

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## NATIONAL LANDSLIDE FORECASTING CENTRE (NLFC)

### In News

- The Union Minister of Coal and Mines inaugurated the **National Landslide Forecasting Centre** in Kolkata.

### More about the News

- The NLFC is a pioneering initiative aimed at **landslide hazard mitigation** in India and will provide early information to local administration and communities, update landslide inventories, and integrate real-time rainfall and slope instability data for enhanced forecasting accuracy.
- He also launched the **Bhusanket Web Portal and Bhooskhalan Mobile App** that will facilitate dissemination of relevant information on landslide hazards, initiating short-range and medium-range landslide forecasting.

### What are Landslides?

- Landslides are a geological phenomenon that involves the sudden and rapid movement of a mass of rock, soil, or debris down a slope under the influence of gravity.
- A variety of causes act as a trigger for a landslide. Some of the major causes of landslide can be seen under the following two heads:
  - ♦ **Natural Causes:** Heavy Rainfall, intense ground shaking due to earthquakes, Volcanic Eruptions and erosions.
  - ♦ **Anthropogenic Causes:** Deforestation, Encroachment in Vulnerable Terrains, poorly planned excavation activities, and overgrazing by cattle.
- Based on the type of movement involved, there are mainly 4 types of landslides:
  - ♦ **Falls:** They refer to the type of landslide that involves the collapse of material from a cliff or steep slope, which then falls down the slope and collects near the base.
  - ♦ **Topples:** Under this type of landslide, the falling mass undergoes forward rotation and movement around an axis or point at or near the base.
  - ♦ **Slides:** Under this type of landslide, there is a distinct zone of weakness that separates the moving material from a more stable underlying material.

### Impacts of Landslides

- Loss of human and animal lives.
- Damage to infrastructure and properties such as homes, roads, etc.
- They can bury or wash away agricultural land, thus affecting agriculture.
- The aftermath of landslides may mean the displacement of local communities.
- Landslides, often, block transportation routes such as roads. This, then, has its own repercussions.

### Landslide Prone Areas in India

- ISRO has recently released the Landslide Atlas of India. As per this atlas, some of the prominent statistics regarding landslides in India are as follows:
  - India is among the top five landslide-prone countries in the world.
  - Excluding snow-covered areas, around 12.6 percent of India's geographical land area is prone to landslides.
  - A rough break-up of reported landslides in India is as follows:
    - ♦ About 66.5 percent from the North-Western Himalayas
    - ♦ About 18.8 percent from the North-Eastern Himalayas
    - ♦ About 14.7 percent from the Western Ghats.
  - As per the Landslide Atlas of India, major landslide prone areas in India are as follows:
    - ♦ The Northeastern Region (comprises about 50 percent of the total landslide prone areas in India)
    - ♦ Areas of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir lying along the Himalayas.
    - ♦ Areas of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu lying along the Western Ghats.
    - ♦ The Araku region in Andhra Pradesh along the Eastern Ghats.

### Initiatives Taken

- The **Disaster Management Act, of 2005** provides a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for the management of various disasters including landslides.
- The **National Landslide Risk Management Strategy (2019)** covers all aspects of landslide disaster risk reduction and management, such as hazard mapping, monitoring, and early warning systems.

- The **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** has issued Guidelines on Landslide Hazard Management (2009) that outline the steps that should be taken to reduce the risk of landslides.
- The **National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)** has been providing capacity building and other support to various national and state-level disaster management authorities.
- Efforts have been made towards better prediction of weather. **E.g. Ensemble Prediction System.** This will help predict disasters like landslides.

Source: PIB

## DEMAND FOR SEPARATE “BHIL PRADESH”

### Context

- The members of the **Bhil tribe** have again demanded **a separate ‘Bhil Pradesh’**.

### What is ‘Bhil Pradesh’?

- The Bhil community has been demanding that **49 districts** be carved out of the parts of **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra** to establish Bhil Pradesh.
- Bhil social reformer and spiritual leader **Govind Guru** first raised the demand for a separate state for **tribals back in 1913**.
  - ♦ This was after the **Mangarh massacre**, which took place six years before Jallianwalla Bagh and is sometimes referred to as the “**Adivasi Jallianwala**”.
  - ♦ It saw hundreds of Bhil tribals being killed by British forces on November 17, 1913, in the hills of Mangarh on the Rajasthan-Gujarat border.
- Post-Independence, the demand for Bhil Pradesh was raised repeatedly.

### Bhil Tribe

- The Bhil tribal community mainly resides in **Rajasthan, western Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and northern Maharashtra**.
- Some families have migrated to other states like **Tripura for jobs in tea gardens**.
- In the Bhil tribe, sub-tribes Bhil-Garasia and Dholi Bhil are included.
- It is believed that their name emerged from the **Dravid language word “billu”** means bow and arrow.

### Process to form/rename a state in India

- **Article 3** authorizes the Parliament to:
  - ♦ form a new state by separation of territory from any state or by uniting two or more states or parts of states or by uniting any territory to a part of any state;
  - ♦ increase the area of any state;
  - ♦ diminish the area of any state;
  - ♦ alter the boundaries of any state; and
  - ♦ alter the name of any state.
- However, **Article 3** lays down two conditions in this regard:
  - ♦ a bill contemplating the above changes can be introduced in the Parliament only with the prior recommendation of the President;
  - ♦ and before recommending the bill, the President has to refer the same to the state legislature concerned for expressing its views within a specified period.
- The **President (or Parliament) is not bound** by the views of the state legislature and may either accept or reject them.
- Moreover, the **Indian Constitution (Article 4)** itself declares that laws made for alteration of names of existing states (under Articles 3) are not to be considered as amendments of the Constitution under **Article 368**
  - ♦ Such laws can be passed by a simple majority and by the ordinary legislative process.

### Factors Responsible for Demands for a Separate State

- **Linguistic and Cultural Identity:** Communities often feel that their distinct language, culture, and heritage are not adequately represented or protected within larger states.
- **Regional Disparities:** Economic and developmental disparities between different regions within a state often fuel demands for bifurcation.
- **Political Representation:** Some regions feel that they are not adequately represented in state governments or at the national level due to their minority status within larger states.
  - ♦ The creation of separate states can provide better political representation and empower local leaders to address the specific needs and concerns of their communities.
- **Resource Allocation:** Disputes over the distribution of resources, such as water, land, and revenue, also drive demands for bifurcation.

- **Historical Grievances:** Historical injustices, perceived discrimination, and unresolved grievances from the past fuel demands for state bifurcation.

### Challenges

- **Political Opposition:** Political opposition from various stakeholders, who may have vested interests in maintaining the status quo or have concerns about the impact of bifurcation on their political influence.
- **Administrative Reorganization:** It requires the creation of new administrative units, redistribution of resources, and delineation of boundaries, which lead to administrative inefficiencies and confusion.
- **Resource Allocation:** Dividing a state often raises issues related to the allocation of resources such as water, land, and financial resources.
  - ♦ Disputes over the distribution of resources can arise between the newly formed states, leading to prolonged negotiations and conflicts.
- **Social Integration:** Bifurcation affects social cohesion and integration, particularly in regions with diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities.

### Way Ahead

- The demand for new states or the reorganization of existing ones continues to persist in India, driven by factors such as regional identity, economic disparities, and governance issues.
- Any future reorganizations will likely involve careful deliberation and negotiation to balance competing interests and maintain the unity and integrity of the nation.

Source: IE

## IMMUNITY TO GOVERNORS UNDER ARTICLE 361

### Context

- The Supreme Court agreed to examine the **contours of Article 361** of the Constitution which grants “blanket immunity” to governors from any kind of criminal prosecution.

### Background

- A woman staff member of the West Bengal Raj Bhawan, has accused Governor CV Ananda Bose of sexual harassment.
- The plea challenges the immunity granted to the governor of a state under **Article 361 of the**

**Indian Constitution** and seeks several directions and investigations.

### What is Article 361?

- The Governors of state **receive immunity from legal proceedings** over the duration of their term in office under Article 361 of the Constitution.
- The aim of the Article is to ensure that **they are not answerable to any court** for the exercise and performance of their official powers and duties, nor for any acts done in the course of these duties.
  - ♦ **Criminal proceedings:** No criminal cases can be initiated or continued against them, and no arrest or imprisonment orders can be issued by any court under **Clause (2) of Article 361**.
  - ♦ **Civil proceedings:** The Article mandates a two-month notice for any civil proceedings related to personal acts.
  - ♦ **Clause (3) of Article 361** restricts any arrest or imprisonment orders during their term.
- The article is an exception to **Article 14 (right to equality)** of the Constitution and provides that the president or the governor is not answerable to any court for the exercise of the powers and duties of his office.

### Immunity power of the Governor

- **Ceases to be in office:** The police can act only after the Governor ceases to be in office, which is when either the Governor resigns or no longer enjoys the confidence of the President.”
- **Rameshwar Prasad v Union of India:** In the landmark 2006 ruling in Rameshwar Prasad v Union of India, that outlined the immunity enjoyed by the Governor “even on allegation of personal malafides,” the Supreme Court held that “the position in law, is that the Governor enjoys complete immunity.”

### What is the role of a governor in India?

- Governors in India have the responsibility of **upholding and enforcing the Constitution and laws**.
- According to **Articles 153 and 154** of the Constitution, governors ensure the smooth functioning of state governments within the constitutional framework.

### Concluding Remarks

- Governors in India **possess discretionary constitutional powers**, which enable them to make critical decisions in the executive

realm, particularly during times of political or administrative uncertainty.

- Although these powers are constitutionally granted, they are **subject to judicial review** to ensure they are exercised within legal and proper bounds.

Source: TH

## INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR AUDIT OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

### Context

- Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India Girish Chandra Murmu inaugurated the International Centre for Audit of Local Governance (iCAL) in Rajkot.

### About

- The institute, **a first in the country** as per the CAG office, will function out of the office of the Accountant General (account & entitlement and Audit-1) in Rajkot and aims to set global standards for auditing local governance bodies.

### International Centre for Audit of Local Governance (iCAL)

- iCAL will be a **collaborative platform for policymakers, administrators and auditors** linked with local governments.
- It will enhance the local government auditors' independence to ensure **improved financial performance assessment, service delivery, and data reporting**.
- It will also serve as a **center of excellence** for capacity building of local government auditors.

### Local governments in India

- India has a **three-tier governance structure** comprising the Union or Central government, state governments, and local bodies at urban and rural levels.
- **Panchayati Raj Institutes (PRIs)** like village panchayats, taluka (block) panchayats and district panchayats have been set up for self-governance in rural areas, with **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** such as municipal corporations and municipalities in urban areas.

### How are local bodies audited in India?

- While keeping accounts is the responsibility of the concerned local body, many state governments have an **Examiner of Local Fund Accounts (ELFA)** or **Director of Local Fund Accounts (DLFA)** for auditing their accounts.

- The CAG conducts audits of all funds (including the state and Central governments).

- ♦ It also exercises control and supervision over the proper maintenance of accounts and auditing for all three levels of PRIs/ULBs.

### What is the need for iCAL ?

- **A 2022 report from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** found, "Most municipalities only prepare budgets and review actuals against budget plans but do not use their audited financial statements for balance sheet and cash flow management, resulting in significant inefficiencies."
- Also around **40 countries** have their respective **supreme audit institutions (SAIs)** conducting audits of local bodies and there is a need to promote global good practices.
- There must be **institutionalized collaboration among SAIs and with international audit organizations** to share best practices, exchange knowledge and experiences of global auditors."
  - ♦ A collaborative platform could aid the improvement of local government audit practices.

### Conclusion

- To effectively navigate the complexities of auditing local governments, we need to **build the capacity of the auditors** as well as the local government employees to enhance their understanding of financial management practices and internal controls.
- **Open communication channels with local government officials** can facilitate the audit process, improve data accessibility, and foster cooperation in addressing audit findings.

Source: IE

## ELEVATING ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING IN INDIA

### Context

- Recently, the NITI Aayog, in a report, recommended specific policy measures like tariff rationalisation and skilling for electronics manufacturing in India.

### Electronics Manufacturing in India: Current Landscape

- India's electronics industry has been on a remarkable trajectory, fueled by technological advancements, rising consumer demand, and strategic policy initiatives.

- India's electronics production has achieved an impressive milestone, reaching **approximately \$115 billion in FY24**—a growth of **nearly four times over the past decade**.
  - ♦ It has been fueled by various **sub-sectors**, including mobile phones, telecom, auto electronics, and industrial electronics.
- Notably, India has significantly reduced its reliance on smartphone imports, with 99% of mobile phones now being manufactured domestically.
- However, despite these strides, **India's share in the global electronics market** remains modest, accounting for only 4%.

### Employment and Exports

- Achieving the \$500 billion goal would create employment opportunities for approximately 6 million people.
- In a business-as-usual scenario, electronics manufacturing is projected to grow to \$278 billion by 2029-30, including \$253 billion from finished goods and \$25 billion from components manufacturing.
- Employment generation is expected to reach around 3.4 million, with exports reaching \$111 billion.

### Electronics as Capital Goods

- Capital goods like machinery, tools, and equipment that drive production are essential for modern manufacturing.
  - ♦ For electronic manufacturing, capital goods are **precision machines, cutting-edge robotics, and automated assembly lines**.
- They empower us to produce high-quality electronics efficiently and at scale.

### Importance of Global Value Chains (GVCs)

- GVCs play a crucial role in modern manufacturing. They involve international collaboration across design, production, marketing, and distribution.
- It accounts for **70% of international trade**. India urgently needs to enhance its participation in these chains, especially in areas like semiconductors, automobiles, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.
- Globally, the electronics market, **currently valued at \$4.5 trillion**, is anticipated to **soar to \$6.1 trillion by 2030**.

### India's Role in the Global Electronics Landscape

- While India has made significant progress, there's room for growth. It needs to move beyond

assembly and focus on design and component manufacturing.

- Initiatives like **Make in India and Digital India** have stimulated domestic manufacturing and attracted foreign investments. However, sustained efforts are necessary.

### Strategic Advantage and Demand Drivers

- India's large and growing middle-class population, rising disposable incomes, and consumer appetite for electronic gadgets create a favourable market environment.
- The advent of technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, and artificial intelligence further propels demand for electronic devices.

### Government Initiatives and Support

- **National Policy on Electronics (NPE) 2019:** It aims to position India as a global hub for **Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM)**. It encourages capabilities in core components, including chipsets. To achieve this vision, three key schemes were notified:
  - ♦ **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:** Offers incentives for large-scale electronics manufacturing, including mobile phones and specified components.
  - ♦ **Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS):** Focused on strengthening the component ecosystem.
  - ♦ **Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme (EMC 2.0):** Aims to foster electronics manufacturing clusters across the country.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** India allows 100% FDI under the automatic route for electronics manufacturing. In defence electronics, FDI up to 49% is allowed automatically, and beyond 49% requires government approval.

### Policy Interventions

- **NITI Aayog**—the central government's think tank—has set an ambitious target of \$500 billion in domestic electronics manufacturing by 2030. To achieve this, specific policy measures are essential:
- **Promoting Components and Capital Goods Manufacturing:** Strengthening the ecosystem for producing components and capital goods is critical.
- **Incentivising Research:** Encouraging R&D in electronics will drive innovation and competitiveness.

- **Tariff Rationalisation:** Streamlining tariffs can boost local manufacturing.
- **Skilling Initiatives:** Developing a skilled workforce is vital for sustained growth.
- **Facilitating Technology Transfers:** Collaborations with global players can accelerate knowledge transfer.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Robust infrastructure supports efficient manufacturing.

### Challenges and the Road Ahead

- **Localization and Domestic Value Addition:** India must reduce dependency on imports and enhance domestic manufacturing capabilities. Localising high-tech components is crucial.
  - ♦ Strengthening design capabilities through research and development (R&D) investments is essential.
- **Skilling and Talent Development:** India's young and skilled workforce provides a competitive edge. Fostering skill development ensures efficient and cost-effective manufacturing operations.
- **Global Competitiveness:** Strategic partnerships with global technology leaders and innovation-driven policies are vital.
  - ♦ By 2030, India should aspire to achieve \$500 billion in electronics manufacturing, creating 6 million jobs.

### Bridging the Gap

- **Domestic Demand:** There's an urgent need to **close the gap between the demand and supply of capital goods** within our own borders. By bolstering manufacturing infrastructure, there is a need to reduce dependency on imports and ensure a steady supply of high-quality equipment for domestic consumption.
- **Export Competitiveness:** Beyond meeting domestic needs, India can and should become a global powerhouse in the capital goods sector, particularly in electronics manufacturing.
  - ♦ To achieve this, it must focus on **innovation, research, and development**. Policies that encourage creativity and protect intellectual property rights are crucial.

### Way Forward

- There's a need for a **dedicated centre** — one with a substantive corpus of at least 1,000 crore— focused on innovation in capital goods. Perhaps such a centre could find its home at the **Central Manufacturing Technology Institute (CMTI)**.
- By nurturing talent, fostering collaboration, and investing in R&D, India can elevate India's capital goods industry to new heights.

Source: TH

## NEWS IN SHORT

### FOREIGNERS TRIBUNALS

#### Context

- The Assam government asked the Border wing of the State's police not to forward cases of non-Muslims who entered India illegally before 2014 to the Foreigners Tribunals (FTs).

#### About

- This was in keeping with the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019** that provides a citizenship application window for non-Muslims — Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jains, and Buddhists — who allegedly fled persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

#### Foreigners Tribunals (FTs)

- The FTs are **quasi-judicial bodies** formed through the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order of 1964 under **Section 3** of the **Foreigners' Act of 1946**, to let local authorities in a State refer a person suspected to be a foreigner to tribunals.
- An FT has the **powers of a civil court** in certain matters such as summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him or her on oath and requiring the production of any document.

Source: TH

### KHELO INDIA RISING TALENT IDENTIFICATION (KIRTI) PROGRAM

#### Context

- Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) program is set to get a fresh boost as the Paris Olympics draws near.

#### About KIRTI

- KIRTI (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification) aims to develop an **integrated talent identification architecture based on modern ICT tools** and global best practices. It seeks to streamline the process of grassroots talent identification on a single platform.
- The program is set to revolutionize the landscape of Indian sports by focusing on two primary objectives:
  - ♦ Identifying sports talent from across the nation,

- ♦ Using sports to combat drug addiction and excessive gadget use among school **children aged 9 to 18**.
- The programme aligns with the nation's aspiration to become a **top 10 sports nation by 2036** and among the **top five by 2047**.

Source: PIB

## LA NINA DELAYED: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THE MONSOON?

### Context

- Multiple global weather models have forecasted a delayed emergence of La Nina — the periodic cooling of ocean surface temperature in the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

### About the La Nina

- It is **one of the three phases of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)**.
- During La Nina, ocean surface temperatures in the **equatorial Pacific become cooler than usual**. It affects global atmospheric circulation and, consequently, influences weather patterns worldwide.
- It tends to favour **increased rainfall** during the monsoon season in **India**, it is not absolutely essential for a successful monsoon season.

### ENSO

- It is a climate phenomenon that involves changes in sea temperatures along the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, coupled with fluctuations in the overlying atmosphere.

### Phases: Warm, Cool, and Neutral

- **El Nino:** Characterised by warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific.
  - ♦ During El Nino years, the Indian monsoon tends to be adversely affected, resulting in less rainfall than average.
- **La Nina:** Characterised by cooler-than-normal sea surface temperatures in the western region.
- **Neutral:** When conditions are neither strong El Nino or La Nina.
- These phases occur irregularly in cycles of 2 to 7 years.

Source: IE

## UNION PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (UPSC)

### Context

- Recently, the chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), has resigned, citing 'personal reasons' for stepping down from his position.

### About the Public Service Commissions in India

- According to the **Article-315** of the Constitution, there shall be a **Public Service Commission for the Union and for each State**.
- **Joint State Public Service Commission:** Parliament may by law provide for the appointment of a Joint State Public Service Commission to serve the needs of those States.
- **Two or more States** may agree that there shall be one Public Service Commission for that group of States, and if a resolution to that effect is passed by the House or, where there are two Houses, by each House of the Legislature of each of those States.
- The **Public Service Commission for the Union**, if requested to do so by the Governor of a State, may, with the approval of the President, agree to serve all or any of the needs of the State.

### Appointment and Term of Office (Article-316)

- The Chairman and other members of a Public Service Commission shall be appointed, in the case of the **Union Commission or a Joint Commission, by the President**, and in the case of a **State Commission, by the Governor of the State**.
- A member shall hold office for a **term of six years** from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains, in the case of the **Union Commission**, the age of **sixty-five years**, and in the case of a **State Commission or a Joint Commission**, the age of **sixty-two years**, whichever is earlier.
- A person who holds office as a member of a Public Service Commission shall, on the expiration of his term of office, **be ineligible for reappointment to that office**.

### Removal and Suspension (Article-317)

- The Chairman or any other member of a Public Service Commission shall **only** be removed from his office **by order of the President** on the



**ground of misbehaviour after the Supreme Court**, on inquiry held in accordance with the procedure prescribed in that behalf under **Article 145**.

- The President may **by order** remove from office the Chairman or any other member of a Public Service Commission if the Chairman or such other member, as the case may be:
  - is adjudged an insolvent; or
  - engages during his term of office in any paid employment outside the duties of his office; or
  - is, in the opinion of the President, unfit to continue in office by reason of infirmity of mind or body.
- Members of the UPSC can submit their resignation directly to the President of India at any time.

### Functions of PSCs (Article 320)

- Conduct examinations for appointment to the services of the Union.
  - Each state has its own SPSC, which performs similar functions but at the state level.
- PSCs advise the government on matters related to personnel management, promotions, and disciplinary actions.
- Direct recruitment by selection through interviews.
- Appointment of officers on promotion / deputation / absorption.
- Framing and amendment of Recruitment Rules for various services and posts under the Government.
- Disciplinary cases relating to different Civil Services.

Source: TH

## NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME: AN AGENDA FOR REFORM REPORT

### Context

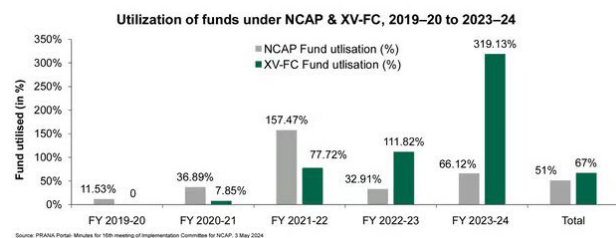
- The **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)** report titled “**National Clean Air Programme: An Agenda for Reform**” was published.
  - Most polluted cities Delhi, Noida are among **cities with less than 40% National Clean Air Programme fund utilisation**.

### Utilization of Fund

- 64 percent of the funds** under NCAP and the 15th Finance Commission have **been spent on road dust mitigation**.
  - In contrast, **significantly less funding has been allocated to control emissions from industries, vehicles, and biomass**

**burning**—key combustion sources contributing to air pollution.

- Some of the most polluted cities reported the highest unutilised NCAP funds.**
  - Anantapur (today Ananthapuramu), Delhi, Angul, Kolhapur, Gulbarga (Kalaburagi) and Noida had utilised less than 40 per cent of the funds.
- Rishikesh, Ujjain, Guwahati and Korba** are among cities to have utilised over 70 per cent of the funds.



- National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):** Launched in **2019**, NCAP is a comprehensive initiative with the goal of reducing air pollution in identified cities and regions across India.
  - The program focuses on improving air quality monitoring, implementing stricter emission standards, and promoting public awareness.

Source: DTE

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

### Context

- The Prime Minister congratulated **Ursula von der Leyen** on being re-elected as the **President of the European Commission**.

### About

- The European Commission **was established in 1958** as the **executive body** of the European Union.
- Members:** A team or ‘College’ of Commissioners, 1 from each EU country
- Its main roles include:
  - proposing new laws and policies
  - monitoring their implementation
  - managing the EU budget
- The Commission also ensures that EU policies and laws are correctly applied across Member States, negotiates international agreements on behalf of the EU, and allocates funding.

### European Union

- The European Union (EU) is a political and economic alliance of **27 countries**.

- **Background:** The EU traces its roots to the European Coal and Steel Community, which was founded in **1950** and had just **six members: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.**
  - ♦ It became the **European Economic Community in 1957** under the Treaty of Rome and subsequently was renamed the European Community (EC).
  - ♦ **European Union (EU)**, Organization of European countries, formed in **1993** to oversee their economic and political integration.
  - ♦ It was created by the **Maastricht Treaty** and ratified by all members of the European Community (EC), out of which the EU developed.
- It promotes democratic values in its member nations and is one of the world's most powerful trade blocs.
- **Nineteen of the countries share the euro** as their official currency.
- ♦ Self Help Groups (SHGs) or Joint Liability Groups (JLG)s of farmers including sharecroppers etc.
- **How does it Work?**
  - ♦ Farmers engaged in Agriculture and other allied activities can acquire Kisan Credit Card loans up to **Rs 3 lakh at a benchmark rate of 9%.**
  - ♦ However, the Centre provides **2% interest subvention** on the benchmark rate, bringing down the effective rate of interest to **7 percent.**
  - ♦ An additional **3% concession** for prompt and timely repayment further reduces it to 4% per year.

Source: IE

## URANIUM CONTAMINATION

### In Context

- A new study by scientists from the **Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)** has concluded that concentration of uranium, a radioactive substance, up to 60 micrograms per litre (millionth of a gram per litre or  $\mu\text{g/l}$ ) in drinking water was entirely safe
- ♦ However, in 2021, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) had revised the acceptable level of uranium concentration in drinking water from 60  $\mu\text{g/l}$  to 30  $\mu\text{g/l}$ .

Source: TH

## MODIFIED INTEREST SUBVENTION SCHEME (MISS)

### Context

- The Union Government plans to increase the **upper limit of the short-term crop loans** under the **Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS)** from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 5 lakh.

### About MISS

- The interest subvention scheme for farmers aims at **providing short term credit to farmers at subsidised interest rate.**
- The policy came into force with effect from Kharif **2006-07**. The scheme is being implemented for the year **2022-23 to 2024-25.**
- **The interest subvention will be given to** Public Sector Banks (PSBs), Private Sector Banks, Small Finance Banks, Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) on use of own funds and to NABARD for refinance to RRBs and Cooperative Banks.
- The scheme is being **implemented by NABARD and RBI.**
- **Eligibility:** Farmers, individuals/ Joint borrowers who are owner cultivator;
  - ♦ Tenant farmers, oral lessees & sharecroppers

### About

- Uranium (U) is a radioactive chemical element of the actinide series of the periodic table, atomic number 92.
- Uranium is a dense, hard metallic element that is silvery white in colour. It is ductile, malleable, and capable of taking a high polish.
- India produces about **2 percent of the world's uranium.** India has no significant reserves of Uranium. All needs are met through imports. **India imports thousands of tonnes of uranium from Russia, Kazakhstan, France.**
- **Punjab is the worst-affected state** in terms of the percentage of wells found to have uranium concentration of more than 30 ppb.
- Haryana is the **second state in terms of uranium prevalence in groundwater.**
- Uranium contaminates water due to geogenic processes, overexploitation of groundwater and its decline, nitrate pollution etc.
- Uranium creates a lot of adverse impacts on health like cancer, Nephritis etc.

Source: TH

## IVORY COAST JOINED THE UNITED NATIONS WATER CONVENTION

### Context

- **Ivory Coast** joined the **United Nations Water Convention**, becoming the 10th African nation to do so.

### About

- **Ivory Coast shares eight transboundary river basins** (Black Volta, Bia, Tanoe, Comoe, Niger, Sassandra, Cavally et Nuon) with six of its neighbours, which include **Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone**.
- Among these, the **Niger basin**, which is the **continent's third-longest river** and **traverses nine countries** (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria), is **one of Africa's most vulnerable regions to climate change**.



### United Nations Water Convention

- It is a **1992 Convention** on the **Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes**, known as the 1992 UN Water Convention.
- It has **53 member countries**.
- The Convention obliges Riparian Parties to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, use transboundary waters in a reasonable and equitable way and ensure their sustainable management.

Source: DTE

