, from the UN Security Council to the Indo-Pacific, New Delhi will be expected to be more assertive, diplomatically and militarily, in its posturing.**

### 6) The fall of Kabul, the future of regional geopolitics

**GS-2 India and its neighborhood- relations, Policies and politics of developed and developing countries**

#### CONTEXT

- **The fall of Kabul in the wake of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan will prove to be a defining moment for the region and the future shape of its geopolitics;**
- It would be as defining, if not more, as the Soviet intervention in 1979 and the American one in 2001.
- While a lot depends on the Taliban's actual conduct both domestically as well as on the southern and western Asian geopolitical chessboard in the months ahead, the Taliban is likely to continue as a 'useful villain' in the unfolding great power competition.
- **For New Delhi, the fall of Kabul is a moment of reckoning and it must rethink its regional strategies and options.**

#### VACUUM IN EURASIAN HEARTLAND

- The haphazard manner in which the United States withdrew from Afghanistan has created the **regional power vacuum in the Eurasian heartland.**
- As a result an axis of **regional powers such as China, Pakistan, Russia, and the Taliban** have already started filling this power vacuum, thereby shaping **the contours of the region's geopolitics based on their individual and common interests.**

- There is much possibility that **Iran might also jump on this opportunistic bandwagon under the Chinese leadership.**

#### IMPACT OF REGIONAL POWERS ON AMERICAN INFLUENCE

- It is abundantly clear that each of the countries which have come into foreplay in Afghanistan after American withdrawal, harbour deep anti-American feelings in varying degrees.
- Thereby catalysing further shrink of American influence in the Eurasian heartland.
- Hence, with the formation of the regional axis, **the U.S. might need to decide to explore new ways of working with them to stabilise the region, if it desires to do so, and remain relevant there.**

#### CONCERNS FOR INDIA

##### Advantage for China:

- The post-American power vacuum in the region will be primarily advantageous to China and its grand strategic plans for the region.
- Beijing will further strengthen its efforts to bring every country in the region, except India, on the **Chinese Belt and Road Initiative bandwagon**, thereby altering the geopolitical and geoeconomic foundations of the region.
- More so, the much-feared **Chinese encirclement of India will become ever more pronounced.**
- **Also, Beijing is likely to become less accommodative towards India including on the Line of Actual Control.**
- Even in trade, given the sorry state of the post-COVID-19 Indian economy, **India needs trade with China more than the other way round.**
- Hence, unless New Delhi can find ways of ensuring a rapprochement with China, it must expect Beijing to challenge India on occasion, and be prepared for it.

##### Advantage for extremists:

- Other bigger challenge for India would be a **near-certain increase in terrorism and extremism in the region.**
- The U.S. presence in Afghanistan, international pressure on the Taliban and Financial Action Task Force worries in Pakistan had a relatively moderating effect on the region's terror ecosystem.

- With the Taliban now back in Kabul, things are bound to change.
- Further the visuals of the Taliban releasing terrorists from Afghan jails would send a powerful message to their fellow travellers, handlers, and sympathisers in the region.

#### **Impact on India's regional interests**

- The return of the Taliban to Kabul has effectively **laid India's 'Mission Central Asia' to rest**. The fall of Kabul and the consequent knock-on effects in the region will have several potential implications for India's foreign policy and its strategic choices and behaviour.
- **For one**, given the little physical access India has to its north-western landmass, its focus is **bound to shift more to the Indo-Pacific** even though a maritime grand strategy may not necessarily be an answer to its continental challenges.
- **Second**, New Delhi might also seek to shed the arrogance it displayed towards its smaller neighbours and cultivate friendly relations with them.
- Myanmar is a case in point. India has already indicated that it would not challenge the junta on the coup and its widespread human rights violations.
- **Third**, the developments in Afghanistan could nudge New Delhi to seek stability, if not peace, with Pakistan.

#### **ISSUES**

- While the neighbouring countries other than India are also worried about terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, but they are

busy making their own private deals with the Taliban to not host terror organisations targeting them.

- 1) There is little appetite for a regional approach to curbing terrorism from a Taliban-led Afghanistan.
- 2) This enables the Taliban to engage in a selective treatment towards terror outfits present there or they have relations with.
  - Moreover, the international community may have no choice but to recognise the Taliban regime, as UN Security Council members such as **China and Russia have already indicated their intent to do so**.
  - This would mean that the **Taliban would hold more power in a bargain on the terror question**.
  - It is unlikely that the Taliban will proactively export terror to other countries unless of course for tactical purposes by, for instance, Pakistan against India.
  - However, **the real worry is the inspiration that disgruntled elements in the region will draw from the Taliban's victory against the world's sole superpower**.

#### **CONCLUSION**

- The lesson for India in the wake of these developments is clear:
  - 1) **It will have to fight its own battles.**
  - 2) So it must make enemies wisely, choose friends carefully, rekindle flickering friendships, and make peace while it can.

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## INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED

### 1) Ratification of Kigali Amendment on phasing down HFCs

#### About Hydrofluorocarbons

- Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are a **group of industrial chemicals** primarily used for cooling and refrigeration.
- HFCs are powerful **greenhouse gases** and a substantial number are **short-lived climate pollutants** with a lifetime of between 15 and 29 years in the atmosphere.
- HFCs are widespread in **air conditioners, refrigerators, aerosols, foams and other products**.
- While these chemicals do not deplete the stratospheric ozone layer, some of them have **high Global Warming Potentials (GWPs) ranging from 12 to 14,000**.
- Overall **HFC emissions** are growing at a rate of **8% per year** and annual emissions are projected to rise to **7-19% of global CO2 emissions by 2050**.
- HFCs were introduced as **non-ozone depleting alternatives** to support the timely **phase out of CFCs and HCFCs under Montreal Protocol**.

#### Montreal Protocol

- The Montreal Protocol on **Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer** is an **international environmental treaty** that regulates the **production and consumption of nearly 100 man-made chemicals** referred to as **ozone depleting substances (ODS)**.

- Adopted on 15 September 1987, the Montreal Protocol is the **only UN treaty that has been ratified by every country**.
- The stratospheric ozone layer **protects humans and the environment** from harmful levels of ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- The main aim of Montreal Protocol is to **end the use of chlorofluorocarbons**.
- Under this treaty, all parties have specific responsibilities related to the **phase out of the different groups of ODS**, control of ODS trade, annual reporting of data, national licensing systems to control ODS imports and exports, and other matters.
- Developing and developed countries have **equal but differentiated responsibilities** along with **binding, time-targeted and measurable commitments**.
- The Parties are assisted by the **Ozone Secretariat**, which is based at UN Environment Programme headquarters in **Nairobi, Kenya**.
- Developing countries agreed to start their phase out process of **Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) in 2013** and are now following a stepwise reduction until the complete phase-out of HCFCs by **2030**.
- But the Montreal Protocol has been a far more effective and successful agreement than the climate change instruments. It has already **resulted in the phase-out of 98.6% of ozone-depleting substances**. The remaining 1.4% are the HCFCs that are in the process of being transitioned.

### MONTREAL PROTOCOL CONTRIBUTES TO THE



### Kigali Agreement

- The Parties to the Montreal Protocol reached agreement at their 28th Meeting of the Parties on 15 October **2016 in Kigali, Rwanda to phase-down HFCs.**
- This Agreement particularly aims at phasing out the **production and consumption of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)** which were first introduced as a substitute to ODSs namely Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs).
- Before the middle of this century, **current HFC use has to be curtailed by at least 85 per cent.** Countries have **different timelines** to do this. **India** has to achieve this target by **2047** while the developed countries have to do it by 2036. China and some other countries have a target of 2045.
- While the reductions for the rich countries have to begin immediately, India, and some other countries, have to begin cutting their HFC use only from 2031.
- The agreement came into force on **1st January 2019** and has been ratified by **119 countries** so far.
- Kigali Agreement **legally binds the signatory countries** with non-compliance measures.

### Why in News ?

- The Union Cabinet gave its nod for **ratification of the Kigali Amendment** for phasing down of ozone layer-depleting hydrofluorocarbons by India under the Montreal Protocol.

### News in Detail

- The phasing down of HFCs is expected to prevent the **emission to the tune of 105 million tonnes of greenhouse gases**, which would potentially help avoid a rise in global temperature up to **0.5 degrees Celsius** by the year 2100
- Phasing down HFCs will provide a scope for **domestic manufacturing** of equipment as

well as alternative non-HFC and **low-global warming potential chemicals** to enable the industry to transition to the low global warming potential alternatives.

- In addition, there would be opportunities to promote **domestic innovation for new generation alternative refrigerants and related technologies.**

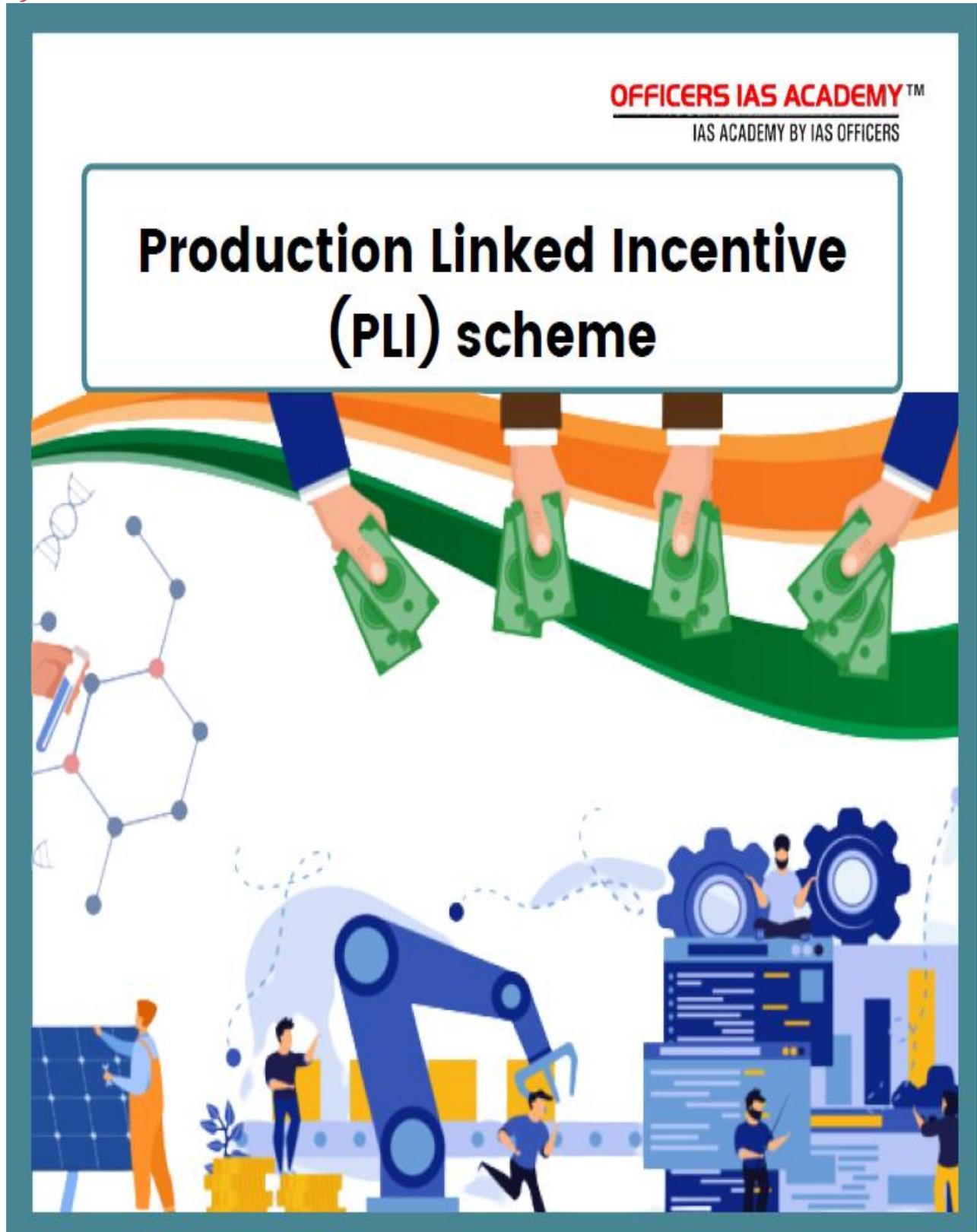
### India's efforts

- India had played a key role in negotiating the Kigali Amendment. It had fought hard to get an extended timeline for itself, and some other countries, for the reduction of HFC use.
- Despite being one of the main architects of the Kigali Amendment, India was the last major country to announce its decision to ratify it.
- In the meanwhile, however, India had unveiled an ambitious action plan for the cooling industry which accounts for the phase-out of HFCs.
- The **20-year 'India Cooling Action Plan', or ICAP**, released in 2019, describes cooling as a "developmental need" and seeks to address the rising demand in cooling, from buildings to transport to cold-chains, through sustainable actions.
- The plan estimates that the national cooling demand would grow eight times in the next 20 years, which would result in a corresponding five to eight-fold rise in the demand for refrigerants that involve the use of HFCs.
- The ICAP aims to **bring down the refrigerant demand by 25 to 30 per cent in the next 20 years.**
- As part of the ICAP, the government has also announced targeted R&D efforts aimed at developing low-cost alternatives to HFCs.

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## INFOGRAPHIC OF THE WEEK

### 1) PLI Scheme



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## About the Scheme

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In April last year, the central government had for the first time notified the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for **mobile phones and allied component manufacturing.**



As a part of the scheme, companies which set up new mobile and specified equipment manufacturing units or expanded their present units would get **incentives of 4 to 6 per cent**, after they achieve their investment and production value target for each year.



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It aimed at making India a hub for manufacturing and exports.



In November, the government announced that the PLI scheme would be expanded to include 12 more sectors such as automobile and automobile components,



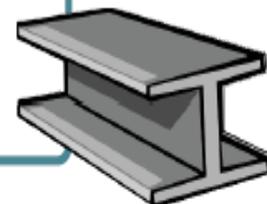
pharmaceutical drugs, textile products, food products,



high efficiency solar photo-voltaic modules,



white goods such as air conditioners and LED bulbs, and speciality steel products.

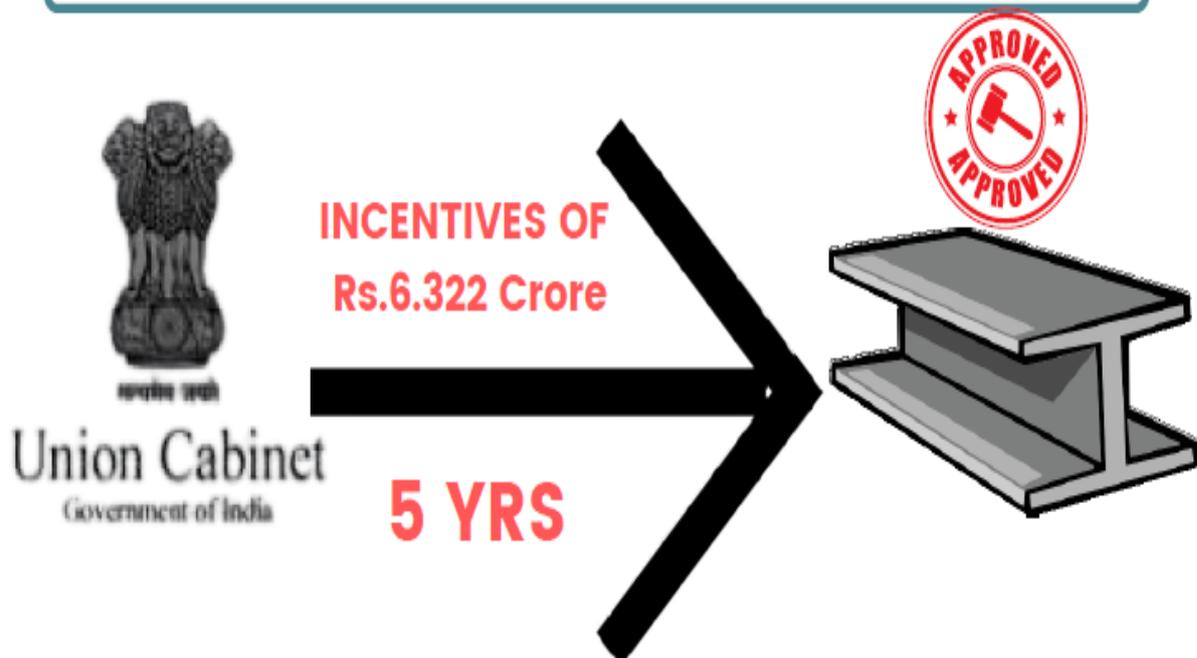


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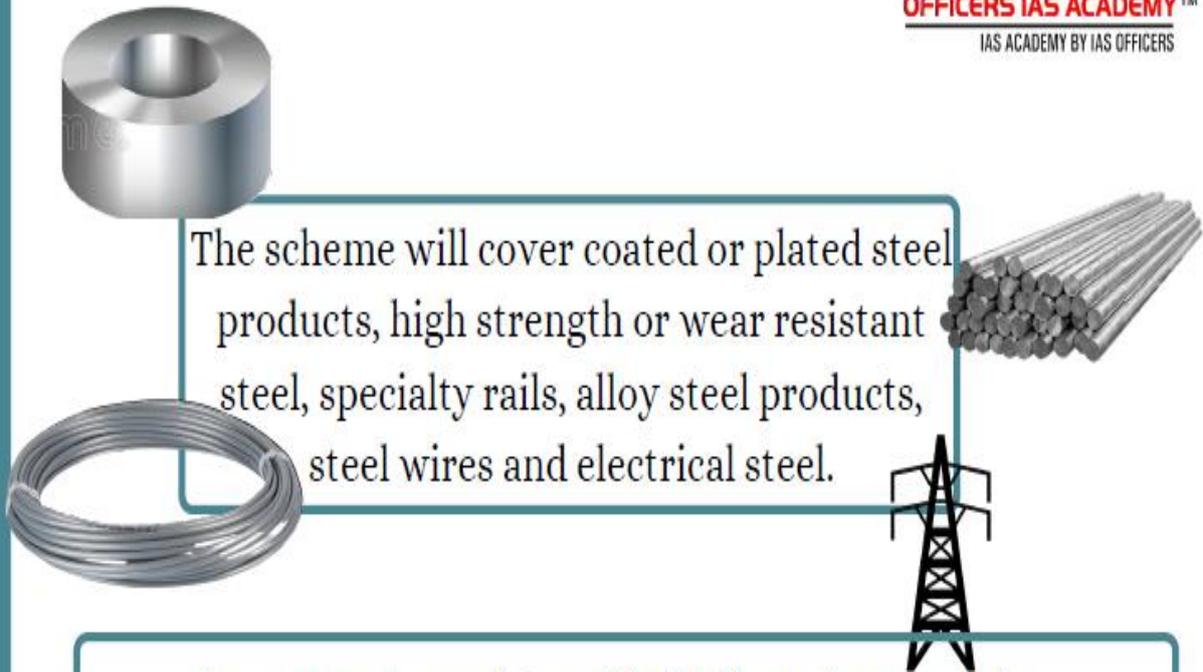
## Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the Production-linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for **Specialty Steel** with incentives of Rs. 6,322 crore. This will be provided over a period of **five years**. This scheme will boost production of high grade specialty steel in the country.



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Any company registered in India and engaged in manufacturing of the identified specialty steel grades is eligible to participate in this scheme. The decision will **boost exports and minimise dependence on imports for high end steel.**



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This will also bring in investment of approximately 40 thousand crore rupees and has a potential of generating over five lakh 25 thousand jobs.

**40 thousands  
crore rupees**



**INVESTMENT**

**5 lakh  
25 thousand**

**J**  **bs**

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The Scheme proposes to **incentivize eligible manufacturers by paying between 4 percent to 12 percent incentive on incremental production.**



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