

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## AUKUS NEW DEAL

### Context

- **Australia** had signed a deal to allow the **exchange of nuclear secrets and material** with the United States and Britain.

### About

- It is a key step toward equipping its navy with **nuclear-powered submarines**.
- It binds the **three countries to security arrangements** for the transfer of sensitive U.S. and U.K. nuclear material and knowhow as part of the **tripartite 2021 AUKUS security accord**.

### Major Highlights

- It specifies that the agreement will **remain in force until December 31, 2075**, but any party can exit it with a **one-year written notice**.
- In the event of a **breach or termination**, the remaining countries can demand the return or destruction of any exchanged information, material, or equipment.
- The material, to be transferred in complete, welded power vgunits, **must only be used for naval propulsion**.
- The treaty also allows the US and UK to **cease cooperation** and demand the return of materials if **Australia breaches the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** or detonates a nuclear device.
- Australia will be responsible for **any nuclear safety risks** and will indemnify the US and UK against liabilities related to the nuclear material and equipment.
- The treaty includes a **non-legally binding document** outlining additional political commitments but does not specify any obligation for Australia to participate in US-led military actions.

### What is AUKUS?

- AUKUS is a **trilateral defence and security partnership** between **Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States**.
- It was established in **2021** to bolster their allied deterrence and defense capabilities in the **Indo-Pacific**.
- The trilateral partnership has two pillars.
  - ♦ **Pillar 1** revolves around the acquisition and development of conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy;

- ♦ and **Pillar 2** focuses on cooperation in eight advanced military capability areas: artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technologies, innovation, information sharing, and cyber, undersea, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic and electronic warfare domains.

### Why was AUKUS formed?

- **Increasing Presence of China:** The Indo-Pacific region has witnessed increasing geopolitical tensions, including territorial disputes, military build-up, and assertive behavior by China.
  - ♦ The participating countries share concerns about maintaining peace, stability, and freedom of navigation in the region.
- **Technological Cooperation:** AUKUS aims to enhance technological cooperation, particularly in the field of defense and security.
- **Alliance Strengthening:** AUKUS represents a deepening of security ties between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- **Response to Regional Dynamics:** The formation of AUKUS is seen as a response to shifting regional dynamics and evolving security challenges in the Indo-Pacific.
  - ♦ It reflects a broader trend of countries in the region seeking to forge closer security partnerships and alliances to address common concerns and counterbalance China's influence.

### Way Ahead

- Achieving the core objectives will take years, with Pillar I likely requiring decades, even with all states moving forward at full speed.
- Regardless, AUKUS still holds immediate promise for participating countries.
- Critically, it will help catalyze technological innovation and enhance research and development for emerging capabilities necessary to maintain a competitive edge, strengthen defense ties, and deepen the three countries' presence in the Indo-Pacific.

Source: TH

## GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR YOUTH 2024

### Context

- **The International Labour Organization (ILO)** has released its report titled **"Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024 (GET for Youth)**.

### About

- This report represents the **20th anniversary publication** of the ILO's GET for Youth.
- This GET for Youth looks back on what has been achieved since the dawn of the twenty-first century while also looking ahead to what may lay in store for youth employment in an era characterized by crises and uncertainties.

### About International Labour Organization

- It is an United Nations Agency established in **1919** as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, and it became the **first specialized agency of the UN in 1946**.
- It has **187 Member states**.
- It sets labour standards, develops policies and devises programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
- It is the only tripartite U.N. agency that brings together governments, employers and workers.
- It is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- **Major Reports:** World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO), Global Wage Report, World Social Protection Report, World Employment and Social Outlook for Youth, World of Work Report.

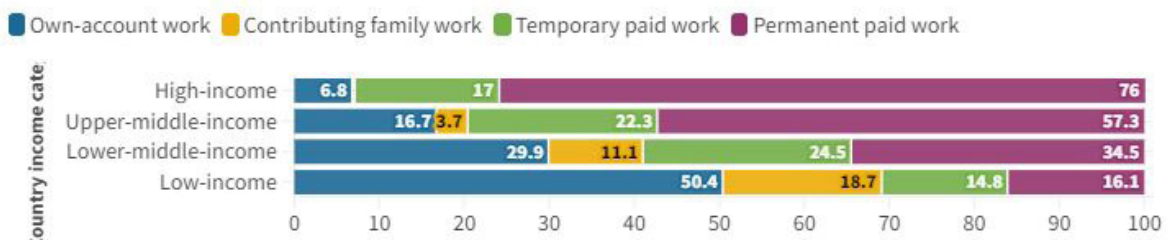
### Major Highlights

- **Resilient economic growth** post Covid 19, has **improved the global labour market outlook** for

young people belonging to the **15-24 age group**.

- **The 2023 youth unemployment rate at 13 percent**, represents a **15-year low** and a fall from the pre-pandemic rate of 13.8 per cent in 2019.
  - ♦ It is expected to fall further to **12.8 per cent this year** and the next year.
- **Higher Unemployment Rates:** In the Arab countries, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific, youth unemployment rates were higher in 2023 than in 2019.
- **NEET Youth:** The report also cautions that the number of young people who are not in **employment, education or training (NEET)** is 'concerning', as it stood at 20.4 percent with **two in three young NEETs globally being women**.
- **Concerns of Employed Youth:** Lack of progress in gaining decent jobs, more than half of young workers are in informal employment globally.
  - ♦ The share of young adults working in a secure paid job is **significantly higher in high-income countries** (at 76% in 2023) but the the incidence of temporary work has risen in those countries too.
  - ♦ **The supply of high-skill jobs** to match the supply of educated youth, especially in middle-income countries, has not been enough.
  - ♦ **In low-income countries**, only one in five young adults aged 25 to 29 manage to find a secure paid job.

### Share (%) of youth in different types of work



- **Services Sector:** From 2008, **services** took over as the **largest employer** of young people worldwide. The share of youth employment by services rose to **45.9 percent**.
  - ♦ Within services, **three aggregated subsectors** have been responsible for two thirds of the increase in the sector's share: wholesale and retail trade; accommodation and food services; and other business services.
- **Agriculture Sector:** The share of youth

employment accounted for by agriculture **declined to 30.5 percent by 2021**.

- **Industry Sector:** Within the industry sector, manufacturing accounted for a diminishing share of youth jobs between 2001 and 2021, while **construction** has come to play a more dominant role, for young men in particular.
- **In Asia and the Pacific region**, youth unemployment rate was at **13.9%** in 2023 and it reflected a full recovery from the crisis years and fell below the rate of the pre-crisis years.

- ◆ By 2025, the youth unemployment rate in the region is expected to **continue its decline to 13.7%**.
- ◆ **The gender gap in youth** not in employment, education or training rates in South Asia was **higher than in any other subregion of the world**
- ◆ **The region's youth NEET rate** is expected to grow very slightly to 20.5% (from 20.4% in 2023).
- ◆ The share of young adults in Asia and the Pacific **working in temporary jobs has increased** from one in five to one in four since the start of the millennium.
- ◆ By 2021, only the subregion of **South Asia still had the agricultural sector as the largest employer of young people (at 35%)**.
- ◆ Panna has a long history of diamond mining and continues to contribute to India's gem industry.
- **Gujarat:** The diamond sector in Gujarat shines brightly.
  - ◆ **Surat**, often called the '**Diamond City**' processes around eight lakh (800,000) rough diamonds, making it a **global hub for diamond polishing**. Recently, the **Surat Diamond Bourse** has further boosted the industry.
  - ◆ With an estimated annual turnover of 2 lakh crore (approximately \$27 billion), this bourse is set to provide employment to an additional 1.5 lakh people.

### India's Dominance in Cut and Polished Diamonds

- **Exports:** Indian exports of finished diamonds amount to a staggering \$23 billion annually.
- **Employment:** The diamond sector directly employs around 1 million people in India.
  - ◆ Additionally, it indirectly supports approximately 5 million jobs across various related industries.
- **Global Leadership:** India processes over 90% of the diamonds used in jewellery worldwide. Indian artisans skillfully transform rough stones into exquisite gems that adorn fingers, necks, and ears across the globe.

### Conclusion

- The report reminds us that **opportunities for young people are highly unequal**; with many young women, young people with limited financial means or from any minority background still struggling.
- Without equal opportunities for education and decent jobs, millions of young people are missing out on their chances for a better future.

Source: TH

## DIAMOND SECTORS IN INDIA

### Context

- Diamond industry in India is facing mass scale job losses, pay reduction and uncertainty about work, which employs around seven lakh workers in thousands of factories in cutting and polishing rough diamonds and exporting them in multiple countries.

### Geographical Distribution of Diamond Fields

- Diamonds are precious gems, formed deep within the Earth's crust over millions of years, hold both cultural and economic significance.
- India's diamond occurrences date back to prehistoric times, and the country is home to several diamond-bearing regions.
- **South Indian Tract (Andhra Pradesh):** This region comprises parts of Anantapur, Kadapa, Guntur, Krishna, Mahabubnagar, and Kurnool districts. Andhra Pradesh hosts significant diamond reserves and extraction activities.
- **Central Indian Tract (Madhya Pradesh - Panna Belt):** Madhya Pradesh, particularly the Panna belt, is renowned for its diamond deposits.

### Key Concerns

- **Lowering Exports:** India's cut and polished diamond exports in 2023-24 **plunged 27.5% from a year ago to a \$15.97 billion** due to sluggish demand from the **United States, China and the United Arab Emirates**
  - ◆ The fall in exports forced the world's biggest diamond polisher **to reduce imports of rough diamonds by 18%** from a year ago to \$14.27 billion in the financial year 2023-24.
- **Mass Job Losses and Pay Reductions:** Approximately seven lakh workers find employment in Surat's diamond factories, but uncertainty now looms large.
- **Global Factors at Play:** Since 95% of polished diamonds from Surat are exported, global factors significantly impact the industry.
- **Geopolitical tensions**, such as the **Russia-Ukraine conflict and Israel-Palestine issues**, have disrupted demand for diamonds worldwide. These conflicts ripple through the supply chain, affecting Surat's factories.
- **Inventory Woes and Supply Chain Disruptions:** Surat's factories are left with substantial inventories.

It is because **Russia, a major supplier of rough diamonds**, has faced sanctions and geopolitical challenges.

- ♦ The delicate balance between supply and demand has been upset.
- **Recession's Toll:** In 2022, Surat's diamond industry boasted a turnover of nearly 2,25,000 crore. Alas, that figure has dwindled to around 1,50,000 crore today.
- ♦ The recession has been relentless, casting a shadow over the city that once sparkled with diamond brilliance.

### Other Factors

- **Market Dynamics:** Fluctuations in global demand and rough diamond prices impact revenue.
- **Technological Shifts:** The rise of lab-grown diamonds and changing consumer preferences necessitate adaptation.
- **Sustainability:** Balancing growth with environmental and ethical considerations remains crucial.

Source: TH

## MANAGEMENT OF BALLAST WATER

### In News

- Tamil Nadu Water Resources Department (WRD) observed that Kamarajar Port is the main reason for the spread of the invasive species by not regulating the **ballast water from ships**.

### About

- Tamil Nadu's Water Resources Department (WRD) is seeking 160 crore from Kamarajar Port to address the invasive charru mussel (*Mytella strigata*) problem.
- ♦ The mussel disrupts marine ecosystems and affects fisher boat movements.

### About Ballast Water

- Ballast water is seawater taken on board ships to maintain stability and immersion.
- It is pumped in when cargo is unloaded and pumped out when cargo is loaded.

### Utility

- **Used for stability and maneuverability** of ships during voyages.
- Helps when ships are empty, lightly loaded, or need more stability due to rough seas.
- Adds weight to ensure the **ship can pass under bridges** and structures.

### Emerging Issues

- Ballast water can carry **invasive species**, leading to ecological damage.
- ♦ There have been hundreds of invasions due to ballast water, often with severe ecological impacts.
- ♦ In India, around 30 invasive species have been recorded, with the charru mussel being particularly harmful.

### Global Regulations

- The Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention, effective from September 8, 2017, requires ships to manage ballast water to prevent the spread of harmful organisms. Ships must treat ballast water or exchange it with oceanic water before discharge.
- ♦ Countries like Australia and New Zealand rigorously enforce ballast water regulations to protect their ecosystems, such as the Great Barrier Reef.

### India's Position:

- India has not signed the BWM Convention, meaning there are no specific regulations or checks for ballast water discharge at Indian ports. Indian ports are not responsible for regulating ballast water.
- Under current Indian law, ports are not liable for invasive species caused by ballast water. Ship owners may be held responsible if regulations were in place.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- It is suggested that India should adopt the BWM Convention
- Ships must manage their ballast water according to the BWM Convention to prevent the spread of harmful organisms.
- Newer ships must use ballast water management systems that treat the water with chemicals to remove organisms.
- Older ships must exchange ballast water with deep ocean water before entering ports.

Source:TH

## HOW WAS THE TUNGABHADRA DAM GATE SWEEP AWAY?

### Context

- A flood alert has been sounded downstream of the Tungabhadra dam in Karnataka's Koppal district after one of the 33 crest gates of the stone masonry dam across the Tungabhadra river was washed away.

### Dams in India

- India has 4,407 large dams, the **third highest** number in the world after China (23,841) and the USA (9,263).
- **Maharashtra** has the maximum number of large dams followed by Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

### Dam Failures in India

- The first failure was recorded in **Madhya Pradesh** during 1917 when the **Tigra Dam** failed due to overtopping.
- The worst dam disaster was the failure of **Machu dam (Gujarat)** in 1979 in which about 2000 people died.
- There are 40 reported failure cases so far.

### Major threats to dams in India

- **Aging:** With over 6,000 dams in India, ranked third globally in terms of large dams and approximately 80% of these dams exceeding 25 years of age while 234 surpassing the century mark, ensuring their safety is of paramount importance.
  - ♦ For India, 2025 is set to be a big year as more than 1,000 dams would turn roughly 50 years or older.
- **Sediments & siltation:** Accumulation of sediments and siltation decreases a reservoir's capacity over the years.
- **Flooding:** The country gets concentrated rainfall every year for a designated time period as opposed to distributed rainfall, which contributes to the dams' vulnerability.
  - ♦ In India, the downstream areas are often exposed to flood disasters & flooding has caused **44%** of dam failures in India.
- **Seismic threat:** Some of the Himalayan dam systems, including the Tehri Dam, are in an active seismic area given that the Himalayan mountain system is constantly changing and growing giving rise to several tectonic movements.

### Dam Safety Act, 2021

- **About:** It is an Act to provide for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of the specified dam for prevention of dam failure related disasters.
  - ♦ It also provides for an institutional mechanism to ensure their safe functioning and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

- ♦ These are dams with height of more than **15 meters**, or height between 10 meters to 15 meters with certain design and structural conditions.
- **Provision of National Bodies:**
  - ♦ **The National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS):** Its functions include evolving policies and recommending regulations regarding dam safety standards. It will be chaired by the **National Water Commissioner**.
  - ♦ **The National Dam Safety Authority:** Its functions include implementing policies of the National Committee, providing technical assistance to State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs), and resolving matters between SDSOs of states or between a SDSO and any dam owner in that state.
- **Dam Safety Unit:** Dam owners are now required to have a dedicated Dam Safety Unit, prepare Emergency Action Plans, and conduct Comprehensive Safety Evaluations at regular intervals.
  - ♦ **Head of dam safety:** Chairman of the Central Water Commission (CWC) would head dam safety protocols at the national level.
- **Constitution of state bodies:** State will constitute two bodies i.e. State Committee on Dam Safety and State Dam Safety Organisation.
  - ♦ These bodies will be responsible for the surveillance, inspection, and monitoring the operation and maintenance of dams within their jurisdiction.
- **Classification of dams:** Provisions require States to classify dams based on hazard risk, Conduct regular inspections, Create emergency action plans, Institute emergency flood warning systems, Undertake safety reviews and period risk assessment studies, Report and record incidents of dam failures.
- **Non-compliance:**
  - ♦ Failure to comply with any provision of the Act is punishable with imprisonment and/or fines.
  - ♦ If such obstruction or refusal to comply with directions results in loss of lives or imminent danger thereof, [entity] shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years.

### Other initiatives taken by the government

- **Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Scheme:** Under the World Bank funded

DRIP Phase-I scheme, which was implemented between 2012 to 2021, 223 existing dams located in 7 States were comprehensively audited and rehabilitated.

- ◆ Now the government has taken up DRIP Phase-II & III scheme envisaging rehabilitation and safety improvement of 736 dams located in 19 States.
- **Dam Health and Rehabilitation Monitoring Application (DHARMA)**, has been developed to capture authentic data pertaining to all large dams to act as information repository.
  - ◆ This tool has the appropriate access to policy makers, project managers, and dam managers to review the information and take appropriate action.

### Way Ahead

- **Automated Monitoring Systems:** Implement real-time monitoring systems that use sensors to detect structural weaknesses, seepage, and other signs of dam distress.
- **Comprehensive Safety Audits** should be conducted at regular intervals to assess the overall integrity of the dam.
- **Hazard Potential Classification:** Classify dams based on the potential consequences of their failure.

### Tungabhadra River

- **Origin:** The river derives its name from two streams i.e., the **Tunga and the Bhadra**, which rise in the Western Ghats.
- **Course:** The river, after the confluence of the two streams near Shimoga, runs for about 531 km and joins the river **Krishna in Andhra Pradesh**.
  - ◆ The river forms the **boundary between Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Hampi**, the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire and a UNESCO World Heritage Site is located on the bank of Tungabhadra river.

### Tungabhadra dam

- Tungabhadra dam was first conceived of in **1860** to mitigate the impact of recurrent famine in Rayalaseema.
- Construction of the dam was begun by the erstwhile governments of Hyderabad and Madras in **1945**, and the project was completed in **1953**.

Source: IE

## NEWS IN SHORT

### FLOODWATCH INDIA 2.0

#### Context

- Union Minister for Jal Shakti, launched the **Version 2.0 of the 'FloodWatch India'** mobile application developed by the **Central Water Commission (CWC)**.
  - ◆ The first version of the application was launched in **2023**.

#### About

- **'FloodWatch India'**, aims to use mobile phones to disseminate information related to flood situations in the country and **flood forecasts up to 7 days on a real-time** basis to the public.
- The app utilizes advanced technologies such as **satellite data analysis, mathematical modeling and real-time monitoring** to deliver accurate and timely flood forecasts.
- Version 2.0 of the app provides information on flood forecasts at additional **392** flood monitoring stations, taking up the total number of stations to **592**.
  - ◆ The earlier version provided information at 200 level forecast stations.

Source: PIB

### MISSION KARMAYOGI

#### Context

- The DoPT Minister said that **Mission Karmayogi** is contributing positively to achieve Minimum Government and Maximum Governance.

### National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (Mission Karmayogi)

- In 2020, Government of India has launched Mission Karmayogi, a National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCP).
- It is anchored by an apex body and **headed by the Prime Minister**.
- The programme aims at building a future-ready civil service with the right attitude, skills and knowledge, aligned to the vision of New India.

### Extended Version of Mission Karmayogi :

- **My iGOT** delivers targeted training courses on the home page of individual officers facilitating a highly personalized capacity-building experience thereby ensuring a perfect fit between the individual and organizational learning needs.

- **Blended Programs on iGOT-Karmayogi** platform will facilitate equitable access to training methodologies across all levels to meet dynamic training needs of the officials.
- **Curated Programs on iGOT Karmayogi** are designed to cater to diverse learning needs of the Ministries/Departments and Training Institutions.
- **12 domain specific capacity building e-learning courses** have been developed as part of Annual Capacity Building Plan (ACBP) by Karmayogi Digital Learning Lab (KDLL) of DoPT.
- **VIKAS (Variable & Immersive Karmayogi Advanced Support)** is a new blended learning programme meant for capacity building of Middle management civil servants in the Central Secretariat.

Source: PIB

## JIYO PARSI SCHEME PORTAL

### Context

- The Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijju has launched the **Jiyo Parsi Scheme portal**, which enables Parsis to apply online, check the status of their application and to receive the financial assistance online through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode.

### Jiyo Parsi Scheme

- Launched in 2013-14, it is a **Central Sector Scheme**.
- The objective of the scheme is to **reverse the declining trend of Parsi Population** by adopting scientific protocol and structured interventions to stabilize their population in India.
  - ♦ The population of the **Parsi (Zoroastrian) community** decreased from 69,601 in the Census 2001 to 57,264 in the Census 2011.

The scheme has three components, Medical Assistance, Advocacy & Health of Community:

Under **Medical Component** of the scheme, financial assistance is provided to Parsi Couples for medical treatment under standard medical protocol;

Under **Health of Community Component**, financial assistance is provided to Parsi Couples for child care and assistance of elderly people and

Under the Advocacy **Component**, advocacy/outreach programmes are conducted to generate awareness among the Parsi Population.

Source: PIB

## HOUSING FINANCE COMPANIES (HFCs)

### Context

- The RBI issued revised guidelines as part of the phased transition towards tighter regulations for housing finance companies (HFCs) to harmonize them with Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).

### Housing finance companies (HFCs)

- **HFCs are corporate entities** that operate under the Companies Act of 1956.
- Their primary focus is **providing housing loans** or finance through various direct or indirect means.
- Initially they were regulated by the **National Housing Bank (NHB)**, but in 2019 the responsibility of handling HFCs was transferred to the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.
  - ♦ However, certain regulatory powers remain with the NHB.

### Non-Banking Financial Corporation (NBFCs)?

- It is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 engaged in the business of loans and advances, acquisition of shares/stocks/bonds/debentures/securities issued by Government or local authority or other marketable securities.
- It does not include any institution whose principal business is that of agriculture activity, industrial activity, purchase or sale of any goods (other than securities) or providing any services and sale/purchase/construction of immovable property.
- A non-banking institution which is a company and has the principal business of receiving deposits under any scheme or arrangement in one lump sum or in installments by way of contributions or in any other manner, is also a non-banking financial company (Residuary non-banking company).
- The functions of the NBFCs are managed by both the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the Reserve Bank of India.

Source: BS



## LONG RANGE GLIDE BOMB (LRGB), GAURAV

### In News

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the maiden flight test of the **Long Range Glide Bomb (LRGB), named GAURAV**.

### About GAURAV

- The test was carried out from a Su-30 MK-I aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) off the coast of Odisha.
- GAURAV is a 1,000 kg class air-launched glide bomb.
- It is designed for long-distance targeting.
- It uses a hybrid navigation system combining Inertial Navigation System (INS) and GPS for accurate targeting.
- It is a significant milestone in developing indigenous defence technologies.

Source: PIB

## DDOS ATTACK

### In News

Elon Musk hosted Donald Trump for a live audio interview on the social media platform X.

- The interview experienced a delay and glitches due to a suspected "massive DDoS attack."

### About DDoS attack

- A Denial-of-Service (DoS) attack prevents access to a website or online service by overwhelming it with traffic.
- A Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attack involves multiple sources attacking a single target, making it harder to identify the attackers.
- How DDoS Attacks Work:** Attackers direct a large volume of traffic to overwhelm a server's bandwidth.
  - Networks of compromised devices used to execute the attack.
  - Uses spoofed IP addresses to flood the target's servers with responses.
  - Sends incomplete connection requests, overloading the server and preventing legitimate connections.
- Signs:** Slowed internet speed and inability to access online services.

- Firewalls and online security systems are best for verification, as internet issues can have other causes.
- Impact :** DoS attacks can cause major disruptions lasting from hours to days.
  - Examples include the 2016 attack on major websites like Spotify and Twitter, and recent attacks on French state services before the Paris Olympics.
- Measures :** Anti-virus Software helps detect unusual traffic patterns and thwart attacks.
  - Security Systems is essential for managing and mitigating the impact of the attack.

Source: IE

## EXERCISE MITRA SHAKTI

### Context

- The **10th edition** of India-Sri Lanka joint military exercise MITRA SHAKTI commenced, at Army Training School, Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka.

### About

- Exercise MITRA SHAKTI is an **annual** training event conducted alternatively in India and Sri Lanka. Last edition was conducted in Pune (India) in November 2023.
  - The aim of the exercise is to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter insurgency operations in a Sub Conventional scenario under **Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate**. The exercise will focus on operations in the semi-urban environment.
- The Joint Exercise will also enhance defence cooperation, further augmenting bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

Source: PIB

## ST MARTIN'S ISLAND

### Context

- Recently, **St Martin's Island of Bangladesh** was in controversy after the resignation of Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

### About the St. Martin's Island

- Location and Geography:** The island is located in the **northeastern region of the Bay of Bengal**, close to the **border between Bangladesh and Myanmar**.

It is about nine kilometres away from the **southern tip of Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar-Teknaf peninsula**.



- The 7.3 km long island is **mostly flat** and sits at **an elevation of 3.6 metres** above the mean sea level.
- It is **Bangladesh's only coral island** — there are reefs from 10-15 km to the west-northwest — and is also a **breeding ground for sea turtles**.

### Historical Background

- The island was once part of the **Teknaf peninsula (around 5,000 years ago)** but gradually got submerged into the sea.
- Around 450 years ago, the southern suburbs of present-day St Martin's Island resurfaced.
- The **Arab merchants** were among the **first ones to settle on the island** in the 18th Century.
  - ♦ The merchants initially named the island '**Jazira**' (meaning 'the island' or 'the

peninsula') and later **changed it to 'Narikel Jinjira' or 'Coconut Island'**.

- **In 1900**, British India annexed the island **during a land survey**. By then, the island came to be known as **St Martin's Island**, named after then Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Martin.

Source: IE

## GYMNEMA SYLVESTRE (GURMAR)

### Context

- Recently, researchers have identified **Gymnema Sylvestre, commonly known as Gurmar**, among several **medicinal plants** on **Brahmayoni Hill in Gaya, Bihar**.

### About Gymnema Sylvestre (Gurmar)

- Its unique properties include its ability to reduce **blood sugar levels**, attributed to **Gymnemic acid**, which blocks intestinal sugar absorption.
- It also helps in Lipid Metabolism, Flavonoids, It combines with **Metformin (the first-line diabetes drug)**.
- It has already been utilised in developing the **anti-diabetic drug BGR-34**.
  - ♦ **BGR-34 combines Gurmar** with other potent phyto-ingredients like Daruharidra, Giloy, Vijaysar, Manjishtha, and Fenugreek. Together, they form a formidable team against diabetes.

Source: DD News

