

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 04-09-2024

Table of Content

- Accelerate Safety Measures to Reduce Road Traffic Deaths
- New Insights into the Lothal Dockyard Theory
- A brief history of Iran-US Ties
- Micronutrients Malnutrition in India
- Harnessing Biotechnology for Economic Development

NEWS IN SHORT

- Na Anka Famine
- Cocoa (Theobroma Cacao)
- Aparajita Bill
- Vishanu Yudh Abhyaas
- Brunei Darussalam
- The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority
- Financialization of Capital Markets
- Capital Acquisition Proposals by DAC

ACCELERATE SAFETY MEASURES TO REDUCE ROAD TRAFFIC DEATHS

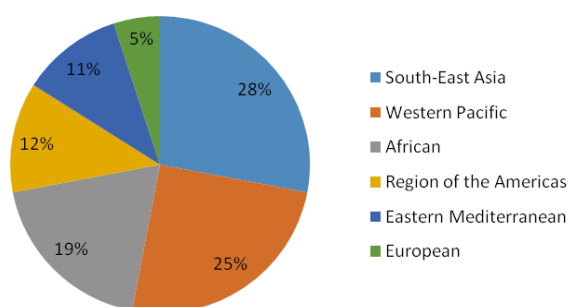
Context

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has called on countries in the southeast Asia region to accelerate measures to reduce road traffic deaths, a leading cause of mortality among people aged between 15 and 29.

About

- Vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and two or three-wheelers constitute **66%** of all reported road traffic deaths in the southeast Asia region.
- The region accounted for **3,30,223** of the **1.19 million** estimated global road traffic deaths in **2021**, accounting for **28%** of the global burden.
- The WHO South-East Asia Region, amid rapid urbanization, faces challenges such as,
 - High prevalence of motorized two and three-wheelers,
 - Inadequate traffic injury data, poor pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, and
 - Limited emergency services.
- With **70%** of the global population projected to live in urban areas by **2030**, demand for public transport will surge.

WHO Regions and Road Accidents



Road Accidents in India

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), each year, **3,00,000 people** are estimated to be killed on the road in India. It is equivalent to more than **34 people every hour** of every day.
- In India, road crashes are estimated to cost between **5% and 7% of national GDP**.

Focus areas for better safety

- Helmet use:** It must be enforced among motorcyclists as well as their pillion passengers. Correct helmet use can lead to a 42% reduction in the risk of fatal injuries.
- Speeding must be reduced:** Speeding causes 70% of India's road crash deaths. Also there should be no tolerance for drink-driving.
- Road infrastructure should be enhanced:** Many roads are not in a safe condition, although government programmes in recent years have led to rapid improvements.
- Behavioral changes:** Large-scale public awareness campaigns such as the new UN global campaign for road safety #MakeASafetyStatement, involving international celebrities, must be undertaken to secure behavioral changes.

Steps taken by India

- Implementation of the **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019**.
 - The Act hike in penalties for traffic violations, electronic monitoring of the same, enhanced penalties for juvenile driving,
- Computerization/automation** of vehicle fitness tests, recall of defective vehicles, streamlining the third party insurance and payment of increased compensation for hit and run cases etc.

Global measures

- Road safety, a public health and development priority, is crucial to achieving the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- In September 2020, the UN General Assembly launched the **Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030** which aims to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by at least **50% by 2030**.

Way Ahead

- Low- and Middle-Income Countries need to **prioritize the safety of vulnerable road users**, such as pedestrians, cyclists, and riders of two and three-wheelers who are disproportionately at higher risk.
- Strengthening trauma and emergency care systems**, enhancing road safety data, strong leadership and promoting collaboration among all stakeholders are essential for improving road safety.
- While the WHO South-East Asia Region saw a **2% decrease** in road fatalities in **2021**, contributing to a **global 5% reduction**, further efforts are needed to meet global targets.

Source: TH

NEW INSIGHTS INTO THE LOTHAL DOCKYARD THEORY

Context

- New study has suggested the existence of a **dockyard at Lothal**, Gujarat, during Harappan Civilisation.

Major Findings

- The study has revealed that the **Sabarmati river used to flow by Lothal** (currently, it flows 20 km away from the location) during the Harappan Civilisation.
- There was also a **travel route** connecting Ahmedabad, through Lothal, the Nal Sarovar wetland, and the Little Rann, to Dholavira — another Harappan site.
- The researchers based their study on the hypothesis that from Lothal, there was an **inland network connected to the Rann of Kutch**.
- The study suggests that **traders came to Gujarat through the Gulf of Khambhat**, probably went to Ratanpura to get materials, and carried them to Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq).
- The research **supports the dockyard theory** and addresses concerns about historical inlets, demonstrating **Lothal's importance for trade via river and sea routes**.



Lothal

- Lothal ('the mound of the dead' in Gujarati) was discovered under a mound among **marshy fields of the Saragwala village**.
- The presence of **Harappan town planning at Lothal** such as houses, bathing platforms, streets, fortification walls, a cemetery and large structures, easily allowed it to be accepted as an outpost of Harappan civilisation.
- It was concentrated in a northwest arch starting at **Sindh/Balochistan and going up to present day Haryana**.
- Since it was discovered in the **1950s** and postulated to be a **dockyard**, archaeologists and experts have been divided.
 - Some argued that **Lothal was a Harappan dockyard based on discoveries** at the site, including a 222 x 37 metres basin (claimed to be a dockyard), a wharf to anchor the ships or boats, and artefacts such as Harappan seals.
 - However **not all accept the dockyard theory**, they argue that it was only in modern times that Indian ports came to be directly situated on the sea.

Other Evidences that Support Sea Trade

- There are numerous temples to goddess Siktara in Gujarat, which is named after the **island of Socotra**, which is situated at the mouth of the Red Sea and served as a haven to Indian sea-farers more than 2,000 years ago.
- Numerous inscriptions in Brahmi script show that Indians used this island as an important halt on the trading route to the Middle East and East Africa.

Harappan Civilization

- The Harappan civilization is believed to be **one of the oldest world civilizations** together with Egypt and Mesopotamia.
- It was developed along the **river Indus** and for that reason it is also known as the **Indus Valley Civilization**.
- The Harappan civilization is identified as a **Bronze-age civilization** because many objects have been found that are made up of **copper based alloys**.

Major Features of Civilization

- **Urban Planning:** Their towns were well planned and they had brick houses which were situated along the roads.
 - Every house was equipped with a staircase, a kitchen and several rooms.
 - Their courtyards had wells, bathrooms and they had proper drainage systems.
- **Ornaments:** The Harappans wore ornaments made of **gold, silver, ivory, shell, clay, semi-precious stones and others**.
- **Trade and Commerce:** The civilization had extensive trade networks, reaching as far as

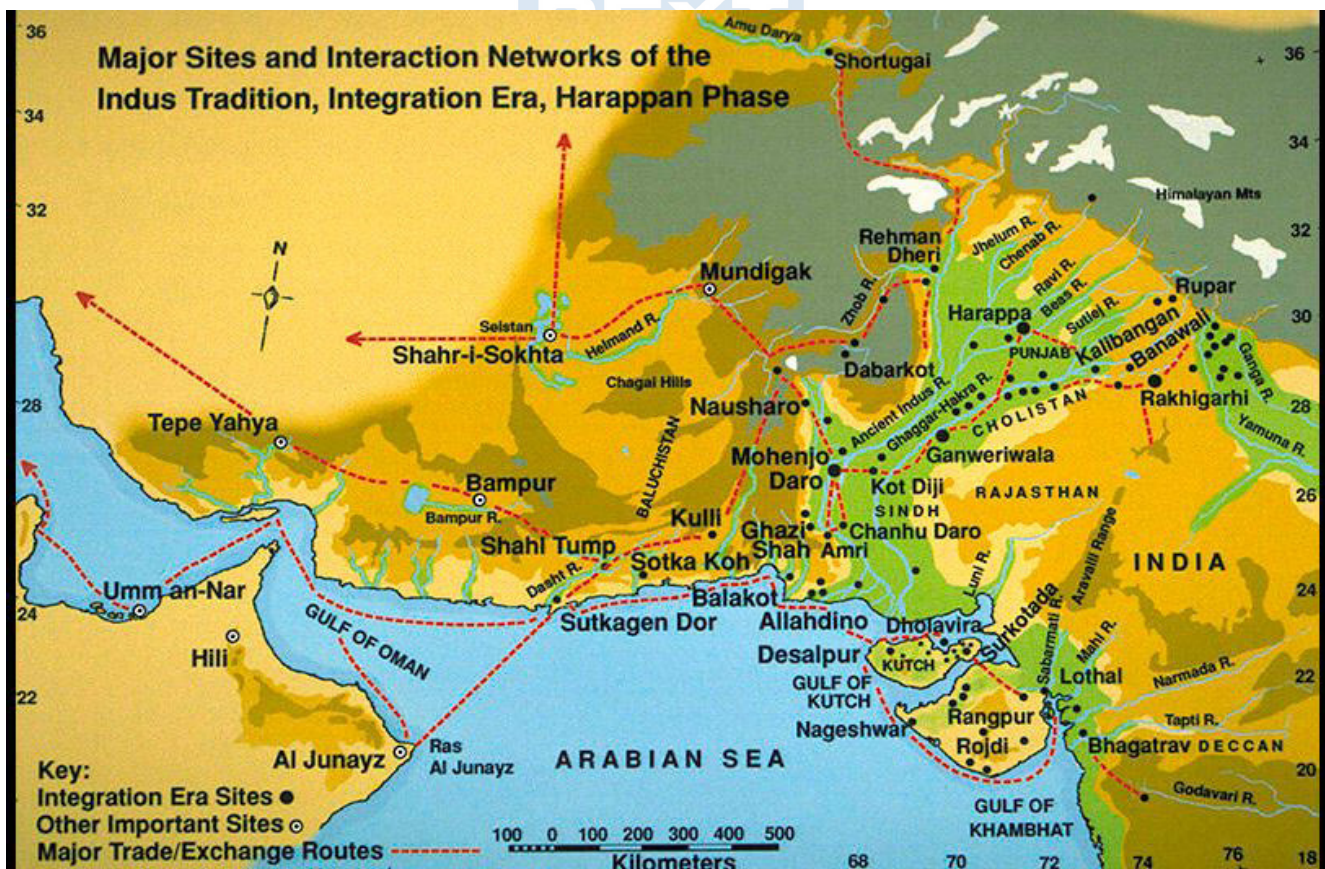
Mesopotamia, Afghanistan, and the Arabian Peninsula.

- **Religion and Iconography:** Harappan artifacts depict various symbols and motifs believed to be related to religious beliefs.
 - ♦ These include figures such as the “**Priest King**” and images of animals like **bulls**, suggesting possible reverence for certain animals.
- **Craftsmanship and Artistry:** The Harappans produced **intricate pottery**, including the **famous red pottery** with black painted motifs.
 - ♦ They also created jewelry, sculptures, and seals made of **steatite, terracotta, and other materials**.
- **Agriculture:** They cultivated crops such as **wheat, barley, peas, and cotton**.
- **Social Organization:** The society was likely stratified, with evidence suggesting a **hierarchical structure**. This is indicated by variations in housing sizes and the presence of public buildings.
- **Decline and Disappearance:** The reasons for the decline of the Harappan Civilization are still debated among historians and archaeologists.

- ♦ Possible factors include ecological changes, such as shifts in river courses, as well as invasions and internal conflicts.

Major Harappan Sites

| Site | Present Day |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| • Harappa | • Punjab, Pakistan |
| • Mohenjo-Daro | • Sindh, Pakistan |
| • Dholavira | • Kutch district of Gujarat, |
| • Kalibangan | • Rajasthan |
| • Lothal | • Gujarat |
| • Rakhigarhi | • Haryana |
| • Chanhudaro | • Sindh, Pakistan |
| • Ganweriwala | • Punjab, Pakistan |
| • Sutkagendor | • Baluchistan Province, Pakistan |
| • Alamgirpur | • Uttar Pradesh |
| | |



Source: IE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IRAN-US TIES

In News

- The Iranian Supreme Leader indicated that while the U.S. is not to be trusted, there is no harm in engaging in negotiations with them about nuclear cooperation.

Iran-US relations :

- The US and Iran have longstanding tensions over Iran's nuclear program, missile capabilities, and regional influence.
 - ♦ The US believes Iran's nuclear program could lead to weapons development, while Iran insists its program is for civilian use.

Historical Linkages

- **In 1953**, The U.S. and the UK orchestrated a coup to remove Iran's democratically elected leader, Mohammad Mosaddegh, who had sought to nationalize oil resources.
 - ♦ The U.S. supported the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who established a repressive regime.
- **In 1979**, The Iranian Revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini resulted in the establishment of an Islamic Republic and severed diplomatic ties with the U.S.
- Since 1979, the **U.S. has imposed various sanctions on Iran**, including trade embargoes, arms embargoes, and sanctions on foreign banks.

Previous Engagement

- The last time the Iran-US seemed close to bilateral cooperation was in 2015, when Iran and Western countries signed the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**
 - ♦ It was aimed to limit Iran's nuclear weapons development in exchange for relief from Western economic sanctions.
- **In 2018**, the Trump administration withdrew from the JCPOA, leading to further deterioration in the U.S.-Iran relations.

Impact:

- The JCPOA represented a thaw in relations but was undermined by the U.S. exit in 2018.
 - ♦ Iran has since accelerated its nuclear program, though it claims not to seek nuclear weapons.

- The ongoing hostility between the U.S. and Iran contributes to regional instability, with the U.S. supporting Israel and Iran opposing U.S. and Israeli policies.
- Iran faces severe economic challenges due to US sanctions, including a drop in oil exports, inflation, and decreased growth.
 - ♦ Despite these troubles, Iran has historically managed to cope with sanctions.

Developments Favoring Iran:

- **Saudi-Iran Peace Deal:** The China-brokered peace deal with Saudi Arabia in March 2023 and Iran's inclusion in the SCO and BRICS have improved Iran's regional standing.
- **Gaza War:** Iran's military capabilities were highlighted by its involvement in the Gaza conflict.
- **Iran's Strategic Partnerships:** Iran has strengthened ties with Russia and China and is exploring opportunities with India.
- **Oil and Gas Reserves:** Iran has vast reserves of oil and natural gas, making it a key player in global energy markets.

India's Engagement with Iran :

- India has enhanced its outreach in West Asia, but relations with Iran have not fully matched potential due to geopolitical and economic factors.
- India maintains multilateral ties with Iran through platforms like SCO and BRICS.
- **Key agreements** include the Tehran Declaration (2001) and the New Delhi Declaration (2003), although relations have been strained by sanctions and geopolitical factors.
- **India and Iran** signed a 10-year agreement to develop the **Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar port**, marking a new phase in India's long-term interest in the port.

Response of US and India's Dilemma

- The U.S. has raised concerns about potential sanctions related to the Chabahar deal.
 - ♦ There has been no clear exemption provided for this project, despite previous exemptions for humanitarian aid and support to Afghanistan.
- India faces pressure from the US to stop Iranian oil imports while maintaining strong bilateral ties with Iran.
 - ♦ Indian oil companies have reportedly ceased placing new orders for Iranian oil due to sanctions.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The upcoming U.S. presidential elections could influence Iran's situation.
- And India should monitor potential tougher actions from the U.S. and navigate its diplomacy carefully.
- India's options include finding informal ways to continue oil imports or negotiating with the US for an exemption, while enhancing investments in Chabahar and other projects to maintain relations with Iran without directly defying US policy.

Source:TH

MICRONUTRIENTS MALNUTRITION IN INDIA

Context

- A recent article in The Lancet has estimated that the **Indian population's consumption of 15 dietary micronutrients is inadequate.**

Major Highlights

- **Over 5 billion people worldwide**, which is **68%** of the global population, do not consume enough iodine; 67% do not consume enough vitamin E; and 66%, calcium.
- **More than 4 billion people (65% of the population)** do not consume enough iron; 55%, riboflavin; 54%, folate; and 53%, vitamin C.
- **Within the same country and age groups**, estimated inadequate intakes were higher for women than men for iodine, vitamin B12, iron, and selenium; and higher for men than women for magnesium, vitamin B6, zinc, vitamin C, vitamin A, thiamin, and niacin.
- **Calcium intake inadequacy** is reported to be **highest in countries in south Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and east Asia and the Pacific.**
 - ♦ Also, Intake inadequacy was high across all age–sex groups in these countries, but highest among people aged 10–30 years.

Micronutrients

- Micronutrients are vitamins and minerals needed by the body in very small amounts.
- **Vitamins** are organic compounds that are often categorized into two groups:
 - ♦ **Water-Soluble Vitamins:** These include Vitamin C and the B vitamins (like B12, B6, folate). They dissolve in water and are

typically not stored in the body, so regular intake through diet is necessary.

- ♦ **Fat-Soluble Vitamins:** These include Vitamins A, D, E, and K. They are absorbed along with dietary fat and can be stored in the body's fatty tissues and liver.
- **Minerals are inorganic elements** that are also classified into:
 - **Major Minerals:** Such as calcium, potassium, and magnesium, which are needed in larger amounts.
 - **Trace Minerals:** Such as iron, zinc, copper, and selenium, which are needed in smaller amounts but are still vital for health.

Significance of Micronutrients

- **They perform a range of functions**, including enabling the body to produce enzymes, hormones and other substances needed for normal growth and development.
 - ♦ They support metabolic processes, bone development and maintenance, several micronutrients influence brain health and cognitive function.
 - ♦ Iron, vitamin B12, and folate are vital for the production of red blood cells and the prevention of anemia.
 - ♦ Vitamins C and A, as well as zinc, play roles in tissue repair and wound healing.
 - ♦ Adequate intake of certain micronutrients can help prevent chronic diseases.
- **Micronutrient deficiencies** can cause visible and dangerous health conditions, but they can also lead to less clinically notable reductions in energy level, mental clarity and overall capacity.
 - ♦ This can lead to reduced educational outcomes, reduced work productivity and increased risk from other diseases and health conditions.
- **Many of these deficiencies are preventable** through nutrition education and consumption of a healthy diet containing diverse foods, as well as food fortification and supplementation, where needed.

Government of India Initiatives targeting Micronutrients Malnutrition

- **National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyan):** Launched in 2018, it aims to reduce stunting,

undernutrition, anemia, and low birth weight by improving the nutritional status of children, adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.

- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):** It provides comprehensive services for children under six years of age, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. It aims to improve the nutritional status and health of these groups.
- **National Iron Plus Initiative (NIPI):** It was launched to combat iron deficiency anemia, especially in children and women. Initiative includes providing iron and folic acid supplements.
- **Food Fortification Programs:** Fortification programs focus on adding iodine to salt (iodized salt), iron and folic acid to wheat flour, and Vitamin A to edible oils.
 - ♦ The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) oversees the implementation of these fortification standards.
- **Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS):** The scheme provides free lunches that are fortified with essential nutrients to schoolchildren, aiming to enhance their nutritional intake and promote regular school attendance.
- **Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB):** The program includes regular iron and folic acid supplementation, deworming, and efforts to enhance dietary intake of iron-rich foods.
 - ♦ It also emphasizes the need for community-based interventions and awareness campaigns.

Source: TH

HARNESSING BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Context

- The Union government unveiled its **BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment)** policy for Fostering High Performance Biomanufacturing.

Biotechnology

- Biotechnology deals with the application of biological knowledge and techniques pertaining

to molecular, cellular and genetic processes to develop significantly improved products and services.

- The Biotechnology industry in India is divided into the following segments – Biopharmaceuticals, Bio-services, Bio-agriculture, Bio-Industrials and Bio-IT.

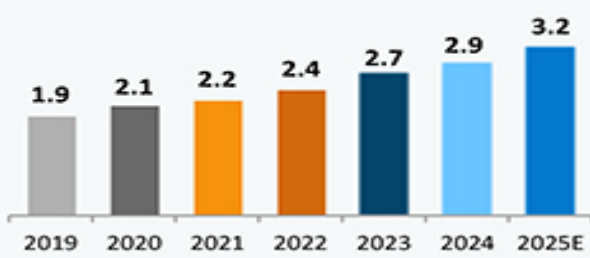
Status of Biotechnology in India

- **The percentage share** of the biotechnology segments is:
 - ♦ BioPharmaceuticals- 62% (\$57.5 Bn)
 - ♦ BioAgriculture- 13% (\$11.5 Bn)
 - ♦ BioIndustry- 15% (\$14.1 Bn)
 - ♦ BioIT & BioServices- 10% (\$9.3 Bn)
- Biotechnology sector is recognized as the key driver for contributing to India's **USD 5 trillion** economy target.
- India is among the **Top-12 destinations for biotechnology** in the world and **3rd largest destination for biotechnology in Asia Pacific**, with approximately **3%** share in the global Biotechnology industry.
 - In 2022, India became the **fifth-largest economy** globally and is recognized as a top innovation economy in Central and Southern Asia, ranking 40th according to the Global Innovation Index (GII) Report 2023.
- The Indian Biotechnology industry was valued at **\$93.1 billion in 2022**, with expectations of reaching **\$300 billion by 2030**.

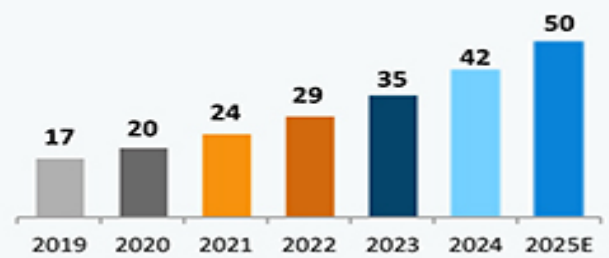
Potential of Biotechnology in India

- India has a **huge wealth of bioresources**, an unsaturated resource waiting to be harnessed and an advantage in Biotechnology especially due to the vast biodiversity and the unique bioresources in the Himalayas.
- With a total population of **1.4 billion, 47% being under the age of 25**, India has a large pool of young and skilled workforce.
- Biotechnology sector in India has made significant contributions to various sectors including **Health, Medicine, Agriculture, Industry and Bioinformatics**.

Clinical trials market in India (US\$ billion)



Medical device market in India (US\$ billion)



Government initiatives

- Policy initiatives of the Government of India (GoI) such as **Startup India and Make in India programs** are aimed to develop India as a world-class Biotechnology and Bio-manufacturing hub.
- **National Biopharma Mission** is supporting 101 projects including more than 150 organizations and 30 MSMEs.
- In **2022, India and Finland** agreed to advance bilateral collaboration and expand cooperation in sectors like digital education, future mobile technologies, biotechnology, and the digital partnership in ICT.
- **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** established by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) is aimed at strengthening and empowering emerging biotechnology enterprises to undertake strategic research and innovation
- **Biotechnology Parks and Incubators** are established across the country by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), under the Ministry of Science and Technology, to translate research into products and services by providing the necessary infrastructure support.
- Favorable Government Policies like **Draft R&D Policy 2021, PLI Schemes and Clinical trial rules** have propelled India to be the 'pharmacy of the world'.
- **FDI Policy:** 100% FDI is allowed under the automatic route for greenfield pharma. Also **100% FDI** is allowed under the government route for brownfield pharma.
 - ♦ **Up to 74% FDI** is under the automatic route and beyond **74%** is under the government approval route.

BioE3 policy

- The BioE3 policy envisages the setting up of several **biomanufacturing hubs** across India.

- At these hubs, industry partners and start-ups can establish facilities for producing specialized **chemicals, smart proteins, enzymes, functional foods, and other bio-products and services.**
- **The hubs will focus on six areas** — bio-based chemicals and enzymes, functional foods and smart proteins, precision biotherapeutics, climate resilient agriculture, carbon capture and utilization, and futuristic marine and space research.

Way Ahead

- The BioE3 Policy will further strengthen Government's initiatives such as '**Net Zero**' carbon economy & '**Lifestyle for Environment**' and will steer India on the path of accelerated '**Green Growth**' by promoting 'Circular Bioeconomy'.
- It will foster an advanced future that is more sustainable, innovative, and responsive to global challenges and lays down the Bio-vision for Viksit Bharat.

Source: IE

NEWS IN SHORT

NA ANKA FAMINE

Context

- Recently, the Union Education Minister proposed changing the name of Ravenshaw University as it believes **Na Anka Famine** occurred during Ravenshaw's tenure.

About the Na Anka Durbhikshya (1866) (aka Great Odisha Famine)

- Odisha was ravaged by a catastrophic famine—the **Na Anka famine**, just two years before the **Ravenshaw University's establishment.**

- ◆ Ravenshaw University, nestled in the ancient city of Cuttack in Odisha was founded in 1868.
- **Severity:** The famine was so severe that approximately **one-third of Odisha's population** perished during this tragic period.
- **Regnal Year:** It occurred in the **9th Regnal year of King Divya Singha Deva**, the Gajapati king of Orissa.

Role of Thomas Edward Ravenshaw

- Thomas Edward Ravenshaw, a **British Bureaucrat** who held the **position of colonial commissioner of Odisha division** during this tumultuous period.
- He witnessed the **horrors of the famine firsthand**.

Causes and Impact

- **Communication Challenges:** Prior to the famine, Orissa faced significant challenges in terms of communication and connectivity, making it difficult to access essential supplies during times of crisis.
- **Inaccessibility:** Orissa was virtually 'out of the world' in terms of trade and communication that exacerbated the effects of the famine.
- In response to the devastating famine, the **Famine Commission of 1866** highlighted the **urgent need to improve communication** in Orissa to prevent similar disasters in the future.
- The commission recommended the speedy construction of a **Trunk Road connecting Cuttack (in Orissa) to Calcutta (now Kolkata)** to facilitate trade and movement, and suggested making **irrigation canals navigable (Construction of Orissa Coast Canal** began in 1880-81).

Source: IE

COCOA (THEOBROMA CACAO)

Context

- California Cultured, a plant cell culture company, is growing cocoa from cell cultures at a lab facility in California.

About

- The cocoa tree is an **evergreen tree** in the family Malvaceae.
- **The flowers** are produced in clusters directly on the trunk and older branches (cauliflory). The

flowers are small, 1–2 cm diameter, with **pink calyx**.

- **The fruit**, called a **cacao pod**, is ovoid, ripening yellow to orange, and contains 20 to 60 seeds.
 - ◆ The seeds are called "**beans**", embedded in a white pulp.
 - ◆ Cocoa beans are used to make **chocolate liquor, cocoa solids, cocoa butter and chocolate**.

Growing Conditions

- It grows about **20 degrees north and south of the equator** in regions with warm weather and abundant rain, including **West Africa and South America**.
- Cocoa requires **deep and well drained soils**. Majority of area under Cocoa cultivation is on clay loam and sandy loam soil.
- It requires a **temperature** between **15°-35°C** with optimum of 25°C.

Source: TH

APARAJITA BILL

Context

- **The West Bengal Legislative Assembly** unanimously passed the **Aparajita Women and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024**.

Major Highlights

- It seeks changes in **several sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023** so that 10 or 20-year jail terms in rape, gangrape and murder cases are replaced with **death penalty or imprisonment for remaining life of the convict**.
- The Bill introduces **three critical elements** — increased punishment, speedy investigation, and rapid dispensation of justice, specifically targeting cases of **sexual assault under the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act**.
- The State government will form a special '**Aparajita Task Force**' from among the State police to ensure **time-bound completion of the probe**.
- The Bill has provisions for **capital punishment** for those convicted of rape if their actions resulted in the victim's death or left her in a vegetative state.

- The legislation also requires that **investigation** into rape cases must be concluded **within 21 days** of the initial report.
- The bill will require **Presidential assent under Article 254(2)** of the Constitution to become law within the geographical jurisdiction of West Bengal.
 - ♦ According to Article 254(2), a state legislature can seek to amend an existing Union law on a subject mentioned in the Concurrent List, but it cannot become law without assent from the President.

Source: TH

VISHANU YUDH ABHYAAS

In News

- The central government conducted a five-day mock drill named **Vishanu Yudh Abhyaas (Virus War Exercise)**

About Vishanu Yudh Abhyaas

- The drill took place over five days in Ajmer district, Rajasthan.
- It is conducted under the **National One Health Mission (NOHM)**.
- It aims to assess pandemic preparedness and response to zoonotic disease outbreaks.
 - ♦ **Zoonotic Diseases** include infections spread between people and animals, such as avian influenza, Nipah, and Zika, caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi.
- **Objective:** To evaluate the readiness and response of the National Joint Outbreak Response Team (NJORT), which includes experts from human health, animal husbandry, and wildlife sectors.
- **Outcome:** The drill provided valuable insights to improve India's preparedness and response to zoonotic disease outbreaks and promoted a coordinated and efficient approach across relevant sectors.

Source: PIB

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Context

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India embarked on a visit to **Brunei Darussalam** which will be

the **first ever bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister.**

About the Brunei Darussalam (often simply referred to as Brunei)

It is a small sultanate in Southeast Asia, and the smallest country in Southeast Asia by population, with less than half a million people.



- ♦ Brunei is **an absolute monarchy**, and its head of state is Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.
- Geographically, it occupies a coastal strip on the **northern part of the island of Borneo**, surrounded by the **Malaysian state of Sarawak**.
- It has a **predominantly Malay-Muslim population**, with its **official religion is Islam**.

Oil Wealth and Economy

- Brunei is rich in oil and natural gas reserves. Its economy heavily relies on hydrocarbon exports.

India-Brunei Relations

- **Defence:** Strengthening defence ties to promote security and stability in the region.
- **Space:** Exploring collaboration in space-related endeavours.
- **People-to-People Relations:** Fostering stronger connections between the citizens of India and Brunei.
- PM's visit aligned with the **40th anniversary** of diplomatic relations between **India and Brunei**.
- **Brunei** is an important partner in **India's Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific Vision**.

Source: TH

THE INVESTOR EDUCATION AND PROTECTION FUND AUTHORITY

Context

- The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), launched a new toll-free number as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance claimant support services.

About

- It is designed to provide users with access to an upgraded, multi-language Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) and an enhanced Call Centre.
- This initiative aligns with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs's broader efforts to streamline **corporate compliance and improve user experience**.

About IEPFA:

- It was established in **2016**, under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- IEPFA is responsible for managing the Investor Education and Protection Fund, which focuses on safeguarding investor interests by facilitating the **refund of shares, unclaimed dividends, and matured deposits/debentures**.
- Through its initiatives, the IEPFA aims to **ensure transparency, protect investors' rights, and promote financial literacy** across the country.

Source: PIB

FINANCIALIZATION OF CAPITAL MARKETS

Context

- Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran cautioned that financialization of capital markets might distort macroeconomic outcomes.

About

- Financialization of capital markets is the **dominance of the role of financial markets in public policy**.
- India's stock market capitalisation being about **140% of its GDP** indicates a high level of financialisation.

Consequences

- While high market capitalization signals a robust financial sector, it also suggests that the

economy is overly reliant on financial markets rather than the real economy.

- The financial sector's record profitability **exacerbates income inequality**, as gains from financialisation typically accrue to a small segment of the population.
- Advanced economies have seen unprecedented levels of both **public and private debt**, largely driven by the financialisation process.
- Economic growth in financialised economies often **relies on the continuous inflation of asset prices**, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate.
 - ♦ This can **create asset bubbles**, which, when burst, can lead to severe economic downturns.

Source: TH

CAPITAL ACQUISITION PROPOSALS BY DAC

In News

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for 10 capital acquisition proposals totaling 1,44,716 crore.

About Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)

- It is the **top decision-making body for military procurement** and gives what is known as acceptance of necessity (AoN) — the first step towards buying military equipment.
- It is chaired by the Defence Minister.
- It aims to ensure expeditious procurement of the approved requirements of the Armed Forces in terms of capabilities sought and time frame prescribed by optimally utilizing the allocated budgetary resources.

Projects Approved:

- **Stealth Frigates:** Procurement of seven stealth frigates under Project-17B.
- **Future-Ready Combat Vehicles (FRCV):** Main battle tanks to replace the T-72 and T-90 tanks.
- **Air Defence Fire Control Radars (FCR):** For detecting and tracking aerial targets.
 - ♦ These radars will provide detection, tracking, and firing solutions for aerial threats.
- **Dornier-228 Aircraft:** For various operational needs.

- **Patrol Vessels:** Next-generation fast patrol vessels and offshore patrol vessels.
- **Indigenous Sources:** 99% of the procurement costs will be from indigenous sources, under the Buy (Indian) and Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured) categories.
- **Shipyard Construction:** The stealth frigates will be constructed by public sector shipyards Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL).
- **Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Enhancements:** Three AoNs approved:
 - ♦ Dornier-228 Aircraft: For enhanced surveillance and patrolling.
 - ♦ Next Generation Fast Patrol Vessels: For high operational features in rough weather.
 - ♦ Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels: For advanced technology and long-range operations.

Source:TH

