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RISE OF INDIAN TOURISM SECTOR

In News

- The Centre has approved 3,295 crore in interest-free loans for **tourism** infrastructure development across states.

About

- The Union Finance Ministry cleared the loans, which are being disbursed under the **Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme.**
  - The loans are long-term, interest-free, and will be repaid over 50 years.
  - The aim is to develop iconic tourist centers, enhance global branding, and promote sustainable **tourism** that boosts local economies and creates jobs.
- States are encouraged to develop lesser-known tourist destinations like Bateshwar (Uttar Pradesh), Ponda (Goa), Gandikota (Andhra Pradesh), and Porbandar (Gujarat).
  - 40 new tourism projects have been identified across 23 States.

India's Tourism Sector Growth:

- India, one of the oldest civilisations in the world, is a multicultural melting pot.
- India's tourism industry is becoming a global favorite due to its **rich heritage, cultural diversity, and beautiful destinations,** contributing significantly to **economic growth and job creation.**
  - In 2022-23, 76.17 million direct and indirect jobs were created in the tourism sector, compared to 70.04 million in 2021-22.
- **Government Budget for Tourism:** For FY25, the government has allocated 2,479 crore to further develop the tourism sector.
- **Global Ranking**: India ranks **39th among 119 countrie**s in the **Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024 (TTDI)**, with improvements in:
  - Prioritization of Travel & Tourism, Safety & Security, Health & Hygiene.
- **Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs):** In 2023, India recorded 9.24 million FTAs, a 43.5% growth compared to 2022 (6.44 million).
  - Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from FTAs grew by 65%, reaching 2.3 lakh crore in 2023.
  - **Measures to Increase FTAs:** Promotion of adventure and niche tourism.
    - Easier access to e-visas.
    - Launch of a 24x7 multilingual helpline for tourists.
    - Launch of Paryatan Didi and Paryatan Mitra for a better tourist experience.
- In 2023, 2,509.63 million Domestic Tourist Visits (DTVs) were recorded, up from 1,731.01 million in 2022.

Government's Initiatives

- The government is prioritizing adventure tourism and sustainable tourism along with technological integration to increase sector growth.
- **Infrastructure Investment**: India has invested around 7,000 crore (approximately $1 billion) in building tourism infrastructure to improve the tourist experience.
- Initiatives like **Dekho Apna Desh, PRASHAD, Vibrant Village Programme, SWADESH 2.0**, and Udaan aim to promote domestic tourism.

Challenges

- **Infrastructure Deficiencies**: Poor connectivity in remote areas, limited quality accommodation in rural destinations, and inadequate basic amenities.
- **Safety and Security Concerns:** Issues such as crime, health risks from disease outbreaks, and political instability in certain regions can deter tourists.
- **Environmental Impact**: Pollution in urban areas, overtourism leading to the degradation of popular destinations, and potential harm to wildlife and ecosystems due to tourism in sensitive areas.
- **Cultural Sensitivities:** Tourists may unintentionally disrespect local customs, and increased tourism can threaten the preservation of cultural and heritage sites.
- **Marketing and Promotion**: Inadequate awareness and ineffective branding campaigns, like "Incredible India," fail to highlight the country's diverse attractions.
- **Skill Development:** There is a lack of trained professionals in the tourism industry and language barriers for foreign tourists.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- India's tourism industry has shown remarkable growth due to government initiatives, infrastructure development, and global branding.
- The government sees tourism as a driver of social inclusion, employment, and economic progress, working towards making India a developed country by 2047.
- Continued focus on sustainable tourism and technological integration is expected to further boost the sector.

Source: TH

ODISHA PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS (PREVENTION OF UNFAIR MEANS) BILL, 2024

Context

- The Odisha government is to enact a new law with **stringent penal provisions to check cheating and other discrepancies in public examinations of the state.**

About

- The law is known as the **Odisha Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024**.

- The law would be aimed at effectively and **legally deterring persons, organised groups, or institutions** that indulge in various unfair means and adversely impact the public examination systems for monetary or wrongful gains.

- Currently, there is **no specific law in Odisha** to prevent cheating in examinations.

Recent Cases of Discrepancies in Public Exams in India

- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) revealed that there are about 2,000 cases of examination malpractices recorded in the year 2018 only.

- Four people were arrested in Bihar state for leaking the **question papers of the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate).**

- The **qualifying exams for the post of Review Officer/Assistant Review Officer in Uttar Pradesh**, was cancelled amid allegations of paper leak.

- These malpractices have severe financial and psychological tolls on the students, and the whole of the education system requires stronger measures to deal with them.

Impact of Examination Malpractices:

- **Undermines Educational Integrity:** When cheating and malpractices become widespread, it erodes the credibility of the examination system.

- **Devaluation of Qualifications:** When malpractices affect the credibility of exams, the value of the qualifications awarded by educational institutions diminishes, affecting the employability and future prospects of all students.

- **Loss of Trust in the System:** Parents and the public lose trust in the education system.

- **Psychological Impact on Students:** Students feel demotivated and discouraged by the prevalence of malpractices.

- **Delay in Exams:** Malpractices in public examinations lead to delays and cancellation of examinations, adversely impacting the prospects of millions of youth.

- **Additional Cost:** The government has to bear additional financial burden to reconduct the examination.

Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024

- The Act broadly defines **"unfair means"** to include various malpractices, such as:
  - Leaking question papers or answer keys,
  - Assisting candidates during exams (unauthorized communication, providing solutions),
  - Tampering with computer networks or resources,
  - Impersonating candidates,
  - Conducting fake examinations or issuing fake documents,
  - Tampering with documents for merit lists or ranks.

- **Penalties and Punishments:**
  - Individuals:
    - Imprisonment ranges from 3 to 10 years depending on the offense's severity.
    - Fines up to Rs. 1 crore for organized crimes.
  - Service providers:
    - Fines up to Rs. 1 crore for involvement in malpractices.
    - Barring from conducting public examinations for 4 years.
    - Personal liability for directors/ management involved.
  - Organized crimes:
    - Harsher penalties, with imprisonment between 5 and 10 years and a minimum fine of Rs. 1 crore
    - The institution involved can face property attachment and forfeiture

- **Investigation:**
  - All offences under the Act are cognisable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable.
  - An officer not below the rank Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police will investigate the offences under the Act.
  - The Central Government may transfer the investigation to any Central Investigating Agency.

Source: IE

ACCELERATED DEGREE PROGRAMME (ADP) AND EXTENDED DEGREE PROGRAMME (EDP)

Context

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has recently approved a Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for Higher education institutions (HEIs) to offer the **Accelerated Degree Programme (ADP) and Extended Degree Programme (EDP).**

What are ADPs and EDPs?

- At the end of the **first or second semester**, but not beyond, undergraduate students will be allowed to opt for an **ADP or an EDP**.

- Students enrolled under an ADP will follow the same curriculum and must earn the same **number of credits** as required for a **three- or four-year undergraduate (UG) programme**. However, they can **complete their programme sooner** by earning additional credits starting from the semester they choose the ADP.

- **Under ADP**, a three-year UG programme can be completed in **five semesters** instead of the standard six (shortened by a maximum of one semester), while a four-year UG programme can be completed in **six or seven semesters** (shortened by a maximum of two semesters) rather than eight.

- On the other hand, **students who choose the EDP** will be allowed to earn **fewer credits per semester** compared to the standard programme, allowing them to take longer to complete their course.

- The government departments, private organisations, and recruiting agencies like **UPSC/State Service Commissions** and so on, will treat the ADPs and EDPs on a par with those of standard duration.

How will they be implemented?

- HEIs will set up the **committee** to scrutinise the applications they receive for ADP and EDP at the end of the first or second semester and select students accordingly.

- An institution can earmark **up to 10%** of the sanctioned intake for ADP students, while there will be **no cap** on the number of EDP students.

- HEIs can begin offering ADP or EDP from the **2025-26 academic year**, with the choice to implement these programs left to the institutions.

Significance

- ADP allows high-performing students to complete their degrees faster and allows them to enter the **workforce or pursue higher studies** sooner.

- The move was in line with the **National Credit Framework (NCrF)** released last year in accordance with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.**

University Grants Commission (UGC)

- It came into existence on 28th December, 1953 and became a **statutory Organization** of the Government of India by an **Act of Parliament in 1956.**

- The UGC's **mandate** includes:

  ◆ Promoting and coordinating university education.

  ◆ Determining and maintaining standards of teaching, examination, and research in universities.

  ◆ Disbursing grants to the Universities and Colleges.

  ◆ Serving as a vital link between the Union and State Governments and institutions of higher learning.

  ◆ Advising the Central and State Governments on the measures necessary to improve university education.

Source: IE

GOVERNMENT PROPOSED 100% FDI IN INSURANCE SECTOR

Context

- The Union Finance Ministry released a consultation paper proposing to raise the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in the insurance sector from **74% to 100%.**

About

- The FDI limit in the insurance sector was previously increased from **49% to 74% in February 2021.**

- A comprehensive review of the legislative framework of the sector has been conducted in consultation with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) and the industry.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- It refers to investments made by a company or individual from one country in assets, businesses, or production activities in another country.

- **Significance**

  ◆ It boosts the economy by bringing in capital, technology, and management expertise, which enhances productivity and innovation in the host country.

- ◆ It generates employment opportunities, especially in sectors like manufacturing, services, and infrastructure.
- ◆ It facilitates the exchange of skills and technology, enhancing the competitiveness of domestic firms.

Proposed Amendment to Insurance Laws:

- It aims to **ensure accessibility and affordability** of insurance for citizens, foster the expansion and development of the insurance industry, and streamline business processes.
- Net Owned Funds for foreign reinsurers is also proposed to be reduced from Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 1,000 crore.
- IRDAI is being empowered to specify lower entry capital (not less than Rs 50 crore) for underserved or unserved segments on a special-case basis.
- Open architecture for insurance agents that will allow them to tie up with more than one life, general and health insurance player.
    - ◆ Currently, the insurance agents are allowed to tie-up with only one life, general and health insurance company.

Need for the Amendments

- The sector regulator is making efforts **to attract more capital** to the capital-intensive industry.
- The insurance sector needs to infuse **approximately ₹50,000 crore** annually to **double insurance penetration in the country.**
    - ◆ Insurance penetration refers to the ratio of insurance premiums written in a particular year to the gross domestic product (GDP).
- India could save up to **USD 10 billion annually** by expanding insurance coverage to currently uninsured individuals and assets.
    - ◆ With a large portion of India's population still without insurance, the country faces significant risks, including high out-of-pocket expenses.
- IRDA is determined to achieve its mission of **'Insurance for all by 2047'**, with aggressive plans to address the industry's challenges.

Insurance Sector in India

- India is the **fifth largest life insurance market** in the world's emerging insurance markets, growing at a rate of 32-34% each year.
- **Insurance Penetration:** As per the Economic Survey 2023-24, overall insurance penetration in the country moderated slightly to 4% in FY23, from 4.2% in FY22.

- ◆ During the same period, insurance penetration in the life insurance segment declined from 3.2% in FY22 to 3% in FY23, while it remained flat at 1% for the non-life insurance segment.
- **Insurance Companies:** At present, there are **25 life insurance companies, and 34 general insurers in the country.**
    - ◆ Among the life insurers, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) is the sole public sector company.
    - ◆ In addition to these, there is a sole national re-insurer, namely General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re).

Challenges faced by the Sector

- **Low Penetration:** Insurance penetration remains low, with limited awareness among the population about the benefits and types of insurance.
- **Claims Settlement Issues:** Delays, rejections, and lack of transparency in the claims process create customer dissatisfaction.
- **Distribution Limitations:** There is limited reach in rural areas, and insurance distribution remains urban-centric, relying heavily on agents.
- **Affordability:** High premiums and the underpricing of certain products affect accessibility for low-income groups.
- **Fraud and Mis-selling:** Fraudulent claims and mis-selling by agents are common problems, damaging customer trust.
- **Health Insurance Gaps:** Limited coverage and high medical costs make health insurance inadequate.
- **Rising Costs:** Increasing medical and claims costs impact affordability and profitability for insurers.

Way Ahead

- **Increase Financial Literacy:** Conduct educational programs to enhance understanding of insurance products among the population.
- **Simplify Regulations:** Streamline regulatory processes to make product approvals faster and less complex, while ensuring consumer protection.
- **Improve Claims Settlement:** Ensure faster, transparent, and more efficient claims processing to build trust and reduce disputes.
- **Expand Distribution Networks:** Leverage digital platforms and mobile technology to reach underserved rural and semi-urban areas.
- **Enhance Health Coverage:** Expand coverage to include critical illnesses, hospitalization, and post-treatment care.

Source: IE

GLOBAL WAGE REPORT 2024-25: ILO

Context

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) has released the Global Wage Report 2024-25.

About

- The Global Wage Report is an **annual** publication released by the ILO. The first edition was published in **2008**.

- It provides a detailed look at wage trends around the world and in different regions, highlighting **changes in wage inequality and real wage growth.**

Major Highlights of the Report

- **Decrease in Wage Inequality:** The wage inequality has decreased at an average rate of 11.1% per annum in about two-thirds of all countries around the world since 2000.

- **Increase in Global Wages:** Global wages have grown faster than inflation in recent times.
    - The global real wages grew by 1.8% last year, while the projections have reached 2.7% growth in 2024, the highest increase in over 15 years.

- **Regional Disparity in Growth:** Africa, Northern America and parts of Europe recorded stagnant or negative real wage growth.

- **Persistent inequality:** Low-income countries suffer from significantly higher wage inequality compared to high-income nations, with nearly 22% of workers earning less than half the median hourly wage.

- **Decoupling between productivity and wages:** Despite a 29% rise in productivity in high-income countries between 1999 and 2024, real wages have only risen by 15%, highlighting a failure to share productivity gains equitably with workers.

- **A continual gender wage gap:** Women, especially in lower-middle-income countries, remain disproportionately affected by wage inequality due to overrepresentation in informal, precarious and low-paid work.

- **Indian Scenario:**
    - The shares of low-paid wage workers and low-paid non-wage workers in India declined at an average annual rate of 6.3% and 12.7% between 2008 and 2018.
    - The share of low-paid wage workers — those earning less than 50% of the median hourly wage in the country — stands at 9.5% in India.
    - On the other hand, it is 9.4% for Pakistan, 10.5% for Nepal, 11.2% for Bangladesh, 13.7% for Bhutan and 25.9% for Sri Lanka.

- **Analysis:**
    - Despite the positive trend, significant wage differentials persist worldwide.
    - Such positive outcomes mark a notable recovery compared to the negative global wage growth, of -0.9%, observed in 2022.
    - The emerging economies have experienced stronger growth than the advanced ones.

- **Suggestions**
    - Minimum wage adjustments need to be more responsive to inflation, especially to protect low-wage earners.
    - Stronger worker protections, policies and regulations to address precarious and insecure forms of work.
    - Action to close the gender wage gap and ensure equal pay for work of equal value.

> **About International Labour Organization**
> - It is an United Nations Agency established in **1919** as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, and it became the **first specialized agency of the UN in 1946.**
> - It has **187 Member states.**
> - It sets labour standards, develops policies and devises programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
> - It is the only tripartite U.N. agency that brings together governments, employers and workers.
> - It is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland.**
> - **Major Reports:** World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO), Global Wage Report, World Social Protection Report, World Employment and Social Outlook for Youth, World of Work Report.

Source: BS

NUMBER OF GIG & PLATFORM WORKERS IN INDIA

In News

- The government said that the number of gig workers and platform workers in the country is expected to rise to 23.5 million by 2029-30.

What Are Gig Workers?

- Gig workers are individuals who engage in temporary or flexible jobs, often through online platforms.

- They are part of the gig economy, which is characterized by freelance, short-term, or on-demand work rather than traditional, full-time employment.

- The gig economy in India has seen significant growth in recent years, driven by the **widespread adoption of digital technologies** and the **proliferation of online platforms.**

- The gig and platform economy is an emerging sector with significant growth and employment potential.

Status in India

- As per NITI Aayog's report "India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy" (June 2022), there were **7.7 million gig and platform workers in India** in 2020-21, including women.

- According to the Economic Survey 2020-21, India has become one of the world's largest countries for flexi-staffing (gig and platform work). This form of work is expected to continue growing, particularly with the expansion of e-commerce platforms.

Impacts

- **Macro**: The gig economy has had a substantial impact on India's economy.
    - It has provided employment opportunities to millions of people, particularly in urban areas

- **Micro:** Gig work offers several benefits for workers, including flexibility, independence, and the ability to earn additional income.
    - Many gig workers appreciate the freedom to set their own schedules and work on multiple projects simultaneously.

Challenges

- Gig workers in India have protested over issues like revenue sharing, working hours, and employment conditions.
    - These issues are hard to address within the current legal framework, which is designed for traditional employer-employee relationships.

- **Lack of Legal Protection:** Without recognizing employment relations, gig workers lack access to labor law protections, such as Occupational safety and health standards etc.

- **Income Instability:** There is no guaranteed minimum earnings, and workers may not earn consistently, even if available for long hours.

- **Unregulated Working Hour**s: Gig workers, like app-cab drivers, often work late into the night or early mornings, leading to safety concerns, including accidents.

Measures

- For the first time, the **Code on Social Security, 2020** provides definitions for 'gig workers' and 'platform workers' and outlines provisions related to them.

- The Code on Social Security, 2020 includes the provision for framing social security measures for gig and platform workers, covering areas like:
    - Life and disability cover
    - Accident insurance
    - Health and maternity benefits
    - Old-age protection

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The gig economy in India is a dynamic and growing sector that offers numerous opportunities for workers and businesses alike.

- However, to fully harness its potential, it is essential to address the challenges faced by gig workers and create a supportive regulatory framework.

- With the right policies and initiatives, the gig economy can contribute significantly to India's economic growth and provide sustainable employment for millions of people.

Source :Air

NEWS IN SHORT

RAMAPPA TEMPLE

In News

- Centre approves 141 Crore loans for development of Ramappa Circuit under the Special Assistance to States/Union Territories for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme.

About Ramappa Temple

- **Brief:** The Ramappa Temple, also known as the **Rudreshwara Temple**, is a magnificent testament to the architectural prowess of the Kakatiya dynasty.

A MASTERPIECE OF HUMAN CREATIVE GENIUS

Photo: Ramoorthy P

➤ Rudreshwara temple constructed between **12th & 13th centuries** during the reign of the **Kakatiya** rulers **Rudradeva** and **Recharla Rudra**

➤ The temple is dedicated to **Lord Shiva** and the presiding deity is **Ramalingeswara Swamy**

➤ It is also known as the **Ramappa temple**, after the **sculptor** who executed the work in the temple for **40 years**

➤ Built with **sandstone** and a sandbox foundation, the Rudreshwara temple has decorated **beams** and **columns** made of **granite stone**

➤ The temple's unique feature is its **Vimana** constructed using porous bricks, which is in the shape of a **pyramid**

- The presiding deity of the temple is **Ramalingeswara Swamy.**
- Located in **Palampet, Telangana**, this 13th-century temple was **inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2021.**
- **Key Features:**
  - The temple is renowned for its exquisite sculptures, depicting gods, goddesses, dancers, and mythical creatures.
  - The **"sandbox technique"** used in the foundation of the temple has been a marvel of engineering. Kakatiyas adopted the **Chalukyan Style of Vesara Architecture.**
    - The **sandbox technique** involves filling a pit (dug for the foundation) with a mixture of sand-lime, jaggery (for binding), and karakkaya (black myrobalan fruit) before constructing the building.
    - The lower part of the temple is constructed using **red sandstone.**
    - The pillars are **made of basalt, while the white gopuram is made of light bricks** that are said to float on water, showcasing the advanced engineering methods of the time.
  - The **gopuram (temple tower)** is one of the key features of the temple. Built with light bricks, it is not only a structural marvel but also has **aesthetic significance.**
  - The gateway style employed at the **Rudreswara Temple is unique to the Kakatiya region** and reflects a highly evolved aesthetic sense in South Indian temple architecture.

Source: TH

JYOTIBA PHULE

Context

- November 28 marks the death anniversary of great Indian activist and reformer, Jyotiba Phule.

About: Jyotiba Phule

- **Birth:** On **11th April, 1827** in Khatgun village which is today in the Satara district of **Maharashtra**.
- **Title:** His family belonged to the 'mali' caste and their original title was **'Gorhay'**. On May 11, 1888, he was bestowed with the title of **Mahatma** by a Maharashtrian social activist Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar.
- **Ideology and influence:** His ideology centered around **liberty, egalitarianism, and socialism**. He drew inspiration from **Thomas Paine's** book *The Rights of Man.*

- **Marriage:** He was married off when he was only 13 with **Savitribai**. The couple went on to establish the country's **first school for girls** in Bhidewada, Pune, in 1848.
- **Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha:** In **1863**, Jyotiba and Savitribai began Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha, India's first home dedicated to prohibiting infanticide and supporting pregnant Brahmin widows and rape victims.
- **Satyashodhak Samaj:** Phule along with his followers formed **Satyashodhak Samaj in 1873** which meant 'Seekers of Truth' and was dedicated towards the removal of the socio-economic backwardness of Dalits.
  - It is believed that it was Phule who **first used the term 'Dalit'** for the depiction of oppressed masses often placed outside the **'varna system'**.
- **Literary works:** Gulamgiri (Slavery), Shetkarayacha Aasud (Cultivator's Whipcord), and Tritiya Ratna.

Source: IE

BALTIC SEA

In News

- Sweden has formally requested China's cooperation in explaining the recent damage to two undersea data cables in the Baltic Sea.

About Baltic Sea

- The **Baltic Sea is the youngest sea on Earth,** formed 10,000-15,000 years ago as glaciers retreated.

- The Baltic Sea is artificially linked to the White Sea by the **White Sea Canal and to the North Sea by the Kiel Canal.**

- **Location**: It is in Northern Europe, bordered by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden.
  - It includes the **Gulf of Bothnia, the Bay of Bothnia**, the Gulf of Finland, the Gulf of Riga, and the Bay of Gdańsk.
- **Characteristics:**
  - **Brackish Water:** It is one of the largest brackish water bodies, where saltwater from the North-East Atlantic mixes with freshwater from rivers and streams.
  - **Ecosystem**: The Baltic Sea has a unique and sensitive marine ecosystem with diverse flora and fauna.
  - **Economic Importance:** Provides food, income, recreation, and well-being, but faces underperformance due to environmental decline.
- **Concerns:**
  - **Environmental Impact:** 94% of the Baltic Sea is affected by eutrophication, leading to dead zones.
    - **Baltic Sea Seagrass Initiative** helps train local citizens to restore seagrass meadows in the Baltic Sea which can help tackle Climate Change.
  - **Biodiversity Decline**: Cod populations have crashed, European eel is near extinction, and only around 500 Baltic Harbour porpoises remain.
  - **Climate Change**: A degraded Baltic Sea may release more greenhouse gases, worsening climate change.

Source :TH

KORAGA TRIBAL COMMUNITY

In News

- The Kerala government has launched a **project named Operation Smile** to provide **land titles (patta) to the Koraga community.**
  - By securing land rights, the Koraga community can **access government housing schemes, agricultural loans, and other welfare programs.**

About Korega Tribals

- The Koraga community is a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) primarily residing in the Kasaragod district of Kerala and certain parts of Karnataka.
  - **PVTGs** are identified by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** and currently there are 75 PVTGs communities.

- In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission** created **Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)** (in 2006, renamed as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- They primarily **speak Tulu** and possess a rich cultural heritage, including traditional songs, dances, and rituals.

Source: TH

RULE 267

In News

- The increasing frequency of invoking **Rule 267** in the Rajya Sabha has led to disruptions and delays in parliamentary proceedings.

About

- **Rule 267 of the Rajya Sabha Rules of Procedure** allows members to move a motion to suspend the normal business of the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance.

Source: PIB

NAFITHROMYCIN

In News

- Mumbai-based Wockhardt Limited developed Nafithromycin with the support of the **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).**
  - The **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** is indeed a Public Sector Enterprise established by the **Department of Biotechnology (DBT).**

About

- It would be available with the **brand name Miqnaf.**
- It is designed to treat **Community-Acquired Bacterial Pneumonia (CABP)**, caused by drug-resistant bacteria like **Streptococcus pneumoniae.**
- Antimicrobial resistance is a **serious global health threat**. The emergence of drug-resistant bacteria has made it increasingly difficult to treat common infections.

Source: Print

INDEX OF EIGHT CORE INDUSTRIES (ICI)

In News

- The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) showed a 3.1% growth in October 2024 compared to October 2023.

About Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)

- The ICI encompasses industries such as Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, and Electricity, which together account for **40.27% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).**
  - Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index that **tracks manufacturing** activity in different sectors of an economy.
  - IIP data is compiled and **published by CSO every month.** CSO or Central Statistical Organisation operates under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).**
  - The **base year** was changed to **2011-12** from 2004-05 in the year 2017.
- The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is released by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India**, through its **Office of the Economic Advisor**. This index is published monthly.

Source: PIB

CAFE NORMS

In News

- The Indian government has identified non-compliance with tightened CAFE norms by eight major car manufacturers for the fiscal year 2022-23, resulting in proposed penalties.

About CAFE Norms

- **Brief:**
  - Introduced in 2017 under the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001.** CAFE norms link the corporate average fuel consumption of vehicles (measured in litres/100 km) to the average kerb weight of all vehicles sold by an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) in a fiscal year.
  - The calculation focuses on achieving better mileage and lower emissions across the entire fleet of vehicles a manufacturer sells.
- **Objectives**:
  - Reduce CO_2 emissions from vehicles.
  - Lower fuel consumption.
  - Decrease oil dependency and address air pollution.
- **Applicability:**
  - Applicable to vehicles with gross weight less than 3,500 kg.
  - Covers petrol, diesel, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles.

- **Compliance Phases:**
  - Phase I (2017–2022): Focused on introducing the standards and achieving initial compliance.
  - Phase II (from 2022): Enforces stricter fuel efficiency and emission targets.

Impact of CAFE Norms

- **Fuel Efficiency:** Encourages the development and production of more fuel-efficient vehicles.
- **Reduced Emissions:** Contributes to lower greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality.
- **Technological Advancements:** Promotes innovation in automotive technology, such as hybrid and electric vehicles.
- **Consumer Benefits:** Lower fuel costs and reduced environmental impact.

Source: IE

INDIAN ARMY LAUNCHES EKLAVYA DIGITAL PLATFORM

In News

- The Indian Army's Eklavya platform is a significant step towards modernizing military education and training.
  - It aligns perfectly with the Indian Army's **"Decade of Transformation" initiative** and Indian Army's theme for 2024 as the **"Year of Technology Absorption."**

About

- **Developed by:** Bhaskaracharya National Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N).
- **Key Features of Eklavya:**
  - **Accessibility:** The platform is accessible to Army officers across the country, eliminating the need for physical attendance at training institutions.
  - **Personalized Learning:** Officers can access a wide range of courses and resources tailored to their specific needs and career goals.
  - **Continuous Learning:** The platform promotes continuous learning by providing regular updates on the latest military doctrines, technologies, and best practices.
  - **Collaborative Learning:** Eklavya fosters collaboration among officers through discussion forums, webinars, and other interactive features.

Source: ET