

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## BANGLADESH CRISIS & INDIA'S POLICY ON REFUGEES

### Context

- Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will likely remain in India for some time, as her plans to travel to the United Kingdom faced a technical roadblock.

### About

- Former PM came to India after violent protests against her government forced her to flee Bangladesh.
- The ex-PM had planned to seek asylum in the UK, but according to the country's immigration rules, asylum requests can only be processed once a person is in the UK and she does not hold a visa for travelling there.
- On the other hand, India has decided to let her stay in the country despite the lack of an official policy on refugees.

### Overview of Migration Terms

- **Asylum seeker:** A person who is seeking international protection. Prior to being granted legal status in the destination country, refugees are termed asylum seekers.
  - ♦ Not all asylum seekers will be granted refugee status.
- **Internally displaced person:** Someone who has been forced to flee from their home to avoid conflict, violence and disasters and has moved within an internationally recognized state border.
- **Migrant:** A migrant is an "umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across a border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons".
- **Refugee:** According to the 1951 UN Convention, refugees are individuals living outside their countries of origin who are in need of international protection because of feared persecution, or a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin.
  - ♦ Refugees have legal permission to remain in the host country and may have access to health care, education and welfare benefits.

### Refugee Crisis in India

- **Afghan Refugees:** With the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan, there has been an influx of Afghan refugees into India seeking safety and asylum. Many of them are Sikhs and Hindus facing religious persecution.
- **Rohingya Crisis:** Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar have sought refuge in India due to ethnic violence and persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine State.
  - ♦ India has been grappling with their status, with the government taking a firm stance on their deportation.
- **Tibetan Refugees:** Tibetans have been living in India since the 1959 Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule.
  - ♦ They are granted refugee status and live primarily in settlements in states like Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka.
- **Sri Lanka:** In the case of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, many of them are in camps in Tamil Nadu. The state government provides them an allowance and allows them to seek jobs, and their children to attend school.
  - ♦ After the end of the Sri Lanka civil war in 2009, India has encouraged return through the method of voluntary repatriation, if the situation back home is safe.

### India's Policy on Refugees

- India has welcomed refugees in the past, with nearly 300,000 people categorised as refugees.
  - ♦ This includes the Tibetans, Chakmas from Bangladesh, and refugees from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, etc.
- But India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugee. Nor does India have a refugee policy or a refugee law.
- **Reason:** This has allowed India to keep its options open on the question of refugees.
  - ♦ The government can declare any set of refugees as illegal immigrants — as has happened with Rohingya despite the UNHCR verification — and decide to deal with them as trespassers under the Foreigners Act or the Indian Passport Act.
- All foreign undocumented nationals are governed as per the provisions of The Foreigners Act, 1946, The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and The Citizenship Act, 1955.

- As per the MHA foreign nationals who enter into the country without valid travel documents are treated as illegal immigrants.

### Reasons for India's Policy on Refugees

- **Resource Strain:** Hosting refugees puts pressure on resources such as food, water, housing, and healthcare facilities, especially in areas where infrastructure is already stretched thin.
- **Social Cohesion:** Large numbers of refugees can strain social cohesion, potentially leading to tensions with host communities, especially when resources are perceived as scarce.
- **Security Concerns:** There are security concerns related to refugee influxes, including the potential infiltration of extremist elements or challenges in monitoring movements across porous borders.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** Hosting refugees can strain diplomatic relations with neighboring countries or countries of origin, particularly if there are geopolitical tensions or disputes involved.
- **Economic Impact:** Refugees compete for low-skilled jobs, affecting the local job market, while their potential contributions to the economy through entrepreneurship or labor may not be fully realized.

### Way Ahead

- India can work towards a comprehensive approach to managing the refugee crisis, ensuring that refugees receive the protection and support they need while promoting stability and cooperation in the region.
  - ♦ **Refugee Status Determination:** Establish clear procedures for determining refugee status and provide legal protections accordingly.
  - ♦ **Access to Rights:** Ensure refugees have access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, and employment.
  - ♦ **Regional Collaboration:** Work with neighboring countries and international organizations to manage refugee flows and share responsibilities.
  - ♦ **Bilateral Agreements:** Strengthen diplomatic ties to facilitate the safe return or resettlement of refugees.
  - ♦ **Empowerment Initiatives:** Support initiatives that empower refugees economically and socially, such as vocational training and language education.
  - ♦ **Conflict Resolution:** Address the root causes of displacement through diplomatic efforts and support for peacebuilding initiatives.

Source: IE

## DRAFT BROADCASTING SERVICES (REGULATION) BILL, 2024

### Context

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has proposed the draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2024.

### About

- The government is set to replace the 30-year-old Cable TV Networks Act 1995 with the bill.
- The government has expanded its remit from OTT content and digital news to include social media accounts and online video creators.
- **Need for the Bill:** There were a number of instances where creators made videos on current affairs which made some sensational claims about the government and its senior leaders in the run up to the elections.
  - ♦ That's when it was decided that there has to be an accountability measure for these creators as well, to create a level-playing field between mainstream press and independent creators.

### Definition of the Independent News Creators Online

- **In the 2023 version of the draft, the Bill defined news and current affairs programmes as:**
  - ♦ newly-received or noteworthy audio, visual or audio-visual programmes or live programmes, including analysis, about recent events primarily of socio-political, economic or cultural nature, or
  - ♦ any programmes transmitted or retransmitted on broadcasting network, where the context, purpose, import and meaning of such programmes implies so.
- In the 2024 draft has a new category called "digital news broadcaster" or "publisher of news and current affairs content".
  - ♦ It is defined as any person who broadcasts news and current affairs programmes through an online paper, news portal, website, social media intermediary, or other similar medium as part of a systematic business, professional, or commercial activity but excluding replica e-papers.
- The term 'systematic activity' has also been defined to mean any structured or organised activity that involves an element of planning, method, continuity or persistence.



### Major Highlights of the Bill

- **Individual Creators:** The Bill specifically includes individual creators in the definition of digital news broadcasters, unlike the definition in the Information Technology Rules, 2021 that specifically excludes individual users.
- **Obligations for Creators:** If a creator is categorised as a digital news broadcaster, they must 'intimate' the MIB about their work and existence.
  - ♦ They will also have to form one or more content evaluation committees (CEC) at their own expense – and “strive to make” the committee diverse by including individuals with a knowledge of different social groups, women, child welfare, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities.
  - ♦ The names of people in their CEC will also have to be shared with the government.
- **Penalty:** The news creators who do not intimate the Central Government names, credentials and other details of members of their CEC will be fined Rs 50 lakh in the first contravention, and Rs 2.5 crore for subsequent violations in the next three years.
- **Exemption:** The draft Bill allows the government to “exempt a distinct class of players or a group for avoiding genuine hardship”.
- **Social Media Companies:** Online intermediaries like Facebook, YouTube, and X are exempted from liability for third-party content, if:
  - ♦ the function of the intermediary is limited to providing access to a communication system over which information made available by third parties is transmitted or temporarily stored or hosted;
  - ♦ the intermediary does not initiate the transmission;
  - ♦ the intermediary does not select or modify the information, except in compliance with government orders;
  - ♦ the intermediary observes due diligence while discharging his duties under this Act and observes other prescribed guidelines.
- The Bill also has criminal liability provisions for social media companies if they do not provide information “pertaining to OTT Broadcasters and Digital News Broadcasters” on its platforms for compliance.
- **Concerns:** The proposed regulations on content creators of Instagram, YouTube and X have already raised concerns about the freedom of speech and expression and the government's powers to regulate it.

### Conclusion

- In Singapore, both traditional broadcasters, and over the top (OTT) content providers fall under the country's broadcasting law.
  - ♦ Under the country's copyright law, OTT platforms are regulated and they require a licence from a regulator, although licensees do not have the same level of obligations as other television services.
- The Bombay and Madras High Courts had stayed rule 9(1) and 9 (3) of the IT Rules 2021 that mandate news and current affairs publishers to adhere to Code of Ethics, citing its adverse impact on press freedom.
- These court orders may serve as a precedent if digital news broadcasters seek a stay on provisions in the Broadcasting Bill, if it were to be published in its current form.

Source: IE

## INDIA-SRI LANKA FISHERMEN ISSUE

### Context

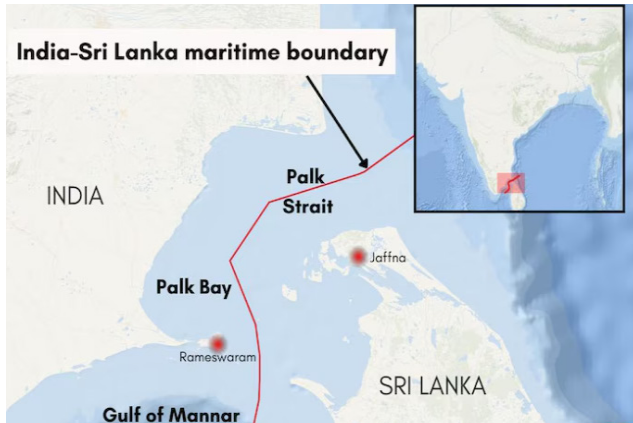
- 32 fishermen from Pamban in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of poaching.

### Background

- The prolonged dispute over fishing rights around Kachchatheevu Island in Palk Bay has been a source of tension between India and Sri Lanka for many years.
- According to the 1974 Indo-Lanka Maritime Agreement, the Indian Government ceded Kachchatheevu Island to Sri Lanka, without consulting the Tamil Nadu government.
- The agreement allowed Indian fishermen “access to Katchatheevu for rest, for drying of nests and for the annual St Anthony's festival” but it did not ensure the traditional fishing rights.

### What is the issue?

- The IMBL was born out of a bilateral agreement signed back in 1974 and 1976 under the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- However, Indian fishermen have been crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) unintentionally and have sometimes been apprehended or faced unfortunate consequences from the Sri Lankan authorities.



### Why do Indian fishermen cross borders?

- Fishermen from Tamil Nadu claim that they and their ancestors have fished in waters beyond the IMBL for centuries and generations.
- Also the depletion of fish stocks on the Indian side of the IMBL is one of the prime motivations behind such incursions.

### Concerns of Sri Lanka

- Sri Lanka asserts that the Indian encroachment is often well-coordinated. They categorize fishing by Indian fishers in their waters as “poaching” and maintain that the practice could jeopardize the national security of both nations.
- **Proliferation of trawlers in Indian coast:** Trawlers are mechanized boats with highly exploitative fishing nets unlike most of the poor fishermen on the Sri Lankan coast who use traditional fishing methods.

### Way Ahead

- The ongoing fisheries dispute between India and Sri Lanka is a complex issue that has the potential to impact the bilateral relationship between the two nations.
- A comprehensive and holistic approach, taking into account the concerns of all stakeholders, including the human rights violations of Indian fishermen in Palk Strait, is necessary to resolve this issue.
- By leveraging advanced technologies such as satellite imagery and algorithms, fishing vessels can be accurately identified in real-time, even in remote areas.
- This will provide valuable insights for authorities to understand fishing patterns and take the necessary measures to maintain the region’s security.

Source: TH

## INDIA’S RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPACITY SURGE IN 10 YEARS

### Context

- Recently, the Union Minister informed that India’s installed renewable energy capacity has increased by 165% over the past decade, rising from 76.38 Gigawatts (GW) in 2014 to 203.1 GW in 2024.

### Key Facts

- **Solar Power:** Back in March 2014, Solar power generation was 2.82 GW, and it is around 85.47 GW of solar power in June 2024. That’s nearly 30 times the original capacity.
  - ◆ India achieved 4th position globally in RE (Renewable Energy) Installed Capacity.
- **Wind Power:** Wind turbines have been spinning their way to success too. It has surged from 21.04 GW to a breezy 46.66 GW in the same period.
  - ◆ India achieved 5th position globally in it.

### Non-Fossil Fuel

- **For the first time ever, India has surpassed the 200 GW mark from non-fossil fuel sources. It includes:**
  - ◆ 85.47 GW of solar power
  - ◆ 46.93 GW of large hydro
  - ◆ 46.66 GW of wind power
  - ◆ 10.95 GW of biopower
  - ◆ 5.00 GW of small hydropower

### Budget and Tariff

- The budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Renewable Energy has doubled from Rs10,000 crores last year to more than Rs20,000 crores this year.
- Solar power tariffs have gone from Rs. 10.95 per unit in 2010-11 to a mere Rs. 2.60 in 2023-24.

### India Towards a Greener Future

- India aims to reach a non-fossil fuel energy capacity of 500 GW by 2030 and fulfil at least half of its energy requirements via renewable energy by 2030 at the COP26.
  - ◆ To achieve this ambitious target, the MNRE is targeting the bidding of around 50 GW of renewable energy projects per annum.
  - ◆ It is a significant increase from the previous target of 450 GW.
  - ◆ The plan involves an investment of at least ₹2.44 lakh crore or ₹2.44 trillion.

- India's renewable energy sector has the potential to employ around one million people by 2030, and most of the new jobs would be generated by small-scale renewable energy projects.

### Challenges Faced by the Renewable Energy Sector in India

- Financial Health of Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs):** The poor financial condition of power distribution companies (discoms), which are mostly owned by state governments.
  - Almost all renewable energy is purchased by such discoms, resulting in very long and unsustainable payment cycles.
- Land Utilisation and Availability:** Issues such as lack of a proper Land Utilisation Policy, poorly maintained land records, land ceiling limits, and the task of obtaining permissions from local bodies act as roadblocks to the implementation of large-scale renewable energy projects.
- Rapid Demand Growth and Chronic Supply Shortages:** India currently experiences a significant increase in energy demand driven by rapid economic growth, which necessitates a shift away from fossil fuels.
  - However, fossil fuels still dominate global energy consumption, continuing to raise GHG emission levels.

### Government Efforts in India's Renewable Energy Sector

- Permitting FDI:** India has permitted FDI up to 100% under the automatic route to attract foreign investments.
- Waiver of Inter State Transmission System (ISTS) charges:** For inter-state sale of solar and wind power for projects, ISTS charges have been waived off.
- Major Renewable Energy Schemes and Programmes:**
  - Scheme for Development of Solar Parks and Ultra-mega Solar Power Projects;
  - Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) Scheme Phase-II;
  - Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme 'National Programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules';
  - PM-KUSUM Scheme;
  - Rooftop Solar Programme Phase II;
  - Green Energy Corridors (GEC), and;
  - Bio-Energy Programme.
- Increasing Awareness:** Efforts have been made by the Government to increase awareness about the

use of renewable energy through introduction of various schemes and publicity through print and media.

### Conclusion

- India's record addition of renewable energy capacity in FY24 is a testament to the country's commitment to a sustainable and green future.
- As the world grapples with the challenges of climate change, India's strides in renewable energy offer a beacon of hope and a model for other countries to follow.

Source: BS

## PROJECTS COMPLETED UNDER NAMAMI GANGE MISSION 2.0

### In News

- The Government of India has completed and operationalized four major projects under the Namami Gange Mission 2.0 in the first quarter of fiscal year 2024-25.

### About Projects

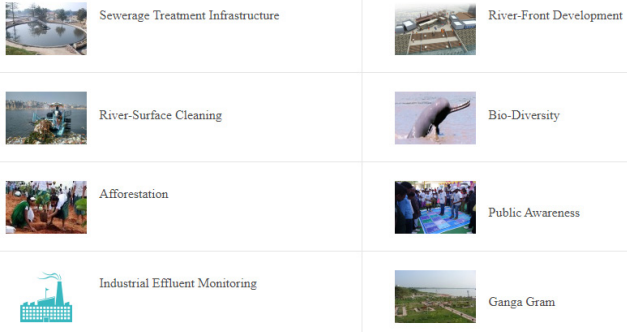
- Locations :** The projects are located in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
  - Total cost of the projects is Rs. 920 crores.
    - Munger (Bihar):** Develops a 175 km sewerage network and a 30 MLD STP (Sewage Treatment Plant).
    - Mirzapur (Uttar Pradesh):** Intercepts nine drains and rehabilitates six existing structures. Increases sewage treatment capacity to 31 MLD.
    - Ghazipur (Uttar Pradesh):** Includes a 1.3 km Interception and Diversion (I&D) network and a 21 MLD STP.
    - Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh):** Intercepts and diverts 15 drains.
- Constructs three STPs with a combined capacity of 63 MLD.
- Aims to improve water quality in the Ramganga River and subsequently the Ganga.
- These projects based on the Hybrid Annuity PPP (HAM) model have been designed on the basis of Advanced Sequencing Batch Reactor technology and meet the stringent standards prescribed by the National Green Tribunal NGT.

### About the Namami Gange Mission

- It is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014 with budget outlay of Rs.20,000 Crore to accomplish the twin objectives

of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

★ Main pillars of the Namami Gange Programme are:-



- With the success of the initial phase, the government has now embarked on Namami Gange Mission 2.0, a more ambitious and comprehensive effort to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of the river.

### Objectives

- **Pollution Abatement:** It aims to intercept, divert, and treat wastewater from open drains through innovative technologies and sewage treatment plants (STPs).
  - ◆ Over 200 sewerage infrastructure projects have been sanctioned, with many already completed and operational.
- **Riverfront Development:** Enhancing the aesthetic and functional aspects of the riverfronts, including the construction and modernization of ghats and crematoria, to promote tourism and cultural activities.
- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Efforts are being made to restore and conserve the river's biodiversity. This includes the development of aquatic species restoration plans and the establishment of rescue and rehabilitation centres for endangered species<sup>1</sup>.
- **Public Awareness :** Engaging local communities, urban local bodies, and Panchayati Raj Institutions in the mission to ensure sustainable results.
- **Effluent Monitoring:** Strict monitoring and regulation of industrial effluents to ensure that industries comply with environmental standards and do not pollute the river.

### Challenges

- **Funding Issues:** Despite significant financial commitments, ensuring consistent and adequate funding for the various projects under the mission remains a challenge.

- **Technological and Infrastructure Issues:** the adoption and scaling up of advanced technologies for wastewater treatment and pollution control can be hindered by infrastructural limitations and the need for continuous maintenance.
- **Community Engagement:** Ensuring that local communities, urban local bodies, and Panchayati Raj Institutions remain actively engaged and take ownership of the initiatives is a persistent challenge.
- **Industrial Pollution Control:** Enforcing compliance with environmental standards among industries can be difficult, especially in regions with high industrial activity
- **Environmental Concerns:** Restoring and conserving the river's biodiversity requires a delicate balance.

### Suggestions and Way Forward

- Namami Gange Mission 2.0 represents a holistic approach to river rejuvenation, integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions.
- By addressing the challenges and building on the achievements, the mission aims to restore the Ganga to its pristine glory, ensuring it remains a lifeline for millions of Indians for generations to come.
- Still there is a need for a multifaceted approach, combining technological innovation, community engagement, strict regulatory measures, and effective coordination among all stakeholders. By tackling these issues head-on, the Namami Gange Mission 2.0 can achieve its goal of rejuvenating the Ganga River and ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

Source:PIB

## PM KUSUM SCHEME FACES IMPLEMENTATION HURDLES

### Context

- According to a report by the think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the PM KUSUM scheme has achieved only 30 percent of its targets after six years.

### PM KUSUM Scheme

- PM KUSUM stands for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan.
- The scheme was launched in 2019, with the objective to provide energy and water security to farmers, enhance their income, de-dieselize the farm sector, and reduce environmental pollution.



### Different parts of the scheme

- **Component-A:** Farmers can set-up Decentralized Ground/ Stilt Mounted Grid Connected Solar or other Renewable Energy based Power Plants on their land up to the capacity of 2MW.
  - ♦ The renewable power generated from these power-plant is purchased by DISCOMs at the pre-fixed levelized tariff.
- **Component-B:** Farmers can install the Stand-alone Solar Agriculture Pumps for irrigation. The Government provides the Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of 30% (or 50% for North Eastern Region/Hilly region/Islands) for the stand-alone solar Agriculture pump.
- **Component-C:** This Component enables solarisation of grid-connected Agriculture Pumps under its Individual Pump Solarisation (IPS) mode & also Feeder Level Solarisation (FLS) of agricultural load.
  - ♦ The Government provides the Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of 30% (or 50% for the North Eastern Region/Hilly region/ Islands) for both IPS & FLS.

### What are the implementation challenges?

- The report says that progress has been slow, with most efforts focused on Component B, while Components A and C have seen minimal progress.
- One of the principal challenges the scheme faces is the availability of cheap electricity for farmers, which diminishes the incentive to shift from electric water pumps to solar water pumps.
- **Implementation model of the scheme:** In Punjab, the scheme's implementation is overseen by the Punjab Renewable Energy Development Agency, in contrast to Rajasthan, where each component has a different implementing agency.
- **Uniform approach:** Farmers are often forced to opt for pump sizes larger than needed for their land.

### Way Ahead

- The scheme needs to be tailored to meet farmers' specific requirements to be financially viable.
  - ♦ The pump sizes should be based on the land size and water requirements of different areas, rather than being kept uniform throughout the country.
- A decentralized model is important to realize the potential of the scheme. Also farmers should be allowed to pay for solar pumps in installments, which will make it financially more viable for them.
- The central government should increase financial support to states, especially to cover the rising costs of solar modules.

Source: ET

## NEWS IN SHORT

### QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

#### Context

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India has paid tributes to all those who took part in the Quit India Movement under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership.

#### About the Quit India Movement

- In 1942, with World War II raging, India found itself drawn into the conflict due to its status as a constituent component of the British Empire.
- The Congress Working Committee, in response to Britain's aggressive activities, passed a resolution condemning the war but asserting that India could not be part of it without consultation.
- The Viceroy's subsequent statement promised post-war modifications to the Government of India Act of 1935, but Mahatma Gandhi saw it as insufficient—a mere "stone" instead of the "bread" the Congress had asked for.

#### How the Quit India Movement unfolded?

- **August Offer:** In August 1942, the Viceroy issued an "August Offer" in an attempt to pacify Indians. However, both the Congress and the Muslim League rejected it. The dissatisfaction with British rule intensified.
- **Gandhi's Call:** At a Congress Working Committee meeting in Wardha, Gandhi revealed his plan for Individual Civil Disobedience.
  - ♦ Satyagraha—the weapon of truth and nonviolent resistance—once again gained popularity as the means to challenge British authority.
- **Do or Die:** On August 8, 1942, at the Gwalior Tank Maidan in Mumbai, Gandhi issued his famous call to "Do or Die."
  - ♦ The All-India Congress Committee demanded an "orderly British withdrawal" from India. The Quit India Movement was born.
- **Mass Protest:** Millions of Indians participated in strikes, demonstrations, and civil disobedience across the country. The movement aimed for complete independence from British rule.
- **Repression and Sacrifice:** The British responded with brutal repression. Many leaders were arrested, and protesters faced violence. Despite this, ordinary people stood firm, making immense sacrifices for freedom.
- **Legacy:** The Quit India Movement marked a turning point. It demonstrated the unwavering spirit of Indians and their determination to break free from colonial shackles.



- ♦ Although it faced suppression, it left an indelible mark on India's path to independence.

Source: PIB

## PROJECT PARI

### In News

- Recently, Project PARI was initiated on the occasion of the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee Meeting,

### About Project PARI

- The Project PARI (Public Art of India) was launched by the Ministry of Culture.
- It is managed by Lalit Kala Akademi and National Gallery of Modern Art.
- **Art Forms:** Includes traditional and contemporary art such as Phad paintings, Thangka paintings, Warli art, Gond Art, Alpona art, Cheriya painting, Tanjore paintings, Kalamkari, Pithora Art, and Kerala Murals.
- **Objective:** To celebrate and enhance the public art scene by blending India's cultural heritage with contemporary themes.

Source: PIB

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

### Context

- The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed on August 9 every year.

### About

- The day was chosen in recognition of the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations held in Geneva in 1982.
- The day recognises the unique cultures, languages, and traditions of Indigenous peoples, as well as their contributions to global diversity and sustainable development.
- Moreover, the day serves as a call to action for governments, organizations, and individuals to uphold the rights of indigenous peoples, promote their empowerment, and work towards achieving justice, equality, and reconciliation.

### About the Indigenous Peoples

- Indigenous Peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment.

- They reside in remote forests rich in natural resources in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Peru and Venezuela.

- There are an estimated 476 million Indigenous Peoples in the world living across 90 countries. They make up less than 6 percent of the world's population, but account for at least 15 percent of the poorest.

Source: IE

## LOWER COFFEE PRODUCTION IN INDIA

### Context

- The Coffee Board of India hinted that coffee production for 2024-25 may be significantly lower.
  - ♦ There has been a considerable loss of plants and berries on account of high temperature, heavy rainfall and landslides in the Wayanad.

### Coffee Production in India

- India became the world's eighth largest coffee grower during 2022-2023.
- **Indian coffee is one of the best coffees in the world owing to its high quality and pertains to being premium in the international markets. India produces two types of coffee:** Arabica and Robusta.
- Karnataka accounts for 70% of the country's total coffee production, while Kerala is the second-largest producer with a contribution of 23%.
  - ♦ Tamil Nadu is the third-largest producer with 5% of India's total coffee production.
- **Climatic Conditions:** Coffee plants thrive in temperatures ranging from 15°C to 24°C. Extreme temperatures outside this range can adversely affect growth and yield.
  - ♦ India cultivates all of its coffee under a well-defined two-tier mixed shade canopy, comprising evergreen leguminous trees.
  - ♦ Shade trees prevent soil erosion on a sloping terrain; they enrich the soil by recycling nutrients from deeper layers, protect the coffee plant from seasonal fluctuations in temperature, and play host to diverse flora and fauna.

### Coffee Board of India

- Government of India established the 'Coffee Board' through a constitutional act "Coffee Act VII of 1942" under the administrative control of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- The Board comprises 33 members including the Chairman and the Secretary & Chief Executive Officer.
- It is an organisation that promotes coffee production in India.

Source: TH

## RBI ENHANCES UPI TRANSACTION LIMIT FOR TAX PAYMENTS

### Context

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken a significant step to facilitate digital payments by increasing the transaction limit for tax payments through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

### Key Points

- **Increased Limit:** The UPI transaction limit for tax payments has been raised from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh per transaction. This move aims to make it easier for taxpayers to settle their dues using UPI.
- **Delegated Payments Feature:** In addition to the increased limit, the RBI has proposed a new feature called "Delegated Payments" for UPI users.
  - ♦ It allows a primary user (say, an account holder) to authorise another individual (a secondary user) to make UPI transactions from the primary user's bank account, up to a specified limit.
  - ♦ Essentially, this means that parents can grant their children limited access to their accounts for daily expenses, even if the children don't have their own bank accounts or smartphones.
- **Previous Changes:** It's worth noting that in December of last year, the RBI had already increased the UPI transaction limit to Rs 5 lakh (from Rs 1 lakh) specifically for payments related to hospitals and educational institutions.

### Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

- It is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank), merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments into one hood.
- It was developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in 2016.
- **Participants in UPI:** Payer Payment Service Provider (PSP), Payee PSP, Remitter Bank, Beneficiary Bank, NPCI, Bank Account holders, and Merchants.

Source: TH

## GENE-EDITING PESTICIDES

### Context

- Research has found risks to genes of even humans, animals and plants due to gene-editing pesticides.

### About

- Gene-editing technologies, like CRISPR, are being explored as a way to develop new types of pesticides.
- The idea is to use these technologies to either modify pests or crops in ways that reduce the need for traditional chemical pesticides.
- **Significance:** These applications could potentially make agriculture more sustainable by reducing reliance on traditional chemical pesticides and minimizing their environmental impact.
  - ♦ Genetic pesticides are touted as more environmentally friendly than chemical ones.
- **Concerns:** Scientists have warned that they may be able to edit the genes of people, animals, and insects in the environment where pesticides will be sprayed.
  - ♦ The most likely impact is on humans, who may experience significant biological consequences.
  - ♦ This exposure could happen through contact, inhalation, or ingestion.

Source: DTE

## THREAT TO GREAT BARRIER REEF

### Context

- Researchers have found that ocean temperature at the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) is the hottest in the past 407 years, threatening the existence of Coral reefs.

### What are Corals?

- Corals are invertebrates that belong to a large group of animals called Cnidaria.
  - ♦ Corals are formed by multiple small, soft organisms known as polyps.
  - ♦ They secrete a rocky chalk-like (calcium carbonate) exoskeleton around themselves for protection.
  - ♦ Coral reefs are therefore created by millions of tiny polyps forming large carbonate structures.
- **Appearance:** Corals range in color from red to purple and even blue, but are most commonly shades of brown and green.

- ♦ They get most of their colors from the millions of microscopic algae that grow inside each polyp's tissues.
- There are three types of coral reefs – fringing reefs, barrier reefs and atolls.
  - ♦ Fringing reefs form along shorelines, barrier reefs form in open water and atolls are circular reefs that have formed around sunken volcanoes.
- **Significance:** They provide food, shelter, resting and breeding grounds to a quarter of all marine life, acting as nurseries and refuges to protect critical biodiversity.
  - ♦ They also support more than 1 billion people living in coastal regions around the world by providing food, livelihoods and recreation.

### Coral Bleaching

- Corals have adapted to survive and grow within a specific temperature range.
- Coral Bleaching occurs when sea temperatures rise too high and corals expel their algae, subsequently turning white.
- The phenomenon also occurs due to low salinity, cold waters or pollution, regional and global mass bleaching events.

### Great Barrier Reef

- It is the world's largest coral reef system located on the north-east coast of Australia.
- It contains the world's largest collection of coral reefs, with 400 types of coral, 1,500 species of fish and 4,000 types of mollusc.
- The site is home to the dugong ('sea cow') and the large green turtle.

Source: DTE

## INDIAN-NAMED STRUCTURES IN OCEAN

### In News

Three underwater geographical structures located in the Indian Ocean have been awarded names proposed by India.

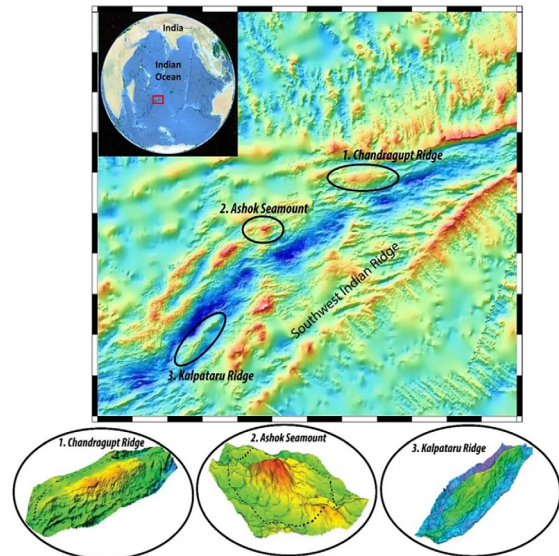
- All three names were proposed by India and approved by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and UNESCO's IOC.

### About

- **Location and Discovery:** The structures are located along the Southwest Indian Ridge in the Indian Ocean.
  - ♦ Discovered by oceanographers from the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research

(NCPOR), Goa.

- ♦ Discovery occurred during an international survey exploration programme.



- **Names :** Ashoka Seamount (named after rulers of the Mauryan dynasty): Discovered in 2012 by the Russian vessel Akademik Nikolay Strakhov, covering 180 sq km.
  - **Chandragupt Ridge** (named after rulers of the Mauryan dynasty): Discovered in 2020 by the Indian vessel MGS Sagar, covering 675 sq km.
  - **Kalpataru Ridge** (third structure): Also discovered in 2012 by the same Russian vessel, covering 430 sq km.

### Previous Indian-Named Structures:

- **Raman Ridge:** Named in 1992 after physicist Sir CV Raman, discovered in 1951.
- **Panikkar Seamount:** Named in 1993 after oceanographer NK Panikkar, discovered by Sagar Kanya.
- **Sagar Kanya Seamount:** Named in 1991 after the research vessel Sagar Kanya, discovered during its 22nd cruise in 1986.
- **DN Wadia Guyot:** Named in 1993 after geologist DN Wadia, discovered in 1992 by Sagar Kanya.

### Do you know ?

- Indian Southern Ocean Research Programme was launched in 2004 with NCPOR as the nodal agency.
- Aims to study various aspects of the Southern Ocean including bio-geochemistry, biodiversity, and hydrodynamics.

Source: IE