



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Time: 45 min

Date: 30-09-2023

India's Policy towards Afghanistan

Syllabus :GS 2/International Relations

In News

Recently, The Afghanistan Embassy to India informed that it was being forced to close down, given the lack of resources with the Taliban regime .

Situation in Afghanistan

- Afghanistan has historically been a theatre of great-power politics, from the British colonial period to when the United States (US) launched its 'War on Terror' in the early 2000s.
- The Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in August 2021 changed the strategic dynamics in the region.
- Afghanistan found itself sinking further into destitution due to international isolation and the economic turmoil.
- The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported a **staggering increase in poverty, with 97% of Afghans living below the poverty line**, a stark rise from **47% in 2020**, according to **Amnesty International**
- The **absence of social safety nets** forced desperate families into distressing measures such as child marriages and organ trafficking.
- The Afghan **economy continued to suffer from the freezing of foreign reserves** and the reduction of development assistance.
- The **Taliban regime imposed increasingly** draconian restrictions on women's rights, stifled media freedom, and curtailed freedom of expression.

India's Interest

- India and Afghanistan have a strong relationship based on historical and cultural links.
- India, owing to its strategic location straddling **Pakistan and Iran and other Central Asian Republics (CARs)**, has had a keen perception of the threat of terrorism emanating from the region.

- As a contiguous neighbour and long-standing partner of Afghanistan, and given strong historical and civilisational linkages to the Afghan people, India has direct stakes in ensuring the return of peace and stability to the country.
- When Kabul fell to the Taliban in August 2021, India was compelled to rethink its policy towards its western neighbour.
- Irrespective of the regime in power in Afghanistan, India has always helped stabilise the country and projected itself as an influential actor in the region
- Between 2001 and 2021, India had more than **500 projects spread across Afghanistan's 34 provinces**, covering various critical sectors in development, reconstruction, and capacity-building.

Present Approach

- India's collective approach to Afghanistan has been articulated in Security Council Resolution 2593, which was adopted on August 30, 2021, following the fall of Kabul and the subsequent Taliban takeover.
- India made a statement that Afghanistan's land should not be utilized for the purposes of harboring, instructing, organizing, or financing terrorist operations.
- India's permanent representative to the United Nations has reiterated the country's steadfast **dedication to peace, stability and humanitarian support for Afghanistan**.
- India has **delivered assistance to Afghanistan** in the form of food grains, medicines, vaccines, disaster relief aid, winter clothing and materials for education.
- India has **continued scholarships to Afghan students**. It has also partnered with the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime in its humanitarian efforts.
- India has been participating in regional and international peace initiatives like the **Moscow Format consultations** to articulate its policy approach towards Afghanistan, work towards building a global and regional consensus on how best to deal with the situation, and bolster its leadership credentials as an important player in Afghanistan.

Future Prospects

- India has played a significant role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan.
- Peace and stability in Afghanistan are critical imperatives that need to collectively strive for.
 - India will continue to play its constructive role in the pursuit of this objective.
- The interests of the Afghan people will always continue to be at the core of all efforts.

- It is believed that the pursuit of peace and stability in Afghanistan is an urgent and shared imperative that demands collective dedication
- A broad-based, inclusive, and representative formation is necessary for long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Source: [TH](#)

Age of Consent under POCSO Act

Syllabus: GS2/Social Issues

Context :

- The [22nd Law Commission](#), headed by Justice (Retired) Ritu Raj Awasthi, submitted its **Report** on '**Age of Consent under the [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012](#)**' submitted to the Ministry of Law & Justice.

Background

- The Law Commission received a reference from the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka in November, 2022, asking the Commission to rethink on the age criteria for consent, taking into consideration the rising number of cases relating to minor girls above the age of 16 years falling in love, eloping and having sexual intercourse with the boy, thereby attracting the provisions of the "POCSO Act and/or the Indian Penal Code, 1860.
- The Commission is also in receipt of a reference from the Hon'ble High Court of Madhya Pradesh (Gwalior Bench) in April, 2023.

Key Highlights of the recent report

- **Tacit approval:** It has called for certain **amendments to the POCSO Act** '*to remedy the situation in cases wherein there is tacit approval in fact though not consent in law on part of the child aged between 16 to 18 years*'.
- **Guided Judicial Discretion:** The Law Panel advises introduction of "guided judicial discretion" while sentencing in cases that involve the tacit approval of children in the 16 to 18 years age bracket.
 - Law Commission seems **it is not advisable to tinker with the existing age of consent** under the POCSO Act after a careful review of **existing child protection laws**, various judgements and considering the maladies of child abuse, child trafficking and child prostitution that plague our society.
- **Role of Special Court:** Law Commission recommended that amendments be made to **Sections 4 (punishment for penetrative sexual assault)** and **Section 8**

(sexual assault) of the POCSO Act, allowing the **Special Court** to award **lesser sentence** in cases where the child is of the age 16 or above, subject to a checklist.

- **Juvenile Justice Act:** The Law Commission suggested making changes in **Section 18 of the Juvenile Justice Act** dealing with '**orders regarding children found to be in conflict with law**' and corresponding changes in **Sections 375 and 376 of IPC**.

Other recommendations

- **Reporting crime in real time:** Law Commission recommended **amending Section 154 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973** in order to roll out the registration of **e-FIRs** in a phased manner, beginning with offences that attract a jail term of up to three years.

Criticism against the recommendations:

- Reducing the age of consent to 16 years will lead to **many unintended consequences** of much severe nature thereby reducing the POCSO Act to a 'paper law'.
- **Effectiveness of Act:** POCSO Act is an important tool to combat child trafficking and child prostitution and altering the definition of 'child' under the Act would hamper its effectiveness.
- **Exploitation of the girl child:** The Report argues that reducing the age of consent could lead to rise in child marriages and further. Any decrease in the age of consent would **negatively impact the age-old fight against child marriage** by providing parents an opportunity to marry off minor girls.
 - **The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA)** is a weak law as it is **silent on age of consent and sexual relations with a minor**, with the POCSO Act filling this void.
- **Mental trauma and harassment** children face if a consensual act falls under the ambit of the POCSO Act, and it stresses on the possible effect on the mental and physical growth of children facing exploitation, trafficking, prostitution etc.
- **Socio-Economic Factor:** Lowering the age of consent and allowing children to enter into such relationships will trap children in the **vicious cycle of multi-dimensional and multi-generational poverty**.
- **Loopholes in the legal system:** Courts have failed to analyse why victims become uncooperative or even encouraged victims to marry their abusers.
- All of the above concerns are **further compounded by the increased vulnerability and danger** that children face in a **digital world**.

Legal Definition of Child:

- The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (Article 1)**: 'A child means every human being below the **age of 18 years** unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier'.
- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2000**: 'Juvenile' or 'Child' means a person who has not completed the 18th year of age.

Possible Solutions recommended by the Law Commission:

1. **A blanket reduction of the age of consent** to 16 years as was the situation prior to enactment of the POCSO Act;
2. **Introduction of a limited exception** in case of consensual sexual act involving a child above the age of 16 years;
3. **Introduction of judicial discretion** in sentencing in cases of consensual romantic relationship between adolescents or with an adolescent between the age of 16 to 18 years.
 - On the other hand, the Parliament is already considering increasing the age of marriage for girls to 21 years, at par with boys, and thus any decrease in the age of consent would be against the tide of rational change.

Conclusion:

- Carving out a limited judicial discretion at the stage of sentencing 'seems to strike a delicate balance to address the issue at hand and at the same time protecting children from sexual exploitation', and 'is a more reasonable approach'.

[Source: PIB](#)

Classification of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)

Syllabus: GS3/Economy

Context:

- Renewable Energy Company IREDA gets upgraded from 'Schedule B' to 'Schedule A' Central Public Sector Enterprise.

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA):

- It is a **Public Limited Government Company established as a Non-Banking Financial Institution in 1987**, under the administrative control of the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**.
 - It has been notified as a 'Public Financial Institution' under **section 4 'A' of the Companies Act, 1956** and registered as **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) with Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.
- It engaged in promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for

setting up projects relating to new and renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency/conservation.

- **Motto of IREDA: 'Energy for Ever'**

About

- The upgradation has been effected through an Office Memorandum issued by Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Finance, which has subsequently been **notified by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy**.

Significance:

- The upgradation to the 'Schedule A' category opens the door for its upgradation from '**Mini Ratna (Category-I)**' to '**Navratna**' status.
- It will grant **more financial autonomy to IREDA**, allowing the organisation to make more **strategic decisions** to further its commitment to accelerating the adoption of renewable energy solutions across the country.

Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) Classification:

There are different systems of classification for CPSEs. Important among these are:

1. Cognate group-wise classification;
2. Grouping of CPSEs;
3. Classification of **CPSEs into Navratna, Miniratna I, Miniratna II, etc.** for the purpose of delegation of powers.

Classification (A, B, C & D):

- It was introduced in the year **1965**, was essentially aimed at providing relativity between the compensation structures of Board level executives of CPSEs.
- The categorization of **CPSEs into 4 Schedules, namely A, B, C & D on the basis of their importance to economy and complexities of problems.**
- The **Department of Public Enterprises** has laid down certain criteria for categorization and revision (up gradation) of the schedule of CPSEs.

The Parameters:

- **Quantitative factors:** Investment (paid up capital + long term loans), capital employed (net block+net working capital), net sales, profit, number of employees, number of units, etc.
- **Qualitative factors:** National importance, complexities of problems, level of technology, prospects for expansion and diversification of activities and competition from other sectors.
- In addition, other factors like image of the CPSE (in terms of its share price, MOU ratings, classification as Navratna/Miniratna, ISO 9000/IS 14000 certification), productivity of the PSE (in terms of capacity utilisation) and value added per employee are also taken into account.

Classification as Navratna, Miniratna and Other Profit making companies:

- In order to **delegate higher financial and operational powers to CPSEs** that have comparative advantages and the potential to become global players, 9 CPSEs were identified in 1997 and were classified as Navratna.
 - Subsequently three more in 2007 and four more in 2008 were added to this list, bringing up the total of Navratna CPSEs to 16.
- The **criteria for classifying a CPSE as Navratna** are:
 1. The CPSE should be a Miniratna I and Schedule A company;
 2. The CPSE should have obtained 'excellent' or 'very good' rating in three of the last five MOUs; and
 3. The CPSE should have obtained a composite score of 60 or more, calculated with reference to seven specified parameters / ratios.
- Similarly, enterprises that have been **making profits continuously during the preceding three years** and fulfilling a few other conditions like positive net worth, non-dependence on budgetary support, not defaulting in repayments of loans and interest on loans etc. **are categorised as Miniratna**.
 - In case the pre-tax profit is Rs. 30 crore or more in any one of the three years, the **CPSE is classified as Miniratna I**, otherwise it is Miniratna II.

Other Classification Systems:

- The **Public Enterprises Survey of CPSEs** brought out **every year by the Department of Public Enterprises**, classifies and ranks CPSEs under various heads - Ministry and Department wise, **in terms of profit and loss** making categories, relative performance during the year, sales wise, geographical/region wise, etc.

[Source: PIB](#)

Delhi 15-point winter action plan to fight air pollution

Syllabus: GS3/Conservation of Environment

News:

The Chief Minister of Delhi recently announced a **15-point action plan to deal with air pollution** during winter, when the city struggles with smog, poor visibility, and a drop in air quality mainly due to meteorological factors and stubble burning.

Do you know ?

- The CM has been announcing Winter Action Plans before the onset of winter every year, at least since 2019.

Why does Delhi turn into a 'gas chamber' each year?

1. **Stubble burning:** Crop fires are undoubtedly the biggest contributor towards air pollution in Delhi. **The burning of rice paddies** after harvests across Punjab and other states persists. This is because farmers have to clear their fields ahead of the rabi season and burning of stubble is an **efficient and quickest way to do it**.
2. **Punjab's groundwater issue:** In Punjab, farmers are **prohibited from planting paddy in May in order to prevent groundwater levels** from going low before the monsoons. Thus, farmers in Punjab **can only plant paddy from mid-June onwards**.
 - Due to the late sowing, the crops are harvested only in late October/early November. This coincides with the **onset of winter season in north India** when wind speeds slow down and temperatures drop.
3. **Lack of machinery and knowledge:** Most farmers in Punjab are **poor and cannot afford machinery for clearing out stubble** in the ground. They are left with no option but to resort to the **cheaper solution of stubble burning**.
4. **Cultural Practices:** Millions of people set off fireworks for several days for the Hindu festival of **Diwali**, which falls in October or November, leading to fog-like situations and downgrading in air quality.
5. **Atmospheric Conditions:** In the winter **cold-air inversions trap particulates close to the ground**, and **lower wind speeds** deposit dust from Gulf countries and neighboring Afghanistan, adding to northern India's dust.
 - Average winter concentrations of both PM_{2.5} (168 µg/m³) and PM₁₀ (314 µg/m³) are **double those in the summer**.

Recent 15-point action plan

- The plan includes several focus areas, including **controlling stubble burning, vehicular pollution, open burning, and dust pollution**.
- It also calls for the **formation of special teams to enforce some of the existing bans**, such as the one on open garbage burning.
- The government has identified **13 pollution hotspots** and that specific action plans have been prepared for each.
- A war room had been created and **13 special teams had been formed** to check the implementation of the action plans.
- To control dust pollution on roads, **82 mechanical road sweeping machines, 530 water sprinkling machines, and 258 anti-smog guns** will be deployed during winter.

Other measures:

- The Chief Minister Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi launched the **Delhi Electric Vehicles (EV) policy in 2020** with a mission to make Delhi pollution free and establish Delhi as the EV capital of India.

- **Bio-decomposers:** bio-decomposer made by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa are being used .
 - The bio-decomposer is a **microbial liquid spray** which, when sprayed onto paddy stubble, breaks it down in a way that can be easily absorbed into the soil, whereby farmers then have no need to burn the stubble.
- In a bid to contain the spread of harmful particulate matter, the government, earlier this month, **decided to impose a complete ban on the sale, storage, production, and bursting of firecrackers** for the third consecutive year.
- Delhi government permanently shut down the old, polluting **Badarpur coal-fired power plant** in the southeastern outskirts of Delhi as a way to scale back pollution.
- The CPCB has recently mandated that **all highly polluting industrial plants install automatic emission-measurement stations**, which will send data to the CPCB in real time to better enable enforcement of pollution rules.

Way Ahead

- **The air does not belong to any one State** therefore all have to work in close coordination with neighbouring States to curb air pollution.
- Policies to reduce air pollution offer a **win-win strategy for both climate and health**, lowering the burden of disease attributable to air pollution, as well as contributing to the near- and long-term mitigation of climate change.

Source: [TH](#)

Matangini Hazra

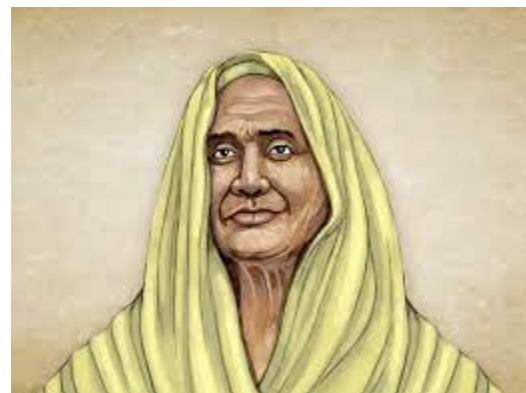
Syllabus: GS-1/Art and Culture, Personalities in News

Context:

Remembering 'Matangini Hazra' on her 81st Anniversary of Martyrdom.

About Matangini Hazra:

- **Early life:**
 - She was born on 19 October 1870, in the small village of **Hogla, near Tamluk in Bengal**, she was the daughter of a poor peasant and did not receive a formal education.
 - She was married early and became widowed at the age of eighteen.
- **Role during freedom struggle**



- She was a revolutionary and actively participated in the Indian Independence Movement.
- She was affectionately known as **Gandhi Buri (Bengali for Old Lady Gandhi)**.
- In 1905, she became actively interested in the Indian independence movement **as a Gandhian**.
- She took part in the **Non-Cooperation Movement** and protested for the **abolition of salt tax** as a part of the civil disobedience movement.
 - It was during this time that she became an active member of the **Indian National Congress**, and started spinning her own khadi in Gandhi's footsteps.
 - She led a procession of 6000 protestors, mostly women as a part of the **Quit India Movement**.
- She kept chanting **Vande Mataram (Hail to the Motherland)** during her last moments.
- **Post Independence:**
 - Numerous schools, colonies, and streets were named after Hazra.
 - The first statue of a woman put up in Kolkata, in independent India, was Hazra's in 1977.
 - In 2002, as part of a series of postage stamps commemorating sixty years of the Quit India Movement the Department of Posts of India issued a five rupee postage stamp with **Matangini Hazra's image**.

Source: [IE](#)

Facts In News

Female Military Officers Course for ASEAN countries

Syllabus :GS 3/Defence

In News

India concluded its premier Female Military Officers Course for officers from [ASEAN countries](#) and the Indian Army.

About Female Military Officers Course for ASEAN countries

- It is spearheaded by the Indian Army's vision for gender neutrality and women empowerment.
- It is themed on the UN framework.
- It was organised under the stewardship of the **Ministry of Defence**.

- **Purpose** : The course has been designed to elevate leadership competencies, strategic acumen, and operational efficacy among female officers, while offering a rich platform for cross-cultural interaction and mutual professional development.
 - Participants delved into an enriching mix of dynamic workshops, tactical simulations, and expert lectures.
 - They were also introduced to the 'Made in India' equipment set to be a part of upcoming UN missions.
- **Significance** : It reinforces India's commitment to fostering deeper international collaboration while championing gender equality in the armed forces.
 - It stands not only as a testament to India's evolving military diplomacy but also as a beacon of hope for stronger ASEAN-India ties, and the future role of women in peacekeeping and defence sectors globally.

Source: [PIB](#)

Bharatiya Bhasha Utsav and Technology & Bharatiya Bhasha Summit

Syllabus: Prelims/ Current Events of national importance

News:

The Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship recently launched a **two-day Bharatiya Bhasha Utsav and Technology & Bharatiya Bhasha Summit**, at New Delhi.

About Bharatiya Bhasha Divas and Utsav

- The Government of India has proposed to celebrate the birthday of renowned Tamil poet and freedom fighter Mahakavi Chinnaswami Subramania Bharati as **Bharatiya Bhasha Divas (11 December)**.
 - The Bharatiya Bhasha Utsav will be held from 28th September 2023 to 11th December 2023.

Bharatiya Bhasha Summit

- The Bharatiya Bhasha Utsav will be held from **28th September 2023 to 11th December 2023**.
- It is about to **set the course for a technologically enriched future for Bharatiya languages in education**.
- The summit, organized as part of the Bharatiya Bhasha Utsav, will encompass three pivotal thematic sessions:
 - (i) Technology FOR Bharatiya Languages,
 - (ii) Technology IN Bharatiya Languages, and

- (iii) Technology THROUGH Bharatiya Languages.
- These themes will **emphasize the integration of technology in promoting Bharatiya Bhasha**, including its role in teaching, training, examination, and translating educational materials.
 - The summit aims to **facilitate a seamless transition from the current education ecosystem to one rooted in Bharatiya Languages**, in line with the NEP-2020 vision.

Source:[PIB](#)

National Service Scheme Awards

Syllabus: Prelims/Current Events of national importance

News:

The President of India presented the National Service Scheme Awards for the year 2021-2022 at Rashtrapati Bhavan recently.

About Awards

- The NSS Awards, **instituted by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**, are presented **every year** to the NSS Volunteers, Programme Officers, NSS Units and the Universities/+2 Councils to recognize their voluntary service.
- These awards were instituted in the year 1993-1994. Since then, these awards are given away every year at various Levels.
- **Objectives** : To recognize outstanding contribution by NSS student volunteers, NSS Programme Officers and the Programme Coordinators in community service

National Service Scheme (NSS)

- The National Service Scheme (NSS) is a **Central Sector Scheme** of Government of India, **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports**.
- It provides opportunity to the student youth of **11th & 12th Class of schools at +2 Board level and student youth of Technical Institution, Graduate & Post Graduate at colleges and University level** of India to take part in various Government led community service activities & programmes.
- **Motto:** The motto of the National Service Scheme is **“NOT ME BUT YOU.”**
- The primary objective of **developing the personality and character of the student youth** through voluntary community service. **‘Education through Service’** is the purpose of the NSS.
- **Progress** : NSS was launched in **1969** in 37 Universities involving about 40,000 volunteers which has now spread over 657 Universities and 51 +2

Councils/Directorates, covering 20,669 Colleges and 11,988 Senior Secondary Schools.

Major Activities:

- **National Integration Camp (NIC):** It is organized **every year** and the duration of each camp is 7 days.
- **NSS Republic Day Parade Camp:** The camp takes place in Delhi between 1st and 31st January every year with 200 NSS selected volunteers who are good in discipline, March-past and cultural activities.
 - **A Contingent of selected NSS volunteers participates in the Republic Day Parade at Rajpath, New Delhi on 26th of January** every year in accordance with the guidelines and requisition of the Ministry of Defence.
- **National Youth Festivals:**
 - They are organized every year from **12th to 16th January by the Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** in collaboration with the State Governments in different parts of the country.

Source:[PIB](#)

Sycamore Tree

Syllabus: GS-3/Environment

In News:

A 300-year-old famous Sycamore Tree in England was cut down by a teenage boy, in a deliberate act of vandalism.

- It was located in a dip between two hills, at a gap in the Hadrian Wall .

About the Sycamore Tree:

- **Scientific Name:** Acer pseudoplatanus
- These trees can live up to 400 years, and can be identified by their broad leaves and winged seed pods, known as **Samaras**.
- These trees are also known as **Plane Trees**.
- **Features:**
 - The trees can become extremely tall as they mature, reaching a height of up to 35 meters.
 - A sycamore can live for as long as 400 years.

- The **young trees have smooth, pink gray bark**; while **older trees** become **cracked and have rough texture**.
- The leaves are broad with five lobes.
 - Like most maple trees, the leaves are bright green in the spring and summer, turning brilliant shades of red, yellow and orange in the autumn.
- **Distribution:**
 - These trees are native to **central, eastern and southern Europe**, it is believed to have been introduced to the UK by the Romans or in the Tudor era around the 1500s. They are commonly found in the UK.
- **Significance:**
 - The fine grain of sycamore wood is ideal for carving.
 - Tolerant of pollution

- **Hadrian Wall:**

- The sycamore tree was located in a dip between two hills, at a gap in the Hadrian Wall in Northumberland, northern England.
- The Hadrian Wall is part of a larger UNESCO World Heritage Site called the 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire' and is found in the UK and Germany.

Source: [IE](#)

Sankalp Saptaah

Syllabus: GS-2/Government Policies and Interventions

In News:

The Prime Minister launched a unique week-long programme for Aspirational Blocks in the country called '**Sankalp Saptaah**' at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

About Sankalp Saptaah:

- It is closely tied to effective implementation of **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)**.
- The goal of this initiative is to enhance governance at the block level, thereby improving the quality of the life of citizens.
- It is being implemented in **500 Aspirational Blocks across 329 districts in the country**.
 - Each day is dedicated to a specific development theme on which all blocks will work.

- The themes for the first six days include ‘**Sampoorna Swasthya**’, ‘**Suposhit Pariwaar**’, ‘**Swachhta**’, ‘**Krishi**’, ‘**Shiksha**’, and ‘**Samridhi Diwas**’.
- The last day of the week will be a celebration of the work conducted during the entire week, as ‘**Sankalp Saptah – Samavesh Samaroh**’.

The Aspirational Block Program (ABP):

- The Programme aimed at improving performance of blocks lagging on various development parameters by enhancing governance and public services delivery in those areas.
- It was announced in the **Union Budget 2022-23**.
- It will initially cover 500 districts across 31 states and Union Territories, with over half of these blocks located in six states – **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal**.
- To execute this, **Chintan Shivirs** were organized at both village and block levels across the country.
 - The ‘**Sankalp Saptah**’ is a culmination of these chintan shivirs.

Source: [PIB](#)

Balochistan

In News:

Many people were killed in a suicide blast near a mosque in Balochistan province.

About the place:

- **Balochistan (or Baluchistan)** is the western most province of Pakistan.
- **Capital:** Quetta
- **Geography:** It is situated between Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan.
 - on the south by the Arabian Sea.
 - It lies at the mouth of the **Strait of Hormuz** and provides the shortest route from seaports to **Central Asia**.
 - It is rich in exhaustible and renewable resources.
- **Historical Linkages :** The Kingdom of Balochistan was given the option of joining India, Pakistan, or staying independent during the British departure from the Indian subcontinent.



- The king decided to be independent, and the nation did so for more than a year.
- The territory was taken under the jurisdiction of the Pakistani government in 1948 through a mix of military and diplomatic tactics.
- **Economy:**
 - Agriculture is limited by the scarcity of water, power, and adequate transportation facilities.
 - Wheat, jowar and rice are the major food crops, and fruits are the principal cash crops.
 - Sheep raising employs the great majority of the population and occupies most of the land. It provides high-quality wool and is exported also.

Source: [IE](#)

2023 Sastra Ramanujan Prize

Syllabus: Miscellaneous

Context:

- Mathematician Ruixiang Zhang Professor of University of California to receive 2023 Sastra Ramanujan Prize.

About:

- The award, instituted by the Shanmugha Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA) in 2005 .
- SASTRA 2023, with a **cash prize of \$10,000** and a **citation** for outstanding researchers **all over the world**, will be given at an international conference in **Number Theory** during December at **SASTRA University in Kumbakonam, in Tamil Nadu**.
- The prize is given **every year on 22nd December**.
- **Age limit: Under the age of 32** which is influenced by Ramanujan's achievements in his brief life of 32 years.

Importance:


- SASTRA 2023 award has been instituted with a view to embolden young minds to pursue cutting-edge research in Mathematics influenced by Srinivasa Ramanujan and increase the visibility of Mathematics both at the national and international levels.
- The prize has established itself as one of the most prominent and coveted international awards.

Do you know ?

- **Ramanujan** is remembered for his contributions to mathematical analysis,

infinite series, continued fractions and number theory. He also discovered his own theorems and compiled as many as 3900 results independently.

- Ramanujan had a wealth of ideas that transformed and reshaped 20th century mathematics
- December 22, the birth anniversary of the great mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan was designated as “National Mathematics Day (NMD)” by the Government of India in December 2011.



The Mathematical Genius SRINIVASA RAMANUJAN

22 December 1887 – 26 April 1920

India's greatest mathematical genius.


Independently compiled nearly 3900 results.

Stated results Ramanujan prime & Ramanujan theta function that inspired a vast amount of further research.

Made extraordinary contributions to mathematical analysis, number theory, infinite series, & continued fractions

Known for Ramanujan's sum
Landau–Ramanujan constant
Mock theta functions
Ramanujan conjecture
Ramanujan Soldner constant
Rogers–Ramanujan identities
Ramanujan's master theorem

“An equation means nothing to me unless it expresses a thought of God”

 @prasarbharati

Source: [The Hindu](#)