

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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SC HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR CONTINUOUS LEGISLATIVE ASSESSMENT BY EXECUTIVE

Context

- The Supreme Court highlighted the need for **continuous legislative assessment by executive and judicial oversight**.

About

- The case that triggered this judicial intervention was a long-standing dispute over the **redevelopment of a slum area in Borivali, Mumbai**.
- SC expressed concern over the **inefficacies in the implementation of the Maharashtra Slum Areas (Improvement, Clearance, and Redevelopment) Act**, and directed the chief justice of the Bombay high court to constitute a bench for a **suo motu review of the statute's functioning**.

Directions by SC

- The Supreme Court has underscored the **crucial role that both the executive government and constitutional courts** play in ensuring the **effective functioning of laws**, holding that **reviewing and assessing** the implementation of a statute is an integral **part of the rule of law**.
- Role of Executive Branch:** According to the court, the executive branch has a constitutional obligation not only to implement laws but **also to monitor their effectiveness continuously**.
 - The executive branch has a constitutional duty to ensure that the purpose and object of a statute is accomplished while implementing it.
- Role of Judiciary:** While the judiciary traditionally reviews executive and legislative actions, the judgment envisaged **a vital role for it in nudging the system toward necessary reforms**.
 - In this role, the judiciary does not review executive and legislative actions but **only nudges and provides impetus to systemic reforms**.
 - However, the bench clarified that while the judiciary can compel such audits and promote debate, **it cannot directly enforce legislative reforms**.

Legislative Impact Assessment

- Legislative Impact Assessment (LIA) is a **systematic approach** used to evaluate the potential effects of proposed legislation on various aspects of society and governance.

- The goal is to **understand the implications of a bill or law** before it is enacted, ensuring that it effectively addresses the issue at hand while minimizing unintended consequences.

India and Legislative Assessment

- In India, Parliament passes the legislation framework in the skeleton form and delegates the task of filling the details to executives and state legislatures as per the local requirements by providing broad guidelines.
- Mechanisms in India:** In India there are few mechanisms to assess the legislation post enactment such as standing committees of parliament, financial commission, law commission, committees or bodies created for specific policies or legislations etc.
 - But there is no institutionalized legislative impact assessment strategy having statutory status to assess the legislation before its enactment.
- Challenges:** Lack of scrutiny of laws enacted by entrusted bodies, laws profusion etc.
 - Sometimes these laws fail due to lack of pre-legislative rationale, impact analysis of laws, consultation and deliberation. Thus, the outcome is **numerous laws with little data on their achievements**.
 - Laws are formulated by respective ministries with little or no coordination with other ministries leading to contradiction in implementation.
 - Therefore, need arises to institutionalize a uniform framework for assessing the impact of laws before, during and after enactment to ensure that they meet desired objectives.

Governance Structure in India

- In India, the governance structure is divided into **three main branches**, each with distinct roles and functions:
- Executive Branch:** The President of India is the **ceremonial head of state**. The President's role is largely symbolic, but have important functions such as **appointing the Prime Minister and giving assent to bills passed by Parliament**.
 - Head of Government:** The Prime Minister of India is the real head of government and exercises executive power. The Prime Minister leads the **Council of Ministers**, who are responsible for the administration of various government departments and implementing policies.
- State Level:** Each state has a **Governor**, and a Chief Minister, who is the head of the state government and leads the Council of Ministers in the state.

- **Legislative Branch:** The Parliament of India is bicameral, consisting of:
 - ♦ **Rajya Sabha (Council of States):** The upper house, representing states and union territories.
 - ♦ **Lok Sabha (House of the People):** The lower house, whose members are directly elected by the people of India through general elections.
 - ♦ **State Legislature:** Most states have a unicameral legislature known as the Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha).
 - ♦ Some states also have a bicameral legislature with a Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad), which functions similarly to the Rajya Sabha at the state level.
- **Judicial Branch: Supreme Court:** The highest court in India, with the authority to interpret the Constitution, adjudicate disputes between states and the center, and oversee the legality of laws and government actions.
 - ♦ Each state or group of states has a High Court, which handles appeals from lower courts and issues related to state-level legal matters.
 - ♦ District Courts handle civil and criminal cases at the district level, and various specialized courts such as family courts, consumer courts, and labor courts.
- Each branch operates independently but is designed to work in harmony with the others, providing a system of **checks and balances** to ensure fair governance and adherence to the Constitution.

Conclusion

- The Supreme Court's intervention in this matter not only seeks to address the specific shortcomings in the implementation of the Maharashtra Slum Areas Act but also **reinforces the broader principle** that it is the duty of the executive government to continually assess and adapt laws to meet their objectives.
- The judiciary's role in this context is to ascertain that these assessments are carried out effectively, **promoting a legal system that is both responsive and accountable.**

Source: HT

TOURISM SECTOR IN INDIA

Context

- According to the **Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024 report**

published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), India is ranked **39th among 119 countries.**

About

- In the previous index published in 2021, **India was ranked 54th.**
- **India's scores have improved in three areas:** Prioritization of Travel & Tourism, Safety & Security, and Health & Hygiene.
- There were 975 million International Tourist arrivals around the world in 2022, wherein India recorded 14.3 million International Tourist Arrivals that represented **1.47% of the international inbound tourism market share.**
 - ♦ The share of India's International Tourist Arrivals in Asia & Pacific is **15.66% in 2022.**

Types of Tourism offered in India

- Bounded by the **Himalayan ranges in the north** and edged by a **coastline** surrounded by **three seas**, India has magnificent historical sites and royal cities, golden beaches, misty mountain retreats, rich cultures and festivities.
 - ♦ **Adventure tourism:** This involves exploration of remote areas and exotic locales and engaging in various activities.
 - ♦ For adventure tourism in India, tourists prefer to go trekking to places like Ladakh, Sikkim, and Himalaya.
 - ♦ **Spiritual Tourism :** The astounding diversity of religions, cultures, and languages of India is unique and unparalleled.
- **Beach Tourism:** India's vast coastline and islands provides ample opportunities for tourism.
 - ♦ Kerala, Goa, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep islands attract tourists in large numbers all around the year.
- **Cultural tourism:** India is known for its rich cultural heritage and an element of mysticism, which is why tourists come to India to experience it for themselves.
- The various fairs and festivals that tourists can visit in India are the Pushkar fair (Rajasthan), Taj Mahotsav (Uttar Pradesh), and Suraj Kund mela (Haryana).
- **Wildlife tourism:** India has a rich forest cover which has exotic species of wildlife – some of which are even endangered and very rare. This has boosted wildlife tourism in India.
- **Medical tourism:** Tourists from all over the world come to India to avail themselves of cost-effective but superior quality healthcare in terms of surgical procedures and general medical attention.

Indian Tourism Sector

- The Indian Tourism sector ranks among the **fastest-growing economic sectors** in the country.
- International Tourist arrival is expected to reach **30.5 million by 2028**.
- By 2028, India's tourism and hospitality industry is projected to generate revenue **of over \$59 Bn.**
 - ♦ Additionally, Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) are anticipated to reach 30.5 Mn by 2028.

Challenges

- **Infrastructure Deficiencies:** Many tourist destinations in India suffer from inadequate infrastructure, including poor road conditions, insufficient public transportation, and inadequate facilities in popular tourist areas.
- **Environmental Degradation:** Increased tourism lead to environmental problems such as pollution, overuse of natural resources, and damage to wildlife and ecosystems. Sustainable tourism practices are often lacking.
- **Lack of Standardization:** There is a lack of standardized quality control across various services in the tourism sector, from hotels and restaurants to tour operators. This inconsistency affect the overall tourist experience.
- **Seasonality:** Many tourist destinations face seasonal fluctuations, with high tourist numbers during peak seasons and low numbers during off-seasons.
- **Marketing and Promotion Challenges:** Effective marketing strategies are often lacking, and there is a need for better promotion of lesser-known destinations.
- **Cultural Sensitivity and Management:** Managing cultural heritage responsibly while balancing tourism needs is challenging.
 - ♦ There are issues related to respecting local traditions and practices while catering to tourist demands.

Government Initiatives

- **Incredible India Campaign:** Launched in 2002, this ongoing campaign aims to position India as a premier tourist destination.
 - ♦ It focuses on highlighting India's diverse culture, heritage, and attractions through various media and promotional activities.
- **National Tourism Policy:** The National Tourism Policy aims to promote sustainable tourism, improve infrastructure, and increase tourist arrivals.

- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme:** This scheme was launched to develop theme-based tourist circuits across the country.
 - ♦ It focuses on creating world-class infrastructure, including roads, amenities, and signage, to improve the tourist experience.
- **Prasad Scheme:** The Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) aims to develop and beautify pilgrimage destinations across India, enhancing facilities and accessibility for spiritual tourism.
- **Atithi Devo Bhava Campaign:** This initiative promotes hospitality and the cultural ethos of treating guests with utmost respect and care.
 - ♦ It includes training programs for service providers in the tourism sector.
- **Visa Reforms:** The introduction of e-visa facilities for citizens of many countries has simplified the process for obtaining a visa to visit India. This move aims to attract more international tourists.
- **Tourism Infrastructure Development:** The government has invested in improving infrastructure, including the development of airports, roads, and railways, to make travel more convenient for tourists.
- **Support for Sustainable Tourism:** The government is promoting eco-friendly and sustainable tourism practices through various schemes and guidelines, including the promotion of responsible tourism.

Source: PIB

PUMPED STORAGE PROJECTS

In News

- The Union Budget for 2024-25 promised that a policy for **promoting pumped storage projects will be brought out for electricity storage** and facilitating smooth integration of the growing share of renewable energy with its variable and intermittent nature.

About Pumped storage projects

- It is a configuration of two water reservoirs at different elevations that can generate power as water moves down from one to the other (discharge), passing through a turbine.
- **Pumped storage projects** store energy to balance the variability of renewable energy sources like wind and solar.

Types

- Pumped storage is of two types:
 - ♦ **On-River:** Traditional hydroelectric projects using river flow.

- ♦ **Off-River:** Uses two reservoirs at different elevations in a closed loop. Energy is stored by pumping water to a higher reservoir and generating power by letting it flow down.
 - One such project is at Kadamparai, Tamil Nadu.
- Capacity: 400MW with four 100MW units.

Status in India

- India has **3.3GW of pumped storage**. Main ones are in Nagarjunasagar, Kadana, Kadamparai, Panchet and Bhira.
- **China leads the world with 50GW** of pumped storage supporting 1,300GW of wind and solar energy.

Need

- India has planned to create an ambitious 500GW of non-fossil fuel energy by 2030.
- From 2021 to 2023, it created some 23GW of non-fossil generation capacity.
 - ♦ Out of the total 10GW added in eight months in 2023-24, 7.5GW were from wind and solar energy pointing to how renewables will account for most of the new power generation that will be added in India.
- India would need to ramp up its pumped storage capacity by several times if it wants to meet its renewable power generation targets.

Advantages

- Quick on/off response of turbine
- Quick Response to generation variability to stabilise grid
- Best mechanism to help integrate the intermittent energy resources with system
- Help improve grid efficiency.
- Low O&M Cost
- Environment friendly as helps reducing Greenhouse gas emission from energy generation by fossil fuels

Disadvantages

- Loss of energy while pumping.
- At times Attracts adverse impact on environment due to large submergence in two reservoirs.
- Initial cost is very high and cost economics is a challenge.
- Long gestation period 8
- Requires highly meticulous and judicious planning and design.

- Very difficult to find suitable site and the ideal site is rare to find

Suggestions and Way Forward

- Given the ongoing energy transitions in the country, the development of Pump Storage Projects is of paramount importance for providing greater inertia and balancing power to the grid as battery storage solutions are still being scaled up and are required for short duration storage needs in grid management
- Pump Storage Projects are a natural enabler for integrating greater amounts of wind and solar power. With its ability to store a large amount of energy, frequent starts/stops, and faster ramp up/ramp-downs, PSPS are ideally suited to address the dynamic supply and demand.

Source:TH

INDIA'S PER CAPITA INCOME AND THE MIDDLE-INCOME TRAP

Context

- According to the **World Bank**, more than 100 countries — including China, India, Brazil, and South Africa — face serious obstacles that could hinder their efforts to become high-income countries in the next few decades.

About the Middle-Income Trap

- It refers to a **situation** where countries, **after achieving a certain level of economic development and income**, find themselves stuck in a rut — **unable to make the leap to becoming high-income nations**.
 - ♦ It occurs when a nation's growth stalls after reaching a certain income level, preventing it from transitioning to high-income status.
- As countries grow wealthier, they often encounter a critical juncture — usually when their annual GDP per person reaches about 10% of the United States' GDP per capita (which is roughly equivalent to \$8,000 today).
- It lies squarely in the middle of what the **World Bank classifies as 'middle-income'** countries, and manifests when these nations struggle to sustain rapid growth and innovation, leading to stagnation in their economic progress.

Numbers

- As of 2023, **India** was classified as a middle-income country, with an annual GDP **per capita ranging from \$1,136 to \$13,845**.

- The critical threshold for most countries is around 10% of annual U.S. GDP per person, currently equivalent to **approximately \$8,000**.
- Since 1990, only 34 middle-income economies have successfully transitioned to high-income status, often due to factors like EU integration or newfound oil reserves.

Global Economic Prosperity

- The battle for global economic prosperity largely unfolds in middle-income countries. These nations, home to 75% of the world's population, generate over 40% of global GDP.
- However, relying on outdated strategies won't suffice. Countries must adapt, innovate, and overcome the challenges posed by the middle-income trap.

Vision and the Reality

- India envisions itself as a developed economy by 2047 — the centennial of its independence. However, the World Bank cautions that achieving this goal would be akin to a miracle given historical patterns.
- Comparing India's trajectory to that of South Korea, which transformed from a middle-income to a high-income economy in just 25 years, the report emphasises the need for innovative strategies.
- The World Bank study highlights that India could take 75 years to achieve a per capita income equivalent to a quarter of that in the United States if current trends persist.

Obstacles Faced by Middle-Income Countries

- **Ageing Populations:** Many middle-income countries grapple with rapidly aging populations. This demographic shift poses significant challenges for sustaining economic growth and maintaining social welfare systems.
- **Rising Protectionism:** In advanced economies, protectionist policies are on the rise. These barriers to trade can hinder middle-income countries' access to global markets and technological advancements.
- **Energy Transition:** As the world confronts climate change, transitioning to cleaner energy sources becomes imperative. Middle-income countries must balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.

Scale of the Challenge

- At the end of 2023, a staggering 108 countries were classified as middle-income. These nations

are home to approximately six billion people—constituting 75% of the global population.

- Shockingly, two out of every three people living in extreme poverty reside in these middle-income countries.
- Moreover, they generate over 40% of global GDP and contribute more than 60% of carbon emissions.

A Way Forward: 3i Strategy

- To escape the middle-income trap, the World Bank proposes a pragmatic '**3i Strategy**':
- **Investment (1i):** Low-income countries should focus primarily on policies that encourage investment. Building infrastructure, improving education, and attracting foreign direct investment are crucial steps.
- **Infusion (2i):** As countries attain lower-middle-income status, they need to diversify their strategies. This phase involves adopting technologies from abroad and spreading them across the economy. Innovation becomes essential.
- **Innovation (3i):** At the upper-middle-income level, countries must embrace innovation. This means fostering research and development, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating an ecosystem that encourages creativity.

Conclusion

- The battle for global economic prosperity hinges on how effectively middle-income countries navigate this critical phase. With demographic, ecological, and geopolitical pressures, there's no room for complacency.
- By adopting the 3i strategy and learning from past experiences, these nations can break free from the middle-income trap and chart a course toward sustained growth and prosperity.

Source: TH

DISASTER MANAGEMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

Context

- The Minister of State for Home Affairs introduced the **Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024** in the Lok Sabha.

About

- The bill seeks to amend the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**.

- It aims to strengthen the functioning of the **national and state disaster management authorities**, besides bringing in more clarity and convergence among stakeholders working in the field of disaster management.

What is a Disaster?

- “disaster” means a catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence in any area, arising from natural or man made causes, or by accident or negligence which results in substantial loss of life or human suffering or damage to, and destruction of, property, or damage to, or degradation of, environment, and is of such a nature or magnitude as to be beyond the coping capacity of the community of the affected area.

Disaster Management

- **Disaster management** means a continuous and integrated process of planning, organizing, coordinating and implementing measures which are necessary or expedient for;
 - ♦ prevention of danger or threat of any disaster;
 - ♦ mitigation or reduction of risk of any disaster or its severity or consequences;
 - ♦ capacity-building;
 - ♦ preparedness to deal with any disaster;
 - ♦ prompt response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster;
 - ♦ assessing the severity or magnitude of effects of any disaster.

Key Features of the Bill

- The Bill seeks to create a “**disaster database at national and State level**,” and makes provision for the constitution of “**Urban Disaster Management Authority**” for State capitals and large cities having municipal corporations, except the union territories of Delhi and Chandigarh.
- The Bill empowers the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** and the **State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMA)** to prepare the disaster plan at national level and State level respectively.
- The Bill empowers the NDMA to take stock of the entire range of disaster risks in the country periodically, including emerging disaster risks.

- ♦ It includes “risks of those disasters that may not have taken place, but may occur in future due to extreme climate events and other factors.”
- The Bill further aims to provide statutory status to certain pre-Act organizations like the **National Crisis Management Committee** and the **High Level Committee**.

Concluding Remarks

- There was a need to amend the Disaster Management Act, 2005 to mainstream “Disaster Management in the development plans, aligning with the recommendations of the **Fifteenth Finance Commission**.”
- The Bill is being opposed, as it creates several authorities which will give rise to confusion.
- Also it grants excessive rulemaking power to the Central government through delegated legislation to make rules on specific matters, which could potentially overlap with the legislative powers reserved for the States.

Disaster Management Act, 2005

- It is a national law that empowers the Central government to declare the entire country or part of it as affected by a disaster and to make plans for mitigation to reduce “**risks, impacts and affects**” of the disaster.
- **Four important entities** have been placed at the national level;
 - ♦ **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA):** It is tasked with laying down disaster management policies and ensuring a timely and effective response mechanism.
 - ♦ **National Executive Committee (NEC):** It is composed of secretary level officers of the Government of India assigned to assist the NDMA.
 - ♦ **National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM):** It is an institute for training and capacity development programs for managing natural disasters.
 - ♦ **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF):** It refers to trained professional units that are called upon for specialized response to disasters.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

LA NIÑA

Context

- The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has revised the outlook for the probability of 'La Nina' weather conditions in the Pacific Ocean.

About

- The development of La Niña is said to be high in September to January (50-70%) with a possibility to peak in November (70%).

What is La Nina?

- La Niña is the opposite of El Niño. La Niña witnesses **cooler than average sea surface temperature (SST)** in the equatorial Pacific region.
- Trade winds are stronger than usual, pushing warmer water towards Asia.
- Impact:** This leads to **drier conditions in the Southern U.S.**, and heavy rainfall in Canada. It has also been associated with heavy floods in Australia.

How does it affect the Indian Monsoon?

- In El Niño years**, India faces **warmer temperatures and less rainfall**, causing droughts in some regions.
 - This affects agriculture, water resources, and ecosystems.
 - The El Nino phenomenon led to **1.4% decrease** in food grain production for the 2023-24 (July-June) crop year.
- La Niña** brings cooler sea surface temperatures, leading to increased rainfall in certain parts of India.

Source: TH

PRIVILEGE MOTION

Context

- Congress MP moved a notice **to bring a privilege motion** against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Lok Sabha.

About

- If a member believes that **parliamentary privileges by an MP** have been **breached or misused**, a motion or complaint can be raised to the house chairman or speaker.

- Two conditions exist** – the question shall be restricted to a specific matter of recent occurrence and the matter requires the intervention of the Council.
- Process:** The Speaker/Chair upon initial examination can either admit or reject such motion.
 - When admitted, the motion is then referred to a **privileges committee** consisting of members nominated by him from time to time.
 - The committee on examination of a privilege motion can make recommendations that it deems to be fit.
 - A report shall be presented within a maximum time limit of one month or at an early date suggested by the Chair/Speaker.
 - Penal action against members is recommended only in extreme cases.

What is parliamentary privilege?

- India lacks a law that defines what is a parliamentary privilege.
- Article 105** in the Indian Constitution explicitly mentions only two kinds of privileges, **freedom of speech in the Parliament and the right to publish the house proceedings**.
- The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**, grants freedom from arrest and detention of members under a civil process during house proceedings or during the functioning of any of its committees.
 - Members also enjoy immunity for forty days before its commencement and after the conclusion of any house or committee proceedings.
 - Members are not liable for any court proceedings for anything said or published regarding house or committee proceedings.

Source: IE

STATES CAN DIRECTLY BUY RICE FROM FCI

Context

- The Union government has announced that the States can directly purchase rice from the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** under the **Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic)** without participating in **e-auction**.

About

- The States wanted to procure more rice over the stipulated five kg of free grain per individual under the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna**

Yojana (PMGKAY); they can procure it for **₹2,800 per quintal** (excluding transportation cost).

What is the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS)?

- Under the **Open Market Sale Scheme**, the FCI from time to time sells surplus food grains from the central pool especially wheat and rice in the open market to traders, bulk consumers, retail chains and so on at predetermined prices.
- FCI does this through **e-auctions** where **open market bidders can buy specified quantities** at the prices set at the start of a cycle and revised routinely.
- Usually, states are also allowed to procure food grains through the OMSS without participating in the auctions, for their needs beyond what they get from the central pool to distribute to **National Food Security Act, 2013** beneficiaries.

FCI discontinued the sale of grains to states

- In **June 2023**, the Union government stopped the sale of rice and wheat from the Central pool under the OMSS to state governments.
- It also disallowed private bidders to sell their OMSS supplies to state governments.

Food Corporation of India (FCI)

- FCI was setup under the **Food Corporations Act 1964**, in order to fulfill **following objectives** of the Food Policy:
 - ◆ Effective price support operations for safeguarding the interests of the farmers.
 - ◆ Distribution of foodgrains throughout the country for a public distribution system.
 - ◆ Maintaining a satisfactory level of operational and buffer stocks of foodgrains to ensure National Food Security Since its inception.
- FCI has played a significant role in India's success in transforming the crisis management oriented food security into a stable security system.

Source: TH

CURBING SURROGATE ADVERTISEMENT FOR TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL

Context

- Recently, the Health Ministry of India has recently taken a proactive stance to address the issue

of surrogate advertising of tobacco and alcohol products.

About the Surrogate Advertising

- The word '**surrogate**' refers to '**substitute**'. It is the process of using a brand's name, logo, and essence to sell a product/service it is not popularly known for.
- In simple words, it involves brands promoting legally admissible products or services instead of the ones that are not.
- **Surrogate advertisements** promote products in restricted categories undermine consumer rights and can have serious implications.

Measures Proposed by the Health Ministry

- **Anti-Tobacco Declaration of Interest Form:** Both the SAI and the BCCI are urged to have sportspersons sign an anti-tobacco declaration of interest form. This step emphasises their commitment to promoting health and discouraging tobacco consumption.
- **No Promotion/Advertising in Stadiums or Events:** The Ministry recommends that sportspersons refrain from promoting or advertising tobacco and alcohol products during events hosted or partnered by the BCCI or the SAI. This includes avoiding any surrogate advertising.
- **Directives to Sportspersons:** Sportspersons under the ambit of the BCCI are specifically directed to avoid any surrogate promotion, partnership, or advertisement related to tobacco and related products.

Impact and Rationale

- **Reducing Tobacco Consumption:** By discouraging surrogate advertising, especially among youth, the Ministry aims to contribute to a decline in tobacco use.
- **Positive Image of Sportspersons:** Upholding the highest standards of integrity and responsibility in sports, sportspersons can continue to be advocates for health and fitness.

Source: TH

FIN WHALE

In News

- Japan has expanded its commercial whaling to include fin whales.

About Fin whale

- It gets its name from an easy-to-spot fin on its back, near its tail



- It has sleek, streamlined bodies with V-shaped heads.
- It is the **second-largest whale species** on earth, second only to the blue whale.
- It is a fast swimmer and is often found in social groups of two to seven individuals.
- **Habitat and Distribution** :It is typically found in deep, offshore waters of all major oceans, primarily in temperate to polar latitudes. They are less common in the tropics.
 - ♦ They occur year-round in a wide range of locations, but the density of individuals in any one area changes seasonally.
 - ♦ Most migrate from the Arctic and Antarctic feeding areas in the summer to tropical breeding and calving areas in the winter.
- **IUCN Status** : Vulnerable
- **Threats** : Hunted by commercial whalers, which severely lowered their populations.

Source:TH

GROWTH IN THE PRODUCTION OF KEY MINERALS

In News

- Production of key minerals in the country, such as iron ore and limestone, has continued to show robust growth in Q1 of FY 2024-25, after reaching record production levels in FY 2023-24.

Mineral Production Overview (FY 2023-24):

- **Iron Ore Production**: 275 million metric tons (MMT).
- **Limestone Production**: 450 MMT.
- **Iron Ore and Limestone**: Together account for about 80% of total MCDR mineral production by value.

Growth in FY 2024-25 (April-June) Compared to Previous Year:

- **Iron Ore**: Increased from 72 MMT to 79 MMT (9.7% growth).
- **Limestone**: Increased from 114 MMT to 116 MMT (1.8% growth).
- **Manganese Ore**: Increased from 0.9 MMT to 1.0 MMT (11% growth).
- **Non-Ferrous Metal Sector(Primary Aluminium Production)**: Increased from 10.28 lakh tons (LT) to 10.43 LT (1.2% growth) for April-June FY 2024-25.

Global Rankings:

- **Aluminum**: India is the 2nd largest producer.
- **Limestone**: India is the 3rd largest producer.
- **Iron Ore**: India is the 4th largest producer.

Economic Implications:

- Continued growth in iron ore and limestone production indicates strong demand in steel and cement industries.
- Growth trends in minerals and metals suggest ongoing strong economic activity in sectors like energy, infrastructure, construction, automotive, and machinery.

Source:PIB

BHOPAL GAS TRAGEDY

Context

- In the 40th year of Bhopal Gas Tragedy (1984), demand for disposal of toxic waste at the Union Carbide Factory gained momentum.

About the Bhopal Gas Tragedy

- It occurred on the night of **December 2-3, 1984**, at the **Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL)** pesticide plant in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- The release of **Methyl Isocyanate (MIC)** gas from the factory resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and widespread suffering.

Toxic Waste and Groundwater Contamination

- One critical aspect of this tragedy is the toxic waste left behind at the Union Carbide Factory site.

- For four decades, this waste has remained largely unaddressed, polluting the environment and contaminating groundwater.
- Studies have revealed that the toxic chemicals—often referred to as '**forever chemicals**' due to **their persistent nature**—have seeped into the groundwater of 42 settlements around the factory.
- These chemicals do not lose their potency over time, exacerbating the crisis.
- An **Oversight Committee, appointed by the Supreme Court**, monitors the disposal process.

Source: DTE

