

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## INDIA'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS BECOMING A GLOBAL LEADER IN SEMICONDUCTOR PRODUCTION

### Context

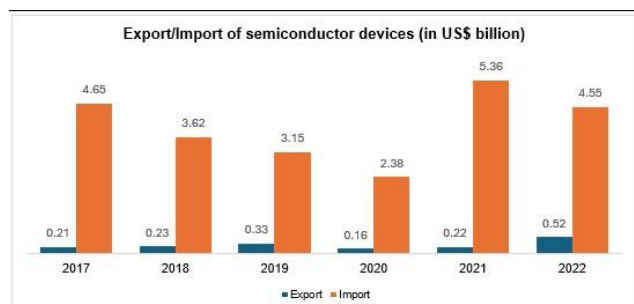
- The Prime Minister on the occasion of **78th Independence day**, outlined commitment towards becoming a global leader in semiconductor production and achieving the target of **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.

### About

- There was a time when India used to import mobile phones but now India has created a **manufacturing ecosystem in the country** and emerged as a big manufacturing hub.
- Many global companies are eager to invest in India, with the nation poised to become a global leader in semiconductor production.
- There is a **need for state governments** to compete in attracting these investments, which requires policies that ensure good governance and law and order.

### India's Semiconductor Industry

- In 2022, the Indian semiconductor market was valued at US\$ 26.3 billion and is projected to expand at a CAGR of 26.3% to **US\$ 271.9 billion by 2032**.



- Semiconductor devices include** diodes, transistors and photovoltaic cells assembled or not assembled in modules or panels, light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and mounted piezo-electric crystals.

### Factors favouring India

- Skilled Workforce:** India leads the world with record number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduates, offering the much-needed skilled workforce required in semiconductor manufacturing, design, research, and development.

- Cost Advantage:** India offers a substantial cost advantage for semiconductor manufacturing due to the lower labour cost, supply chain efficiency and emerging ecosystem.
- Global Supply Chain Diversification:** India has become a preferred destination for back-end assembly and testing operations amidst this industry relocation, with potential for future front-end manufacturing.
- Policy support:** The Indian government has promptly seized the opportunity following the global semiconductor supply chain glut after the pandemic and showed great intent through policy support to present India as an alternative to China in the global semi supply chain.

### Government Initiatives

- India Semiconductor Mission:** It functions as a dedicated division within the Digital India Corporation.
  - Its main goal is to nurture a strong semiconductor and display ecosystem to position India as a prominent global player in electronics manufacturing and design.
  - Under ISM, there are several schemes in place:

<b>Semiconductor Fab</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers fiscal support of up to 50% of the project cost to approved applicants.</li> <li>Attract substantial investments for the establishment of semiconductor wafer fabrication facilities in India.</li> </ul>
<b>Display Fab</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers fiscal support of up to 50% of the project cost to approved applicants.</li> <li>Focus on increasing display fabrication facilities in India.</li> </ul>
<b>Compound Semiconductors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fiscal support of 50% of the capex to facilities involved in compound semiconductor, silicon photonics, sensor and discrete semiconductor fabrication and semiconductor packaging.</li> <li>Focus on establishing semiconductor wafer fabrication facilities in India.</li> </ul>
<b>Design Linked Incentive (DLI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers product design-linked incentives of up to 50% of eligible expenditure and product deployment-linked incentives ranging from 6% to 4% on net sales over a five-year period.</li> </ul>

- The government offers incentives for manufacturing setup in India:**
  - Under the Semiconductor Fab Scheme, fiscal support of 50% of the project cost on an equal footing for all technology nodes.
  - Under the Display Fab Scheme, fiscal support of 50% of the project cost on an equal footing basis.
  - Under the Compound Semiconductor Scheme, fiscal support of 50% of the capital expenditure on an equal footing basis, including support for discrete semiconductor fabs.

- In February 2024, the government approved the **establishment of three semiconductor plants, two in Gujarat and one in Assam.**

### Way Ahead

- India is poised to witness exponential growth in its semiconductor industry with the advent of well-thought initiatives as well as calculated partnerships.
- **Through the European Commission and Japan**, the Indian government's MoU indicates their commitment to take proactive steps towards strengthening global semiconductor ecosystems.
- With sustained efforts and a proactive stance, India is on course to solidify its position as a leading semiconductor manufacturing hub, contributing majorly to technological advancement and economic growth.

Source: PIB

## SECULAR CIVIL CODE

### Context

- In his 11th Independence Day speech, PM Modi called for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), framing it as a "Secular Civil Code" as distinct from the existing "communal civil code".

### What is Uniform Civil Code (UCC)?

- **A Uniform Civil Code refers** to the provision of one law for the entire country, applicable to all religious communities, in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, etc.
- Currently, separate personal laws apply for the members of different major religions.
- **The Supreme Court** in 2019 hailed Goa as a "shining example" of an Indian State which has a functioning UCC.

### Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 44** contained in **part IV** of the Constitution says that the state "shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India".
- Part IV of the Constitution outlines the **Directive Principles of State Policy**, which, while not enforceable or justiciable in a court of law, are fundamental to the country's governance.

### UCC in India

- **UCC in Goa:** It follows the **Portuguese Civil Code of 1867**, which means that people of all religions in Goa are subject to the same laws on marriage, divorce, and succession.
  - ♦ The Goa Daman and Diu Administration Act of 1962, which was passed after Goa joined the union as a territory in 1961, gave Goa permission to apply the Civil Code.
- States like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Assam have expressed their willingness to follow the UCC, none have officially adopted it.

### Arguments in favor of UCC

- **Uniformity in Governance:** Having a common set of laws would streamline governance and administrative processes, making it easier for the state to administer justice and ensure the rights of its citizens.
- **Women's Rights:** Personal laws in different religions may have discriminatory provisions, particularly against women, and a uniform code will provide a more egalitarian legal framework.
- **Secularism:** A Uniform Civil Code is seen as a way to reinforce the secular fabric of the country by treating all citizens equally irrespective of their religious affiliations.
- **International Image:** Implementing a UCC may enhance India's international image by demonstrating a commitment to principles of equality, secularism, and human rights.
- **The Supreme Court** in various judgments including **Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum judgment of 1985**, has called for the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code.
- **Promote national Spirit:** The implementation of a UCC will promote the integration of India by establishing a shared platform for diverse communities.

### Arguments against UCC

- **Plurality in existing laws:** Experts argue that if there is plurality in already codified civil and criminal laws, how can the concept of '**one nation, one law**' be applied to diverse personal laws of various communities.
- **Issues with implementation:** The implementation of the code has been difficult because India is a diverse country with various religious communities following their own personal laws.

- ♦ It has been argued that the marriage and death rituals observed by **tribal communities** differ from Hindu customs, and there is concern that these practices may also face prohibition.
- **Challenge for Law and Order:** It would be a tyranny to the minority and when implemented could bring a lot of unrest in the country.
- **Against Constitutional provisions:** UCC is perceived as an infringement upon the constitutional right to freely exercise one's chosen religion found in **Article 25 and 26** and the **Sixth Schedule** of the Constitution
- **Fear among minorities:** There is a contention that the Uniform Civil Code may potentially enforce a code that is influenced by Hindu practices in all communities.
- **The Law Commission of India** stated that a UCC "is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage". It recommended that discriminatory practices, prejudices and stereotypes within a particular religion and its personal laws should be studied and amended.

### Way Ahead

- The authorities should consult with different sections of society before implementing the UCC to foster an environment of inclusivity, transparency, and respect for diverse perspectives throughout the process.
- The Law Commission expressed its support for achieving "equality within communities" as opposed to pursuing "equality between" communities.

Source: IE

## BAIL IS RULE AND JAIL IS EXCEPTION': SC

### In News

- The Supreme Court emphasized the principle that "bail is the rule and jail is the exception," even for offenses under special statutes like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

### Key Observations

- Once a case for bail is made, courts should grant bail if the legal conditions are met. Serious allegations do not automatically justify the denial of bail.

- ♦ Denying bail in deserving cases would violate the constitutional right to life and personal liberty under Article 21.

### About the Bail

- Bail is a fundamental aspect of the criminal justice system in India, designed to ensure that an accused person is not deprived of their liberty unnecessarily while awaiting trial.
- **Article 21 of the Indian Constitution** guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, which includes the right to seek bail.

### Types of Bail

- **Regular Bail:** Granted under Sections 437 and 439 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) for an accused who is in custody.
  - ♦ The grant of regular bail generally involves evaluating: (a) risk of the accused fleeing, (b) potential for tampering with evidence, and (c) possibility of influencing witnesses. The gravity of the offence may also be considered.
- **Interim Bail:** Temporary bail granted until the application for regular or anticipatory bail is decided.
- **Anticipatory Bail:** Provided under Section 438 of the CrPC, Allows an accused to seek bail from a Sessions Court or High Court before arrest for non-bailable offences.

### Presumption of Innocence:

- The foundational principle in Indian criminal jurisprudence is that an accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty, leading to bail being a common practice during investigation and trial.
- **Exceptions for Certain Offences:** Strict bail conditions apply to offences under special statutes such as the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Act, and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.
- **Sections 436 (bailable offences) and 437 (non-bailable offences) of the CrPC** reflect the legislative intent to make bail the rule and jail the exception.

### Judicial Pronouncements

- The Supreme Court of India has emphasized that bail is the rule and jail is the exception.
  - ♦ In the landmark case of *State of Rajasthan v. Balchand*, the Court held that the basic principle is that an accused should not be detained unless absolutely necessary

- The Supreme Court reiterated that prolonged pre-trial detention violates the right to personal liberty.
  - ♦ The Court highlighted the need for speedy trials and cautioned against the misuse of bail provisions.

### Challenges

- **Overcrowded Prisons:** A significant number of undertrial prisoners contribute to overcrowded prisons.
- **The discretionary power of judges** in granting bail can lead to inconsistencies.
  - ♦ Despite numerous Supreme Court rulings, inconsistencies and arbitrary decisions sometimes occur, affecting the right to personal liberty as envisaged under Article 21.
- **Many accused individuals** lack access to legal representation, affecting their ability to secure bail.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- The bail provision in India is a crucial mechanism to uphold the principles of justice and liberty.
- The provision of bail balances the individual's right to freedom with the need to ensure their presence at trial and the protection of society.
- The legal framework provides robust guidelines, continuous reforms and vigilant judicial oversight are necessary to ensure that the right to bail is exercised fairly and effectively.
- The grant of bail, especially for non-bailable offences, is at the discretion of the judge and should be guided by facts and circumstances, not by public sentiment.
- Judicial orders for bail must be reasoned and not cryptic.

Source: HT

## CENTRAL LAW ON HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS

### Context

- The Supreme Court of India expressed its concern regarding the non-implementation of the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act, 2021.

### Background

- A PIL was filed in the Supreme court in 2023, over non-implementation of the **National Commission**

### for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act, 2021.

- It was observed that even after three years, the Union and the states have failed to discharge their responsibility.
- Out of all states and UTs, **only 14 states have constituted the state councils** under the Act. It has been urged that the above state councils are not functional either.
- The Court asked the Centre, states and the UTs to ensure compliance of the Act by October 12.

### About the NCAHP Act

- The Act is aimed at "**regulation and maintenance of standards of education and services by allied and healthcare professionals,**" including those in fields such as medical laboratory sciences, physiotherapy, trauma care, and more.
- **Allied health professional:** It defines 'allied health professional' as an associate, technician, or technologist trained to support the diagnosis and treatment of any illness, disease, injury, or impairment.
  - ♦ Such a professional should have obtained a diploma or degree under this Bill.
  - ♦ The duration of the degree /diploma should be at least 2,000 hours (over a period of two to four years).
- **Healthcare professional:** A 'healthcare professional' includes a scientist, therapist, or any other professional who studies, advises, researches, supervises, or provides preventive, curative, rehabilitative, therapeutic, or promotional health services.
  - ♦ Such a professional should have obtained a degree under this Bill.
  - ♦ The duration of the degree should be at least 3,600 hours (over a period of three to six years).
- **National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions:** The Commission will perform the following functions;
  - ♦ framing policies and standards for regulating education and practice,
  - ♦ creating and maintaining an online Central Register of all registered professionals, providing basic standards of education, courses, curriculum, staff qualifications, examination, training, maximum fee payable for various categories, and
  - ♦ providing for a uniform entrance and exit examination, among others.

- **Professional Councils:** The Commission will constitute a Professional Council for every recognised category of allied and healthcare professions.
- **State Councils:** state governments will constitute State Allied and Healthcare Councils. It will;
  - ◆ Enforce professional conduct and code of ethics to be observed by allied healthcare professionals,
  - ◆ Maintain respective State Registers,
  - ◆ Inspect allied and healthcare institutions, and
  - ◆ Ensure uniform entry and exit examinations.

Source: IE

## REFORM IN UN SECURITY COUNCIL

### Context

- Recently, the G4 Countries have said that without reforms the UN Security Council is ill equipped to address global challenges.

### United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- It is one of the UN's six main organs and is aimed at maintaining international peace and security.

### Current Composition

- The UNSC currently consists of **five permanent members (P5)**: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
  - ◆ These P5 members hold **veto power**, allowing them to block any substantive resolution.
- Additionally, there are **ten non-permanent members** elected for two-year terms.
- More than 50 United Nations Member States have never been Members of the Security Council.

### UNSC Elections

- Each year the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members (out of 10 in total) for a two-year term.
- The 10 non-permanent seats are distributed on a regional basis as follows:
  - ◆ Five for African and Asian States.
  - ◆ One for the Eastern European States.
  - ◆ Two for the Latin American and Caribbean States;
  - ◆ Two for Western European and other States

### G4 Nations

- These, comprising **Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan**, are four countries that support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council.
- Unlike the G7, where the common denominator is the economy and long-term political motives, the G4's primary aim is the permanent member seats on the Security Council.
- Each of these four countries have figured among the elected non-permanent members of the council since the UN's establishment.

### Need For Reform

- **Representation Matters:** The G4 nations stressed that the **lack of adequate geographic representation** in the Security Council is responsible for its failures.
  - ◆ Specifically, they highlighted the non-representation of **Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean**, as well as the under-representation of the Asia-Pacific region in the permanent category of the UNSC.
  - ◆ Addressing this historical imbalance is crucial for the Council to effectively tackle current global challenges.
- **Imbalances and Urgency:** India's Charge d'Affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN pointed out that recent geopolitical events have revealed the UNSC's limitations in **safeguarding international peace and security**.
  - ◆ The realities of 1945, when the Council was established, no longer align with today's geopolitical landscape.
  - ◆ The G4 nations firmly believe that any reform of the Council must address the lack of representation, especially in the permanent category. Failing to do so would exacerbate existing imbalances.

### India's Stance

- India has consistently advocated for UNSC reform. It believes that as a major global player, it deserves a permanent seat on the Council.
  - ◆ It emphasises the need for equitable representation, especially for developing countries.
- India rightly emphasises that UNSC reform is a collective effort, stating it's not solely the responsibility of a single powerful nation; all UN members must actively participate.

### Proposed Reforms

- The G4 proposed expanding the Council's membership to include more permanent and non-permanent members.
- Africa's role is particularly crucial in shaping a more representative and effective UNSC.
- Without meaningful reforms, the Council risks being ill-equipped to address the pressing challenges faced by the international community.

### Challenges and Reluctance

- Reforming the UNSC is not an easy process. Various countries have differing views on how to proceed. Some nations use procedural tactics to delay progress, hindering meaningful reform.
- **Coffee Club:** It is an informal group comprising 40-odd member states, mostly middle-sized states who oppose bigger regional powers grabbing permanent seats, has been instrumental in holding back reforms to the United Nations Security Council over the past six years.
- India, however, remains committed to pushing for change.

### Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)

- It serves as a platform for discussing UNSC reform. Unfortunately, progress has been slow.
- India has called out the use of IGN as a "smoke-screen" by a few countries, preventing substantial movement toward reform.

### India's Preparedness

- As a current non-permanent member of the UNSC, India will complete its two-year tenure in December.
- India is ready to take on greater responsibilities but also seeks to address historical injustices faced by the Global South.

Source: News On AIR

## BIO-ECONOMY DRIVEN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

### Context

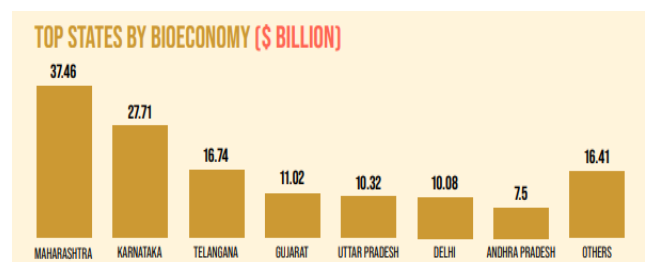
- The Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh at the ceremony of '4th edition of Global Bio India 2024' said that the Next Industrial Revolution will be BioEconomy driven.

### What is BioEconomy ?

- The BioEconomy is the **knowledge-based production and use of biological resources to provide products, processes and services** in all economic sectors within the frame of a sustainable economic system.
- It encompasses sectors like **agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food production, biotechnology, and bioenergy**.
- Subsectors of the BioEconomy in India are;
  - ♦ **BioPharma or BioMedical:** It includes the development and production of medical products and services, such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and lab-grown organoids.
  - ♦ **BioAgri:** It includes the development and production of genetically modified crops and animals, precision agriculture technologies, and bio-based products. **EX: Bt Cotton**
  - ♦ **BioIndustrial:** It includes the development and production of biobased chemicals and products using enzymes, biosynthetic routes, and recombinant DNA technology.

### BioEconomy of India

- India's BioEconomy has grown 13-fold over the last decade, from **\$10 billion in 2014** to over **\$130 billion in 2024**, with a projection to reach **\$300 billion by 2030**.
- In the Global Innovation Index, India has climbed from 81st place in 2015 to **40th out of 132** economies.
- India ranks **3rd in the Asia-Pacific region** and 12th globally in terms of biomanufacturing.
  - ♦ **Biotechnology**, a sunrise sector, has achieved a valuation of **Rs 75,000 crore** over the past 10 years.
- In 2022, BioEconomy accounted for **4%** of India's gross domestic product (GDP) of **\$3.47 trillion** and **employs over 2 million** people.



### Government Initiatives

- **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** established by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) is aimed at strengthening and empowering emerging biotechnology enterprises to undertake strategic research and innovation.
- Policy initiatives of the Government of India (GoI) such as **Startup India and Make in India programs** are aimed to develop India as a world-class Biotechnology and Bio-manufacturing hub.
- Favorable Government Policies like **Draft R&D Policy 2021, PLI Schemes and Clinical trial rules** have propelled India to be the 'pharmacy of the world'.
- **FDI Policy:** 100% FDI is allowed under the automatic route for greenfield pharma. Also **100% FDI** is allowed under the government route for brownfield pharma.
  - ♦ **Up to 74% FDI** is under the automatic route and beyond **74%** is under the government approval route.

### Challenges for BioEconomy of India

- **Global Competition:** India's BioEconomy faces stiff competition from more established bio Economies in countries like the USA, EU, and China, which have more advanced infrastructure, funding, and R&D capabilities.
- **Intellectual Property (IP) Protection:** Protecting intellectual property in the biotech sector is challenging, leading to concerns over innovation theft and lack of incentives for research.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Insufficient infrastructure for research, development, and commercialization of biotechnology innovations.
- **Brain Drain:** Talented scientists and researchers leave India for better opportunities abroad, reducing the country's capacity for innovation.

### Way Ahead

- Encourage increased **public and private investment** in biotech R&D through grants, tax incentives, and venture capital support.
- **Engage in global research collaborations** to leverage expertise, share resources, and accelerate the development of new technologies.

- **Develop innovation clusters/ecosystems** where academia, industry, and government entities can collaborate closely on BioEconomy initiatives.

### Concluding remarks

- India needs a coordinated national strategy, with **public-private partnerships** as the bedrock for a thriving bioeconomic landscape.
- Seizing the **demographic dividend** and harnessing **STEM ( Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) talent** are crucial for economic growth and global leadership.

Source: PIB

## NEW METHOD TO PREDICT AMPLITUDE OF NEXT SOLAR CYCLE

### Context

- Astronomers from the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)** have found a **new method** to predict the **amplitude of the upcoming solar cycle**.

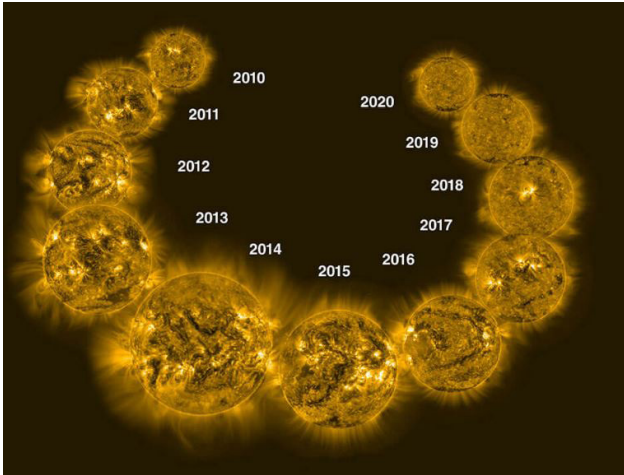
### About

- The astronomers have discovered a new correlation using **100 years of solar data from the IIA's Kodaikanal Solar Observatory**.
- The intricacies of the **solar cycle and forecasting space weather** are important fields of current research, **including in India**.
- Their research can **help in space weather forecasting**.

### Solar Cycle

- The solar cycle is the cycle that the **Sun's magnetic field goes through approximately every 11 years**.
- The Sun is a huge ball of electrically-charged hot gas. This charged gas moves, **generating a powerful magnetic field**.
  - ♦ Every 11 years or so, the Sun's **magnetic field completely flips**. This means that the **Sun's north and south poles switch places**.
  - ♦ Then it takes about another 11 years for the Sun's north and south poles to flip back again.
- The solar cycle affects activity on the surface of the Sun, such as **sunspots which are caused by the Sun's magnetic fields**.
  - ♦ As the magnetic fields change, so does the amount of activity on the Sun's surface.





- **Tracking of Solar Cycle:** One way to track the solar cycle is by **counting the number of sunspots**.
  - ♦ The beginning of a solar cycle is a **solar minimum**, or when the Sun has the least sunspots.
  - ♦ Over time, solar activity—and the number of sunspots—increases.
  - ♦ The middle of the solar cycle is the **solar maximum**, or when the Sun has the most sunspots.
  - ♦ As the cycle ends, it fades back to the solar minimum and then a new cycle begins.
- **Forecasting:** Astronomers use many different ways to forecast the strength of the next solar cycle.
  - ♦ This includes theoretical calculations based on dynamo models, extrapolations, precursor methods, etc.
  - ♦ The precursor method uses the value of some measure of solar activity at a specified time to predict the strength of the following solar maximum.

### What is Space Weather?

- **The main components of space weather** are the solar wind, coronal mass ejections, and solar flares.
- **Space weather is concerned with the varying conditions** within the solar system and its heliosphere influenced by the sun and solar wind.
- **Impact:** They can **compress the magnetosphere** of the Earth and trigger geomagnetic storms, which can affect communication and power transmission, damage spacecraft electronics, and threaten the lives of astronauts.
  - ♦ Thus, space weather has a profound influence on modern civilization.

Source: TH

## NEWS IN SHORT

### SRI AUROBINDO

#### Context

- PM Modi paid homage to the revered philosopher, thinker, and spiritual leader Sri Aurobindo, on his **152nd birth anniversary**.

#### Early Life

- Primary education from **England – St. Paul's School, London**, and at **King's College, Cambridge**.
- He returned to India in **1893** and worked for the next thirteen years in the **Princely State of Baroda** and as a professor in Baroda College.

#### Role in freedom struggle

- In **1906**, Aurobindo was appointed the **first principal of the National College in Calcutta (Bengal National College)**, and started to impart national education to Indian youth.
- He was the first political leader in India to openly put forward the **idea of complete independence** for the country in his newspaper **Bande Mataram**.
- In **1907** at the **Surat session of Congress**, he led along with extremists.
- He helped establish a series of youth clubs, including the **Anushilan Samiti of Calcutta in 1902**
  - ♦ He was arrested in 1908 in connection with the **Alipore Bomb Case**.

#### Yogic Life

- Sri Aurobindo had **begun the practice of Yoga in 1905** in Baroda.
- **In 1910 he withdrew from politics** and went to Pondicherry in order to devote himself entirely to his inner spiritual life and work.
- During his forty years in Pondicherry he evolved a new method of spiritual practice, which he called the **Integral Yoga**.
- In **1926**, he founded the **Sri Aurobindo Ashram**.

#### Literary works

- **The Life Divine**, which deals with the philosophical aspect of Integral Yoga.
- **Synthesis of Yoga**, which deals with the principles and methods of Integral Yoga.
- **Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol**, an epic poem.

Source: PIB

## SC HAS DESIGNATED SENIOR ADVOCATES

### Context

- The **Supreme Court** has designated 39 lawyers, including 10 women as senior advocates recently.

### Senior Advocates

- **Section 16 of the Advocates Act, 1961** prescribes two different classes of advocates: senior advocates and other advocates.
- The designation of senior advocate is a **mark of excellence to advocates** who have distinguished themselves and have made a significant contribution to the **development of the legal profession**.
  - ♦ It identifies advocates whose standing and achievements would justify an expectation that they can provide outstanding services as advocates in the best interest of the administration of justice.
- Section 16 also states that senior advocates may be **subject to certain additional restrictions**.
  - ♦ They are barred from filing a vakalatnama, appearing before a court without a junior or an advocate-on-record, doing drafting work, or directly accepting briefs for cases from clients.
- **Recommendation: The Chief Justice of India, along with any other Supreme Court judge**, can recommend in writing the name of an advocate for the designation.
- The new guidelines prescribe the **minimum age as 45 years** to apply for the 'senior advocate' designation.
  - ♦ This **age limit may, however, be relaxed** by the Committee for Designation of Senior Advocates, the CJI, or a Supreme Court judge, if they have recommended an advocate's name.
- **Grading:** Applicants for the designation are graded out of 100 marks.

Source: IE

## DRUG CAPTAGON

### In News

- A trial began in Aachen for four men accused of selling **Captagon tablets** worth over 58 million abroad.

### About Captagon

- Captagon is a **synthetic drug originally developed** in the 1960s and 1970s in Germany to treat attention deficit disorders.
- It contains **fenethylline** (a synthetic amphetamine), caffeine, and other stimulants.
  - ♦ Fenethylline metabolizes into amphetamine and theophylline, both stimulants.
- **Production and Distribution: Syria is the largest producer of Captagon**, accounting for about 80% of global production.
  - ♦ The drug trade has become a significant economic lifeline for Syria, worth an estimated \$5.7 billion in 2021.
  - ♦ Captagon is **exported to Gulf countries**, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon, often hidden in products like grains and fruits.
- **Usage:** Known as "poor man's cocaine," Captagon is popular among young adults in the Middle East and North Africa.
  - ♦ It is used to **boost performance**, euphoria, and wakefulness but can lead to cognitive impairment, cardiovascular issues, and addiction.
    - High quantities of fenethylline and varying pill compositions increase risks.

Source: IE

## WHO DECLARES MPOX AS PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

### In News

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared mpox a "public health emergency of international concern" (PHEIC).

- This is the second PHEIC for mpox in two years.

### PHEIC:

- A PHEIC is an extraordinary event posing a public health risk through international disease spread and requiring coordinated international response.
- It is serious, sudden, unusual, unexpected, and has implications beyond the affected state's borders.

### About Mpox:

- Mpox is caused by **the monkeypox virus (MPXV)**, an enveloped double-stranded DNA virus of the Orthopoxvirus genus.

- There are two genetic clades of the virus: clade I and clade II.
- **Origin : Discovered** in monkeys in Denmark (1958)
  - ♦ First human case reported in a nine-month-old boy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1970)
  - ♦ Initially emerged in central, east, and west Africa

### Global outbreak occurred in 2022–2023

- **Transmission:** Physical contact with an infectious person
  - ♦ Contact with contaminated materials
  - ♦ Contact with infected animals
- **Vaccination and Funding:** Two vaccines for mpox are currently in use, recommended by WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization and approved by various national authorities.
  - ♦ An initial \$15 million is needed for surveillance, preparedness, and response.
  - ♦ WHO has released \$1.45 million from its Contingency Fund for Emergencies, with potential for additional funds as needed.

Source: DTE

## NATIONAL PEST SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (NPSS)

### Context

- Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan inaugurated the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) in New Delhi.

### About

- **The aim of NPSS** is to reduce the dependence of farmers on pesticide retailers and inculcate a scientific approach among them towards pest management.
- The system will help farmers to connect with agriculture scientists and experts on controlling pests using their phone.
  - ♦ Farmers can take photos of the infested crops or the insect using the NPSS platform and these will reach scientists and experts.
- NPSS will **analyze the latest data on pests using AI tools** to help farmers and experts in pest control and management.

Source: TH

## NEW RAMSAR SITES

### Context

- Recently, the **Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary** and **Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary** in **Tamil Nadu**; and **Tawa Reservoir** of **Madhya Pradesh** have been recognised as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, taking the tally to 85.

### Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary

- Located in **Tiruppur district**, in Tamil Nadu this sanctuary is a haven for avian biodiversity, especially for **waterfowl habitats**.
- The sanctuary is named after Nanjarayan, a local deity associated with the well-being of birds and animals.

### Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary

- Found in **Villupuram, Kazhuveli in Tamil Nadu** that provides essential habitat for various bird species, including migratory visitors.
- With the addition of Nanjarayan and Kazhuveli, **Tamil Nadu now boasts 18 Ramsar sites—the highest number in India.**

### Tawa Reservoir

- It is located in **Madhya Pradesh's Narmadapuram district**.
- Its inclusion underscores our commitment to preserving these vital ecosystems, which play a crucial role in maintaining biodiversity, **water purification, and flood control**.

### Ramsar Convention

- A Ramsar site denotes **a wetland of international importance** designated under the **Ramsar Convention, adopted in Ramsar, Iran, an intergovernmental treaty established by UNESCO** in 1971 and effective from 1975.
- Countries that are parties to the convention commit to designating wetlands of international importance within their territories.
  - ♦ These sites are referred to as **Ramsar Sites**.
- It promotes efforts to conserve wetlands and use their resources sustainably, focusing on wetlands that are crucial for biodiversity, especially those that are waterfowl habitats.
- India has been a party to the Convention since 1982.

**Criteria**

- Supporting vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species; or
- Threatened ecological communities; or,
- If it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds; or,
- Is an important source of food for fishes, spawning grounds, and nursery.

Source: News On AIR

**BALEARIC ISLANDS****Context**

- Recently, the Environment Department of the **Balearic Islands** issued a press release looking into how a Katy Perry video came to be filmed on a small, protected island without the necessary permissions.

**About the Balearic Islands**

These are part of **Spain**, having **Mallorca, Ibiza, Menorca, and Formentera** different islands.

- It has a **dune system of S'Espalmador**, an approximately 1.8-mile-long islet to the north of **Formentera**, one of the most ecologically rich areas.



- S'Espalmador has been part of the **Ses Salines de Ibiza and Formentera natural park** since 1980.
  - ♦ The dunes on the small privately owned, uninhabited island make up the **best-preserved dune system** in the **Balearic Islands** and are of 'great ecological value'.
- Dunes like these are **dynamic ecosystems** that form a **natural buffer** between a sea and the land.

Source: DTE