

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 01-10-2024

Table of Content

International Day of Older Persons, 2024

Annular Solar Eclipse

Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)

Bail Provisions under PMLA

Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) 2024

BharatGen: World's First Government-funded Multimodal Large Language Model

News In Short

Permafrost

Poumai Naga Tribe

Jal Hi AMRIT Program

NAMASTE Scheme

Anna Darpan

RoDTEP scheme

Bidkin Industrial Area (BIA)

Stem Cell

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)

Exercise KAZIND

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS, 2024

Context

- The International Day of Older Persons, is commemorated on **1 October** each year.

About

- Origin:** The idea was initiated by the United Nations. It stems from the **Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging**, which was adopted in **1982** by the World Assembly on Ageing.
 - UN General Assembly Resolution:** In **1990**, the UN General Assembly formally established October 1 as the International Day of Older Persons through Resolution 45/106.
- Objectives:** To raise public awareness about the opportunities and challenges with ageing populations and to mobilize the families, community groups and stakeholders to address the difficulties faced by older people.
- Theme for 2024:** 'Ageing with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide'.

Current Demographics of India

- As of **2021**, India had around **138 million** elderly persons (aged 60 years and above), accounting for roughly **10%** of the total population.
- According to projections, **by 2050**, the elderly population in India is expected to reach around **319 million**, making up approximately **19.5%** of the total population.

Reasons for Elderly Population Growth

- Increasing Life Expectancy:** The life expectancy in India has increased from around 50 years in 1970 to approximately 70 years in 2023 due to better healthcare and living conditions.
- Declining Fertility Rate:** India's fertility rate has declined over the years, leading to a shrinking younger population and a rising proportion of older persons.

Challenges Faced by the Elderly population

- Health Issues:** Older persons in India commonly face non-communicable diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular issues, and arthritis.
- Economic Dependency:** Many elderly individuals in India are financially dependent on their children or families due to **limited pension coverage and savings**.
 - Only about **30%** of the elderly are covered by some form of a pension scheme.
- Elder Abuse**, especially emotional and financial

neglect, is an issue in many families.

- Social Isolation:** Changing family structures, with nuclear families becoming more common, resulted in increased social isolation for the elderly, particularly in urban areas.

Government initiatives

- Senior Able Citizens for Re-Employment in Dignity (SACRED)** portal to connect senior citizens with job providers in the private sector.
- Senior care Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE)**, by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, to promote and incentivise senior care products.
- National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP):** It was formulated in 1999 to guide the development of policies and programs aimed at promoting the well-being of senior citizens.
- Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):** Provides physical aids and assisted-living devices to elderly persons belonging to BPL categories and suffering from age-related disabilities.
- Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana:** It includes awareness generation/sensitization programmes with school/college students for strengthening Inter-generational bonding.
- Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS):** It is a government-backed savings scheme designed specifically for senior citizens to provide them with a steady source of income.
- The Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM)** initiative is providing comprehensive healthcare through Health and Wellness Centres.
 - It focuses on preventive, promotive, curative, and rehabilitative care, using multiple traditional health systems like Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH).

What are the opportunities?

- Silver Economy:** It refers to economic activities, goods, and services designed for the growing elderly population.
 - This demographic, particularly those aged 45-64 years, is considered the wealthiest, creating a lucrative market for products and services catering to their specific needs.
- Health and Wellness Industry Growth:** Healthcare accounts for **one-third** of the consumption by older adults and there is a significant opportunity for businesses in senior care, health services, and wellness sectors.
- Elder Care Services:** The rising elderly population will increase the demand for elder care services such as home care assistance, nursing homes, retirement communities, and assisted living

facilities.

- **Senior-Friendly Tourism:** With more disposable income and time, the elderly population is likely to drive demand for senior-friendly travel and tourism.

Concluding remarks

- As India's aging population increases, there is a critical need for solutions that promote **healthy aging, financial security, and social inclusion**.
- Leveraging advancements in health technology, infrastructure, and senior care services, the **silver economy can transform aging into a dynamic opportunity** for both economic growth and societal well-being.

Source: PIB

ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE

In News

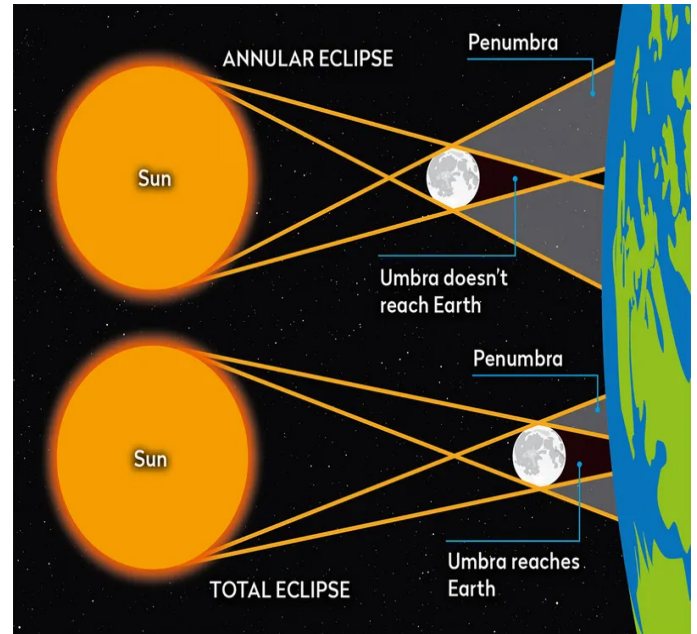
- On October 2, an annular solar eclipse will be visible in parts of South America, while a partial solar eclipse can be seen in regions including South America, Antarctica, North America, and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, including Hawaii.

About Solar eclipses

- Solar eclipses occur when the Sun, Moon, and Earth align, causing the Moon to pass between the Sun and Earth.
- This alignment casts a shadow on Earth, partially or fully blocking the Sun's light in certain areas.
- Eclipses are infrequent because the Moon's orbit is not in the same plane as that of the Sun and Earth.
- These alignments occur during "eclipse season," which happens twice a year.

Types

- **Total Solar Eclipse:** This occurs when the Moon completely blocks the Sun as it passes between the Sun and Earth. Observers in the center of the Moon's shadow will experience a total eclipse, where the sky darkens, and they can briefly remove their eclipse glasses to view the Sun's corona.



- **Annular Solar Eclipse:** This happens when the Moon is at its farthest point from Earth, appearing smaller than the Sun and creating a "ring of fire" effect as it covers the center of the Sun.
- **Partial Solar Eclipse:** In this type, the Sun, Moon, and Earth are not perfectly aligned, so only part of the Sun is obscured, giving it a crescent shape. Observers outside the path of totality or annularity will see a partial eclipse.
- **Hybrid Solar Eclipse:** This occurs when the eclipse shifts between total and annular due to the curvature of the Earth's surface as the Moon's shadow moves across the globe.

Source:IE

OVERSEAS CITIZEN OF INDIA (OCI)

Context

- The Consulate General of India in New York has clarified that rumours circulating on social media regarding OCIs becoming reclassified as "foreigners" are false.

Overseas Citizen of India

- OCI was introduced by the Indian government in **2005**.
- A registered OCI is **granted multiple entry, multi-purpose life-long visa** for visiting India.
- **They are exempted** from registration with Foreign Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) or Foreign Registration Officer (FRO) for any length of stay in India.
- OCI cardholders can open special bank accounts in India, they can buy non-farm property and exercise ownership rights and can also apply for

a driver's licence and PAN card.

- However they are **required to seek permission** or a permit to visit protected areas in India.

Eligibility Criteria

- It provides for registration as an OCI of all Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) who were citizens of India on **26th January, 1950**, or thereafter, or were eligible to become citizens of India on the said date.
- A foreign national who;
 - ♦ Belonged to a territory that became part of India after **15th August, 1947**; or
 - ♦ A child or a grandchild or a great grandchild of such a citizen; or
 - ♦ A minor child of such persons mentioned above; or
 - ♦ A minor child whose both parents are citizens of India or one of the parents is a citizen of India is eligible for registration as OCI cardholder.

Who cannot be an OCI?

- An applicant is not eligible to get an OCI card if his/her parents or grandparents have ever been a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh.
- Foreign military personnel either in service or retired are also not entitled for grant of OCI.

What are OCIs not allowed to do?

- The OCI card holder is not entitled to vote; to be a member of a Legislative Assembly or of a Legislative Council or of Parliament; to hold Indian constitutional posts such as that of the President, Vice President, Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court.
- He or she cannot normally hold employment in the government.

Source: IE

BAIL PROVISIONS UNDER PMLA

Context

- The Supreme Court recently held that constitutional courts cannot allow provisions of the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act** to become instruments in the hands of the **Enforcement Directorate to continue incarceration for a long time.**

The Prevention of Money-Laundering Act (PMLA)

- It was enacted by Parliament of India under **Article 253 of Constitution in 2002** to prevent money laundering and provide for the confiscation of property derived from or involved in money

laundering.


- PMLA and the Rules notified there under came into force with effect from **2005**, and it was further amended in **2009 and in 2012**.
- Director, FIU-IND and Director (Enforcement) have been conferred with exclusive and concurrent powers under relevant sections of the **Act to implement the provisions of the Act.**
- **The offence under the PMLA** mainly involves money laundering obtained through criminal activities (e.g., drug trafficking, terrorism, corruption).

Bail Provisions under the Law

- **Section 45 of the PMLA**, which deals with bail, first states that **no court can grant bail for offences under this law**, and then proceeds to mention a **few exceptions**.
 - ♦ The negative language in the provision itself shows **that bail is not the rule but the exception under PMLA.**
- The provision makes it **mandatory to hear the public prosecutor** in all bail applications, and when the prosecutor opposes bail, the **court is required to apply a twin test**.
 - ♦ These two conditions are: (i) that there are "reasonable grounds for believing that [the accused] is not guilty of such offence"; and (ii) that "he is not likely to commit any offence while on bail".
- There are **similar provisions in several other laws** that deal with serious offences — for example, Section 36AC of The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, Section 37 of The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, and Section 43D(5) of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967.


Supreme Court's Take on the Law

SC knocks back on law




On incarceration

These stringent provisions regarding the grant of bail, such as Section 45(1)(iii) of the PMLA, cannot become a tool which can be used to incarcerate the accused without trial for an unreasonably long time.




On speedy trials

The expeditious disposal of the trial is also warranted considering the higher threshold set for the grant of bail. Hence, the requirement of expeditious disposal of cases must be read into these statutes.



On courts granting bail

If the judges conclude that there is no possibility of a trial concluding in a reasonable time, the power of granting bail can always be exercised by the constitutional courts.



On constitutional rights

If constitutional courts do not exercise their jurisdiction in such cases, the rights of the undertrials under Article 21 of the Constitution will be defeated.

- To address concerns raised by ED regarding possible tampering with witnesses or evidence, the court imposed **strict conditions on bail, including:**
 - ♦ regular appearance before the deputy director of ED;
 - ♦ appearance before the investigating officer of the scheduled offences;
 - ♦ restraint against contacting any prosecution witnesses or victims related to the scheduled offences;
 - ♦ full cooperation with the trial and a refrain from asking for adjournments.

About Directorate of Enforcement (ED)

- **Established:** It was established in **1956** with the formation of an **'Enforcement Unit'** under the aegis of the **Department of Economic Affairs** and handled Exchange Control Laws violations under **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 (FERA 1947)**.
 - ♦ A year later, the Enforcement Unit was renamed the Enforcement Directorate.
- It is a **multi-disciplinary organization** mandated with **investigation of the offence of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws**.

The statutory functions of the Directorate include enforcement of following Acts:

- **The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA):** It is a criminal law enacted to prevent money, ED has been given the responsibility to enforce the provisions of the PMLA.
 - ♦ It does so by **conducting investigations** to trace the assets derived from proceeds of crime, to provisionally attach the property and to ensure prosecution of the offenders and confiscation of the property by the Special court.
- **The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA):** It is a **civil law** enacted to consolidate and amend the laws relating to facilitate **external trade and payments**.
 - ♦ ED has been given the responsibility to conduct investigation into suspected contraventions of foreign exchange laws and regulations, to adjudicate and impose penalties on those adjudged to have contravened the law.
- **The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA):** This law was enacted to **deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law** by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts.

- ♦ It is a law whereby the Directorate is mandated to attach the properties of the fugitive economic offenders who have escaped from India warranting arrest and provide for the confiscation of their properties to the Central Government.

Conclusion

- While the PMLA provisions have faced scrutiny, the Supreme Court has consistently upheld their validity, emphasising the need to combat money laundering effectively.
- The balance between law enforcement powers and individual rights remains a critical aspect of this legal framework.

Source: TH

BUSINESS REFORMS ACTION PLAN (BRAP) 2024

Context

- The Union Government is set to unveil the **Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) 2024**.

Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP)

- It was launched by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** in **2014-2015**, aims to improve the ease of doing business and enhance the overall business environment in the country.
- **Key Objectives:**
 - ♦ **Simplification of Regulatory Processes:** Streamlining business regulations to reduce compliance burdens.
 - ♦ **Digitization:** Encouraging digital platforms for business registration, licensing, and other regulatory requirements.
 - ♦ **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involving businesses in the reform process to ensure their needs are met.
 - ♦ **Benchmarking:** Comparing India's business environment with other countries to identify areas for improvement.
- **Major Areas of Focus:**
 - ♦ **Starting a Business:** Reducing the time and cost involved in starting a business.
 - ♦ **Construction Permits:** Streamlining processes for obtaining construction permits.
 - ♦ **Labor Regulation:** Simplifying labor laws and improving compliance mechanisms.
 - ♦ **Trade and Customs:** Enhancing the efficiency of trade processes and customs clearance.

- **Implementation:** The BRAP consists of a series of annual action plans, where states are evaluated on their reform efforts.
 - ♦ States that perform well are recognized and rewarded, creating a competitive environment for reforms.

BRAP 2024

- It is set to establish a seamless business regulatory framework across the country, **enhancing the ease of doing business**.
- Led by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, BRAP 2024 introduces **next-generation reforms** that address the needs of both businesses and citizens.
- BRAP 2024 continues to streamline processes, reduce compliance burdens, and implement digital solutions to make India a preferred global investment hub.
 - ♦ BRAP has expanded beyond its initial scope, covering critical sectors such as Labour, Environment, Taxes, Land Administration, Utility Permits, Inspection and Construction.

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

- It was established in **1995**, and in the year 2000 the Department of Industrial Development was merged with it.
- It is working under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- This department is responsible for formulation and implementation of promotional and developmental measures for growth of the industrial sector, keeping in view the national priorities and socio-economic objectives.

Source: PIB

BHARATGEN: WORLD'S FIRST GOVERNMENT-FUNDED MULTIMODAL LARGE LANGUAGE MODEL

In News

- **"BharatGen"** world's first government-funded multimodal LLM initiative launched by the Ministry of Science & Technology.

About BharatGen

- **Aim:** To revolutionize public service delivery and enhance citizen engagement by developing foundational models in language, speech, and computer vision.

- **Implementation:** By IIT Bombay under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary **Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS)**
- **Key Features of BharatGen:**
 - ♦ Multilingual and multimodal foundation models.
 - ♦ Building and training based on India-centric datasets.
 - ♦ Open-source platform for fostering AI research and innovation.
- The project is expected to be **completed by 2026**, with ongoing research, development, and scaling of AI applications.

Significance

- BharatGen will address both text and speech, ensuring representation across India's diverse linguistic landscape. By using multilingual datasets, it will capture the nuances of Indian languages, which are often underrepresented in global AI models.
 - ♦ This emphasis on data sovereignty gives India greater control over its digital resources and narrative.
- BharatGen will **democratize AI access** across government, education, and private sectors, ensuring AI benefits all segments of society, particularly underserved Indian languages.
- BharatGen aligns with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat by developing AI models specifically for India. By building these technologies domestically

What are Large Language Models?

- Large language models, also known as LLMs, are very **large deep learning models** that are **pre-trained on vast amounts of data**.
- Large Language Models (LLMs) use **machine learning techniques** to recognize, interpret, and generate human languages or other complex data.
- Their capabilities also extend to **handling structured and unstructured data**, including speech, images, and other multimodal inputs, which enhances their utility in fields like customer service, healthcare, and education.

Generative AI (GenAI)

- It is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology that automatically generates content in response to prompts written in natural language conversational interfaces.
- Rather than simply curating existing web pages, by drawing on existing content, GenAI actually produces new content.

- The content can appear in formats that comprise all symbolic representations of human thinking: texts written in natural language, images (including photographs to digital paintings and cartoons), videos, music and software code.
- GenAI is trained using data collected from web pages, social media conversations and other online media. It generates its content by statistically analysing the distributions of words, pixels or other elements in the data that it has ingested and identifying and repeating common patterns.
- In November 2022, OpenAI released ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer) to the public.

Source: BS

- Permafrost is made of a **combination of soil, rocks and sand that are held together by ice.**
 - ♦ The soil and ice in permafrost stay frozen all year long.
- As Earth's climate warms, the **permafrost is thawing.** That means the ice inside the permafrost melts, leaving behind water and soil.
 - ♦ Because of the dangers, scientists are **closely monitoring Earth's permafrost.**

Source: TH

POUMAI NAGA TRIBE

Context

- The Poumai Naga tribe of Purul village in Manipur has banned hunting, trapping, and killing of wild animals and birds within their territory.

About

- The Poumai people or Poumai Naga, are a **Tibeto-Burman ethnic group** that inhabit the Northeast Indian states of **Manipur and Nagaland.**
- The Poumai mainly live in **100 villages** that have been broadly divided into three blocks: **Paomata, Lepaona and Chilivai.**
- **Culture:** The tribe speaks the **Poula** language. They follow both Christianity and indigenous beliefs.
- **Laonii festival** is celebrated on completion of paddy transplantation.

Source: NN

JAL HI AMRIT PROGRAM

In News

- 'Jal hi Amrit' initiative is being launched under AMRUT 2.0 reforms.

About Jal Hi Amrit Program

- The initiative envisaged to incentivise State & UTs to manage the used water (sewage) treatment plants (UWTPs/ STPs) efficiently for ensuring recyclable good quality treated water, meeting environmental standards, on a sustained basis.
- The purpose of the exercise is to build the competition among the cities, develop capacities and incentivise them to attain the best quality of used treated water at the treatment facilities.
- Clean Water Credits will be awarded to Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) based on their performance in treating water. The credits are rated between 3 to 5 stars, with the rating valid for six months.

NEWS IN SHORT

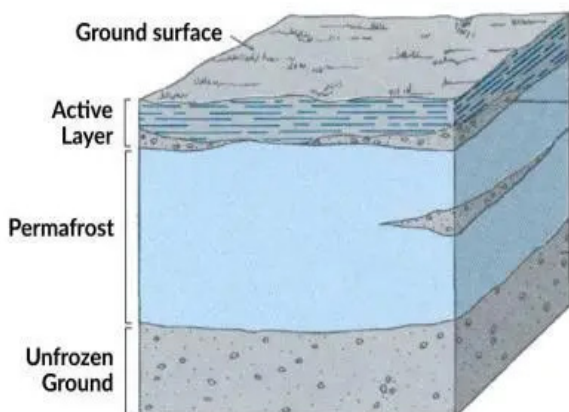
PERMAFROST

Context

- Glaciologists currently based at Himadri research station in Norway are digging deep to identify the **probability of disasters due to permafrost collapse.**

About

- **Permafrost** is any ground that remains completely frozen—**32°F (0°C) or colder**—for at least two years straight.
 - ♦ These permanently frozen grounds are **most common in regions** with high mountains and in Earth's higher latitudes—near the North and South Poles.
 - ♦ Almost a quarter of the land area in the **Northern Hemisphere** has permafrost underneath.



- STPs will be rated on their ability to produce high-quality treated water. The rating serves as an official recognition of their performance.

AMRUT 2.0

- It was launched on 01 October, 2021 for the period of 05 years i.e. from the financial year 2021-22 to the financial year 2025-26.
- AMRUT 2.0 is designed to provide universal coverage of water supply through functional taps to all households in all the statutory towns in the country and coverage of sewage/septage management in 500 cities covered in the first phase of the AMRUT scheme.
 - ♦ AMRUT 1.0 (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) was launched in 2015 with the primary aim of ensuring that every household in selected cities and towns has access to basic civic amenities to improve their quality of life.

Source: PIB

NAMASTE SCHEME

Context

- The profiling of sewer and septic tank workers (SSWs) is being carried out by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment as part of its **NAMASTE programme**.

About

- According to government data tabled in Parliament:
 - ♦ Of the profiled workers, **68.9% were SC, 14.7% were OBC, 8.3% were ST, and 8% were from the general category.**
 - ♦ Between 2019 and 2023, at least **377 people** across the country have died from hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.

NAMASTE Programme

- In 2023-24, the **National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)**, was brought in to replace the **Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS)**.
- It is a **joint initiative** of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- It is to be implemented in all 4800+ Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the country, during the next three years i.e. **upto 2025-26**.
- **NAMASTE aims to achieve the following outcomes:**
 - ♦ Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India;

- ♦ All sanitation work is performed by skilled workers;
- ♦ No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter;
- ♦ Sanitation workers are collectivized into SHGs and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises;
- ♦ All Sewer and Septic tank sanitation workers (SSWs) have access to alternative livelihoods;

Source: TH

ANNA DARPAN

Context

- The **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** has selected Coforge Limited as the system integrator (SI) for its digital transformation project, **Anna Darpan**.

About

- The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has embarked on a digital transformation initiative to modernize its existing supply chain management system, known as the **'Depot Online System'**.
- The system is being designed to **streamline and enhance the entire supply chain** operations and services at various levels including **Mandis, Mills, Depots (both owned and hired)**, as well as divisional, regional, zonal, and headquarters operations.

Food Corporation of India (FCI)

- FCI was setup under the **Food Corporations Act 1964**, in order to fulfill **following objectives** of the Food Policy:
 - ♦ Effective price support operations for safeguarding the interests of the farmers.
 - ♦ Distribution of foodgrains throughout the country for a public distribution system.
 - ♦ Maintaining a satisfactory level of operational and buffer stocks of foodgrains to ensure National Food Security Since its inception.
- FCI has played a significant role in India's success in transforming the crisis management oriented food security into a stable security system.

Source: PIB

RODTEP SCHEME

In News

- The RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) scheme has been extended for domestic tariff area (DTA) units until September 30, 2025.

About

- The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in January 2021 to refund un-reimbursed taxes, duties, and levies incurred by exporters during the production and distribution of goods.
- The was introduced to replace the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS), which was challenged at the World Trade Organization (WTO).
 - ♦ MEIS was deemed non-compliant with global trade rules.

Source: BS

BIDKIN INDUSTRIAL AREA (BIA)**In News**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Bidkin Industrial Area in Maharashtra to the nation.

About Bidkin Industrial Area (BIA)

- The Bidkin Industrial Area spans 7,855 acres and is part of the **National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP)** under the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.
- It is situated 20 km south of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Maharashtra, with excellent connectivity via NH-752E, proximity to Aurangabad railway station (20 km), Aurangabad Airport (30 km), and Jalna Dry Port (65 km).
- Total project cost is Rs. 6,414 crore, developed in three phases.
- It will be equipped with wide roads, quality water and power supply, and advanced sewage and common effluent treatment plants, ready for industrial allotments.

Objectives

- The Bidkin Industrial Area aims to foster industrial growth and economic prosperity, aligning with the “Make in India, Make for the World” initiative.
- It is poised to become a beacon of industrial excellence, contributing to employment generation, boosting exports, and enhancing regional development.

Do you know ?

- The **National Industrial Corridor Development Programme** is India’s ambitious initiative to develop new industrial cities as “Smart Cities,” integrating next-generation technologies across various infrastructure sectors.

- This program aims to create futuristic industrial cities in India that can compete globally as top manufacturing and investment destinations, fostering employment opportunities and driving economic growth for overall socio-economic development.

Source: PIB

STEM CELL**In News**

- Chinese scientists have achieved a groundbreaking success in treating chronic type-1 diabetes through a pioneering cell transplant procedure.

About

- Unlike traditional islet transplants that require donor organs, this new method utilized “**chemically induced pluripotent stem-cell-derived islets**” (CiPSC islets).

About Stem Cells

- Stem cells possess the unique ability to self-renew and differentiate into various cell types during early development and growth.
- Researchers categorize stem cells into two main types:
 - ♦ **Pluripotent stem cells** (including embryonic stem cells and induced pluripotent stem cells), which can develop into any cell type in the adult body, and
 - ♦ **Adult stem cells (or somatic stem cells)**, which are located in specific tissues or organs and can differentiate into specialized cell types of those tissues or organs.
- **Unique properties of all stem cells:** Self-Renewal, Tissue Regeneration, and Different stem cells have varying degrees of potency, influencing the number of cell types they can form.

Source: ET

INNOVATIONS FOR DEFENCE EXCELLENCE (IDEX)**Context**

- The Indian Army has signed the **eighth procurement** contract through the government’s flagship initiative **Innovations for Defence Excellence (IDEX)**.

About Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)

- It was launched in **2018**, during the Defence Expo India.
- iDEX aimed to create an ecosystem to foster innovations and encourage technological development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Research and Development Institutes, Academia, and Industries including MSMEs, Start-Ups, and individual innovators.

Source: AIR

EXERCISE KAZIND**In News**

- The 8th edition of the India-Kazakhstan Joint Military Exercise, KAZIND-2024, commenced at the Surya Foreign Training Node in Auli, Uttarakhand.

About Exercise KAZIND

- It is an **annual exercise**, which began in 2016, aims to enhance joint military capabilities for counter-terrorism operations in sub-conventional scenarios, particularly in semi-urban and mountainous terrains..

Source: PIB

