

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 09-12-2023

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SC RELEASES VIDEOS ON 'KESAVANANDA BHARATI' JUDGMENT

In Context: A five-minute video produced by the Supreme Court in 10 Indian languages gives a concise history of the Kesavananda Bharati judgment.

Background

- The Kesavananda Bharati judgment, delivered on 24 April 1973, was a verdict in a case filed by Sri Kesavananda Bharati.
- He challenged the constitutional validity of the 24th, 25th and 29th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, which sought to curtail the powers of the judiciary and the fundamental rights of citizens.
- The case was heard by a bench of 13 judges of the Supreme Court of India, making it the largest benches in Indian legal history to date.
- The bench was set up to hear the case as it involved important constitutional questions regarding the powers of the Parliament to amend the Constitution.

About the Judgement

- The Supreme Court, in a historic 7:6 majority decision, propounded the basic structure doctrine of the Constitution.
 - ♦ It holds that certain fundamental features of the Constitution, such as democracy, secularism, federalism, and the rule of law, cannot be amended by parliament.
- The court also held that the power of judicial review is an integral part of the basic structure of the Constitution, and cannot be taken away by Parliament through constitutional amendments.

Significance of the Judgement

- The significance of the case lies in the fact that the verdict has stood sentinel to the basic features of the Constitution such as secularism, religious freedom and federalism for 50 long years.
- This doctrine has served as a check on the power of the Parliament to amend the Constitution.
- It has ensured that the Constitution remains a living document that is responsive to changing times while preserving its fundamental values and principles.
- Proponents of the basic structure doctrine consider it to be a safety valve against majoritarian authoritarianism.

- ♦ It is plausible that the 1975 Emergency could have had far more deleterious effects on the health of Indian democracy if the basic structure doctrine was not there.

Criticisms

BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION CONSISTS OF FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES

- Supremacy of the Constitution
 - Republican and Democratic forms of Government
 - Secular character of the Constitution
 - Separation of powers between the Legislature, the executive and the judiciary
 - Federal character of the Constitution
 - Rule of law
 - Judicial review
 - Parliamentary system
 - Harmony and balance between the Fundamental Rights and DPSP
 - Free and fair elections
 - Limited power of the parliament to amend the Constitution, etc.
- Vague and uncertain: The judgment does not provide a clear definition of what constitutes the basic structure of the Constitution, which has led to a great deal of debate about which amendments are valid and which are not.
 - Dilutes Parliamentary Sovereignty: The judgment gave the Supreme Court the power to strike down amendments passed by Parliament, which has been seen by many as a violation of the principle of parliamentary sovereignty.
 - Judicial overreach: The doctrine amounts to judicial overreach over the legislature, which is itself undemocratic.
 - ♦ Government has time and again criticized the orders of the judiciary. For instance, the Supreme Court declaring the NJAC Act unconstitutional.
 - Promotes rigidity: The doctrine of basic structure has been seen as a barrier to necessary reforms of the Constitution. For example, changes the collegium system of judiciary.

Way Ahead

- Despite criticisms, the case has thus had far-reaching consequences for the constitutional development of India, making it one of the most significant cases in Indian constitutional law.
- The judgment has helped to protect the fundamental rights of citizens and the democratic character of the Indian Constitution.

Source: TH

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN JUDICIARY

Context: The Union Ministry for Law and Justice informed the Rajya Sabha that the Supreme Court of India has deployed SUVAS (a machine-assisted translation tool trained by AI), in order to promote regional languages in judicial procedure.

About

- The Union Ministry for Law and Justice informed that about 20,000 judgements have been uploaded on the Electronic version of the Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR) portal on the court's website.
- Even the Kesavananda Bharati verdict is available in ten Indian languages on the Supreme Court website so as to reach out to a wider section of Indian society.

SUPREME COURT VIDHIK ANUVAAD SOFTWARE (SUVAS)

- It is an AI system that can assist in the translation of judgments into regional languages.
- It is the first step towards the introduction of Artificial Intelligence in the Judicial Domain.
- Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency (SUPACE)

SUPREME COURT PORTAL FOR ASSISTANCE IN COURT'S EFFICIENCY (SUPACE)

- The AI-controlled tool is designed to process only information and make it available to judges for decision. It does not participate in the decision making process.
- Judges dealing with criminal matters would use it on an experimental basis.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Judiciary

- The use of AI in judicial systems is being explored by judiciaries, prosecution services and other domain specific judicial bodies around the world.
- For example, in the criminal justice field, the use of AI systems for providing investigative assistance and automating decision-making processes is already in place in many judicial systems across the world.

GLOBAL PRACTICES

- USA: In the US, court transcripts are available to litigants and the public.
 - ♦ The US Supreme Court provides audio and text transcripts of the proceedings.
 - ♦ Many local courts in the US also make a stenographic record of most court proceedings.
- UK: In the UK, a litigant can ask for a transcript of the court proceedings for a fee if the hearing is recorded.

AI & Administration of Justice

Processing time is considerably reduced	Interoperable platforms enables seamless communication with minimal effort	Less room for human error	Improved access to justice	Facilitates detailed analysis of information	Reduces the amount of on-site document storage	Transfer of files enables transparency and flexibility
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Applications of AI in Judiciary

AI reshaping the Justice Delivery System			
Assisting to inform, support and advise people involved in the justice system	Optimising operational functions rather than detracting from or replacing legal Work	Replacing certain functions and activities that were previously carried out by humans	Changing the way that judges work and provide for very different forms of justice (disruptive technology), particularly where processes change significantly.
Natural Language Processing (AI strives to build machines that understand and respond to text or voice data—and respond with text or speech of their own—in much the same way humans do.)			
Virtual Agents and Chatbots (Apple Siri, Amazon Alexa)	Machine Translation and Text Summarization	Spam Detection	Social Media Sentiment Analysis

Other important applications

- Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS): The Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) enables seamless transfer of data and information among different pillars of the criminal justice system, like courts, police, jails and forensic science laboratories, from one platform.
 - ♦ With the aid of the ICJS platform, FIR, case diary and charge sheet can be accessed by Courts.
 - ♦ Speedy Disposal of Bails- VC in Jails for remand prisoners.
- National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP): The service of summons and processes by traditional methods are often a cause for inevitable delay in speedy disposal of cases. It is a centralised process service tracking application comprising a web application and a complementary mobile app designed to streamline the process.
- National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG): It is a national repository of data relating to cases pending and disposed of in all district and taluka courts of the country and also the High Courts.
 - It enables efficient case management and monitoring of cases leading to effective disposal of cases.

Challenges

- Transparency and Explainability: AI systems should be transparent and their decisions should be explainable. This is crucial in the judiciary system where decisions can have significant impacts on human lives and liberties.
- Bias and Unfairness: AI systems can be biased, leading to unfair decisions. This is particularly concerning in the judiciary system where fairness and impartiality are paramount.
- Replacing Human Judgement: AI should supplement, not supplant, human judgement. In the judiciary system, human judgement is critical as it involves nuanced understanding and

interpretation of laws.

- Governance: Changing work processes and implementing digital procedures require strong decision-making processes geared toward innovation. Most judiciaries are geared to be production organisations, processing cases.
- For going digital, this governance setup needs to change.
- Data Privacy and Security: As AI systems often require large amounts of data, ensuring the privacy and security of this data is a significant challenge.

Conclusion

- AI technology will bring forth new challenges related to data protection, privacy, human rights, and ethics. Effectively addressing these concerns will necessitate substantial self-regulation by developers involved in the creation and implementation of these technologies.

Source: IE

INDIA-KOREA ELECTRONIC ORIGIN DATA EXCHANGE SYSTEM (EODES)

Context: India-Korea Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES) for faster clearance of imported goods launched.

About EODES

- It is aimed at facilitating the smooth implementation of the India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by way of electronic exchange of origin information between the two customs administrations in respect of the goods traded under the CEPA.
- The data fields in a Certificate of Origin (CoO) shall be electronically shared by the exporting customs administration with the importing customs, as soon as the certificate is issued.
 - ♦ This would facilitate faster clearance of imported goods.
- The success of the EODES project shall serve as a global template in the field of international Customs cooperation.

INDIA-REPUBLIC OF KOREA BILATERAL RELATIONS

- **Diplomatic relations** : They established diplomatic relations on 10 December 1973.
 - ♦ Both countries formed a “Strategic Partnership” in 2010, which was elevated to “Special Strategic Partnership” in 2015 during the State Visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Seoul.
- India’s Role in Korean War: India played an important role in the Korean peninsula after Korea’s independence in 1945.
 - ♦ Former Indian diplomat Shri K P S Menon was the Chairman of the 9-member UN Commission set up in 1947 to hold elections in Korea.
 - ♦ India sent an Army medical unit - the 60th Parachute Field Ambulance comprising 627 medical personnel during the Korean War as part of the UN Command, and treated about 220,000 patients.
- High-Level Exchanges: PM Narendra Modi paid a State Visit to ROK from 18-19 May 2015, during which bilateral relationship was upgraded to ‘Special Strategic Partnership’.
- Economic Relations: Trade and economic relations gathered momentum following the implementation of CEPA in 2010.
 - ♦ India and ROK launched an initiative ‘Korea Plus’ to promote and facilitate Korean investments in India.
 - ♦ Bilateral trade in 2022 reached record levels of US\$ 27.8 billion.
 - ♦ India’s import volume stands at US\$ 18.8 billion, while the export volume is US\$ 9 billion.
 - ♦ Major items of India’s exports to Korea are mineral fuels/oil distillates (mainly naphtha), cereals, iron and steel.
 - ♦ Korea’s main export items are automobile parts, telecommunication equipment, hot rolled iron products, petroleum refined products, base lubricating oils, mechanical appliances, electrical machinery & parts and iron and steel products.
- Defence Relations: The Defence Ministers of ROK and India have been interacting regularly since 2015.

- ◆ Service level talks across the three arms of the military are held annually
- ◆ A Roadmap for Defence Industries Cooperation was signed between the two countries in September 2019.
- Cultural Relations: An Indian Cultural Centre (renamed later as Swami Vivekananda Culture Centre (SVCC)) was established on July 1, 2011 as a cultural wing of the Embassy of India, Seoul.
 - ◆ SARANG, the festival of India in Korea has been organised every year by the Embassy since 2015, to showcase India's diverse art and music in various regions of ROK.
 - ◆ Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore composed a short but evocative poem titled- 'Lamp of the East' - in 1929 about Korea's glorious past and its promising bright future, which is fondly remembered by the Koreans and finds mention in Korean school textbooks.
- Indian Community: The total number of Indian nationals living in ROK is estimated to be around 15,000.
 - ◆ A large number of Indian scholars are pursuing post-graduate and Ph.D programmes, mostly in pure sciences.
 - ◆ During the past few years, many professionals mainly in the areas of IT, shipping and automobile have come to ROK.
 - They are working mostly with companies like Samsung, LG, Hyundai TATA Daewoo, TCS, Coupang etc.
- It confirms the Sendai Framework's principle that Target E is the foundation for achieving other targets and has triggered concrete DRR implementation.

Key Findings of the report:

- The 'Global Status of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems 2023' report analyses the latest data one year into the Early Warnings for All Initiative.
- The Early Warnings For All Initiative (EW4All) was formally launched at the COP27 in 2022 meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh.
- It is a groundbreaking initiative to ensure that everyone on Earth is protected from hazardous weather, water, or climate events through life-saving early warning systems by the end of 2027.
- It reveals that 101 countries now have multi-hazard early warning systems, which is based on more complete data from the Sendai Framework Monitor.
- The report calls for investments of US\$ 3.1 billion over five years – just 50 cents per person per year – to strengthen disaster risk knowledge and management, observation and forecasting, dissemination and communication of warnings, and preparedness and response capabilities.
- It aligns with the priorities of the Paris Agreement and supports key provisions of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, particularly Target G on availability and accessibility of multi-hazard early warning systems.
- It also contributes to delivering the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on poverty, hunger, health, water, clean energy, climate action and sustainable cities.

Source: PIB

GLOBAL STATUS OF MULTI-HAZARD EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS 2023

Context: The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have released the 'Global Status of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems 2023' report.

Background:

- The report 'Status of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems 2023' focuses on the continued efforts made by governments in developing national and local disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies, aligning them to the Sendai Framework, and fostering integration between DRR, climate change, and sustainable development.
 - ◆ These are cost-effective tools that save lives, reduce economic losses, and provide a nearly tenfold return on investment.
- Early warning systems have helped decrease the number of deaths and have reduced losses and damages resulting from hazardous weather, water or climate events.

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)

- It was the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda and provides Member States with concrete actions to protect development gains from the risk of disaster.

Targets:

- Reduce global disaster mortality
- Reduce the number of affected people globally
- Reduce direct economic loss in relation to GDP
- Reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services
- Increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies
- Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries
- Increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems

The Four Pillars:

- **Disaster risk knowledge and management:** Ensuring all countries have access to reliable, understandable and relevant risk information, science and expertise (led by UNDRR).
- **Detection, observation, monitoring, analysis, and forecasting:** Ensuring all countries have robust forecast and monitoring systems (both soft and hardware infrastructure) and enabling policies to support optimization and sustainability of hazard monitoring and early warning systems (led by WMO).
- **Warning dissemination and communication:** Using a people-centred approach to ensure that early warnings are effectively and timely disseminated to reach everyone, especially those most at risk (led by ITU).



- **Preparedness and response capabilities:** Ensuring local governments, communities and individuals at risk have the knowledge and means

to take pre-emptive early actions to prepare for and respond to incoming disasters upon receiving warnings (led by IFRC).

- The Global Status Report (2022) reveals that countries with substantive-to-comprehensive early warnings coverage have disaster mortality eight times lower than countries with limited coverage.
- According to the Global Commission on Adaptation, giving just 24 hours' notice of an impending hazardous event can reduce damage by 30%.
 - ♦ Investing just US\$800 million in such systems in developing countries would prevent losses of \$3 to \$16 billion annually.

Challenges

- **Inadequate installed systems:** Despite the urgent need, only half of the countries worldwide report having adequate multi-hazard early warning systems. And even fewer have regulatory frameworks that connect early warnings to emergency and response plans.
- **Climate Vulnerability:** Climate, weather and water-related extremes have led to 15 times more deadly hazards for people in Africa, South Asia, South and Central America, and small island states.
 - ♦ Vulnerable, least-developed countries that have not contributed significantly to the climate crisis are bearing the brunt.
 - ♦ Over the last 50 years, nearly 70% of all deaths from climate-related disasters have occurred in the 46 poorest countries.

Solutions

- **Using Technology:** With 95% of the world's population having access to mobile broadband networks and nearly 75% owning a mobile phone, mobile networks have become powerful communication channels that can effectively target those in at-risk areas.
- **Coordination and Collaboration:** The Early Warnings for All initiative brings together the broader UN system, governments, civil society and development partners across the public and private sectors to enhance collaboration and accelerated action to address gaps and deliver people-centred, end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems that leave no one behind.

Source: UN

CARBON CAPTURE SEQUESTRATION AND STORAGE (CCSS) TECHNOLOGIES

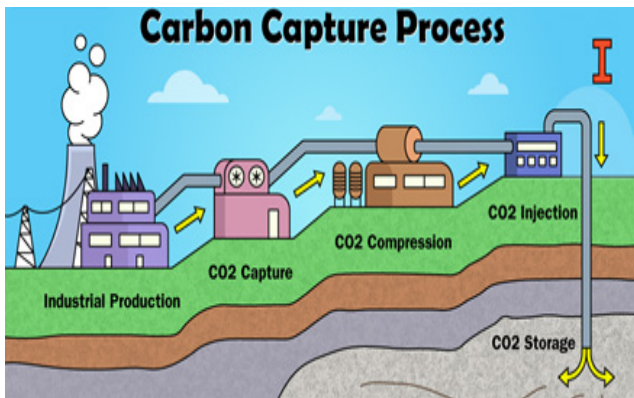
Context: According to a recent Oxford University study, relying on CCSS technologies to achieve net-zero carbon emissions is not viable.

About

- **CCSS process:** It involves capturing carbon emissions from sources like power plants, cement factories, etc; transporting it via ship or pipeline and then storing them underground in geological formations.

Limitations of CCS

- **Cost Inefficiencies:** Emission pathways requiring the storage of up to 20 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide underground in 2050 to achieve net-zero could cost at least US\$ 30 trillion.



- ♦ Further, there have been no cost reductions in any part of the CCS process over the last 40 years.
- **Limited Capacity:** Currently, all CCS projects worldwide have a combined capacity to store about 49 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, which is a small fraction of the total annual CO₂ emissions.
- **Availability of better alternatives:** The study suggests that there are more cost-effective and efficient alternatives, such as the replacement of fossil fuels with renewables and afforestation

Benefits of CCS

- **Prevent Global Warming:** CCS directly reduces greenhouse gas emissions at the source.
- **Simultaneous Pollutant Removal:** Oxyfuel combustion (during CO₂ compression) reduces nitrogen oxide (NO_x) and sulphur dioxide (SO_x)

gases, providing dual benefits by addressing multiple pollutants.

- **Economic Benefits:** Creates jobs for skilled professionals, contributes to economic growth through applications in power generation, geothermal energy, manufacturing, and infrastructure.
- **Enhanced Power Generation:** Increases power generation efficiency through carbon dioxide-based steam cycles, requiring less energy for steam compression.
- **Sustainable Geothermal Energy:** Utilises geologically stored carbon dioxide for sustainable geothermal energy generation.

Source: IE

GLOBAL RIVER CITIES ALLIANCE (GRCA)

Context: The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has signed a Memorandum of Common Purpose (MoCP) with the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI).

About

- The NMCG has signed the MoCP on behalf of the River Cities Alliance (RCA) during COP28 in UAE.
- The current RCA has now expanded its strength to the membership of 267 global river-cities including India, USA and Denmark.
- This significant agreement positions NMCG a step closer to the imminent launch of the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA).
- The collaboration includes a comprehensive water monitoring program, sharing best practices for renaturing urban areas, and restoring aquatic ecosystems for sustainable urban development.
- Restoring urban forests and lakes connected to rivers is also part of the programme underscoring the significance of green spaces.

River Cities Alliance (RCA)

- RCA was initiated by NMCG under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, in association with National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in 2021.
- It is a dedicated platform for river cities across India to discuss & exchange information for sustainable management of urban rivers.

- The Alliance focuses on three broad themes- Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support.
- RCA has 142 Indian River cities and Aarhus of Denmark as members.

Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI)

- MRCTI represents 124 cities/towns situated along the banks of the Mississippi River, USA.
- It has been promoting economic and environmental security and stability along the Mississippi River Corridor Since 2012.
- The MRCTI builds the capacity of member mayors, empowering them with the tools and support to undertake effective local initiatives.

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

- **NMCG** is a registered society under the Societies Registration Act 1860.
- **Objective:** To ensure effective abatement of pollution and rejuvenation of the river Ganga and maintain minimum ecological flows in the river while ensuring environmentally sustainable development.
- **NMCG** has a two tier management structure and comprises Governing Council and Executive Committee.
- **Head:** Both of them are headed by Director General, NMCG.
- The Executive Committee has been authorized to accord approval for all projects up to Rs.1000 crore.
- It implements Centre's flagship Namami Gange scheme Programme, which integrates the efforts to clean and protect the Ganga River in a comprehensive manner.

Aarhus River

- It is a 40-kilometer long river or stream, in eastern Jutland, Denmark.
- The river flows through the large river valley of Aarhus Ådal and has been important for the development of the city of Aarhus.

Mississippi River

- The Mississippi river is the second-longest river of the United States. The River lies entirely within the United States.

- **Source:** Lake Itasca in Minnesota
- **Mouth:** Gulf of Mexico
- **Major Tributaries:** Missouri River, Ohio River, Arkansas and Illinois. The length of the Missouri River (3,767 km) is slightly longer than the Mississippi river (3,766 km).

Source: IE

CRISPR GENE THERAPY FOR SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Context: The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved two gene therapies for sickle cell disease, making one of them the first treatment based on the Nobel Prize-winning CRISPR gene editing technology.

About

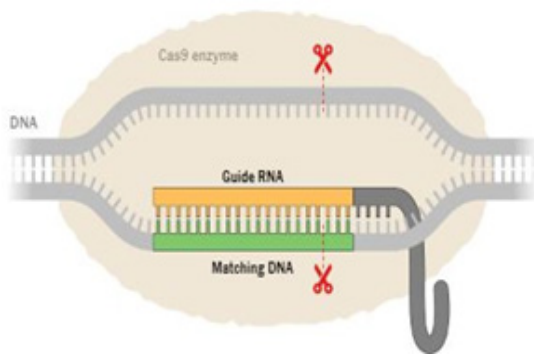
- The US FDA approved the Casgevy (developed by Vertex Pharmaceuticals and CRISPR Therapeutics), and Lyfgenia (developed by Bluebird bio) for people aged 12 years and older.
 - ♦ Casgevy and Lyfgenia are pitched as one-time treatments, and these will be available in early 2024.
- Casgevy is based on CRISPR that uses molecular 'scissors' to trim faulty parts of genes that can then be disabled or replaced with new strands of normal DNA.
- On the other hand, Bluebird's gene therapy (Lyfgenia) is designed to work by inserting modified genes (cell-based gene therapy) into the body through disabled viruses.
 - ♦ Lyfgenia uses a lentiviral vector (gene delivery vehicle) for genetic modification.

CRISPR Technology

- CRISPR stands for Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats and was developed in the year 2012.
- CRISPRs are specialised stretches of DNA.

Cas9:

- The protein Cas9 (or 'CRISPR-associated') is an enzyme that acts like a pair of molecular scissors, capable of cutting strands of DNA.
- It allows researchers to easily alter DNA sequences and modify gene function.



Treatment:

- CRISPR-Cas9 technology was set to revolutionise medicine in the treatment of diseases such as sickle cell anaemia, for instance, and agriculture.

Significance

- The therapies represent a breakthrough in the treatment of sickle cell disease. Offers hope for improved management and potential transformative impact.
- They are significant for the Black community, which is disproportionately affected by sickle cell disease.

Issues involved

- Limited Data Availability: so the companies need to assess potential long-term safety risks through a 15-year follow-up study after approval.
- Limited donors available: The only longer-term treatment for sickle cell disease is a bone marrow transplant, but that requires matching donors.
- High Cost: Casgevy and Lyfgenia have list price of \$2.2 million and \$3.1 million respectively.

About the Sickle Cell Disease

- It is a group of inherited blood disorders which is most common in African Americans.
- The primary problem is a mutation in haemoglobin, a protein found in red blood cells that delivers oxygen to the body's tissues.

Sickle cell anemia



Normal red blood cells

Sickle cell anemia

- This mutation causes red blood cells to develop a crescent or 'sickle' shape that restricts the flow in blood vessels and limits oxygen delivery to the body's tissues, leading to severe pain and organ damage called Vaso-Occlusive Events (VOEs) or Vaso-Occlusive Crises (VOCs).
- Anaemia - Sickle cells easily disintegrate and die.
 - Red blood cells last approximately 120 days before needing to be replaced. However, sickle cells die in 10 to 20 days, leaving a red blood cell shortage (referred to as Anaemia).
- The recurrence of these events or crises can lead to life-threatening disabilities and/or early death.

Treatment

- It is a genetic disorder, making complete 'elimination' a challenge that requires a major scientific breakthrough.
- However, the standard care for sickle cell patients is through chemotherapy drug hydroxyurea (once-daily drugs), that aim to slow the breakdown of red blood cells.
- The gene therapy and stem cell transplants are in developmental stages.

India and sickle cell anaemia

- India is the second-worst affected country in terms of predicted births with sickle cell anaemia — i.e. chances of being born with the condition.
 - Research and screening programmes have found that the prevalence of haemoglobinopathies (disorders of the blood) is more common among tribal populations than non-tribal communities in India.

What has India done so far?

- India is working on 'mission mode' to eliminate the condition by 2047.
- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) in different States are undertaking outreach programmes for better management and control of the disease.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched a portal wherein people can register themselves if they have the disease or the trait, in order to collate all information related to sickle cell anaemia among tribal groups.

Source: TH

FACTS IN NEWS

MERA GAON MERI DHAROHAR PROJECT

Context: The Government of India has decided to prepare mapping and documentation of all villages under the Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar (MGMD) programme.

About

- The Ministry of Culture initiated the 'Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' (MGMD) project under National Mission on Cultural Mapping in coordination with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).
- Objective: The MGMD program seeks to compile comprehensive information detailing the life, history and ethos of Indian villages and make it available to virtual and real-time visitors.
- Under MGMD, information is collected under seven broad categories given below:
 - ♦ Arts and Crafts Village
 - ♦ environmentally oriented village
 - ♦ Educational village linked to the textual and scriptural traditions of India
 - ♦ Epic village associated with Ramayana, Mahabharata and/or mythological legends and oral epics
 - ♦ Historic village linked to local and national history
 - ♦ Architectural Heritage Village

Source: *PIB*

TABLE-TOP EXERCISE (TTX)

Context: The Indian army recently conducted the Table-Top Exercise for the Women Officers of ASEAN women peacekeepers at Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi.

About the exercise

- It is an initiative to promote gender inclusivity and enhance the capabilities of women military personnel in peacekeeping operations.
- It underscores India's shared commitment to world peace, stability, and gender equality.
- It is part of ongoing efforts of Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) to strengthen international cooperation and capacity-building in peacekeeping missions, with specific focus on empowering women in the field.

- CUNPK is a premier institution of the Indian Army to impart training in peacekeeping operations.

About the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

- **Establishment:** It was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration).
- **Founding Member States:** Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
 - ♦ Brunei Darussalam Viet Nam Lao PDR, Myanmar and Cambodia joined the group later.

Source: *PIB*

16TH EDITION OF INDIA-GERMANY MILITARY COOPERATION

Context: The 16th edition of the India-Germany Military Cooperation Sub Group (MCSG) meeting was conducted recently in New Delhi.

India-Germany Military Cooperation Sub Group (MCSG)

- It is a forum established to boost defence cooperation between India and Germany through regular talks at the strategic and operational levels.
- Discussions focused on new initiatives for further strengthening ongoing defence engagements.

India-Germany Military Cooperation

- India and Germany have had a 'Strategic Partnership' since 2001.
- In 2006, the Indian and German Defence minister signed an agreement for deeper security and defence cooperation which included the exchange and training of military personnel, increased technology transfer, and greater collaboration in developing joint defence projects and creation of the Indo- German High Defense Committee (HDC).
- In 2008, the first joint naval exercise between India and Germany took place off the coast of Kochi.
- The two countries have discussed co-development of military hardware and tech transfers, and a deal worth \$5.2 billion where Germany would jointly build six conventional submarines in India could be underway.

For more details, click the link: [Indo-German Relations](#)

Source: *PIB*

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT FUND (TDF) SCHEME

In News

- 16 defence technologies have been successfully developed/realised under the Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme.

About Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme

- It is a program of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) executed by DRDO under "Make-in-India" initiative.
- The Government has approved TDF Scheme to encourage participation of public/private industries especially MSMEs and start-ups to design and develop various defence technologies indigenously.
- A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of TDF scheme has been formulated and approved by Competent Authority in 2016.
- The SOP describes the evaluation and assessment criteria.

Objectives

- To engage with the private industries especially MSMEs and Start-ups to bring in the culture of Design & Development of Military Technology and support them with Grant in Aid.
- To focus on Research, Design & Development of Niche technologies which are being developed for the first time in the country.
- To create a bridge amongst the Armed Forces, research organizations, academia and qualifying/certifying agencies with private sector entities.

Source: **PIB**

MEFTAL & DRESS SYNDROME

In Context

- Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) has issued a drug safety alert for commonly used painkiller mefenamic acid, popularly sold under the brand name Meftal.
- ♦ The adverse drug reaction found during preliminary analysis was eosinophilia and systemic symptoms called DRESS syndrome.

About Meftal

- The primary constituent of Meftal is Mefenamic acid which is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug used to treat mild to moderate pain.
- Meftal is a commonly used drug for menstrual cramps and rheumatoid arthritis and other conditions as determined by a doctor, and is available only with a doctor's prescription.

About Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)

- IPC is an autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that sets standards for drugs in the country. It regularly releases updates on the standards of commonly used drugs.

DRESS syndrome

- It is a severe and potentially life-threatening idiosyncratic reaction to certain medications.
- It is characterized by a delayed onset of symptoms, including fever, skin rash, lymphadenopathy, eosinophilia (an increase in a type of white blood cells), and various systemic manifestations.

Source: **TH**