

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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DIGITIZATION OF LAND RECORDS

Context

- Rural India is undergoing a **significant transformation** with the **digitization of land records**, modernizing the management of land ownership.

About

- 95% of land records** have been digitized in rural India **since 2016**, marking a **critical advancement** towards ensuring secure and accessible land ownership in rural areas.

Need for Digitization of Land Records

- It has **transformed land management** by addressing **traditional challenges** like disputes, fraud, and inefficient manual processes.
- Ownership information** is **easily accessible** online, enhancing transparency and reducing illegal encroachments.
- It **simplifies dispute resolution**, easing court burdens, and empowering marginalized communities by improving access to land rights.
- Integration with geospatial mapping **enhances land management**, enabling accurate surveys and planning.
- During land acquisitions or disasters**, digital records ensure fair and timely **compensation**.

Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)

- It was previously known as the **National Land Record Modernization Programme**, and was restructured as a **Central Sector Scheme in 2016**, with full funding from the union government.
- Its main goal is to **establish a modern and transparent land records management system** by developing an Integrated Land Information Management System.
- Achievements:**
 - Around 95%** of land records have been computerized.
 - Digitization of cadastral maps has reached 68.02% at national level.
 - 87% of Sub-Registrar Offices (SROs) have been integrated with land records.
- Key Initiatives under DILRMP**
 - Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN):** It provides a 14-digit alphanumeric code for each land parcel, based on its geo-coordinates.
 - National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS):** It provides a uniform process for document registration across

the country, allowing online entry, payments, appointments, and document searches.

- ♦ **e-Court Integration:** It aims to provide authentic land information to the judiciary, aiding in faster case resolution and reducing land disputes.
- ♦ **Transliteration of Land Records:** To overcome language barriers in accessing land records, the program is transliterating land documents into any of the 22 languages listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution.
- ♦ **Bhoomi Samman:** 168 districts across 16 States have achieved "Platinum Grading" for completing over 99% of the program's core components, including land record computerization and map digitization.

Conclusion

- India is witnessing a **transformative shift in land governance**, focusing on enhancing transparency and accessibility of land information.
- This change is especially important for **marginalized communities**, as it empowers them with secure and accessible proof of ownership—an essential factor for economic growth and stability.
- As land records become clearer and more accessible, they pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable society.

Source: PIB

CENSUS OF INDIA TO BEGIN IN 2025

Context

- The government plans to begin the long-delayed Census in **2025**, which will be followed by delimitation of Lok Sabha seats.

About

- The census, typically conducted **every ten years** to update the **National Population Register (NPR)**, was scheduled for **2021** but had to be postponed due to the Covid pandemic.
- The delimitation of constituencies for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is to be carried out on the basis of the first Census after **2026**.

Census in India

- A census is a survey of the population** of an area that includes collecting details of a country's demographics including **age, sex and occupation**.
- History:** Under **W.C. Plowden**, the Census Commissioner of India, the first synchronous decennial (every ten years) census was conducted in **1881**.

- ◆ **Independent India's first census** was held in **1951** and since then it has happened in the first year of every decade.
- **The Constitution mandates** that enumeration is carried out but the **Census of India Act of 1948** does not specify its timing or periodicity.
- The population census is conducted by the **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

Need for the Census

- **Accurate Population Data:** A reliable population count is fundamental for planning and managing various national and state projects, from healthcare to infrastructure.
- **Socio-Economic Insights:** Census data on literacy, income, occupation, and housing conditions highlights social challenges and allows for targeted interventions.
- **Evaluating Development Progress:** Comparing census data over decades helps assess the effectiveness of past policies, guiding future strategies.
- **Environmental Planning:** The Census provides insights into human settlements and demographic pressures, supporting environmental sustainability efforts.

Benefits of Census

- **Informed Policy Making:** The Census provides detailed socio-economic data, helping the government make informed decisions on issues like education, healthcare, housing, employment, and infrastructure.
- **Resource Allocation:** Accurate population data ensures fair distribution of resources across states, especially in sectors like public health, education, and welfare.
- **Electoral Reforms and Delimitation:** Census data directly impacts the delimitation of constituencies, ensuring fair representation in Parliament and State Legislatures.

Way Ahead

- **Updated Data for Post-Covid Recovery:** Since the last Census was in 2011, population dynamics have shifted, making updated data essential to address changes in economic and social structures.
- **Delimitation Requirements:** With the delimitation process slated post-2026, it's crucial to have accurate, current population data to ensure fair representation based on updated demographics.

What is Delimitation?

- Delimitation refers to the **process of fixing the number of seats and boundaries** of territorial constituencies in each State for the Lok Sabha and Legislative assemblies.
 - ◆ It also includes determining the seats to be reserved for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in these houses.
- **Article 82 and 170** of the Indian Constitution provide that the number of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative assemblies as well as its division into territorial constituencies shall be readjusted after each Census.
- This process is performed by the **'Delimitation Commission'** that is set up under an act of Parliament.

Delimitation in the Past

- The number of seats in the Lok Sabha based on the 1951, 1961 and 1971 Census was fixed at 494, 522 and 543.
- However, it has been **frozen as per the 1971 Census** in order to encourage population control measures so that States with higher population growth do not end up having higher number of seats.
- This was done through the **42nd Amendment Act** till the year 2000 and was extended by the **84th Amendment Act till 2026**.
- The boundaries of territorial constituencies were readjusted (without changing the number of seats) and seats for SC and ST were determined as per the 2001 Census and will again be carried out after **2026**.

Source: Mint

ELECTION EXPENDITURE IN INDIA

Context

- The **total expenditure for U.S. presidential and Congressional elections in 2024** is estimated at around **U.S. \$16 billion (equivalent to ₹1,36,000 crores)**.
 - ◆ According to the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), the total expenditure by various political parties for the general election to Lok Sabha this year was **around ₹1,00,000 crores**.

Election Expenditure Limit in India

- It is ₹95 lakh per Lok Sabha constituency in larger States and ₹75 lakh in smaller States.

- With respect to Legislative Assemblies, they are ₹40 lakh and ₹28 lakh for larger and smaller States respectively.
- These limits are set, from time to time, by the **Election Commission (EC)**.
- There are **no limits on the expenditure of political parties** during elections.

Global Standards

- **In the U.S.**, the financing for elections happens primarily by contributions from individuals, corporations, and political action committees (PAC).
 - ♦ There are **super PACs** on which there are no limits for spending.
- **In the U.K.**, a political party is allowed to spend £54,010 for each constituency they contest.
 - ♦ There are also limits placed on candidates' spending during the campaign period.

Concerns with High Electoral Expenditure

- **Inequality in Representation:** Wealthy candidates or parties dominate elections, marginalizing those with fewer resources and leading to a lack of diverse representation.
- **Corruption:** It can lead candidates to engage in corrupt practices, such as bribing voters or manipulating election outcomes.
- **Creation of Entry Barrier:** Increased expenditure that is met primarily through large donations creates an unholy nexus between the elected representatives and donors who seek favours.
 - ♦ This acts as an entry barrier into electoral politics for many well-meaning citizens.

Suggested Reforms

- **The Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998) and the Law Commission report (1999)** have advocated for **State funding of elections**.
 - ♦ This would mean the government partially bears the election expenditures of candidates nominated by recognised political parties.
- **Simultaneous elections** are suggested for addressing the issue of rising election expenditures.
 - ♦ It refers to the idea of holding **Lok Sabha and State legislative assembly elections together**, with the aim of reducing the frequency of elections and their associated costs.
- Recommendations as per the **EC's 2016 report on 'Proposed Electoral Reforms'**:
 - ♦ The law must be amended to **explicitly provide that 'financial assistance'** by a political party to its candidate should also be within the candidate's prescribed election expenditure limits.

- ♦ There should be a **ceiling on political party expenditures**.
- ♦ **Additional judges may be appointed in High Courts** for the speedy disposal of election-related cases, which would act as a deterrent against violating these norms.

Source: TH

DRAFT BILL TO AMEND ARBITRATION LAW AND CONCILIATION ACT

Context

- In a significant move aimed at enhancing the efficiency of arbitration proceedings in India, the **Department of Legal Affairs** in the Union Law Ministry has introduced a **Draft Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2024** to amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act.

Draft Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2024

- It proposes several significant amendments to the **existing Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996**.
- The primary objective is to boost institutional arbitration, reduce court intervention, and ensure the timely conclusion of arbitration proceedings.

Arbitration

- It is a form of **alternative dispute resolution** where the parties involved in a dispute agree to submit their conflict to one or more arbitrators.
- These **arbitrators are neutral third parties** who review the evidence, hear arguments, and then make a **binding decision on the matter**.
- The process is **less formal than a court trial** and is often faster and more flexible. Arbitration is commonly used in commercial disputes and is governed by the **Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 in India**.

Conciliation

- It is a voluntary process where a **neutral third party, known as the conciliator**, helps the disputing parties **to reach a mutually acceptable agreement**.
- Unlike arbitration, the **conciliator does not have the authority to impose a decision**. Instead, they **facilitate communication and negotiation** between the parties to help them resolve their differences.
- Conciliation is often used in labour disputes and other situations where maintaining a relationship between the parties is important.

Key Highlights of the Draft Bill

- **Emergency Arbitration:** One of the most notable provisions in the draft bill is the introduction of emergency arbitration.
 - ♦ It allows for the appointment of an emergency arbitrator to grant interim measures before the constitution of the arbitral tribunal. It is expected to provide swift relief in urgent situations, aligning Indian arbitration practices with international standards.
- **Promotion of Institutional Arbitration:** The draft bill emphasises the promotion of institutional arbitration over ad-hoc arrangements.
 - ♦ By encouraging the use of established arbitration institutions, the bill aims to enhance the efficiency and reliability of arbitration proceedings.
- **Arbitration Council of India (ACI):** The bill proposes empowering the Arbitration Council of India to create model rules of procedure for arbitral proceedings and recognize arbitral institutions.
 - ♦ It is intended to standardise practices and improve the overall quality of arbitration in India.
- **Video Conferencing:** Recognising the advancements in technology and the need for flexibility, the draft bill includes provisions for conducting arbitration proceedings via video conferencing.
 - ♦ It is expected to make arbitration more accessible and reduce logistical challenges.
- **Appellate Arbitral Tribunal:** To handle applications against arbitral awards, the bill proposes the establishment of an Appellate Arbitral Tribunal.
 - ♦ It aims to streamline the appeals process and reduce the burden on courts.
- **Omission of Conciliation Provisions:** The draft bill proposes omitting the conciliation provisions from the **Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996**, as these have been incorporated into the **Mediation Act, 2023**.
 - ♦ Consequently, the amended act will be **renamed the Arbitration Act, 1996**.
- **Expert Committee Recommendations:** The draft bill incorporates recommendations from an expert committee led by former law secretary and former **Lok Sabha Secretary General T K Vishwanathan**.
 - ♦ It emphasised the need for reforms to make arbitration more effective and less reliant on judicial intervention.

Key Issues and Concerns

- **Legal Recognition:** Not all jurisdictions recognise the concept of emergency arbitration.
 - ♦ Ensuring that the awards or orders issued by emergency arbitrators are enforceable can be a significant hurdle.
- **Institutional Support:** Effective emergency arbitration requires robust support from arbitration institutions.
 - ♦ It includes having clear rules, a roster of qualified emergency arbitrators, and efficient administrative processes.
- **Time Constraints:** Emergency arbitration is designed to provide swift relief, often within days.
 - ♦ It can put immense pressure on both the arbitrator and the parties involved to present and consider evidence quickly, which might compromise the thoroughness of the process.
- **Costs:** The expedited nature of emergency arbitration can lead to higher costs due to the need for rapid action and potentially more intensive use of resources.
- **Awareness and Acceptance:** Parties may be unfamiliar with or sceptical about the emergency arbitration process.
 - ♦ Building trust and understanding among users is crucial for its successful implementation.
- **Interim Measures:** The effectiveness of emergency arbitration depends on the ability to grant and enforce interim measures.
 - ♦ It can be challenging if the measures require actions in multiple jurisdictions or if local courts are not supportive.

Implications for the Arbitration Landscape

- The proposed amendments are expected to significantly impact the arbitration landscape in India. By **introducing emergency arbitration and promoting institutional arbitration**, the bill aims to make arbitration a more efficient and reliable method of dispute resolution.
- By providing a mechanism for urgent interim relief, it aligns Indian arbitration practices with **international standards**, potentially increasing the **confidence of foreign investors** and parties in the Indian arbitration system.
- It could lead to a reduction in the backlog of cases in Indian courts and enhance the overall ease of doing business in the country.

Conclusion

- The Draft Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2024, represents a significant step towards modernising and improving the arbitration framework in India.

- By introducing emergency arbitration and promoting institutional arbitration, the government aims to make arbitration a more efficient and reliable method of dispute resolution.
- By addressing key issues and incorporating international best practices, the government aims to make arbitration a more attractive and efficient dispute resolution mechanism.

Source: BS

UK PHASE-OUT COAL POWER PLANT

In News

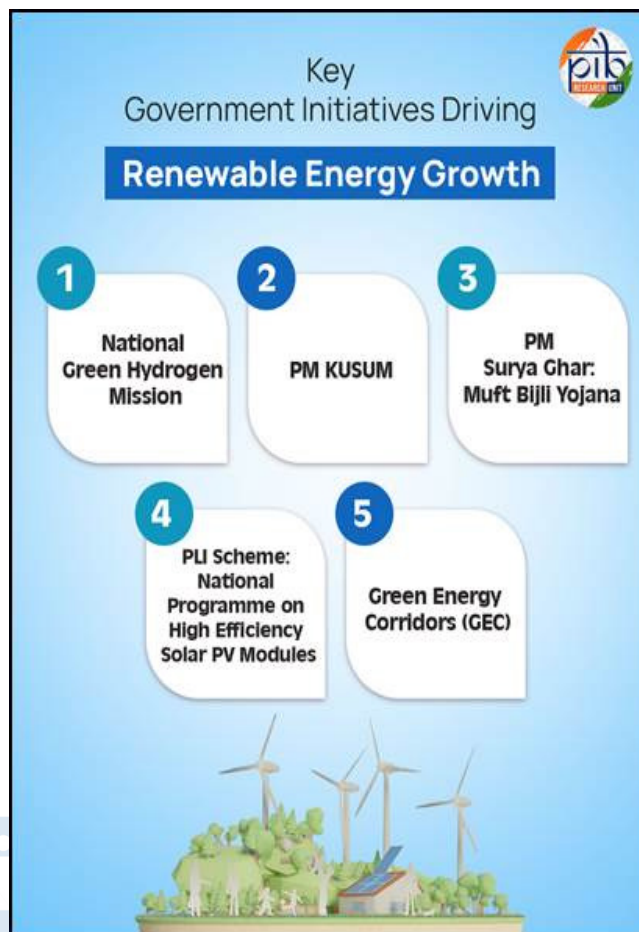
- The UK's last coal-based generation plant, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, was taken off the grid, marking a significant milestone in the country's energy transition.

UK Coal Phase-Out: Success

- The UK has a long history with coal, with its first coal plant established over 140 years ago.
- The share of coal in electricity generation dropped from about 97% in the 1950s to less than 2% recently.
- Since the 1990s, the UK government has pursued policies to close coal mines for political reasons, aiming to phase out all coal plants by 2024.
- **Market Drivers:** The decline in coal generation was facilitated by increasing carbon emission costs and stricter EU regulations.
 - ♦ Carbon capture and storage were mandated for new coal plants, making coal less profitable.
- **Alternative Energy:** The availability of cheap gas significantly contributed to the shift away from coal. The UK's electricity generation peaked and has since declined, with overall generation down by 24% from 2000 to 2023.
 - ♦ The UK increased electricity imports, meeting 20% of its demand in early 2024, thus reducing reliance on domestic coal.

Situation in India

- India holds the fifth-largest coal reserves globally and is the second-largest coal consumer.
- The country's rapid economic growth drives high coal consumption.
 - ♦ Total coal imports increased by 0.9%, reaching 90.51 million tonnes (MT) compared to 89.68 MT in the previous year.
- India's demand for power continues to grow, with coal currently accounting for **70% of its energy output**.
 - ♦ Coal is essential for producing key materials like steel, cement, fertilizer, and paper.



- India's first coal mine dates back to 1774, and it has a much larger population than the UK.
- India is the **third-largest carbon emitter**, but its per capita emissions (2 tonnes) are significantly lower than the global average (4.6 tonnes) and the UK's (5.5 tonnes).

Challenges

- **Coal Consumption Trends:** India is expected to peak coal production and consumption between 2030-35, contrasting with the UK, which peaked decades earlier.
- **Employment in Coal Sector:** India's coal sector employs a significant number of workers, with potential for growth as coal production continues, while the UK's coal employment has dramatically decreased.
- **India lacks access to cheap gas** and faces challenges in expanding hydro and nuclear energy.
- **India is extending the operation of coal plants** beyond typical contracts and is relaxing environmental regulations, contrary to the UK's approach of tightening norms.
- **India's track record on pollution control** is poor, with less than 5% of identified coal capacity having installed flue-gas desulfurizers.

Lessons for India

- The UK focused on a holistic transition plan, including retraining programs, community redevelopment, and integrating renewable energy projects to support former coal regions.
- **India can learn from the UK's experience** by establishing clear timelines for coal plant decommissioning, developing regional redevelopment programs, and retraining workers in historically coal-dependent areas.

Conclusion

- The UK has made significant strides in phasing out coal, but India's circumstances necessitate continued reliance on coal, posing unique challenges for its energy transition.
 - ♦ The UK has made some progress in reducing carbon emissions but remains dependent on gas.
- Therefore a transparent and forward-looking approach is essential for India's energy transition, ensuring it is inclusive and considers the socio-economic realities of coal-dependent communities.

Source :IE



Source: TOI

SAMBHAR LAKE

In News

- Over 40 migratory birds died at **Sambhar Lake** in Rajasthan.

About Sambhar Lake

- **Location:** About 80 km southwest of Jaipur in east-central Rajasthan and is India's largest inland salt lake.
- **Formation:** Formed in a depression of the **Aravalli Range**, it has a rich history, with its salt supply utilized by the **Mughal dynasty** and later jointly managed by the princely states of Jaipur and Jodhpur.
- **Ramsar Site:** Recognized as a wetland of **international importance** since 1990.
- **Salt Production:** The lake is a major salt producer, housing one of India's largest salt manufacturing units.
- **Biodiversity:** The area has **xerophytic vegetation** and is home to flamingoes, pelicans, and other waterfowl.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

SOHRAI PAINTING

Context

- PM Modi presented a **Sohrai painting** to the Russian President Vladimir Putin during the BRICS summit.

About

- **Sohrai Painting is a folk/tribal painting** tradition mostly practiced in the villages of **Jharkhand's Hazaribagh area**.
- **The colors** used in this picture (**red, black, yellow, and white**) are natural earth colors foraged from the wild or purchased from local merchants.
 - ♦ **Chewing twigs** are used as paint brushes, while cloth rags are used to apply the base coat.
- **Theme:** The paintings are known for their **expressive storytelling**, depicting **animals, birds and nature**, which is a **reflection of the agrarian lifestyle** and the reverence for wildlife in tribal culture.
- The paintings depict a **matriarchal tradition** in which the art form is passed down as a legacy to daughters by their mothers.

TRITON ISLAND

Context

- Recent satellite imagery reveals a significant military buildup by China on Triton Island, the closest landmass in the disputed Paracels archipelago to Vietnam.

Triton Island

- **Location:** Triton Island is the southernmost island in the Paracel Islands chain in the South China Sea, situated closer to Vietnam than to other parts of China.
- **Strategic Importance:** Triton Island is of strategic importance due to its proximity to vital shipping lanes, fisheries, and potential underwater energy reserves.

- **Conflicting Claims:** The Paracel Islands, including Triton Island, are claimed by **China, Vietnam, and Taiwan**.
 - ♦ China asserts its claim based on the **Nine-Dash Line**, a demarcation on maps covering most of the **South China Sea**.



South China Sea

- It is a marginal sea of the **Western Pacific Ocean**.
- It is located between **southern China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Malaysia**.
- It is a crucial maritime gateway and junction for shipping between the **Pacific and Indian Oceans**.

Source: ET

JUSTICE K.S. PUTTASWAMY & RIGHT TO PRIVACY

In News

- Justice KS Puttaswamy, petitioner in the 'right to privacy case', which led to the Supreme Court recognising the **right to privacy as a fundamental right** under **Article 21**, has passed away.

About

- **Puttaswamy Judgment (2017):** The Supreme Court of India declared the Right to Privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees the right to life and personal liberty.
 - ♦ The landmark judgment expanded privacy rights, asserting that the right is intrinsic to human dignity and autonomy. It set important precedents for areas like data protection, surveillance, and personal freedoms.

- ♦ Justice Puttaswamy would be one of the first litigants to challenge the Aadhaar scheme.
- Globally, **Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** and **Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966)** both provide legal protections against "arbitrary interference" with an individual's privacy.

Source: TH

RULE OF LAW INDEX

Context

- Recently the **Rule of Law Index** has been published by the **World Justice Project (WJP)**.

About

- It has evaluated countries based on **different factors**, including constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice, and criminal justice.
- India stands at **98 out of 142 countries**.
- **Top Rank:** Denmark has secured first rank, followed by Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Germany in terms of law and order.
- **Worst Rank:** Pakistan has been ranked 140 among 142 countries making it the third worst country in the world.
 - ♦ Mali and Nigeria are the only countries ranked lower than Pakistan.

The World Justice Project (WJP)

- It is an independent, nonpartisan, multidisciplinary organization working to create knowledge, build awareness, and stimulate action to advance the rule of law worldwide.

Source: AIR

PRADHAN MANTRI VANBANDHU KALYAN YOJANA

Context

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India emphasised the importance of **Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (PMVKY)**, stating, '*our tribal communities have shown the way when it comes to living in harmony with nature and conserving our forests*'.

Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (PMVKY)

- **About:**
 - ♦ It is a landmark initiative, launched on October 28, 2014, aimed at the **holistic development of tribal communities**.

- ♦ It addresses the unique challenges faced by India's tribal populations, which constitute **about 8.9% of the country's population**.
- ♦ It aims to empower tribal communities through comprehensive development strategies.
- **Key Components:**
 - ♦ **Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY):** It focuses on the integrated development of villages with significant tribal populations. It aims to improve basic services and facilities such as road and telecom connectivity, education, health services, and sanitation.
 - ♦ **Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):** It targets the socio-economic development of PVTGs while preserving their cultural heritage. It includes financial assistance for education, housing, livelihood, and health.
 - ♦ **Support to Tribal Research Institutes:** It aims to enhance the capacity of Tribal Research Institutes to conduct research and provide policy inputs for tribal development.
 - ♦ **Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships:** These scholarships support the education of tribal students, ensuring they have access to quality education and opportunities for higher studies.
 - ♦ **Administrative Assistance for Project Management Units:** PMVKY allocates funds to establish project management units within state governments, ensuring that schemes related to the welfare of STs are effectively monitored and implemented.

Other Steps by Government for Tribal Welfare

- **Eklavya Model Residential Schools:** These have been established to provide quality education to **STs students from classes VI to XII** in every block having more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons (as per census 2011).
- **Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM):** It has been restructured by merging and extending two existing schemes: the '*Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce through Minimum Support Price*' and the '*Institutional Support for Development and Marketing of Tribal Products*'.
- ♦ It supports the theme of '**Vocal for Local by Tribal**', aiming to empower tribal communities through local resource utilisation.

- ♦ The **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)** serves as the central implementing agency for this initiative.

Source: PIB

LAND PORT AUTHORITY OF INDIA (LPAI)

Context

- The Union Home Minister inaugurated a passenger terminal building and a friendship gate "Maitri Dwar" built by the **Land Port Authority of India (LPAI)**.
- ♦ **The Maitri Dwar (friendship gate)** is a joint cargo gate at the Zero Line agreed upon by both countries.

Land Port Authority of India (LPAI)

- **The Land Ports Authority of India Act, 2010** provides for the establishment of the Land Ports Authority of India.
- **The Authority shall consist of:**
 - ♦ **A Chairperson,**
 - ♦ **Two Members,** out of whom one shall be Member (Planning and Development) and other shall be Member (Finance)
 - ♦ **Not more than nine members, ex officio,** to be appointed by the Central Government from amongst the officers, not below the rank of the Joint Secretary to the Government of India.

Functions of Authority

- The Authority shall have powers to develop, **sanitize and manage** the facilities for **cross border movement of passengers and goods** at designated points along the international borders of India,
- Put in place systems, which **address security imperatives** at the integrated check posts on the border,
- **Plan, construct and maintain roads,** terminals and ancillary buildings other than national highways, State highways and railways, at an integrated check post, etc.

Source: IE

GREENHOUSE GAS BULLETIN : WMO

In News

- Recently, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released the Greenhouse Gas Bulletin .

About Greenhouse Gas Bulletin

- It has been published **annually since 2004**.
- It presents the latest analysis of observations from the WMO Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW) Programme on **concentrations of long-lived greenhouse gases** in the atmosphere for 2023.
- It reports globally averaged surface mole fractions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O).

Key Findings

- **Global average CO₂** reached 420 ppm, **methane** at 1934 ppb, and **nitrous oxide** at 336.9 ppb, significantly above pre-industrial levels (151%, 265%, and 125%, respectively).
 - ♦ Methane and nitrous oxide levels rose, with methane being responsible for 16% of warming and N₂O contributing about 6%.
- **Drivers of Increase:** The surge was driven by high CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels, large vegetation fires, and reduced carbon absorption by forests.
 - ♦ The El Niño phenomenon and large vegetation fires contributed to the surge in greenhouse gases in 2023.
- **Warming Effects:** Radiative forcing from greenhouse gases increased by 51.5% from 1990 to 2023, with CO₂ accounting for 81% of this increase.

Suggestions

- The increase in CO₂ and other gases highlights a concerning trend, signaling that current efforts to mitigate climate change are insufficient.
- The report emphasizes the urgent need for action to meet the Paris Agreement goals and address rising greenhouse gas levels.

Source: TH

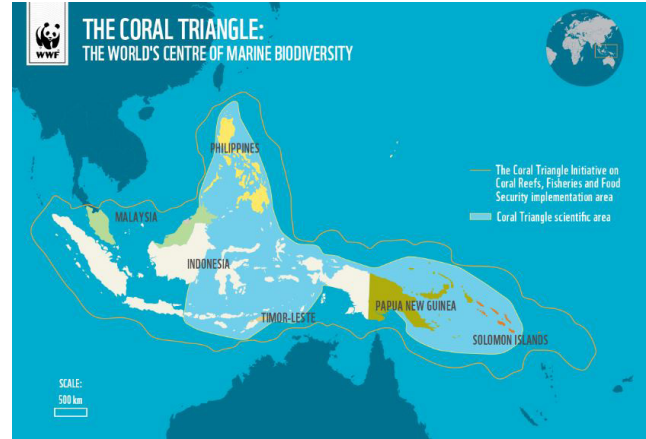
CORAL TRIANGLE

Context

- Experts recommend the **Coral Triangle** be classified as a **Particularly Sensitive Sea Area** to provide it with **special protection** from harmful maritime activities

About

- **The Coral Triangle**, often referred to as the 'Amazon of the seas', is a huge marine area spanning over 10 million square kilometres.
- It **includes countries** like Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and the Solomon Islands.



- This region is home to **76 percent of the world's coral species** and supports more than 120 million people who rely on its resources for their livelihoods.
- Serious dangers brought by **fossil fuel expansion** to the Coral Triangle, were highlighted by a report released in **16th Conference of Parties (COP16)** to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
 - ♦ The report highlighted the overlaps with oil and gas blocks, affecting 24 percent of coral reefs, 22 percent of seagrass areas, and 37 percent of mangroves.

A Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA)

- It is an area that needs **special protection through action by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** because of its significance for **recognized ecological or socio-economic or scientific reasons**.
 - The area must be **vulnerable to damage by international maritime activities**.
 - **Examples of PSSAs** include the Great Barrier Reef, the Galapagos Islands, and the Wadden Sea.

Source: DTE

MIYAWAKI FOREST

Context

- Uttarakhand's forest department has created the world's highest-altitude Miyawaki forest at 8,000 ft in Pithoragarh, beating extreme conditions like sub-zero temperatures and wildlife threats.

What is Miyawaki forest?

- Named after Japanese botanist **Akira Miyawaki**, who developed this methodology in the **1970s**, it involves creating dense urban forests in a small area.
- It involves planting two to four different types of **indigenous trees** within every square metre. The trees grow to their full length within **three years**.

- The dense green cover of indigenous trees plays a key role in **absorbing the dust particles** and regulating surface temperature.
- The plants used are mostly **self-sustaining** and do not require regular maintenance like manuring and watering. Some of the common plants used include Anjan, Amala, Bel, Arjun and Gunj.

Source: TOI

