

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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RAJASTHAN APPROVES 33% QUOTA FOR WOMEN IN POLICE FORCE

In News

- The Rajasthan government approved 33% reservation for women in the police force by deciding to amend the State Police Subordinate Service Rules, 1989.

Current Status

- Over the years, the representation of women in Indian police has improved.
- However, it's essential to note that this progress remains slow but steady.
- As of January 1, 2022, women made up 11.7% of the total State police force.
- **Police** being a **State** subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/ Union Territory (UT) Administrations to **recruit more women police personnel including improvement of gender balance.**

Importance of Women in police force

- **Improved Handling of Violence Against Women:** Increased female representation in law enforcement correlates with higher reporting rates and better handling of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes against women.
 - ♦ Female officers improve reporting rates and clearance rates for these cases.
- **Enhanced Police-Community Relations:** Women officers tend to be trusted more by their communities due to their high interpersonal communication skills and lower likelihood of using force.
 - ♦ This fosters better relationships and safer communities.
- **Problem-Solving Skills:** Women bring effective problem-solving skills to law enforcement.
 - ♦ Diverse workforces, including a balance of men and women, are more creative, resilient, and effective in decision-making and service delivery.

Issues and Challenges

- **Infrastructure Issues:** Many women in the police force expressed dissatisfaction with poor infrastructure, including the lack of separate toilets and inadequate venues to report workplace harassment.
- **Prejudiced Notions:** A portion of the population held prejudiced views about the capability of women in handling police duties.

- ♦ There is a prevalent belief among a notable share of personnel that policing is predominantly a man's job.

- **Workplace Environment:** Women in the police force often face a hostile work environment characterized by sexism and gender bias.
 - ♦ Stereotypes and biases often hinder women's advancement within the force.

Steps taken

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has issued regular advisories to the State Governments/UT Administrations to increase the **representation of women police to 33% of the total Strength.**
- **States/UTs** are advised to ensure each police station has at least 3 women Sub-Inspectors and 10 women Constables to maintain a women's help desk round the clock.
- **States are encouraged** to improve welfare measures for women police personnel, including housing, medical facilities, and rest rooms, to create a conducive work environment.
- **Central Assistance:** Under the "Assistance to States & UTs for Modernization of Police" scheme, central assistance is provided for constructing separate toilet facilities and crèches in police stations.
- **Wide Publicity and Fee Exemption:** Recruitment is widely advertised, and female candidates are exempt from application fees.
- **Relaxed Physical Tests:** Women candidates receive relaxed standards in the Physical Standard Test (PST) and Physical Efficiency Test (PET) compared to male candidates.
- **Anti-Sexual Harassment Measures:** Committees are established at all levels to address and resolve sexual harassment complaints.
- **The Supreme Court** has highlighted the critical need for higher representation of women in the police force due to the prevalence of crimes against women.

Suggestions and Way Ahead :

- There should be efforts to create a conducive environment and basic infrastructure to attract more women to the police force.
- Establishing recruitment boards in all States to ensure regular recruitment of women.
- A model policy is needed to challenge deep-rooted patriarchy within police institutions.
- Deployment decisions should avoid gender stereotyping, enabling women to take on leading operational and investigative roles.

- Implement a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination and harassment.
- Gender sensitization within police forces is crucial. Prejudiced notions about women's capabilities must be addressed.
- Sensitization programs should complement efforts to increase representation.

Source:TH

INDIA, BRUNEI ELEVATE BILATERAL TIES TO 'ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP'

In News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Brunei in September 2024 marks a significant milestone in India-Brunei relations, commemorating 40 years of diplomatic ties.



About

- It was the **first bilateral** visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Brunei.
- This visit is pivotal in furthering **India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Vision**, signaling Brunei's importance in India's strategic and economic interests in Southeast Asia.
- Both nations have a long history of friendship and cooperation, dating back to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1984.

Key Highlights of the visit

- **MoU on Space Collaboration:** The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Telemetry, Tracking, and Telecommand Station

operations for satellite and launch vehicles. This partnership strengthens India's space ambitions, with Brunei hosting crucial infrastructure for ISRO.

- **Economic Cooperation:** Both leaders emphasized expanding trade in sectors like technology, agriculture, and finance. Discussions also focused on food security and the exchange of best practices in agriculture.
- **Direct Flight Connection:** A new direct flight between Bandar Seri Begawan and Chennai was announced, enhancing people-to-people exchanges, trade, and tourism.
- **Defense and Security Cooperation:** The leaders discussed deepening defense ties, including joint naval exercises and port visits. Both countries stressed the importance of maritime cooperation and the adherence to international law in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Regional Cooperation:** They reaffirmed their commitment to the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and condemned terrorism, calling for regional stability.

Significance of India-Brunei Relations

- **Strategic Positioning:** Brunei plays a crucial role in India's Indo-Pacific strategy, particularly in maritime security and regional peace.
- **Strengthening Bilateral Ties:** The visit signifies a shift to an 'Enhanced Partnership,' focusing on mutual cooperation in defense, space technology, and cultural ties.
- **Act East Policy:** Brunei is an important partner for India in its broader Act East Policy, helping India deepen its engagement with Southeast Asia, particularly through ASEAN.

Source: TH

CHINA-HOSTED FOCAC SUMMIT

Context

- Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged **\$51 billion** of funding to African countries at the ninth edition of the **Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing**.

About

- China will support **30 infrastructure projects across the continent**, with 360 billion yuan (\$50.7 billion) to be offered as financial assistance.
- The **theme this year** is "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future."

What is the FOCAC?

- The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was established in **2000** to formalise the strategic partnership between China and African nations.
- A summit is conducted **every three years**, with the host alternating between China and an African member.
- The FOCAC counts **53 African nations** as its members – the entire continent except **Eswatini**.
 - ◆ Eswatini has diplomatic ties with Taiwan against Beijing's "One China" Policy.
 - ◆ The African Union Commission is also a member.

China's Investment in Near Future in Africa

- **China's approach has changed for investment in African Nations:** China wishes to narrow the country's investment portfolio away from big-ticket infrastructure to "small and beautiful projects."
 - ◆ It also hopes to sell advanced, green technologies which Chinese firms have heavily invested in.
- **Reasons for Change in China's Approach:** The summit comes at a time when China is experiencing a prolonged economic slowdown post-pandemic, with China's growth target for the year looks out of reach.
 - ◆ Its manufacturers are battling deflationary pressures and unemployment challenges.
 - ◆ There are also concerns about loan defaults — in 2020, Zambia defaulted on its loan, while Ghana defaulted on most of its \$30 billion external debt in 2022.

Significance of FOCAC 2024

- One goal of the summit can be **narrowing the growing trade imbalance between China and Africa** through increasing imports of agricultural goods and processed minerals.
 - ◆ Meeting these African demands is in **China's geopolitical interest to keep them outside in the tussle with the U.S.**
- African leaders are likely to seek backing for big-ticket items, as they have in the past, but also place **greater emphasis on debt sustainability**.
 - ◆ Recent deadly protests in Kenya were triggered by the government's need to service its debt burden to international creditors, including China.
 - ◆ African leaders at the forum seek not only more Chinese investment but also more **favourable loans in light of such events.**

Source: IE

PAC TO HOLD PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF REGULATORY BODIES

Context

- The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will hold a performance review of "regulatory bodies established by Act of Parliament", such as the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

About

- The decision came amid a political storm over the allegations of **conflict of interest against Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch.
- The panel has picked five subjects for suo motu investigations, including "performance review of regulatory bodies established by Act of Parliament" and "levy and regulation of fees, tariffs, user charges etc. on public infrastructure and other public utilities".

Public Accounts Committee

- The committee was set up first in **1921** under the provisions of the **Government of India Act of 1919**.
- It consists of **22 members**, 15 from the Lok Sabha and 7 from the Rajya Sabha.
- The members are elected by the Parliament every year from amongst its members according to the **principle of proportional representation** by means of the single transferable vote.
- A **minister cannot be elected as a member** of the committee. The term of office of the members is **one year**.
- **The function** of the committee is to examine the annual audit reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), which are laid before the Parliament by the President. The reports are;
 - ◆ Audit report on appropriation accounts,
 - ◆ Audit report on finance accounts and
 - ◆ Audit report on public undertakings.
- In addition, the Committee can also select one or more suo motu subjects for in-depth examination during the year.

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

- **Origin:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India was constituted as a non-statutory body in 1988 through a resolution of the Government of India.

- ◆ In 1992 it was established as a statutory body under the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.
- **Governance:** SEBI is managed by its board of members, which consist of the following people;
 - ◆ **The chairman**, who is nominated by the Union Government of India.
 - ◆ **Two members** from the **Union Finance Ministry**.
 - ◆ **One member** from the **Reserve Bank of India**.
 - ◆ The remaining **five members** are **nominated by the Union Government of India**, and out of them at least three should be whole-time members.

Functions of SEBI

- **Market Regulation:** As the watchdog for the Indian Capital Market, it prescribes the conditions for issuer companies to raise capital from the public so as to protect the interest of the investors.
- **Market Development:** It takes measures to widen and deepen the securities markets by bringing changes in the micro and macro structures of the market.
- **Enforcement of Regulatory Norms:** It ascertains compliance with its norms by carrying out inspections of registered intermediaries, and investigations
 - ◆ It is vested with the **power of civil court** to call for information and records, to issue summons, to inspect, and to investigate entities associated with securities markets.
- **Investors' Protection:** It facilitates the redressal of investors' grievances.

Source: TH

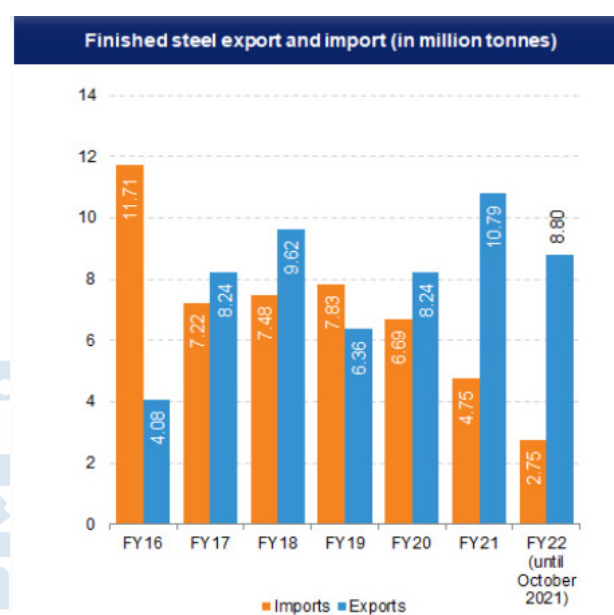
GOVT SETS TARGET OF 500 MILLION TONNES STEEL PRODUCTION BY 2034

Context

- The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, during his address at the 5th edition of ISA Steel Conclave set a target of 500 mn tonnes of steel production by 2034.

Status of Steel Production in India

- India is the **world's second-largest producer** of crude steel, surpassing Japan in 2018.
- **In FY24**, the production of crude steel and finished steel stood at **143.6 MT** and **138.5 MT**, respectively.
- **India's finished steel consumption** stood at 119.17 MT in FY23 and 138.5 MT in FY24.
- In FY24, the exports and imports of finished steel stood at **7.49 MT** and **8.32 MT**, respectively.
- **The per-capita consumption** of steel stood at **86.7 kgs** in FY23.



Potential of Steel Sector in India

- **Easy availability** of low-cost manpower and presence of abundant iron ore reserves make India competitive in the global set up.
 - ◆ India is home to **fifth-highest reserves of iron ore** in the world.
- **India surpassed China** as the top developer of coal-based steel capacity in July 2023, according to the latest report from Global Energy Monitor (GEM).
- **Automobile Industry Growth:** The automotive sector is a major consumer of steel.
 - ◆ As India's middle class expands and consumer purchasing power increases, there is a growing demand for automobiles, contributing to the demand for steel.
- **Urbanization:** With a growing population and increasing urbanization, there is a rising demand for housing, commercial spaces, and urban infrastructure. This trend contributes to a sustained demand for steel in construction and real estate sectors.

Concerns for Steel Sector in India

- **Raw Material Availability and Cost:** The steel industry heavily depends on the availability and cost of raw materials such as iron ore and coking coal.
 - ♦ India remains dependent on **imports to meet 90% of its coking coal** requirement.
- **Global Competition:** The steel industry is highly competitive and Indian steel manufacturers face stiff competition from international players.
 - ♦ Dumping of steel products especially from **China and Vietnam** in the past had major impacts on the industry.
- **Infrastructure Bottlenecks:** Inadequate transportation facilities, inefficient logistics, and power shortages, hinder the smooth operation of the steel industry. It also leads to increased production costs.

Steps taken by Government

- **National Steel Policy 2017 (NSP 2017):** India has set the targets of achieving the total crude steel capacity of **300 MTPA (million tonnes per annum)** and total crude steel demand/production of 255 MTPA by 2030-31.
- **In 2019**, the Government introduced **Steel Scrap Recycling Policy** with an aim to reduce imports.
- **Policy for providing preference to Domestically Manufactured Iron and Steel Products (DMI & SP Policy)** in government procurement which has resulted in import substitution of 34,800 Crore approximately.
- **Brand India labeling:** the Ministry of Steel has undertaken the initiative of Made in India branding of Steel produced in the country to differentiate Indian quality steel from the others.
- **In 2021, India and Russia signed an MoU** to carry out R&D in the steel sector and produce coking coal (used in steel making).
- **In 2021**, took initiative to boost the steel sector through joint activities under the framework of **India–Japan Steel Dialogue**.
- **Productivity Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) for steel:** The Scheme was approved by the Government in 2021, with a financial outlay of **6,322 crores**.
 - ♦ **Objective:** To promote domestic manufacturing of **‘Specialty Steel’** within the country by attracting capital investment,

generate employment and promote technology up-gradation in the steel sector.

- **The “Promotion of Research & Development in Iron & Steel Sector” scheme** provides financial support to stakeholders for initiatives aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and reducing carbon emissions.
- **Government allowed 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** in the steel sector under the automatic route.
 - ♦ According to the data released by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), between April 2000-March 2024, Indian metallurgical industries attracted FDI inflows of **US\$ 17.51 billion**.

Way Ahead

- There is a need for **innovation in achieving low emissions, high productivity, and superior quality** to position India as a leading global steel manufacturer.
- **The use of artificial intelligence (AI)** is required to optimize production, minimize waste, and enhance efficiency throughout the value chain.
- Also there is a need for a level playing field for domestic industries and addressing the **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** with steel industry leaders to promote sustainable manufacturing.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

ASSAM ACCORD

Context

- The Assam government has decided to fulfill most of the recommendations of the high-powered committee appointed by the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs** to implement **Clause 6 of the Assam Accord, 1985**.

What is Assam Accord?

- The Assam Accord was signed in 1985 amongst **Union of India, Govt. of Assam, All Assam Student of Union, All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad**.

- To implement the various Clauses of Assam Accord a new Department has been established in the name of “**Implementation of Assam Accord Department**” during the year 1986.
- The Accord set **March 24, 1971**, as a cut-off. Anyone who had come to Assam before midnight on that date would be an Indian citizen, while those who had come after would be dealt with as foreigners.
- The same cut-off was used in updating the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)**.

Clause 6 of the Assam Accord

- The Assam Accord’s Clause 6 says, “Constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.”
 - ♦ Clause 6 focuses on **protecting the cultural, social, and linguistic identity of the Assamese people**.

Source: TH

KERALA WINS TOP PERFORMER AWARD IN LISTS OF BUSINESS-CENTRIC REFORMS

Context

- Kerala has emerged the country leader in two categories of business-centric reforms and seven categories of citizen-centric reforms in the ranking of the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

About

- **The business-centric reforms** in which Kerala emerged top performer are facilitating utility permits for business and paying taxes.
- **The citizen-centric reforms** where Kerala emerged as the top achiever are;
 - ♦ Online single window system,
 - ♦ the process of issuing various certificates with ease provided by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs),
 - ♦ issuance of certificates by the Department of Revenue,
 - ♦ providing utility permits,
 - ♦ public distribution system (Department of Food and Civil Supplies),
 - ♦ improvements in the transport sector and running employment exchanges.

Source: TH

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION DRIVES SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN INFANT MORTALITY RATES

Context

- A recent study published in Nature, revealed that the **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)**, has contributed significantly to reducing infant and under-five mortality rates across the country – averting 60,000 – 70,000 infant lives annually.

What is the Swachh Bharat Mission?

- The Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission (SBM) was **launched in 2014** with the goal of achieving **universal sanitation coverage by 2019**, as a tribute to the **150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**.
- It consisted of two sub-missions, **urban, and rural or Gramin (G)**.
 - ♦ The urban component of the mission is implemented by the **Ministry of Urban Development**, and the rural component by the **Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation**.
- SBM(G) sought to improve “the levels of cleanliness through **Solid and Liquid Waste Management activities** and making Gram Panchayats **Open Defecation Free (ODF)**, clean and sanitized.
- **SBM Phase II:** The second phase, started in 2020-2021, expands efforts with a focus on **safe management of solid and liquid waste and sustainability of ODF**.
 - ♦ An ODF Plus village is one which has sustained its **Open Defecation Free (ODF) status along with implementing either solid or liquid waste management systems**.
 - ♦ It would transform villages from **ODF to ODF Plus by 2024-25**.

Source: PIB

AFRICA URBAN FORUM

In News

- African bureaucrats and development experts have gathered in Ethiopia for the inaugural African Urban Forum (AUF)

Africa Urban Forum

- It is a continental platform that promotes sustainable development in African human settlements.

- It is a platform through which governments collaborate to enhance African cities, enabling them to fulfill their potential as centers of hope, growth, and prosperity.
- The **African Union Commission** and its member-states established the Africa Urban Forum in **2022** in response to the rising consciousness of the rapid urbanization in Africa, its opportunities, & challenges, and the need to create a continental scale forum to support an inclusive and holistic approach to unlocking the potential of urbanization in the continent.

Focus Areas:

- Fostering African urban solutions aligned with Agenda 2063.
- Urbanization trends and prospects towards Agenda 2063.
- Managing rapid urbanization for positive structural transformation.
- Financing urbanization for socio-economic transformation.
- Promoting institutional and political reforms in urban development.

Do you know ?

- In 2010, 36% of Africa's population lived in urban areas.
- In 2030, it is expected to rise to 50%.
- In 2050 it is projected to reach 60%.
- **Regional Variations:**
 - ◆ East Africa: Lowest urbanization rate.
 - ◆ South and North Africa: Highest urban growth.
 - ◆ Central and West Africa: Home to some of the largest megacities.

Source: DTE

ONDC RECEIVED THE NATIONAL AWARDS FOR E-GOVERNANCE

Context

- **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** has received the national awards for e-governance by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).
 - ◆ The objective of the award is to recognise and promote excellence in implementation of e-Governance initiatives and to encourage innovation in successful e-Governance solutions.

About

- ONDC is an initiative of the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.
- It aims to **promote an open platform** for all aspects of **e-commerce retail** and help small retailers expand their business through e-commerce medium and reduce dominance of giants in the sector.
- The network is now enabling more than 12 million orders per month, spread across categories ranging from fashion to electronics in products, and ride-hailing to metro ticketing in services.
- Over 6 lakh sellers across India have been onboarded so far.

Source: BS

NATIONAL EXIT TEST (NEXT)

In News

- National Exit Test (NExT) for Ayush to be Effective from 2021-2022 Batch.

About

- The test is mandatory for licensing and enrollment in State or National Registers after completing a one-year internship.
- This will grant license to practice as medical practitioner of respective discipline of Indian system of medicine
- The National Exit Test (NeXT) is required to be conducted by the Commissions under the provisions of National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) Act 2020 and the National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH) Act, 2020.

Source: PIB

EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM

In News

- The Eastern Economic Forum 2024 was held in Vladivostok, Russia.

About Eastern Economic Forum

- It is an annual international event held in Vladivostok, Russia, since 2015.
- Its primary aim is to promote economic development in the Russian Far East and to encourage investment, collaboration, and cooperation between Russia and Asia-Pacific nations.

- The forum brings together government officials, business leaders, investors, and policymakers to discuss key economic issues, opportunities in various sectors, and enhance regional connectivity.
- It plays a vital role in shaping economic diplomacy and fostering partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region.
- It borders two oceans, the Pacific and the Arctic, and five countries (China, Japan, Mongolia, the United States and North Korea).

Source: ET

QUANTUM GRAVITY

In News

- Researchers are investigating quantum gravity, aiming to unify classical gravitation and quantum mechanics.

Quantum Gravity

- Quantum gravity (QG) is a field of theoretical physics that seeks to **describe gravity according to the principles of quantum mechanics** particularly in environments where both

gravitational and quantum effects are significant, like near black holes or neutron stars.

- **Previous Findings:** It has been shown that treating the gravitational field quantum mechanically introduces fluctuations (noise) in the lengths of gravitational wave detectors, such as LIGO's interferometer.
- **New Development:** Researchers are studying the signatures of quantum gravity in terrestrial systems to advance towards a complete quantum theory of gravity.
 - ♦ They have derived an uncertainty relation between the position and momentum of freely falling bodies in a quantum gravitational field.
 - ♦ This uncertainty relation indicates a genuine quantum gravitational effect and demonstrates the coupling between the degrees of freedom of a particle and the quantized gravitational field.

Source: PIB

