

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF CLIMATE SERVICES (NFCS)

In Context

- The **IMD** launched the **National Framework of Climate Services (NFCS)** on the **150th Anniversary of India Meteorological Department (IMD)**.

About

- The framework aims to strengthen the production and delivery of **science-based climate monitoring and prediction services** for sectors such as agriculture, health, energy, and disaster management.
- NFCS is based on the **Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS)**.

What is Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS)?

- It is a partnership of governments and organisations at a global level, for the production and better usage of climate information and services.
- The announcement to establish a GFCS was made during the **third World Climate Conference held in Geneva in 2009**.
- It is led by **National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS)** in their respective nations.
- GFCS envisages to generate **high-quality data** from national and international databases on temperature, rainfall, wind, soil moisture and ocean conditions and other vital weather parameters.
- This is aimed at **creating long-term historical averages** of these parameters, as well as maps, risk and vulnerability analyses, assessments and long-term projections and scenarios.

About NFCS

- In lines with the global framework, the national framework will be based on **country-specific weather and stakeholder needs**.
- The nodal agency for the formulation and implementation of the national framework in India will be the **IMD**.
- Along with the identified sectors of focus, India could add other relevant sectors like **transport, tourism and other emerging sectors from time to time**.

- Initially, the NFCS will work in bridging functioning gaps between the various agencies who require climate services.
 - These include the hydrological, power, renewable energy, transport, dams and irrigation, health agencies are central, state and other levels.

Need of NFCS

- Lack of Data:** There are **many gap areas** across terrains and the seas, wherein no weather data is available.
 - There is a **lack of long-term (100 years or more) climatological data** from the Himalayan regions, the oceans, besides inexistence of radar and satellite-based climatology.
- Strengthening Observational Network:** NFCS aims to strengthen the observational network on land and the seas, improve the data inflow and eventually use it to run weather and climate models for **deriving climate predictions**.
- Use of Climate Data:** The climate data and information products will be tailored and help identify agricultural production, health trends, population distribution in high-risk areas, road and infrastructure mapping for the delivery of goods and other socio-economic variables.
- To Prepare for Adaptability:** The framework aims to support efforts to prepare for new climate conditions and adapt to their impacts on water supplies, health risks, extreme events, farm productivity, infrastructure placement, power and energy generation and others.
- Other Countries:** Since the 2009 declaration of frameworks for climate services, Switzerland, China, Germany and the United Kingdom have launched the NFCS.

About IMD

- It is the **National Meteorological Service** of the country and the **principal government agency** in all matters relating to meteorology and allied subjects established in **1875**.
- Ministry: Ministry of Earth Sciences.**
- Functions:** To take meteorological observations and to provide current and forecast meteorological information.

- ◆ To warn against severe weather phenomena like tropical cyclones, norwesters, dust storms, heavy rains and snow, cold and heat waves, etc.
- ◆ To provide meteorological statistics required for agriculture, water resource management, industries, oil exploration and other nation-building activities.
- ◆ To conduct and promote research in meteorology and allied disciplines.

Source: **HT**

UNDERSTANDING THE TENTH SCHEDULE

Context:

- The Maharashtra Assembly Speaker has refused to disqualify MLAs of the Eknath Shinde faction and Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray group.

What is Defection?

- It means the transfer of allegiance by a legislator from one political party to another. It indicates revolt, dissent, and rebellion by a person or a party.
- In a political scenario it is a situation when a member of a political party leaves his party and joins hands with other parties.
 - ◆ Traditionally, this phenomenon is known as **'floor crossing'** which had its origin in the British House of Commons where a legislator changed his allegiance when he crossed the floor and moved from the Government to the Opposition side, or vice-versa.

Defections in India

- The practice of 'defection' in Indian politics has always been the breeding ground of political instability and uncertainty, often tending to shift the focus from 'governance' to 'governments'.
 - ◆ Defections are an integral part of parliamentary democracy, including India.
- According to the **Chavan Committee Report (1969)**, following the Fourth General Elections, Indian politics were characterised by numerous instances of change of party allegiance by legislators in several States.
- Therefore, **to ensure the stability of elected governments**, the **52nd Constitutional**

Amendment introduced the **'Anti-defection' law** through the **Tenth Schedule** in **1985**.

Anti-Defection Law (ADL)

- It was formulated to bring stability to the Indian political system by curbing the tendency among legislators to switch loyalties from one party to another.
- It addresses the following kinds of defection:
 - ◆ By a member **voluntarily giving up membership** of the party on whose symbol they got elected.
 - ◆ By a member **violating a direction (whip)** issued by their party to vote in a particular way or to abstain from voting.
- The Supreme Court of India has interpreted 'voluntarily giving up membership' broadly, ruling that **a legislator's conduct (inside and outside the legislature)** can indicate whether they have left their party.
- The law also **allows** a group of **MPs/MLAs to join (i.e., merge with)** another political party without inviting the penalty for defection.
 - ◆ The law allows a party to merge with or into another party provided that at least two-thirds of its legislators are in favour of the merger.
- **Nominated legislators:** The law specifies that nominated legislators can join a political party within six months of being appointed to the House, and not after such time.
 - ◆ Violation of the law in any of these scenarios can lead to a legislator being penalised for defection.

Deciding Authority

- **Anti-Defection Law** provides for the disqualification of legislators by the Presiding Officer of the Legislature (Speaker, Chairman) based on a petition by any other member of the House.
 - ◆ However, the Supreme Court has held **legislators can challenge their decisions before the higher judiciary**.
- ADL **does not provide a time frame** within which the presiding officer has to decide a defection case.
 - ◆ However, the Supreme Court has held that, ideally, **Speakers should take a decision on a defection petition within three months**.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS FOR DISQUALIFICATION

Significances of ADL

- **Stability:** ADL aims to bring **stability to governments** by discouraging legislators from changing parties, along with **promoting party discipline**.
- **Loyalty:** ADL tries to bring a sense of loyalty of the members towards their own party.
 - ♦ It ensures that candidates elected with party support and on the basis of party manifestos remain loyal to the party policies.

Criticisms around the ADL

- **No scope for acting independently:** ADL penalises legislators for acting independently is that it goes against the idea of a parliamentary democracy.
 - ♦ ADL binds legislators to the official position taken by their party **on any issue**.
- **Accountability to the constituency:** By preventing parliamentarians from changing parties, it **reduces the accountability** to the Parliament and the people.
- **Split as a defence against disqualification:** If there is a split in a particular party, and one-third of the legislators move along with the breakaway group, they will not be disqualified. So, split was a defence against disqualification.
 - ♦ It is being misinterpreted as is seen in Maharashtra because there is no authoritative interpretation of the law.
- **Ambiguous Nature of Split:** In recent years, opposition MLAs in some states have broken away in small groups gradually to join the ruling party.
 - ♦ In some of these cases, more than 2/3rd of the opposition has defected to the ruling party.
 - ♦ However, it is not clear if they will still face disqualification if the Presiding Officer makes a decision after more than 2/3rd of the opposition has defected to the ruling party.
- **Lure of office:** It is widely claimed that Ideological defection doesn't take place in India & the legislators defect for the lure of office.

Suggestions by different Committees on ADL

- **Dinesh Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms (1990):** Disqualification should be limited to cases where:

- ♦ A member voluntarily gives up the membership of his political party;
- ♦ A member abstains from voting, or votes contrary to the party whip in a motion of vote of confidence or motion of no-confidence.
- ♦ The issue of disqualification should be decided by the President/Governor on the advice of the Election Commission.
- **Law Commission (170th Report, 1999):** Provisions which exempt splits and mergers from disqualification to be deleted.
 - ♦ Pre-poll electoral fronts should be treated as political parties under anti-defection law.
 - ♦ Political parties should limit issuance of whips to instances only when the government is in danger.
- **Constitution Review Commission (2002):** Defectors should be barred from holding public office or any remunerative political post for the duration of the remaining term.
 - ♦ The vote cast by a defector to topple a government should be treated as invalid.
- **Election Commission:** Decisions under the Tenth Schedule should be made by the President/Governor on the binding advice of the Election Commission.

Related SC Judgement

- **Kihoto Hollohan vs Zachillhu And Others (1992):** The Supreme Court **upheld the validity of the ADL** and made the **Speaker's order subject to judicial review on limited grounds**.
 - ♦ It held that **Freedom to speech and expression** is not an absolute right but is **subjected to reasonable restrictions**.

Way Forward

- The introduction of the Tenth Schedule in the Indian Constitution was aimed at curbing political defections and stable government, but it has failed to meet its objective of curbing political defections and ensuring political stability.
- Though the law has succeeded in a reasonable way but due to some of its loopholes, it has not been able to achieve the best it can.
- The apex court must review the controversial Tenth Schedule to prevent the further corrosion of democracy.

Source: TH

INDIA -CHINA BORDER ISSUE

In Context

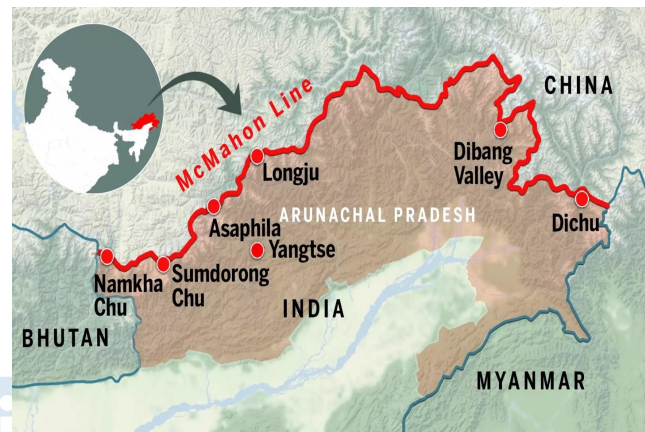
- At least two previously **unknown incidents of conflict between the Indian and Chinese troops** along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** have come to light.

About

- After the beginning of the **stand-off in eastern Ladakh in 2020**, India and China had deployed thousands of troops in forward posts along the LAC in the area which largely continue to remain deployed with the disengagement and de-escalation still incomplete.
- Tensions between India and China along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** continued through 2021 and till end 2022.

The India-China Borders

- India considers the LAC to be **3,488 km long**, while the Chinese consider it to be only around **2,000 km**.
- It is divided into three sectors:** the eastern sector which spans **Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim**, the middle sector in **Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh**, and the western sector in **Ladakh**.
- Western Sector or Aksai Chin Sector:** The region is claimed by the Chinese government **post-1962 war** as an autonomous part of the Xinjiang region which was originally a part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Middle Sector:** It is the less disputed section of the Indo-China border but the **recent Doklam standoff and Nathu La Pass trading issues** have brought distress at all levels.
- Eastern Sector or Arunachal Pradesh: McMahon Line** had differentiated India and China in this sector but in the 1962 war the People's Liberation Army covered 9000 sq. km. area.
 - The announcement of a unilateral ceasefire made them step back on the international borderline.
 - However, China has been claiming that area as their own and recently they have started to **claim the whole of Arunachal Pradesh** as their own.



Why did China Encroach on Indian Territory?

- To show its dominance:** China felt that somehow India was not recognising the growing gap in their relative economic status, when China perceived that India was seeking to get closer to the United States (US) to balance China it decided that it needed to demonstrate its power.
 - From the Chinese point of view, the basis of this "stability" does not come from settling its border issues with India, **but dominance on the border and deterring Indian challenges.**
- India's stand on China's Aggressive Foreign Policy:** India sought to challenge the Chinese point of view in many ways.
 - By building up its **border infrastructure** to more effectively maintain a deterrence capacity against the PLA along its borders.
 - By developing a **relationship with the US** which appeared to merge the threats from China's primary and secondary strategic directions.
 - By promoting its ties with exiled Tibetans and maintaining its relationship with the **Dalai Lama**.
 - Challenging China's efforts to develop ties in **South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.**

- ◆ Leading the **global critique of China's Belt & Road Initiative.**
- **Threat to Chinese efforts in the South-Asian region:** China needs to be accepted in its periphery as the foremost economic and military power, before it is taken seriously as a **global power.**
- ◆ In its southwest is India, **equally huge and populous** and with aspirations of its own, and its neighbors most certainly see India as being the **naturally pre-eminent power in South Asia.**
- **India's engagement with Chinese Adversaries:** In recent years, India has developed strong military ties with the country which China believes is its **primary threat, the United States.**
 - ◆ China would like to focus on the western Pacific challenge and retain stable ties with India in South Asia.
 - ◆ India's constant efforts, however, to upgrade its border infrastructure and strengthen its partnership with the US destabilise China's calculations.

Way Forward

- Disengaging from the points of friction is undoubtedly a step forward, and India and China must go a long way to solve the border dispute.
- India should **continue to press for complete disengagement and de-escalation** from all friction areas.
- Also, the Corps Commanders level talks must continue as the relationship cannot go back to normal as long as the situation along the stand-off lingers.
- India must keep its stand firm over **restoring the status quo** and rebuilding peace all along the LAC.
- The Indian government must constantly watch all developments that affect India's security and take all essential measures to **safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity.**

Source: *TH*

INDIA ACQUIRES LITHIUM BLOCKS IN ARGENTINA

Context

- India has acquired the five Lithium blocks in Argentina.

More about the News

- **The Ministry of Mines** through **Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL)**, signed an agreement with Argentina's State-owned **CAMYEN** (Catamarca Minera Y Energética Sociedad Del Estado).

About KABIL

- It was formed in **2019** as a joint venture of state-run miners **NALCO, HCL and MECL** to source strategic minerals such as lithium and cobalt etc. from abroad.
- KABIL carries out identification, acquisition, exploration, development, mining and processing of strategic minerals overseas for commercial use and meeting the country's requirement of these minerals.

Significance

- The deal will help India strengthen lithium supplies, while developing lithium mining and downstream sectors of both the countries.
- It will facilitate diversification of the supply chain for critical materials towards achieving Global Net Zero goals.

- ◆ Nearly **54%** of India's lithium imports are from China, which hogs 80% of global supply.
- The agreement supports the **Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)** in which India is a **member.**

Lithium

- Lithium is a chemical element with the symbol **Li** and **atomic number 3**. It is a soft, silvery-white alkali metal.
- **Properties:** Like all alkali metals, lithium is highly reactive and flammable, and must be stored in vacuum, inert atmosphere, or inert liquid such as purified kerosene or mineral oil.

Global Reserves

- **Chile, Australia, Argentina, Bolivia and China** contain most of the reserves discovered so far globally.
- Argentina, Bolivia and Chile, also known as the '**Lithium Triangle**' contain **54%** of the world's Lithium reserves.
 - ◆ In Argentina the lithium is present in salt pans in the **Atacama desert** and neighboring arid zones in the region.

Lithium in India

- In India, there is some potential to recover lithium from brines of **Sambhar and Pachpadra areas in Rajasthan, and Rann of Kutch, Gujarat.**
- Also the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has found lithium resources in **Jammu and Kashmir.**

Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)

- It is a US-led collaboration of 14 countries that would focus on the supply chains of minerals such as Cobalt, Nickel, Lithium, and also the 17 'rare earth' minerals.
- **Members:** Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Norway, Sweden, the UK, U.S., and the EU.
- **Mandate:** To catalyze public and private investment in critical mineral supply chains globally. It directly addresses four major critical minerals challenges:
 - ◆ Diversifying and stabilizing global supply chains;
 - ◆ Investment in those supply chains;
 - ◆ Promoting high environmental, social, and governance standards in the mining, processing, and recycling sectors; and
 - ◆ Increasing recycling of critical minerals.

Source: **BL**

NORTH KOREA TESTED SOLID-FUEL MISSILES

Context

- North Korea has tested a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

What is Solid-Fuel Technology?

- Solid fuel missiles are rockets that use a prepackaged propellant mixture of fuel and oxidiser, as opposed to liquid-fueled missiles which require separate tanks for fuel and oxidizer.
- Metallic powders such as **aluminum** often serve as the fuel, and **ammonium perchlorate**, which is the salt of perchloric acid and ammonia, is the most common oxidiser.
- The fuel and oxidiser are bound together by a hard rubbery material and packed into a metal casing.

- When solid propellant burns, oxygen from the ammonium perchlorate combines with aluminum to generate enormous amounts of energy and temperatures, creating thrust and lifting the missile from the launch pad.

Advantages of solid fuel

- **Faster deployment:** Solid fuel missiles require minimal preparation time, as fueling is not necessary. This allows for quicker launches, making them harder to pre-empt or target.
- **Increased survivability:** Solid fuel is more stable and less susceptible to damage compared to liquid fuels, making the missiles more resistant to pre-emptive strikes.
- **Easier storage and maintenance:** Solid fuel has a longer shelf life and requires less maintenance compared to liquid fuels, simplifying storage and reducing logistical burdens.
- **The missiles can fly at unpredictable trajectories** and change direction in flight, making them harder to track and intercept. They can also carry multiple
 - warheads or decoys to confuse the enemy's radars and sensors.

Why is North Korea developing them?

- **Deterrence against potential threats:** North Korea is developing solid-fuel missiles to enhance its military capabilities and deterrence against potential threats from the United States and its allies.
- **Greater accuracy:** Solid-fuel missiles can increase the range and payload of North Korea's missiles, as well as improve the accuracy and survivability of its missiles.
- **Quick response:** Solid-fuel missiles enable North Korea to launch surprise attacks or respond quickly in a crisis, as they can be fired more rapidly and with less warning than liquid-fuel missiles.

Missiles launched by North Korea

- **Hwasong-17:** This ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) successfully test-fired in 2022, showcasing North Korea's progress in developing long-range solid-fuel missiles.
- **Hwasong-18:** Another ICBM test-fired in 2023, potentially marking a further advancement in their solid fuel capabilities.

Source: **TOI**

NEWS IN SHORTS

THIRUVALLUVAR DAY

Context:

- The Tamil Nadu Governor paid floral tributes to a portrait of **Tamil poet-saint Thiruvalluvar** on Thiruvalluvar Day.

About

- Thiruvalluvar Day was first celebrated on May 17 and 18 in 1935.
- In the present time, it is usually observed either on January 15 or 16 in Tamil Nadu and is a part of Pongal celebrations.

Who is Thiruvalluvar?

- He was a great poet, and philosopher, and regarded as a **cultural icon by Tamils**.
- Thiruvalluvar's primary work Thirukkural** contains 1330 couplets (kurals) that are divided into 133 sections of 10 couplets each.
- The text is divided into three parts with teachings on **Dharma, Artha, and Kama (virtue, wealth and love)**.

Social Influence

- In the early **16th century**, a temple was built within the **Ekambareswarar temple complex in Mylapore** and it was dedicated to Thiruvalluvar.
- Valluvar Kotam**, a temple memorial built in Chennai in 1976. It has **one of the largest auditoriums in Asia**.
- Thiruvalluvar Statues** in **Kanyakumari** and **Ulsoor, near Bengaluru** were unveiled in **2000 and 2009** respectively.
- A **statue of Valluvar** was also erected outside the School of Oriental and African Studies in Russell Square, **London**.

Source: **TH**

VIJAY RAGHAVAN COMMITTEE

In Context

- A nine-member committee headed by former **Principal Scientific Advisor to government, K Vijay Raghavan** has submitted its report recently .

About Committee

- It was set up by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 2023 to review the functioning of the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** .
- Need** : The government's decision to review the functioning of DRDO comes against the backdrop of several of its **projects suffering from huge delays**.

Major Recommendations

- Set up Defence Technology Council** : Chaired by the Prime Minister, with the Defence Minister and the National Security Advisor as its Vice Presidents
 - It should determine the country's defence technology roadmap and decide on major projects and their execution
 - It is proposed to have an **executive committee** chaired by the Chief of Defence Staff.
 - The Principal Scientific Advisor, along with the three service chiefs and their vice chiefs, will also be its members.
 - Furthermore, it will include representation from academia and industry, with two members from each sector.
- Department of Defence Science, Technology, and Innovation**: It is proposed to be headed by a **technocrat**, will not only promote defence research and development in the academic and start-up ecosystem but also serve as the secretariat for the Defence Tech Council, chaired by the Prime Minister.
 - It will draw scientists from DRDO and academia, building a repository of knowledge on production expertise and conducting background research for the DTC, hence aiding its decisions on technology production.
- For DRDO** : The DRDO should focus on its original goal of research and development for defence and refrain from involving itself in productization, production cycles, and product management, tasks that are more suitable for the private sector.
 - At present, DRDO remains engaged in all aspects, from research to development to production, in its projects.

Source: **IE**

MODEL-BASED ALGORITHM LENDING

In News

The Reserve Bank of India is closely examining the risks that can emerge from **model-based algorithm lending**, which led to the surge in unsecured loans,

About Model-based algorithm lending

- **Algorithmic models are** powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning
- It has not only reduced operational costs but has also expanded the outreach of financial services providers.
- It often operates as **'black boxes'**, making it challenging to decipher the rationale behind their decisions.
- Such model-based lending could lead to a **potential crisis**.
- Therefore Management, boards of directors, and audit committees should ensure robustness in algorithms and gauge the possible risks these models could create.
- **The Reserve Bank's supervisory systems** have been recalibrated to attune them to the dynamics of the financial sector in a forward-looking approach so as to smell possible distress early.

Source: **LM**

MPLADS E-SAKSHI MOBILE APPLICATION

In Context

- The government has launched the **Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) e-SAKSHI Mobile Application** for revised **fund flow procedure** under MPLAD Scheme.

About

- The mobile app would offer **convenience and accessibility**, allowing MPs to propose, track, and oversee the projects at their fingertips.
- This real-time access enhances **decision-making processes**, enabling swift responses to emerging needs or issues.
- The application will **streamline the communication** between MPs and relevant authorities, facilitating a more efficient exchange of information.

About MPLAD Scheme

- The MPLADS is a Plan Scheme fully funded by the Government of India.
- The annual MPLADS fund entitlement **per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crore**.
- MPs are to recommend every year, works costing at least **15 percent** of the MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by **Scheduled Caste** population and **7.5 percent** for areas inhabited by **Scheduled Tribes population**.
- Lok Sabha Members can recommend works within their Constituencies and Elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works within the State of Election.
- **Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha** can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- All works to meet locally felt infrastructure and development needs, with an emphasis on creation of durable assets in the constituency are permissible under MPLADS as prescribed in the scheme guidelines.

Source: **PIB**

NATIONAL ESSENTIAL DIAGNOSTICS LIST

Context:

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) started revising the current National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL) for the first time.

About the National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL):

- **Background:** In 2018, the **WHO** had recommended the development and implementation of **an NEDL to facilitate the availability of in-vitro diagnostics** across the various tiers of the healthcare pyramid, in facilities **with or without an onsite laboratory**.
- **India's first NEDL** was released **in 2019 by ICMR**, to make the availability of diagnostics an essential component of the healthcare system.
- It lists the **essential and most basic tests** that should be available at various levels of **healthcare facilities** at the village level, in sub-health centres, health and wellness centres, and primary health centres.

- It contains the **minimum diagnostic tests** that should be available at healthcare facilities;

Criteria for proposing additional tests:

- **Essentiality of the test:** Essential diagnostic tests are those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population and should be selected on the basis of:
 - ♦ Disease prevalence and public health relevance;
 - ♦ Evidence of efficacy and accuracy, and;
 - ♦ Cost effectiveness.
- **Disease burden:** The test should focus on conditions with a high disease burden or having significant public health relevance.
 - ♦ There should be a **clear impact on disease diagnosis and management** by the introduction of diagnostic tests.
- **Alignment with Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) 2022:** The proposed test should have documented utility and necessity at the level for which it is suggested.
 - ♦ The proposed addition should be in alignment with the availability of equipment, infrastructure and manpower, as per IPHS 2022.

About ICMR:

- It is the **apex body** in India for formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research
- It conducts, coordinates and implements medical research for the benefit of the Society.
- It translates medical innovations into products/processes and introduces them into the public health system.

Source: **TH**

PUNGANUR COWS

Context

- PM Modi fed Punganur cows on Makar Sankranti.

About Punganur cows

- **Native species:** The Punganur is an **indigenous breed** native to the Punganur, taluka of Chittoor district in the Rayalaseema region of southern **Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Body:** They are a unique dwarf breed, considered the shortest humped cattle in the world.

- **Color:** Punganur cows can be white or gray, or of shades of light or dark brown.
- **Horns:** They have small, crescent-shaped horns of 10-15 cm length, which often curve backward and forward in male cattle and lateral and forward in female cattle of the breed. Females have slightly longer horns than the stumpier ones in males.
- According to the **20th Livestock Census** conducted in 2019, the total number of Punganur cows were **13,275**.

Source: **IE**

KACHCHHI KHAREK

In News

Kachchhi Kharek has been granted a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag** by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDT) of India.

About

- Kachchhi Kharek is an indigenous variety of dates from Kutch, Gujarat.
- Kachchhi Kharek is the second fruit from Gujarat to receive a GI tag, following Gir Kesar mango in 2011.

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- It is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

Source: **TH**

BEST FIFA FOOTBALL AWARDS 2023

News

- Recently, The Best FIFA Football Awards 2023 was announced in London.

About

- Argentina captain Lionel Messi has been crowned The Best FIFA Men's Player 2023, retaining the title he won in 2022.
- Spanish midfielder Aitana Bonmati has been crowned The Best FIFA Women's Player 2023.

The Best FIFA Football Awards

- This Award is presented annually by the sport's governing body, FIFA.

- The award is aimed at reviving the FIFA World Player Gala that was presented between 1991–2009.
- The FIFA World Player Gala was superseded first by the FIFA Ballon d’Or during 2010-15, and since 2016 by The Best FIFA Football Awards.

FIFA

- Founded in 1904, FIFA or the Federation Internationale de Football Association is the highest governing body of football in the world.
- It is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland.
- FIFA is a member of the International Football Association Board, which is responsible for setting the rules of football.

Source: *TH*

