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“BAL VIVAH MukT BHARAT” CAMPAIGN

Context

- In a significant step towards **eradicating child marriage** and empowering young girls across the nation, the Union Minister for Women and Child Development launched the national **campaign “Bal Vivah MukT Bharat”**.

About

- Focused Approach:** The campaign will prioritize seven states with high rates of child marriage: West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh.
- Community Engagement:** The campaign will involve community mobilization and awareness-raising activities to change societal norms and attitudes towards child marriage. Action plan aimed at reducing the child marriage rates below 5% by 2029 was launched.
- Legal Empowerment:** The campaign will strengthen the legal framework to prevent and punish child marriage, including stricter enforcement of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act.
- Digital Platform:** A dedicated online portal will enable citizens to report child marriage incidents and access information about legal remedies.

Status of Child Marriage in India

- According to the latest data, child marriages in India have halved from **47.4% in 2005-06 to 23.3% in 2019-21**.
 - This decline is attributed to the implementation of the **Prevention of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) in 2006** and various **awareness campaigns** like **Bal Vivah MukT Bharat Abhiyan (Child Marriage-Free India Campaign)**.
- As per the NFHS-5 data, there has been a substantial decrease in child marriage rates, from 47.4% in 2005-06 to 26.8% in 2015-16.
- Despite the overall decline, certain states like **West Bengal, Bihar, and Tripura** still report higher rates of child marriage compared to the national average.

Key Reasons Behind Child Marriages in India

- Poverty and Economic Pressures:** Families in economically disadvantaged situations often view marriage as a means to alleviate financial burdens.

- Marrying off daughters early can reduce the economic strain on the family, as it means one less mouth to feed and can sometimes involve a dowry that provides immediate financial relief.
- Cultural and Social Norms:** In many communities, early marriage is seen as a rite of passage and a way to preserve family honor.
 - These deeply ingrained beliefs make it challenging to change attitudes towards child marriage.
- Gender Inequality and Patriarchy:** Patriarchal values and gender inequality contribute to the prevalence of child marriages.
 - Girls are often seen as a burden, and their primary role is perceived to be that of a wife and mother.
 - It limits their opportunities for education and personal growth, making early marriage a common outcome.
- Lack of Education:** The lack of educational opportunities leaves girls vulnerable to early marriage, as families may prioritise marriage over schooling.
 - Educated girls are more likely to delay marriage and have better prospects for their future.
- Fear of Sexual Assault:** In some regions, the fear of sexual assault and the desire to protect a girl's chastity can lead families to marry off their daughters at a young age.
 - This protective measure is often misguided and results in the violation of the girl's rights and freedoms.
- Weak Law Enforcement:** Despite the existence of laws prohibiting child marriage, enforcement remains weak in many areas.
 - Corruption, lack of awareness, and inadequate resources for law enforcement agencies contribute to the continued practice of child marriage.
 - Strengthening the implementation of laws and ensuring accountability is essential to curbing this issue.
- Pandemic-Induced Economic Hardship:** The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated economic hardships for many families, leading to an increase in child marriages.
 - The financial strain caused by the pandemic forced some families to resort to early marriage as a coping mechanism.

Related Initiatives

- **Legal Provision: The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006:** It is the **primary law** addressing the child marriage in India, which replaced the earlier **Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929**.
 - ♦ **Minimum Age of Marriage:** The PCMA sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 for women and 21 for men.
 - ♦ **Punishments:** Those who perform, conduct, or direct any child marriage can face rigorous imprisonment up to two years and/or a fine up to one lakh rupees.
 - ♦ **Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs):** The act mandates the appointment of CMPOs to prevent child marriages, create awareness, and ensure the law's implementation.
- **Supreme Court's Stance:** The Supreme Court of India has **emphasised that the PCMA cannot be overridden by personal laws**, asserting that child marriages violate minors' free will to choose their life partners.
 - ♦ The court has also issued guidelines for the effective implementation of the law, stressing the need for community-driven approaches and multi-sectoral coordination.
- The **Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat Abhiyan (Child Marriage-Free India Campaign)** aims to further reduce child marriage rates below 5% by 2029.
 - ♦ It focuses on high-burden states such as *West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh*, which have higher rates of child marriage compared to the national average.
 - ♦ It emphasizes a multi-faceted approach, including *Education Continuity, Skill Development; Health and Nutrition; and Safety and Security* etc.
 - ♦ The launch of the **Child Marriage Free Bharat portal** is a significant step in this direction. It serves as a platform to raise awareness, report cases, and monitor progress.

Source: TH

APPROVAL FOR VENUS MISSION "SHUKRAYAAN"

In News

- The Indian government has approved ISRO's Venus Orbiting Satellite mission, named **Shukrayaan**.

Shukrayaan Mission (Venus Orbiting Satellite)

- **Launch Details:** Set to launch in March 2028.
 - ♦ Estimated cost of the mission is Rs 1,236 crore.
 - ♦ LVM-3 launch vehicle has been identified to place the spacecraft in an Elliptical Parking Orbit (EPO)
- **Objectives:**
 - ♦ **Atmospheric Studies:** Analyze the composition of Venus's thick, carbon dioxide-rich atmosphere. Study the extreme greenhouse effect and its impact on the planet's climate.
 - ♦ **Surface Mapping:** Utilize advanced radar technology to map the planet's surface, revealing hidden geological features.
 - ♦ **Ionospheric Studies:** Explore the upper atmosphere of Venus, including the ionosphere, to understand its interaction with solar radiation and the solar wind.
- **Scientific Payload:**
 - ♦ **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR):** To penetrate the thick clouds and map the surface features.
 - ♦ **Infrared Spectrometer:** To study the composition of the atmosphere and surface.
 - ♦ **Ultraviolet Spectrometer:** To analyze the upper atmosphere and ionosphere.

Challenges of the Mission

- **Extreme Environment:** Venus's harsh environment, characterized by high temperatures and acidic atmosphere, poses significant challenges to spacecraft design and operation.
- **Technical Complexity:** The mission requires precise navigation and control to achieve its scientific objectives.
- **Data Transmission:** Reliable communication between the spacecraft and Earth over long distances is essential.

Facts about Venus

- **Venus**, the **second planet** from the Sun, is often called **Earth's twin** but is a harsh and hellish world.
- Venus's atmosphere is **incredibly dense**, composed primarily of carbon dioxide. This dense atmosphere traps heat from the Sun, creating a runaway greenhouse effect.
- Venus is the **hottest planet in the solar system** and is named after the goddess of love.

- Venus rotates on its axis in the opposite direction to most other planets, a phenomenon known as **retrograde rotation**. This means that the Sun rises in the west and sets in the east on Venus.
- Several space missions, including **Mariner 2, Venera, and Magellan**, have studied Venus, providing valuable insights into its atmosphere, surface, and geology.
- Future missions, such as **NASA's VERITAS and DAVINCI+**, aim to further explore Venus.

Source: DD News

INDIA PROPOSES FUND TO HELP DEVELOPING NATIONS FIGHT PLASTIC POLLUTION

Context

- India has proposed setting up a **dedicated multilateral fund** to support developing countries in tackling plastic pollution at **5th Intergovernmental Negotiations Committee (INC)**.

About

- INC is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the talks are scheduled to conclude on December 1.
- More than 170 countries in the Republic of Korea are negotiating the global treaty to end plastic pollution, including marine pollution.
- **Aim:** The treaty aims to have countries cut the production of plastic and plastic polymers.
- **The negotiations** are whether to **agree to binding limits** on certain classes of chemicals and on plastic production, or to **settle on a package of funding** aimed at improving trash collection and recycling.

Background

- In 2022, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) adopted a resolution to tackle plastic pollution on a global scale.
 - ♦ 175 nations voted to adopt a global treaty for plastic pollution—agreeing on an accelerated timeline so that the treaty could be implemented as soon as 2025.
- This led to the creation of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) tasked with developing a legally binding international agreement on plastic pollution by 2024.
- Since 2022, the INC has held four sessions in Uruguay, France, Canada, and Kenya.

New Multilateral Fund

- **Objective:** The fund would provide grants (not loans) to developing countries to make it easier for them to transition to eco-friendly technologies and practices.
- **Governance:** It would be governed by a duly constituted subsidiary body.
 - ♦ It will have equal representation from developed and developing countries.
 - ♦ It will oversee the fund's operations, including creating policies, managing resources, and ensuring fair distribution of funds.
 - ♦ The subsidiary body would also handle technology transfers.
- **Grant Based:** The fund will provide grant-based finance to developing countries, and the developed countries will be mandated to replenish the fund on a periodic basis.
- **Private Funding:** It should also provide flexibility of accepting private funds based upon agreed modalities.

Conclusion

- The Global Plastics Treaty is a step in the right direction, but it needs to go beyond just addressing the issue of plastic pollution.
- It is time to eliminate unnecessary plastic, redesign products so they can be reused, repurposed, repaired and recycled, switch to non-plastic substitutes and strengthen systems for sound waste management.

Source: TH

NATIONAL LANDSLIDE RISK MITIGATION (NLRM) PROJECT

Context

- The committee under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister has approved **disaster mitigation and capacity building projects for various states**.

About

- Landslides pose a **significant threat to life and property**, especially in hilly and mountainous regions of India.
- The proposal includes the funding from **National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF)** to mitigate Landslide Risk in **15 States**.
 - ♦ The NDMF is exclusively for the purpose of mitigation projects, aimed at reducing the

impact of disasters. It is overseen by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

- Another proposal is for **training and capacity building of Civil Defense volunteers in all States and UT's** under Preparedness and Capacity Building from the funding window of **National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)**.

Recent Incidents in India

- There has been a **sharp rise in landslide events** due to extreme weather conditions.
- India faced extreme weather events on **93% of the days in the first nine months — 255 out of 274 days** — in 2024 that claimed 3,238 lives, destroyed over 2.35 lakh houses/buildings and affected crops in 3.2 million hectare (mha) of land.

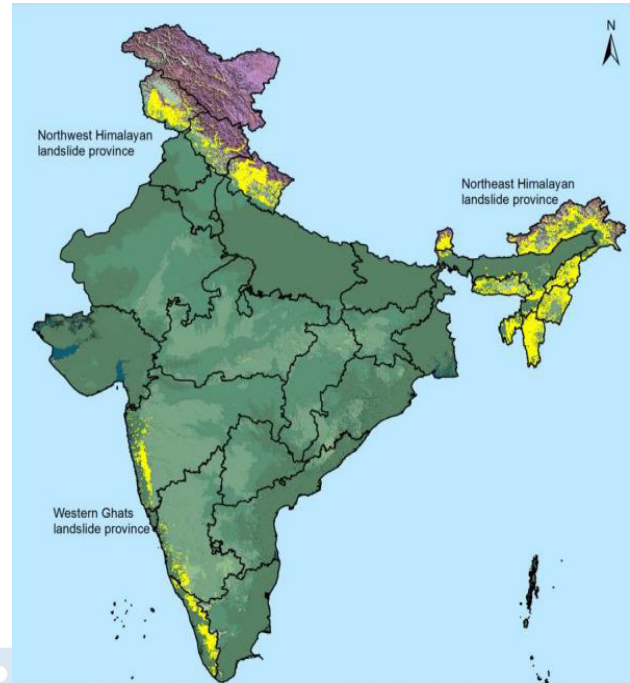
Landslides

- A landslide is a geological phenomenon of **sudden movement of rock, earthen materials, and debris down a sloped section of land**.
- This movement can be triggered by various **natural and man-made factors**.
 - ♦ Intense rain, severe earthquakes, volcanic activity or human activities like construction, deforestation, or changes in cropping patterns can trigger landslides.

Is India prone to landslides?

- India is highly prone to landslides due to its tectonic position.
- **The northward movement of the Indian landmass** at a rate of 5 cm/year **accumulates stress** to which natural disasters like landslides are attributed.
- The Landslide Atlas of India released by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) listed some of the country's most vulnerable areas.
 - ♦ India is among the top five landslide-prone countries in the world.
 - ♦ Apart from snow-covered areas, around **12.6% of India is vulnerable**.
 - ♦ Among them around **66.5% are in the north-western Himalayas**, 18.8% are in the north-eastern Himalayas and around 14.7% are in the Western Ghats region.
- The Northeastern Region (comprises about 50% of the total landslide prone areas in India)
- Areas of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir lying along the Himalayas.

- Areas of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu lying along the Western Ghats.
- The Araku region in Andhra Pradesh along the Eastern Ghats.



Measures Taken by India

- The **Disaster Management Act, of 2005** provides a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for the management of various disasters including landslides.
- **Landslide Hazard Zonation Maps (LHZM):** The Geological Survey of India (GSI) and the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) have developed hazard zonation maps to identify landslide-prone areas. These maps help in planning safer land use, infrastructure development, and disaster preparedness.
- **The National Landslide Risk Management Strategy (2019)** covers all aspects of landslide disaster risk reduction and management, such as hazard mapping, monitoring, and early warning systems.
- The **National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)** has been providing capacity building and other support to various national and state-level disaster management authorities.
- Efforts have been made towards better prediction of weather. E.g. **Ensemble Prediction System**. This will help predict disasters like landslides.

Conclusion

- While landslides pose a significant challenge, proactive measures can reduce their impact.

- It's essential to prioritise research, early warning systems, and sustainable land-use practices.
- By doing so, we can reduce the impact of landslides and protect vulnerable communities.

Source: PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

ISRAEL-LEBANON CEASEFIRE AND UNSC RESOLUTION 1701

In News

- Israel and Lebanon entered into a ceasefire after Israel's security cabinet approved a US-backed proposal to end the 13-month-long conflict.

About Current Ceasefire Proposal

- The proposal follows **Resolution 1701** and calls for a cessation of hostilities within 60 days.
 - ♦ Hezbollah fighters will retreat 40 kilometers away from the Israel-Lebanon border.
 - ♦ Israeli forces are expected to withdraw from Lebanese territory occupied in October 2023.
 - ♦ Lebanon will supervise Hezbollah's movements south of the Litani River, with oversight by UN peacekeepers, the Lebanese military, and a multinational committee.
- **Purpose:** The ceasefire aims to be a permanent cessation of hostilities, with a focus on ensuring that Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations no longer pose a threat to Israel's security.
 - ♦ Hostilities along the **UN-demarcated Blue Line** between Israel and Lebanon had increased since October 2023, following Israel's offensive in Palestine.

UN Resolution 1701

- It was passed by the **UN Security Council in 2006**, calling for a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah, and the creation of a buffer zone.
- It sought the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon and the disarmament of Hezbollah.
- UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeepers were authorized to monitor the situation, and the resolution aimed for a long-term solution to avoid resumption of hostilities.

Source: IE

INDIAN CHEMICAL COUNCIL WINS 2024 OPCW-THE HAGUE AWARD

Context

- **Indian Chemical Council (ICC)** has won the **2024 Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) The Hague Award**.
 - ♦ This is the **first time the award** has been given to a chemical industry body.

About

- In 2013, **OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize** for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons.
- To preserve the legacy of this achievement, the OPCW established the 'OPCW-The Hague Award' in collaboration with the Municipality of The Hague in 2014.
- The Award **recognizes individuals and organizations** that play a significant role in advancing the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

- It came into force in **1997**, and presently has **193 States Parties**.
- Its **Secretariat in The Hague**, is the implementing body.
- The CWC promotes **international cooperation** in the field of chemical weapons, including research and development of peaceful uses of chemistry.
- **India is an original signatory to the Convention**.
 - ♦ **National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC)** is the national authority responsible for implementing the Convention in India.

Indian Chemical Council (ICC)

- It was established in **1938**, is dedicated to the growth and promotion of the **Chemical Industry in India**.
- ICC represents **more than 80% of the Indian chemical Industry** which is valued at \$220 billion.
- This Award acknowledges the **role played by ICC in promoting chemical safety**, compliance with the Convention, and enhancing industry-wide security practices in India.

Source: PIB

E-DAAKHIL

Context

- The Department of Consumer Affairs has completed the nationwide rollout of E-Daakhil.

About

- E-Daakhil is an online platform designed to **streamline the consumer grievance redressal process**.
- It provides an efficient way for consumers to approach the relevant consumer forum to file their grievances.
- The e-Daakhil portal was **first launched in 2020** by the **National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission**.

National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.

- It is a **quasi-judicial commission** which was set up in **1988** under the **Consumer Protection Act of 1986**.
- The Commission is headed by a sitting or a retired Judge of the Supreme Court or a sitting or a retired Chief Justice of a High Court.
- It provides inexpensive, speedy and summary redressal of consumer disputes.

Source: PIB

OPEC+

In News

- Reports suggest OPEC+ may delay increasing oil production, aiming to keep supply tight and prices stable.

Key Factors Affecting Oil Prices

- **Geopolitical Tensions:** Geopolitical events, such as conflicts in the Middle East or Eastern Europe, can disrupt oil supplies and lead to price volatility.
 - ♦ The recent ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah has temporarily eased geopolitical tensions, potentially leading to a slight decrease in oil prices.
- **Global Economic Outlook:** The global economic outlook, including factors like economic growth, inflation, and interest rates, can influence oil demand.
- **Inventory Levels:** If inventories are low, prices may rise due to concerns about supply shortages. Conversely, high inventory levels can put downward pressure on prices.

About OPEC+

- **Brief:** It is a coalition of oil-producing countries that includes members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and several non-OPEC nations. A partnership between OPEC and 10 non-OPEC oil-producing countries.
- **Established:** 1960 by Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.
- **Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria.
- **Members:**
 - ♦ **Founding Members:** Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela.
 - ♦ **Additional Members:** Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria, UAE.
 - ♦ **Non-OPEC members of OPEC+:** Russia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Malaysia, Oman, South Sudan, and Sudan.
- **Significance of OPEC+:** Controls around 40% of global oil supply.

Source: LM

OPEN MARKET OPERATIONS (OMOS)

In News

- As the liquidity deficit in banking widens, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may have to resort to **open market operations (OMOs)**.
 - ♦ A liquidity deficit in the banking system implies a shortage of funds available for lending and investment. This can **hinder economic growth and financial stability**.

About OMOs

- OMOs involve the **buying and selling of government securities** by the central bank to influence the money supply and interest rates.
- When the central bank buys government securities from commercial banks, **it injects money** into the banking system.
 - ♦ **Increased liquidity** can lead to lower interest rates, encouraging borrowing and investment.
- OMOs are often **used in conjunction with other monetary policy tools**, such as the repo rate and the cash reserve ratio, to achieve a balanced monetary policy stance.
- OMOs directly **affect the money supply, influencing factors like inflation**, economic growth, and exchange rates.

Role of Variable Rate Repos (VRRs)

- VRRs are a **short-term liquidity tool** used by the RBI to inject liquidity into the banking system. While they can provide temporary relief, they may not be sufficient to address a persistent liquidity deficit.

Source: BS

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE CO-OPERATIVE BANKS LTD (NAFSCOB)

In News

- The Union Home Minister attended the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the **National Federation of State Co-operative Banks Limited (NAFSCOB)**.

About NAFSCOB

- It was established in 1964 to facilitate the operations of State and Central Co-operative Banks and to develop Co-operative Credit.
- **Functional Wings:** Planning, Research and Development (PRD).
 - ♦ Computer Services Division (CSD).
- **Objectives of NAFSCOB:** Provide a common forum for member banks to discuss issues related to co-operative credit, banking, and allied matters.
 - ♦ **Promote and protect** the interests of member banks across all their activities and represent their views.
 - ♦ **Coordinate and liaise** with key institutions like the Government of India, RBI, State Governments, NABARD, and other financing institutions for co-operative credit development.
 - ♦ **Provide research and consultancy** to strengthen member banks and their organizations.
 - ♦ **Organize conferences,** seminars, workshops, and meetings to share views and contribute to better policy decisions.

Source: BS

NETWORK READINESS INDEX 2024

Context

- India has been placed at **49th rank as per the Network Readiness Index 2024 (NRI 2024) report.**

About

- The report has been published by the Portulans Institute, an independent non-profit research and educational institute based in Washington DC.
- The Report maps the **network-based readiness landscape of 133 economies.**
- It ranks countries based on their performances **in four different pillars: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact,** covering a total of 54 variables.
- The **US topped the rankings for the third year** in a row, **followed by Singapore and Finland.**
- China moved up to the 17th spot and **was the only middle-income economy in the NRI's top 20.**
- India climbed 11 ranks, securing the 49th position in NRI 2024.

Source: PIB

NANOZYMES

In News

- Researchers from the CSIR-Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI) are exploring the **use of nanozymes** as catalysts for transforming biomaterials.

Nanozymes

- **Nanozymes are nanomaterials** engineered to **mimic the catalytic properties** of natural enzymes. They offer **several advantages** over their biological counterparts, including enhanced stability, cost-effectiveness, and tunable properties.
- Nanozymes have gained significant attention since the discovery of **ferromagnetic nanoparticles with horseradish peroxidase-like activity in 2007.**
- **Applications of Nanozymes:** Nanozymes have been increasingly applied in several fields, including:
 - ♦ **Biosensing:** For detecting biological molecules.
 - ♦ **Environmental Protection:** For pollution control and waste treatment.
 - ♦ **Disease Treatments:** In therapeutic and medical applications.

Source: PIB

NATIONAL SECURITY GUARD (NSG)

In News

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has established a permanent **National Security Guard (NSG) hub** in Jammu City to enhance security and counter potential terrorist threats in the region.

About National Security Guard (NSG)

- Elite Counter-Terrorism Force:** The NSG is a specialized force trained to combat terrorism and handle critical security situations.
- Establishment:** In 1984, following **Operation Blue Star**. Created under the **National Security Guard Act, 1986**.
- Administrative and operational control:** Union Ministry of Home Affairs
- Motto:** "Sarvatra Sarvottam Suraksha" (Everywhere, Supreme Security)
- Composition:** The NSG comprises two main groups:
 - ♦ **Special Action Group (SAG):** Primarily composed of Army personnel.
 - ♦ **Special Ranger Group (SRG):** Comprises personnel from Central Armed Police Forces and State Police Forces.
- Key Roles:** Counter-terrorism operations, Hijacking situations, Bomb disposal and post-blast investigations, VIP security.

Source: TOI

SABAL 20 DRONES

In News

- The Army has received **Sabal 20 logistics drones** procured from EndureAir Systems for deployment in the Eastern sector.

Key Features of Sabal 20

- Heavy-Duty Payload Capacity:** The Sabal 20 can carry a payload of up to 20 kg, making it suitable for transporting essential supplies, ammunition, and medical equipment.
- Advanced Technology:** Equipped with VTOL (Vertical Take-Off and Landing) technology, the drone can operate in confined spaces and challenging terrains.

- Stealth Capabilities:** Its low RPM design ensures minimal noise, making it ideal for covert operations.
- Long Endurance:** The drone's efficient design allows for extended flight times, enabling it to cover long distances and deliver supplies to remote locations.

Impact on Military Logistics

- The drone can swiftly deliver critical supplies to troops stationed in remote and inaccessible areas.
- The drone's VTOL capabilities enable it to operate in diverse terrains, providing flexibility and adaptability.

Source: TH

PRESIDENT'S COLOURS AWARD

Context

- General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), presented the **prestigious President's Colours** to four battalions of the Mechanised Infantry.

About President's Colours Award

- Highest Military Honor:** It is the highest honor that can be conferred upon a military unit.
- Symbol of Excellence:** The President's Colours symbolize the unit's commitment to duty, professionalism, and valor.
- Historical Significance:** The tradition of presenting colors to military units dates back to the British era. India adopted this tradition after independence. The Indian Navy became the first amongst the three services to be presented with the President's Colour on 27 May 1951 by Dr. Rajendra Prasad.
- Presentation Ceremony:** The President of India or the Chief of the Army Staff presents the colors to the unit in a grand ceremony. The Colours, which is a ceremonial flag bearing the unit's insignia and motto, are presented by the President.
- Criteria for Award:** Units are selected based on their exceptional performance in various operations, training, and administrative duties.

Source: PIB

