

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## INTER-MINISTERIAL JOINT WORKSHOP ON BLUE ECONOMY

### Context

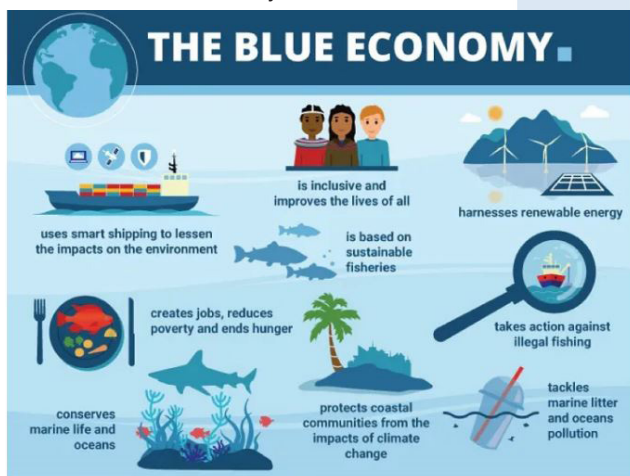
- The Ministry of Earth Sciences hosted the Inter-Ministerial Joint Workshop on Blue Economy.

### About

- MoES has engaged with the World Bank as a knowledge partner to undertake a technical study and prepare a report titled 'India's Blue Economy: Pathways for resource-efficient, inclusive and resilient growth in India'.
- The report is expected to cover the areas related to global best practices in Blue Economy implementation, ocean accounting framework, institutional strengthening and innovative finance mechanisms towards implementing the Blue Economy Policy framework.

### What is the Blue Economy?

- It is referred as the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem.

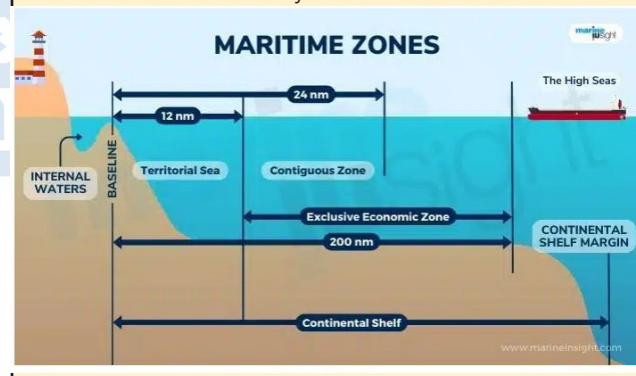


### India's Blue Economy

- India has a **7,517 km long coastline** and **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** of over two million square km is rich in living and non-living resources.
- India's blue economy accounts for **roughly 4% of the GDP** and is estimated to increase once the mechanism is improved.
- The coastal economy also sustains over 4 million fisherfolk and other coastal communities.
- Four primary industries in India can fuel its blue economy; **fishing, aquaculture, ports, and shipping.**

### India's Maritime Zone

- India's maritime zone refers to the **maritime boundaries and areas under its jurisdiction** in the surrounding seas and oceans.
- India has a **coastline of 7,517 Km** including island territories.
- Territorial Waters (12 Nautical Miles):** The territorial waters of India extend up to **12 nautical miles** from the baseline.
  - Within this zone, India exercises **full sovereignty**, and it includes the country's coastal areas and ports.
- Contiguous Zone (24 Nautical Miles):** Beyond the territorial waters, there is a contiguous zone that extends an additional 12 nautical miles.
  - In this zone, India can take action to prevent or punish infringements on customs, fiscal, immigration, or sanitary laws within its territory or territorial sea.
- Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):** The EEZ extends up to 200 nautical miles from the baseline.
  - Within this zone, India has the exclusive rights for exploring, exploiting, conserving, and managing natural resources, such as fisheries and hydrocarbons.



### Significance of the Blue Economy

- Economic Growth:** The Blue Economy presents significant opportunities for economic growth through sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, maritime transport, renewable energy, and biotechnology.
- Resource Utilization:** It promotes the sustainable utilization of marine resources, including fish stocks, minerals, and energy sources, ensuring their availability for current and future generations.
- Renewable Energy:** The Blue Economy encourages the development of renewable energy sources such as offshore wind, wave, and tidal energy, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and mitigating climate change.

- **Tourism:** Coastal and marine tourism is a key component of the Blue Economy, generating revenue, employment, and supporting local economies in coastal regions.
- **Climate Change Mitigation:** Healthy oceans play a crucial role in regulating the Earth's climate.
  - ♦ The Blue Economy promotes conservation efforts and sustainable practices that help mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as preserving coastal ecosystems and reducing carbon emissions.
- **Biodiversity Conservation:** By promoting sustainable practices and responsible management of marine resources, the Blue Economy contributes to the conservation of marine biodiversity and the protection of endangered species and habitats.

### Challenges

- **Pollution and environmental degradation:** India's coastal areas face significant pollution from various sources, including industrial discharge, untreated sewage, agricultural runoff, and plastic waste.
  - ♦ Pollution harms marine ecosystems, affects biodiversity, and undermines the sustainability of fisheries and other marine industries.
- **Overexploitation of marine resources:** Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing exacerbates the problem, leading to depletion of fish stocks and loss of livelihoods for coastal communities.
- **Climate change impacts:** Rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and changes in ocean temperature and currents due to climate change affect fisheries, aquaculture, coastal infrastructure, and biodiversity.
- **Maritime security challenges:** India's maritime security is threatened by various factors, including piracy, illegal trafficking, maritime terrorism, and territorial disputes.
- **Limited institutional capacity and infrastructure:** Developing and managing the blue economy requires robust institutional frameworks, governance mechanisms, and infrastructure.
  - ♦ However, India faces challenges related to capacity constraints, inadequate funding, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and regulatory gaps, hindering effective management and sustainable development of marine resources.

### Steps Taken by Government of India to Promote Blue Economy

- **National Policy Framework:** Government has formulated a National Policy Framework for the Blue Economy, which provides a strategic roadmap for sustainable development and management of marine resources.
  - ♦ The framework aims to integrate various sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, tourism, and renewable energy to promote holistic growth.
- **Sagarmala Programme:** The Sagarmala Programme is a flagship initiative aimed at modernizing India's ports, enhancing port connectivity, and promoting port-led development.
  - ♦ It focuses on optimizing logistics efficiency, promoting coastal shipping, and developing coastal economic zones to stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities.
- **National Marine Fisheries Action Plan (NMFAP):** The plan includes measures to improve fishery resources assessment, enhance infrastructure and technology in the fisheries sector, and promote aquaculture development.
- **Blue Economy Cell:** The Ministry of Earth Sciences has established a dedicated Blue Economy Cell to coordinate research, policy formulation, and implementation of Blue Economy initiatives.
- **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM):** The government has implemented the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Program to promote sustainable development and conservation of coastal ecosystems.
- **Marine Spatial Planning (MSP):** India has initiated efforts to develop Marine Spatial Planning frameworks to ensure efficient and sustainable use of marine space.

### Way Ahead

- The Blue Economy in India is poised for significant growth in the next few years.
- The Blue Economy Mission undertaken by the government can lead to the sector becoming the next economic multiplier, depending on the execution of the policies that have been decided.
- The sector is the sixth dimension of the government's 'Vision of New India by 2030'; with the Blue Economy policies aiming for long-term economic advantages in order to achieve the greater goals of growth, job creation, equity, and environmental protection.

Source: PIB

## GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE BETTING AND GAMBLING PLATFORMS

### Context:

- The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** has recently advised all endorsers and influencers on social media to refrain from promoting or advertising offshore online betting and gambling platforms.

### About:

- The Ministry has **reiterated the advisory by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) dated 06.03.2024** which had expressed concerns regarding **endorsements of betting/gambling platforms** by celebrities and influencers to endorse and promote their betting activities.

### Major highlights of the advisory

- Prohibition:** The guidelines prohibit the endorsement and advertisement of **activities prohibited by law**, including betting or gambling, and caution that any such endorsements or advertisements will be subject to rigorous scrutiny.
  - The advisories also **warn celebrities and influencers to refrain from endorsing and promoting** illegal betting and gambling activities.
- Socio-economic implications:** The Ministry has said that these advertisements have a **significant financial and socio-economic implications** of online betting and gambling on consumers, particularly the youth.
  - The Ministry has also advised the online advertisement intermediaries **not to target such promotional content towards Indian audiences.**
- Sensitization drives:** Social media intermediaries have also been advised to **conduct sensitization efforts among their users** to refrain from publishing such content.
- Penalty:** The advisory cautions that failure to comply with it may **lead to proceedings under the provisions of Consumer Protection Act, 2019** including removal or disabling of social media posts or accounts and penal action under the applicable statutes.
- Applicability:** These guidelines **apply to all advertisements regardless of the medium and**

**are aimed at protecting consumers**, particularly the youth, from the potential harms associated with illegal betting and gambling.

### Online Gambling

- Online gambling refers to the **practice of participating in gambling activities over the internet**. It involves placing bets or wagers on various games and events with the aim of winning money or other prizes.
- It can be played on various devices, including **computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones** and involves the use of virtual chips or digital currencies instead of physical cash.
- The **global online gambling market size** was valued at **USD 63.53 billion in 2022** and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of **11.7% from 2023 to 2030**.
- Major Types:**
  - Casino games:** These include slots, blackjack, roulette, and baccarat, among others.
  - Sports betting:** This involves placing bets on sports events, such as football, basketball, cricket, and horse racing.
  - Poker:** This is a card game played against other players online.
  - Lottery:** This involves purchasing tickets for online lotteries that offer large cash prizes.

### Advantages of Online Gambling

- Accessible entertainment:** Online gambling provides easy and convenient access to entertainment for millions of Indians who may not have access to traditional land-based casinos or gambling establishments.
- Revenue generation:** It can generate significant revenue for the Indian government through taxation and regulation besides creating jobs and business opportunities for Indian entrepreneurs.
- Tourism:** It can help promote tourism in India by attracting foreign players who are interested in Indian-themed games or unique experiences that are not available in their home countries.
- Responsible gambling:** Online gambling platforms can provide responsible gambling resources and tools to help players manage their gambling activities and prevent addiction through setting deposit limits.

### Challenges of Online gambling

- **Addiction:** Online gambling can lead to addiction causing severe financial and social problems as it is easily accessible, and players can spend hours playing games without realizing the amount of time and money they are spending.
- **Lack of Regulation:** Online gambling is often unregulated, making it easy for fraudulent activities to take place. This can lead to players losing their money or their personal information being compromised.
- **Underage Gambling:** Online gambling sites can be easily accessed by minors, leading to underage gambling. This can cause severe psychological and financial problems for children and their families.
- **Money Laundering:** Online gambling can be used as a means for money laundering, where players can deposit large amounts of cash into online accounts and then withdraw the money in a legitimate form.
- **Cybersecurity Risks:** Online gambling sites can be vulnerable to cyber-attacks, which can lead to the theft of sensitive personal and financial information of the players.
- **Social Isolation:** Online gambling can lead to social isolation, as players can spend hours playing games online, leading to a lack of social interaction with family and friends.

**Regulation of Online Gambling in India:** The laws governing online gambling in India are complex and vary by state however, there are some overarching laws that apply to the entire country:

- **Public Gambling Act, 1867:** It is a federal law that prohibits operating or visiting a gambling house. However, this law does not specifically mention online gambling.
- **Information Technology Act, 2011:** It was amended to include provisions related to online gambling which states that any website that offers online gambling services must be located outside of India.
- **Many states in India have their own laws** related to gambling with some states, such as Goa and Sikkim, having legalized certain forms of gambling and issuing licenses to operators.

### Related Supreme Court Judgements:

- **Dr. K.R. Lakshmanan vs. State of Tamil Nadu (1996):** The Supreme Court of India held that

games of skill, such as horse racing and rummy, are not considered gambling under the Public Gambling Act of 1867.

- **State of Andhra Pradesh vs. K. Satyanarayana (1968):** The Andhra Pradesh High Court ruled that playing rummy for stakes is considered gambling and is therefore illegal.
- **Varun Gumber v. Union Territory of Chandigarh (2017):** The Punjab and Haryana High Court declared that online fantasy sports games, such as Dream11, involve a substantial degree of skill and are not considered gambling.
- **Mahalakshmi Cultural Association v. State of Tamil Nadu (2013):** The Madras High Court held that online games of chance, such as poker and rummy, are considered gambling and are therefore illegal.
- **Shri Krishna Agrawal vs. State of Maharashtra (1999):** The Bombay High Court ruled that the game of poker involves a substantial degree of skill and is therefore not considered gambling.

### Way ahead

- Overall, **online gambling poses significant challenges that need to be addressed** by regulators and policymakers to ensure that players are protected and that online gambling is conducted in a fair and responsible manner.
- **The legal landscape surrounding online gambling in India is complex** and can vary widely by state thus there is need for individuals to be aware of the laws in their state and to ensure they are only participating in legal and licensed online gambling activities.

Source: PIB

## INDIAN PM VISIT TO BHUTAN RELATIONS

### Context

- Prime Minister Modi is on a two-day state visit to Bhutan as part of India's 'Neighbourhood First' Policy.

### Key Highlights

- India and Bhutan **inked seven agreements**, on cooperation in energy, food safety, sports and research, as well as a space collaboration roadmap.

- PM Modi was awarded the **Order of Druk Gyalpo**, Bhutan's highest honor.
- Also India has decided to **double Bhutan's assistance** over the next five years, from ₹5,000 crore in 2019-2024 to ₹10,000 crore for the period till 2029.

### India-Bhutan Relations

- **Geographical Connection:** Bhutan shares its border with four Indian states,
- Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim with a length of 699 km and serve as a buffer between India and China.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** The formal diplomatic ties were established in 1968, with the cornerstone being the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1949 and subsequently renewed in 2007.
- **Trade Relations:** India is Bhutan's top trading partner, and in the last decade, India's non-hydropower trade in goods with Bhutan has increased from US\$ 484 million to US\$ 1.606 billion.
- **Financial assistance:** For the 12th Five Year Plan of Bhutan, India's contribution of In Rs 5000 Cr. constitutes 73% of Bhutan's total external grant component.

### Development Projects

- **India has constructed three Hydroelectric Projects (HEPs) in Bhutan:** Chukha HEP, Kurichhu HEP and Tala HEP which are operational and exporting surplus power to India.
  - ♦ Recently, India completed a **720 MW Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power** Project and there are ongoing projects including the 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-1 & 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-2.
- India is supporting the '**Gelephu Mindfulness City**', which is the "visionary project" of Bhutan.
- India and Bhutan plan to build a **58-km rail link** between **Gelephu and Kokrajhar** in Assam.

### The China factor in India-Bhutan relations

- **Boundary negotiations:** China's growing presence in Bhutan is of concern for India. Bhutan border discussions with China which have seen considerable progress making India wary.
- **Threat of swapping Doklam:** There are concerns in India that a deal between Bhutan and China

could include swapping Doklam for disputed territories in the north.

- ♦ The Doklam plateau is close to the strategically important Siliguri Corridor, which connects the Indian mainland to the Northeast. The corridor also links India with Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh.
- **Claiming Bhutan's territories to pressurize India:** In 2020, Beijing asserted a claim on the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, which is situated in eastern Bhutan and borders Arunachal Pradesh.
  - ♦ China has also allegedly built several villages inside Bhutanese territory.
  - ♦ India believes China's claim over Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary is its way of putting pressure on Bhutan to hand over Doklam.



### Way Ahead

- India's engagement with Bhutan underscores its pressing strategic considerations in the Himalayas at a time when the two regional nuclear powers are engaged in a border conflict.
- India's development assistance to Bhutan will lead to economic prosperity in Bhutan and in the region and strengthen economic and investment linkages between India and Bhutan.

Source: TH

## INSURGENCY IN BALOCHISTAN

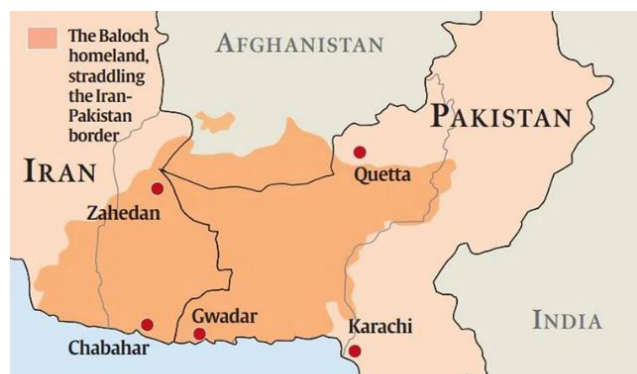
### Context

- **Pakistani security forces** repulsed a militant attack on a complex outside its strategic port of Gwadar in **Balochistan province**.

### About Balochistan

- Balochistan is the **largest Pakistani province** and is sparsely populated and impoverished when compared to the rest of the country.
- Its location as well as **abundance of natural resources, especially oil**, make it strategically vital for Pakistan.

- The province has been the site of a series of bloody insurgencies, brutal state repression, and an enduring **Baloch nationalist movement since 1948.**



Map showing Baloch areas in Pakistan and Iran.

### Background of the Insurgency

- At the dawn of **India's Independence in 1947**, the region now known as Balochistan was partitioned into **four princely states**: Kalat, Kharan, Las Bela, and Makaran.
- These states were presented with **three options**: **merge with India, join Pakistan, or maintain their independence.**
- Under the influence of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Kharan, Las Bela, and Makaran chose to become part of Pakistan but **Kalat decided to remain Independent.**
- On August 4, 1947, a meeting was convened in Delhi, and Jinnah supported Khan of Kalat's decision for independence.
  - On **August 11, 1947**, a **treaty was signed between Kalat and the Muslim League**, recognising **Kalat as an independent state**, and promising that the Muslim League would respect Balochistan's independence.
- Despite meetings with Mountbatten and recognition of Kalat's status as an independent sovereign state, the British issued a memorandum stating that the **Khan of Kalat was not in a position to undertake the international responsibilities of an independent state.**
- On March 26, the Pakistan Army moved into the Baloch coastal region of Pasni, Jiwhani and Turbat.
  - Khan had no option but to agree to **Jinnah's terms to merge with Pakistan.**

### Insurgency and Discontent

- The **forceful integration of Kalat into Pakistan** sowed the seeds of discontent and resistance among the Baloch people.

- Many Baloch nationalists viewed the annexation as a **betrayal of their autonomy and an infringement upon their cultural identity.**
- The region saw **many insurgencies for the Independence** from Pakistan but Pakistan state managed to suppress the resistance.
- Once a proud sovereign state, Balochistan is now the **most-neglected and poverty-ridden province of Pakistan.**
- Despite being the largest province and rich in minerals, **Balochistan accounts for nearly 4 percent of Pakistan's economy.**

### India's Stand on Balochistan

- India's position on Balochistan is **complex and influenced by various factors** including geopolitics, regional stability, and its relationship with Pakistan.
- India and Pakistan have a long-standing **conflict over the region of Kashmir**, and any overt involvement by India in Balochistan **could escalate tensions further.**
- India has been accused by Pakistan of supporting Baloch separatist movements, allegations that India has consistently denied.
- India maintains that it **supports the right to self-determination** for the people of Balochistan but does not interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs.
- Overall, India's stance on Balochistan involves a **delicate balance between expressing concerns about human rights violations and maintaining diplomatic relations with Pakistan.**
- Any significant shifts in this stance would likely depend on changes in the geopolitical landscape of the region.

Source: [IE](#)

## NEWS IN SHORT

### ORDER OF THE DRUK GYALPO

#### Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the **Order of the Druk Gyalpo.**

#### About

- Order of the Druk Gyalpo is **Bhutan's highest civilian award.**
- It was instituted as the **decoration for lifetime achievement** and is the pinnacle of the honour system in Bhutan, taking precedence over all orders, decorations and medals.

- The Prime Minister has been recognised for his **contribution to the growth of India-Bhutan relations**.
- PM Modi is the **first foreign Head of the Government to receive the honour**.

Source: IE

## UNITING FOR CONSENSUS MODEL

### Context:

- Recently, India criticised the **Uniting for Consensus (UfC) Model** at the **United Nations** for opposing **reforms to the Security Council**.

### About the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) Model:

- It is a significant initiative at the United Nations (UN) which was **initiated by Italy in the 1990s**.
- It is also known as the **'Coffee Club'** that comprises **12 member countries** (Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Italy, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Spain, and Turkiye) and 2 observers (China and Indonesia).
- It primarily aims **to counter** bids for permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council by **G4 nations – India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan**.

### The UfC Model and Its Criticism

- UfC proposes a Security Council with 26 seats, with an **increase only in the non-permanent, elected members**.
  - ♦ It **does not support** the representation of **Africa and the Global South in the permanent category** as a 'non-negotiable' goal.
- It stands against the idea advocated by a majority of the UN member states, which is an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of an expanded security council.

Source: AIR

## DIGITAL INNOVATION BOARD OF ITU

### Context

- Recently, India was elected as co-chair of Digital Innovation Board of International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

### About the Digital Innovation Board

- It is a part of the **Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development**, an initiative by the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**.

- It comprises **Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Telecom/ICT from 23 member countries of ITU** spanning Asia, Europe, Africa, North and South America.
- It **primarily focuses** on fostering **innovation and entrepreneurship in digital development** for a more inclusive digital future.
- It provides **strategic guidance, expertise and advocacy** regarding its mission of building critical local enablers and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in digital development, to create a more inclusive and equitable digital future for all.

### International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- It is a **specialised agency of the United Nations** responsible for issues related to information and communication technologies.
- It has started **Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development** to respond to significant unmet needs of ITU Membership in the area of innovation, as articulated in the **Kigali Action Plan** adopted at the **World Telecommunication Development Conference 2022** and the Outcomes of the **ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2022**.
- The Alliance has **three main vehicles**:
  - ♦ Digital Transformation Lab
  - ♦ Network of Acceleration Centres
  - ♦ Digital Innovation Board

Source: PIB

## SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION STARTUP FORUM

### Context

- The fourth edition of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Startup Forum was organized in New Delhi.

### About

- The initiative focused on broadening startup interactions among the SCO Member States.
- It will provide value to startups through mentoring and enabling access to investor and corporate engagement activities.

### Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- **The SCO** is an intergovernmental organization **founded in 2001** with six members.



- **Objective:** To enhance regional cooperation for efforts to curb terrorism, separatism, and extremism in the Central Asian region.
- **Members:** China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Iran.
- **Secretariat:** Beijing
- **Official languages:** Russian and Chinese.
- **Observer status:** Afghanistan, Belarus and Mongolia.
- The SCO has been an observer in the UN General Assembly since **2005**.

**Source:** PIB

## SUBMARINE UNDER AUKUS AGREEMENT

### Context

- Australia is set to provide 4.6 billion Australian dollars to British industry to support the construction of nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS agreement.

### About

- **AUKUS** is a new **trilateral security partnership** for the Indo-Pacific, between Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS).
- Under the pact, the US and the UK will help Australia to acquire conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines.
- The pact also includes cooperation on advanced cyber, artificial intelligence and autonomy, quantum technologies, undersea capabilities, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic, electronic warfare, innovation and information sharing.

**Source:** TH

## PROJECT ANAGRANINF

### Context:

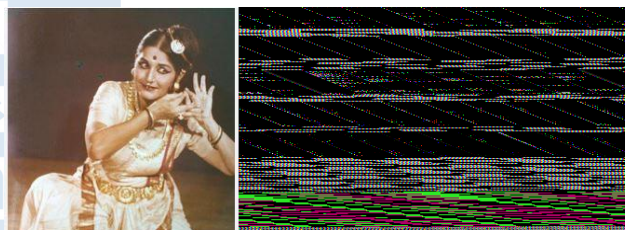
- Recently, the **Technology Development Board (TDB)** of the Department of Science & Technology and others sanctioned the '**Project ANAGRANINF**' for the development of a novel class of antibiotics **against gram-negative bacterial-infections**.
  - ♦ This initiative aims to foster healthcare innovation through a joint effort between Indian and Spanish companies.

### About Gram-Negative Bacteria

- It has built-in abilities to find new ways to be resistant and can pass along genetic materials that allow other bacteria to become drug-resistant as well.
- It causes infections including pneumonia, bloodstream infections, wound or surgical site infections, and meningitis in healthcare settings.
- It is **resistant to multiple drugs** and is increasingly resistant to most available antibiotics.

### Threat:

- Gram-negative bacteria, such as **Acinetobacter Baumannii** and **Pseudomonas Aeruginosa**, are associated with severe hospital-acquired infections.
- These bacteria have been acknowledged as 'red alert' pathogens due to their exceptional ability to develop resistance to all currently available antibiotics.



**Source:** PIB

## PUSHPAK

### In News

- ISRO achieved a major milestone in the area of **Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) Technology** after the successful launch of "Pushpak".
  - ♦ Pushpak was named after the mythological spaceship from the ancient **Indian epic, Ramayana**.

### About

- The Pushpak was lifted by an Indian Air Force Chinook helicopter and was released from 4.5 km altitude.
- After the release, it autonomously approached the runway along with cross-range corrections.
- The Pushpak is shielded with heat-resistant materials to protect the spacecraft during atmospheric re-entry.

### Reusable Launch Vehicle – Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD)

- RLV-TD is one of the most technologically challenging endeavours of ISRO towards developing essential technologies for a fully reusable launch vehicle to enable low-cost access to space.
- The Project lays the groundwork for future missions, like establishing the Bhartiya Antriksh Station by 2035.

### Significance

- Nearly 80 percent of the cost in a space launch vehicle goes into the structure of the vehicle and by using reusable launch vehicles this cost can come significantly down.
- This can also reduce the manufacturing time for building a new vehicle for every launch, thus enabling more frequent launches.

Source: TH

## MOHINIYATTAM

### About Mohiniyattam



- The Sangeet Natak Academy recognizes **eight** classical dance forms, including **Mohiniyattam**.
  - ♦ **Other seven are:** Bharata Natyam, Kathakali,, Kathak, Manipuri, Kuchipudi, Odissi, and Sattriya.
- **Mohiniattam belongs to Kerala in southern India** and takes its name from the mythic enchantress Mohini. It is performed by women in honor of the Hindu god Vishnu in his incarnation as the enchantress Mohini.
- **It is a dance of feminine grace**, and has grown out of performances connected with Kerala's temples.

### Features:

- The dance form is characterized by **graceful, swaying body movements with no abrupt jerks or sudden leaps**.
- Mohiniyattam **lays emphasis on acting and the dancer identifies herself with the character and sentiments** existing in the compositions.
- **The prince Swati Tirunal of Travancore**, was one of the chief architects of the dance in the nineteenth century.
- The main percussion instruments in the performance are the **Edakka**.

Source: TH

## ARSENIC CONTAMINATION

### Context

- A new study by the University of Sheffield's Institute for Sustainable Food and the Department of Geography, UK underlines the **risk of using water contaminated with arsenic to cook rice**.

### Major highlights of the study

- The study pointed out that some countries **still follow the outdated WHO standard of 50 parts per billion as a safe threshold for arsenic in drinking water**.
  - ♦ Also **32 percent of the global population living in low- and middle-income countries** do not adhere to the **World Health Organization's current recommended limits**.
- **India is among 40 other countries that adopted 10 parts per billion as its standard**. However, 19 other countries have no evidence of any regulations.
- **Rice contains more arsenic in comparison to other cereals**.The inorganic arsenic (iAs) is a **Group 1 carcinogen** according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a part of WHO.

### Arsenic (As)

- Arsenic is a **naturally occurring trace element** that occurs in many minerals, usually in combination with sulfur and metals.
- It is **highly toxic** in its **inorganic form**.

### Effects on health

- Long-term exposure to arsenic can cause **cancer, skin lesions, cardiovascular disease, diabetes etc**.

- In-utero and early childhood exposure have been linked to **negative impacts on cognitive development and increased deaths** in young adults.
- In Taiwan, arsenic exposure has been linked to **“Blackfoot disease”**. It is a severe disease of blood vessels leading to gangrene.

#### Permissible Limits

- The **World Health Organization’s** provisional guideline value for arsenic in drinking water is **0.01 mg/l (10 µg/l)**.
- In India the permissible limit of arsenic in the absence of an alternative source is **0.05 mg/l (50 µg/l)**.

#### Status of Arsenic Contamination in India

- The occurrence of Arsenic in groundwater was first reported in **1980 in West Bengal in India**.
- Maximum number of the arsenic-affected habitations are in the **Ganga and Brahmaputra alluvial plains**.

Source: DTE

