



**WE4U IAS COACHING**  
**UPSC MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS**  
**APRIL 2022**

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MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

INDEX

1. INDIAN POLITY

1.1	[News]:	LS passes new Criminal Procedure Bill	1
1.2	[News]:	Nursing Council flays dowry lesson	2
1.3	[News]:	Lok Sabha passes weapons of Mass destruction and their delivery systems (prohibition of unlawful activities) amendment Bill, 2022	3
1.4	[News]:	High time for ADR mechanisms: CJI	5
1.5	[News]:	Pulwama, Pathankot attack masterminds notified as terrorists under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act	10
1.6	[News]:	An umbrella investigative body urgently needed: CJI	12

2. INDIAN ECONOMY

2.1	[News]:	IIM-Ahmedabad launches agri land price index	16
2.2	[News]:	India-Australia deal seeks to double bilateral trade in 5 years	16
2.3	[News]:	FM Nirmala Sitharaman says, over 51 percent of total loan sanctioned under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana to SC, ST, and OBC	17
2.4	[News]:	Government says nearly two lakh 71 thousand persons will be trained over five years under PM-DAKSH Yojana.	19
2.5	[News]:	Retail inflation nears 7% as food prices pinch	20

2.6	[News]:	‘SVANidhi se Samriddhi’ launched in additional 126 cities;	22
2.7	[News]:	SBI hikes lending rate by 0.1%, EMIs to go up23	
2.8	[News]:	India Post Payments Bank launches ‘Fincluvation’	24

### 3. ENVIRONMENT

3.1	[News]:	New genus of parasitoid wasp dedicated to ATREE	26
3.2	[News]:	Chilika lake’s dolphin population falls	27
3.3	[News]:	Record nesting of Olive Ridley turtles	29
3.4	[News]:	New research: Gecko found in Andhra, Odisha turns out to be a new species	30
3.5	[News]:	Record nesting of Olive Ridley turtles	31
3.6	[News]:	IPCC report may spell death knell for coal-based units	33
3.7	[News]:	99% of world population is breathing polluted air: WHO35	
3.8	[News]:	World Health Day: India will achieve the target of Sustainable Development Goals before the deadline of 2030, says Govt	35
3.9	[News]:	Indian Tent Turtles	36
3.10	[News]:	New materials & processes for carbon capture and utilization could show new light for global warming challenge.	37
3.11	[News]:	World’s loudest bird	39

### 4.SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

4.1	[News]:	Illegal variety occupies about a fifth of GM cotton seed Market	40
4.2	[News]:	Pinaka Mk-I (Enhanced) Rocket System and Pinaka Area	41
4.3	[News]:	Anti-Tank Guided Missile ‘HELINA’ successfully flight tested	42

4.4	[News]:	India likely to miss year's solar capacity target	43
4.5	[News]:	All we know about the Bernardinelli-Bernstein comet	44
4.6	[News]:	Bihar ranks third in new HIV infections	46
4.7	[News]:	OIL commissions India's first pure green hydrogen plant in Assam	47
4.8	[News]:	India's 35-year-old research station in Antarctica needs urgent upgrades, says NCPOR director.	49
4.9	[News]:	Earth Day: the history and impact of the environmental Movement	50
4.10	[News]:	Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) Prime	51
4.11	[News]:	What is Zero shadow day?	51

## 5.INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

5.1	[News]:	Sri Lanka announces \$51-billion debt default to combat Crisis	53
5.2	[News]:	ADB Financing to Support Urban Development in Nagaland	54
5.3	[News]:	Explained: Why is the Black Sea crucial to Russia, and the loss of 'Moskva' a significant blow?	55
5.4	[News]:	On World Heritage Day, event takes museum into the Classroom	57
5.5	[News]:	UN: Yemen's Houthi rebels agree to stop using child soldiers	58
5.6	[News]:	China, Solomon Islands sign landmark security pact	60
5.7	[News]:	Cohesion and co-operation: On power imbalances in BIMSTEC	61

## 6.INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

6.1	[News]:	Jagan launches Thalli Bidda Express	64
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# 1. INDIAN POLITY

## 1.1 [News]: LS passes new Criminal Procedure Bill

### [Background]:

It allows collection, storage of physical and biological samples of convicted, arrested and detained persons. The Lok Sabha on Monday passed the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, 2022, by voice vote.

### [Concept]:

#### **Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022**

- \* It replaces the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920, a colonial era law, and authorises police officers to take measurements of people convicted, arrested or facing trial in criminal cases.

#### **Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920**

- \* The Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920 allows police officers to collect certain identifiable information (fingerprints and footprints) of persons including convicts and arrested persons.
- \* Also, a Magistrate may order measurements or photographs of a person to be taken to aid the investigation of an offense. In case of acquittal or discharge of the person, all material must be destroyed.

#### **Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act 2022**

- \* The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, 2022 was introduced in Lok Sabha on March 28, 2022.
- \* The Bill describes:
  - the type of data that may be collected
  - persons from whom such data may be collected
  - the authority that may authorize such collection.
- \* It also provides for the data to be stored in a central database.
- \* Under both the 1920 Act and the 2022 Bill, resistance or refusal to give data will be considered an offence of obstructing a public servant from doing his duty.
- \* The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) will be the central agency to maintain the records.
- \* It will share the data with law enforcement agencies.
- \* States/UTs may notify agencies to collect, preserve, and share data in their respective jurisdictions.

## 1.2 [News]: Nursing Council flays dowry lesson

### [Background],

The Indian Nursing Council on Tuesday condemned “derogatory content” in the sociology textbook for second-year B.Sc. nursing students listing the “merits and advantages of the dowry system”.

[Concept].

### **Indian Nursing Council**

- \* Indian Nursing Council is a national regulatory body for nurses and nurse education in India.
- \* It is an autonomous body under the Government of India, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, constituted under Indian Nursing Council Act, 1947.

**Functions.**

- \* Recognition of nursing qualifications in India
- \* Granting any nursing qualification
- \* Indian Nursing Council has the Power to require information as to courses of study and training and examinations
- \* Inspect any institution recognized as a training institution
- \* Withdrawal of recognition
- \* Power to make regulations

1.3 [News]: Lok Sabha passes weapons of Mass destruction and their delivery systems (prohibition of unlawful activities) amendment Bill, 2022

[Background].

- \* Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the weapons of Mass destruction and their delivery systems (prohibition of unlawful activities) amendment Bill, 2022 with a voice vote.
- \* The Bill moved by External affairs minister S. Jaishankar amends the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005. The 2005 Act prohibits unlawful activities (such as manufacturing, transport, or transfer) related to weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery.

**[Concept],**

**weapons of Mass destruction and their delivery systems (prohibition of unlawful activities) amendment Bill, 2022**

#### **Highlights of the Bill**

- \* **Background:** The bill seeks to modify the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005.
- \* **Original Legislation:** The 2005 Act was enacted to prohibit unlawful activities in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- \* This Act covers unlawful activities relating to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.
- \* It also provides for integrated legal measures to exercise controls over the export of materials, equipment and technologies in relation to weapons of



mass destruction and their delivery systems and for prevention of their transfers to non-State actors or terrorists.

**Need of Amendment.**

- \* The existing Act pertaining to weapons of mass destruction does not cover the financial aspect of such delivery systems and the new provisions are essential to meet international obligations.
- \* The United Nations Security Council's targeted financial sanctions and the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force have mandated against financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

**Objectives of the Bill.** The Bill aims to achieve three objectives.

- \* Prohibit financing of activities linked to WMD.
- \* Empower the Centre to freeze, seize or attach funds, financial assets or economic resources for preventing such financing.
- \* Prohibit making available funds, financial assets or economic resources for any prohibited activity in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

1.4 [News]: High time for ADR mechanisms: CJI

[Background].

- \* Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana stressed the need for increasing the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms that can change the judicial landscape, bringing justice to millions and settling grievances without protracted legal proceedings.

[Concept].

- \* ADR refers to the methods of resolving a dispute, which are alternatives for litigation in Courts.



- \* Generally, it uses a neutral third party who helps the parties to communicate, discuss the differences and resolve the dispute.
- \* Various Modes of ADR

### 1. Arbitration.

- \* The dispute is submitted to an arbitral tribunal which makes a decision on the dispute that is mostly binding on the parties.
- \* It is less formal than a trial and rules of evidence are often relaxed.
- \* Generally, there is no right to appeal an arbitrator's decision.

- \* Except for some interim measures, there is very little scope for judicial intervention in the arbitration process.

## **2.Mediation.**

- \* An impartial person called a "Mediator" helps the parties try to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the dispute.
- \* He/she does not decide the dispute but helps the parties communicate so they can try to settle the dispute themselves.
- \* It leaves control of the outcome with the parties.

## **3.Conciliation.**

- \* It is a non-binding procedure in which an impartial third party, the conciliator, assists the parties in a dispute in reaching a mutually satisfactory agreed settlement of the dispute.
- \* It is a less formal form of arbitration.
- \* The parties are free to accept or reject the recommendations but if both parties accept the settlement document drawn by the conciliator, it shall be final and binding on both.

## **4.Negotiation.**

- \* It is another form of ADR for resolving disputes.
- \* The parties agree upon a course of action and bargain for advantage.
- \* Sometimes they try to adopt a creative option that serves their mutual interests.

- \* It is the most common form of resolving a dispute and this process solves most disputes.

#### **‘Lok Adalat’:**

- \* It is yet another form of ADR created as per the requirements of people in particular areas.
- \* Camps of Lok Adalat were initially started in Gujarat in 1982 and now they have been extended to all over India.
- \* The main purpose of establishment of Lok Adalats is to diminish the heavy burden of pendency of cases in the Courts which were of petty nature. The seekers of justice are in millions and it is becoming rather a heavy burden on the courts to dispose of such matters keeping in view the ever increasing litigation.

#### **Advantages of ADR**

- \* **Less Time Consuming:** People can resolve their dispute in a short period as compared to courts.
- \* **Cost-effective:** ADR saves all that money, which one spends if undergoing the litigation process.
- \* **Less-Technical:** It is free from technicalities of courts and informal ways are applied in resolving the dispute.

- \* **No Fear of Court:** People are free to express themselves without any fear of court of law. They can reveal the true facts without disclosing them to any court.
- \* **Efficient Restoration:** There are always chances of restoring the relationship back as parties discuss their issues together on the same platform.
- \* **Prevent More Conflict:** ADR prevents further conflict and maintains a good relationship between the parties and also preserves the best interest of the parties.

#### **Limitations**

- \* **No Appeals:** There is less or no scope of appeal in awards. Whenever there is a problem with the award, there would be no scope of appeal or correction.
- \* **Varied Guidelines:** It is difficult to choose among various guidelines and multiple institutions providing the facility of arbitration.
- \* **Different Statutes:** Due to different statutes for domestic and international arbitration, it is difficult to ascertain the applicability of the laws relating to international arbitration.
- \* **Cross-cultural Language Barrier:** Due to discrepancy in the language and culture of the two regions, it becomes difficult to bridge the gap and come to a unified solution.

- \* Unfamiliarity & lack of awareness: Most people still prefer the conventional method of going to courts and are also not informed about these options and the methodology.

### 1.5 [News]: Pulwama, Pathankot attack masterminds notified as terrorists under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

#### [Background]:

- \* Government has designated Pulwama and Pathankot attack masterminds as terrorists. In a notification, Union Home Ministry has designated Jaish-e-Mohammad's Mohiuddin Aurangzeb Alamgir as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Alamgir is a key conspirator of the terror attack on the CRPF convoy at Pulwama in 2019.

#### [Concept]:

#### Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

#### Features of the UAPA Act

- \* The Act gives special procedures to handle terrorist activities, among other things.
- \* It aims at the effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.
- \* Unlawful activity refers to any action taken by an individual or association intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.

- \* According to the Act, the union government may proclaim or designate an organisation as a terrorist organisation if it: (i) commits or participates in acts of terrorism, (ii) prepares for terrorism, (iii) promotes terrorism, or (iv) is otherwise involved in terrorism. The Bill also empowers the government to designate individuals as terrorists on the same grounds.
- \* UAPA has the death penalty and life imprisonment as the highest punishments.
- \* The Act assigns absolute power to the central government, by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may, by way of an Official Gazette, declare it so.
- \* Under UAPA, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged. The offenders will be charged in the same manner whether the act is performed in a foreign land, outside India.
- \* Approval for property seizure by National Investigation Agency (NIA): As per the Act, an investigating officer is required to obtain the prior approval of the Director-General of Police to seize properties that may be connected with terrorism.
- \* The Bill adds that if the investigation is conducted by an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the approval of the Director-General of NIA would be required for seizure of such property.
- \* The investigation by the National Investigation Agency (NIA): Under the provisions of the Act, investigation of cases can be conducted by officers of

the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police or above. The Bill additionally empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases.

- \* Insertion to the schedule of treaties: The Act defines terrorist acts to include acts committed within the scope of any of the treaties listed in a schedule to the Act. The Schedule lists nine treaties, comprising of the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997), and the Convention against Taking of Hostages (1979). The Bill adds another treaty to this list namely, the International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005).

**1.6 [News]. An umbrella investigative body urgently needed. CJI**

**[Background].**

This will help bring CBI, ED, SFIO under one roof. Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana on Friday said there was an immediate need for the creation of an independent umbrella institution, so as to bring various central agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) under one roof.

**[Concept].**

**Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).**





- \* Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the premier investigating police agency in India.
- \* It functions under the superintendence of the of Personnel, Ministry of Personnel, Pension & Public Grievances, Government of India – which falls under the prime minister’s office.
- \* For investigations of offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, its superintendence vests with the Central Vigilance Commission.
- \* It coordinates on behalf of India with Interpol Member countries.
- \* Its conviction rate is as high as 65 to 70% and it is comparable to the best investigation agencies in the world.

#### **Enforcement Directorate.**

- \* The origin of this Directorate goes back to 1st May, 1956, when an ‘Enforcement Unit’ was formed, in Department of Economic Affairs, for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 (FERA ’47).

- \* In the year 1957, this Unit was renamed as 'Enforcement Directorate'. The administrative control of the Directorate was transferred from Department of Economic Affairs to Department of Revenue in 1960.
- \* For a short period of 04 years (1973 – 1977), the Directorate also remained under the administrative jurisdiction of Department of Personnel & Administrative Reforms.
- \* Powers:

**The Directorate enforces two laws;**

1. FEMA, a Civil Law having quasi judicial powers, for investigating suspected contraventions of the Exchange Control Laws and Regulations with the powers to impose penalties on those adjudged guilty.
2. PMLA, a Criminal Law, whereby the Officers are empowered to conduct enquiries to locate, provisionally attach/confiscate assets derived from acts of Schedules Offences besides arresting and prosecuting the Money Launderers.

#### **Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO)**

- \* SFIO is a multi-disciplinary organization under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, consisting of experts in the field of accountancy, forensic auditing, law, information technology, investigation, company law, capital market and taxation for detecting and prosecuting or recommending for prosecution white-collar crimes/frauds.

- \* It has its head office in New Delhi.
- \* The Computer Forensic and Data Mining Laboratory (CFDML) was set up in 2013 to provide support and service to the officers of SFIO in their investigations.
- \* Serious Fraud investigation (SFIO) was initially set up by the Government of India by way of a resolution dated 2nd July, 2003. At that time SFIO did not enjoy a formal legal status.
- \* Section 211 of the Companies Act, 2013, has accorded statutory status to the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO).
- \* SFIO also has powers to arrest people for the violation of the Company law.

## 2. INDIAN ECONOMY

### 2.1 [News]: IIM–Ahmedabad launches agri land price index

#### [Background]:

- ✓ Agriculture land in Karnataka is the most expensive followed by Telangana, according to a new Agri Land Price Index (ALPI) launched for six states, including the two launched by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM–A) on Thursday.
- ✓ The index, a prelude to a nationwide gauge to monitor farm land prices, was developed for 107 districts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, benchmarking land prices for rural and semi–urban areas.
- ✓ The index is aimed at removing uncertainty in the agricultural land valuation.

### 2.2 [News]: India–Australia deal seeks to double bilateral trade in 5 years

#### [Background]:

India and Australia signed an Economic Co–operation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) on Saturday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart in Canberra Scott Morrison, with an eye on doubling bilateral trade to \$50 billion in five years and ease movement of people, goods and services.

[Concept].

### Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreements

- \* It is a kind of free trade pact that aims to provide an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
- \* CECA generally covers negotiation on trade tariff and TRQ (tariff rate quota) rates only. It is not as comprehensive as CEPA. India has signed CECA with Malaysia and Singapore.
- \* The aim of the agreement is to enhance economic and social benefits, improve living standards and ensure high and steady growth in real incomes in their respective territories by expansion of trade and investment flows.

2.3 [News]. FM Nirmala Sitharaman says, over 51 percent of total loan sanctioned under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana to SC, ST, and OBC

[Background].

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said that more than 51 percent of total loans sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana went to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and Other Backward Class categories. On 7th anniversary of Mudra Yojana, Mrs Sitharaman said, the Scheme stands for social justice in action and embodies the true spirit of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

[Concept].

**Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) Scheme.**



- \* Launched in April, 2015.
- \* The scheme's objective is to refinance collateral-free loans given by the lenders to small borrowers.
- \* Banks and MFIs can draw refinance under the MUDRA Scheme after becoming member-lending institutions of MUDRA.
- \* Mudra Loans are available for non-agricultural activities upto Rs. 10 lakh and activities allied to agriculture such as Dairy, Poultry, Bee Keeping etc, are also covered.
- \* Mudra's unique features include a Mudra Card which permits access to Working Capital through ATMs and Card Machines.

There are three types of loans under PMMY:

- Shishu (up to Rs.50,000).
- Kishore (from Rs.50,001 to Rs.5 lakh).
- Tarun (from Rs.500,001 to Rs.10,00,000).

**2.4 [News]:** Government says nearly two lakh 71 thousand persons will be trained over five years under PM-DAKSH Yojana.

**[Background]:**

The government has said that around two lakh 71 thousand persons will be trained over five years under Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi, PM-DAKSH Yojana. The scheme aims to increase the skill levels of the target youth by providing for long-term and short-term skills, followed by settlement in employment and self-employment.

**[Concept]:**

**PM-DAKSH Yojana**

- \* The Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana launched in 2021, by the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- \* PM-DAKSH (Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi) Yojana is a National Action Plan for skilling of marginalized persons covering SCs, OBCs, EBCs, DNTs, Sanitation workers including waste pickers.
- \* Support artisans to improve their revenue generation capacities within their practicing vocations.
- \* Empower Women to enter into self-employment thereby financially empowering themselves without neglecting their domestic activities.

- \* Encourage Youth from the target groups to acquire long-term training and specialization in employable vocations giving them better standing in the job market.
- \* The Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment also launched 'PM-DAKSH' Portal and 'PM-DAKSH' Mobile App.

**2.5 [News]: Retail inflation nears 7% as food prices pinch**

**[Background]:**

Retail inflation accelerated sharply to 6.95% in March, the fastest pace of price gains in almost a year and a half, and marked the third straight month when inflation exceeded the Reserve Bank of India's tolerance threshold of 6%.

**[Concept]:**

Retail inflation is measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

**Inflation**

- \* Inflation refers to the rise in the prices of most goods and services of daily or common use, such as food, clothing, housing, recreation, transport, consumer staples, etc.
- \* Inflation measures the average price change in a basket of commodities and services over time.



- \* Inflation is indicative of the decrease in the purchasing power of a unit of a country's currency. This could ultimately lead to a deceleration in economic growth.

### **Consumer Price Index**

- \* It measures price changes from the perspective of a retail buyer.
- \* The CPI calculates the difference in the price of commodities and services such as food, medical care, education, electronics etc, which Indian consumers buy for use.
- \* The CPI has several sub-groups including food and beverages, fuel and light, housing and clothing, bedding and footwear.

### **Four types of CPI are as follows.**

1. CPI for Industrial Workers (IW).
  2. CPI for Agricultural Labourer (AL).
  3. CPI for Rural Labourer (RL).
  4. CPI (Rural/Urban/Combined).
- \* Of these, the first three are compiled by the Labour Bureau in the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Fourth is compiled by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
  - \* Base Year for CPI is 2012.
  - \* The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) uses CPI data to control inflation.

2.6 [News]: ‘SVANidhi se Samriddhi’ launched in additional 126 cities;

[Background]:

28 Lakh Street vendors and their families to be covered after expansion of the scheme; “SVANidhi se Samriddhi” program provides social security benefits to street vendors for their holistic development and socio-economic upliftment.

[Concept]:

#### **PM SVANidhi. Micro Credit Scheme for Street Vendors**

- \* The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi), for providing affordable loans to street vendors.
- \* Earlier, the Scheme was announced as a part of the Economic Stimulus-II under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- \* The scheme would benefit vendors, hawkers, thelewale and people involved in goods and services related to textiles, apparel, artisan products, barbers shops, laundry services etc. in different areas.

**Loan facility:**

- \* The vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments within a year. The loans would be without collateral.

- \* It is for the first time that Microfinance Institutions, Non-Banking Financial Company, Self Help Groups have been allowed in a scheme for the urban poor due to their ground level presence and proximity to the urban poor including the street vendors.
- \* There will be no penalty on early repayment of loan.
- \* Early repayment (or resettlement) is a clearance of debt or loan before the scheduled time. Many banks and lenders charge penalties for repaying loans early.
- \* Those who were vending till 24th March, 2020 can avail the benefits of the scheme.
- \* This is for the first time that street vendors from peri-urban/rural areas have become beneficiaries of an urban livelihood programme.
- \* The scheme is valid until March 2022.

**2.7 [News]: SBI hikes lending rate by 0.1%, EMIs to go up**

**[Background]:**

The lending rate revision by SBI is likely to be followed by other banks in the days to come. The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has raised its marginal cost of funds based lending rate (MCLR) by 10 basis points (bps) or 0.1% across all tenures, a move that will lead to an increase in EMIs for borrowers.

[Concept].

**Marginal cost of funds based lending rate (MCLR):**

- \* MCLR (Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate) refers to the minimum interest rate below which financial institutions can't lend, except in certain cases. Marginal cost of funds based lending rate defines the process used to determine the minimum home loan rate of interest.
- \* The MCLR method was introduced in the Indian financial system by the Reserve Bank of India in the year 2016. The MCLR system has replaced the base rate system that was introduced in the year 2010.

**2.8 [News]: India Post Payments Bank launches 'Fincluvation'**

[Background].

Fincluvation— a joint initiative to collaborate with Fintech Startup community to co-create and innovate solutions for financial inclusion was launched on Thursday, April 21 by India Post Payments Bank (IPPB), a 100% government owned entity under the Department of Posts (DoP).

[Concept].

**Fincluvation.**

- \* Fincluvation will be a permanent platform of IPPB to co-create inclusive financial solutions with participating start-ups.

- \* IPPB and Department of Post (DoP) collectively serve close to 430 million customers through post offices and at their doorsteps via more than 4,00,000 Post Office employees and Gramin Dak Sevaks – making it one of the largest and most trusted postal networks in the world.
- \* It is an Industry first initiative to create a powerful platform to mobilize the start-up community towards building meaningful financial products aimed at financial inclusion.
- \* Startups are encouraged to develop solutions aligned with any of the following tracks:
  - \* Creditization – Develop Innovative & Inclusive credit products aligned with the use cases of target customers and take them to their doorsteps through Postal network.
  - \* Digitization – Bring convenience through convergence of traditional services with Digital Payment Technologies such as making the traditional Money Order service as Interoperable Banking service.
  - \* Market Led Solution – Any Market-led solutions that can help solve any other problem relevant to IPPB and/or DoP in serving the target customers.
  - \* Fincluvation mentors will work closely with the startups to tweak products to the customer needs and align the go-to-market strategies with operating models of IPPB and DoP.

### 3.ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.1 [News]: New genus of parasitoid wasp dedicated to ATREE

[Background],



Parasitoids are natural enemies of other insects, and humans exploit this behaviour for control of crop pests. A new genus of Braconid wasp has been named 'Atree', after the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), a leading research institution and environmental think tank based in Bengaluru. This is said to be the first time in India that an institute has an eponymous insect genus.

[Concept],

**parasitoid wasp**

- \* Parasitoid wasps are a large group of hymenopteran superfamilies, with all but the wood wasps being in the wasp-waisted Apocrita.
- \* As parasitoids, they lay their eggs on or in the bodies of other arthropods, sooner or later causing the death of these hosts.

- \* Different species specialise in hosts from different insect orders, most often Lepidoptera, though some select beetles, flies, or bugs;
- \* The spider wasps (Pompilidae) exclusively attack spiders.
- \* Many parasitoid wasps are considered beneficial to humans because they naturally control agricultural pests.
- \* Some are applied commercially in biological pest control, starting in the 1920s with *Encarsia formosa* to control whitefly in greenhouses.
- \* Historically, parasitoidism in wasps influenced the thinking of Charles Darwin.

### 3.2 [News], Chilika lake's dolphin population falls

#### [Background],

- \* But the overall dolphin population in Odisha increases from 544 to 726 in a year
- \* The dolphin population along Odisha's coast and in its water bodies has increased but the number of Irrawaddy dolphins in Chilika lake has fallen.

#### [Concept],

#### Irrawaddy dolphins



- \* Irrawaddy dolphins are found in coastal areas in South and Southeast Asia, and in three rivers: the Irrawaddy (Myanmar), the Mahakam (Indonesian Borneo) and the Mekong (China).
- \* They are 'Endangered' as per the IUCN Red List.
- \* Irrawaddy dolphins fall under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- \* Dolphin distribution in Chilika is considered to be the highest single lagoon population.

[Extra],

#### **Chilika Lake.**

- \* Chilika is Asia's largest and world's second largest lagoon.
- \* It is the largest wintering ground for migratory birds on the Indian sub-continent and is home to a number of threatened species of plants and animals.
- \* In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the first Indian wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
- \* Kalijai Temple is located on an island in the Chilika Lake.



### 3.3 [News]: Record nesting of Olive Ridley turtles

[Concept]:

Olive Ridley Turtles.



- \* The Olive ridley turtles are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.
- \* These turtles are carnivores and get their name from their olive colored carapace.
- \* Found in warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
- \* **Food:** Mainly shrimp, crab, molluscs, fish and crabs.
- \* **Gender:** determined by the temperature at which they are hatched.
  - A male turtle is born if the egg hatches at a temperature below 29 degrees Celsius.
  - Above that, the hatchling is a female.
- \* **Conservation Status:**
  - IUCN Red List: **Vulnerable**
  - Schedule I of Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
  - CITES Appendix I

\* **Nesting sites:**

- Rushikulya rookery coast (Odisha),
- Gahirmatha beach (Bhitarkanika National park) and
- Mouth of the Devi River.

3.4 [News]: **New research: Gecko found in Andhra, Odisha turns out to be a new species**

[Background],

A gecko found in Visakhapatnam in 2017, then thought to belong to a known species, has now been identified as a member of a new species. The species, *Eublepharis pictus*, also known as the Painted Leopard Gecko, has been described in the journal *Evolutionary Systematics*.

[Concept],

What are Geckos?



\* Geckos are reptiles and are found on all the continents except Antarctica.

- \* These colorful lizards have adapted to habitats from rainforests, to deserts, to cold mountain slopes.
- \* Over a long period of time, geckos have developed special physical features to help them survive and avoid predators.
- \* Most geckos are nocturnal; day geckos are active during the day and nibble on insects, fruits, and flower nectar.
- \* Most geckos make noises such as chirping, barking, and clicking when they are defending their territory or attracting a mate.
- \* There are many species of geckos. Depending on the species, their endangered status can range from least concern to critically endangered.

### 3.5 [News]. Record nesting of Olive Ridley turtles

#### [Background].

As a record number of 4.92 lakh Olive Ridley turtles have crawled to the Rushikulya coast in Odisha, scientists have tagged more than 6,000 turtles to gather more information about their breeding behaviour and migration.

#### [Concept].

#### The Rushikulya River

- ✓ Its one of the major rivers in the state of Odisha and covers entire catchment area in the districts of Kandhamal and Ganjam of Odisha.

- ✓ The Rushikulya originates at an Daringbadi hills of the Eastern Ghats range.
- ✓ The place from where the river originates, Daringbadi is called the ' Kashmir of Odisha '.
- ✓ It meets the Bay of Bengal at Puruna Bandha in Ganjam.
- ✓ Its tributaries are the Baghua, the Dhanei, the Badanadi etc. It has no delta as such at its mouth.

[Extra].

### Olive Ridley Turtles

- \* The Olive ridley turtles are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.
- \* These turtles are carnivores and get their name from their olive colored carapace.
- \* The Odisha's Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is known as the world's largest rookery (colony of breeding animals) of sea turtles.
- \* Protection Status:
  - Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Scheduled 1
  - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
  - CITES: Appendix I

### 3.6 [News]: IPCC report may spell death knell for coal-based units

#### [Background]:

Central Electricity Authority said India has about 211 GW of operational coal-fired power plants, 10% of global capacity

A consortium of scientists as part of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said on Monday that all coal-fired power plants, without the technology to capture and store carbon (CCS), need to be shuttered by 2050 if the world aspired to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

#### [Concept]:

#### **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**

- \* It is the international body for assessing the science related to climate change.
- \* It was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.
- \* IPCC assessments provide a scientific basis for governments at all levels to develop climate related policies, and they underlie negotiations at the UN Climate Conference – the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

#### [Extra]:

## Carbon Capture and Storage

- \* Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is a way of reducing carbon emissions, which could be key to helping to tackle global warming.
- \* It's a three-step process, involving: capturing the carbon dioxide produced by power generation or industrial activity, such as steel or cement making; transporting it; and then storing it deep underground. Here we look at the potential benefits of CCS and how it works.

There are three steps to the CCS process:

### 1. Capturing the carbon dioxide for storage

The CO<sub>2</sub> is separated from other gases produced in industrial processes, such as those at coal and natural-gas-fired power generation plants or steel or cement factories.

### 2. Transport

The CO<sub>2</sub> is then compressed and transported via pipelines, road transport or ships to a site for storage.

### 3. Storage

Finally, the CO<sub>2</sub> is injected into rock formations deep underground for permanent storage.

**3.7 [News]: 99% of world's population is breathing polluted air: WHO**

**[Background]:**

- \* According to the WHO, A full 99% of people on Earth breathe air containing too many pollutants.
- \* A full 99% of people on Earth breathe air containing too many pollutants.
- \* WHO used satellite data and mathematical models to determine that air quality is falling short basically everywhere.
- \* The poorest air quality was found in the eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asia regions, and Africa.

**3.8 [News]: World Health Day: India will achieve the target of Sustainable Development Goals before the deadline of 2030, says Govt**

**[Background]:**

The Union Health Ministry has said that India has registered a significant decline in the maternal and infant mortality rate and it will achieve the target of Sustainable Development Goals before the deadline of 2030.

**[Concept]:**

**World Health Day**

- \* Every year, on April 7th, World Health Day is commemorated. It is a World Health Organisation (WHO) project to raise awareness about people's

general health and wellbeing around the world. Every year, World Health Day has a different theme. Many dreadful diseases afflict millions of individuals all over the world. Every year, World Health Day is observed to promote awareness about people's general health and wellbeing around the world.

### 3.9 [News]: Indian Tent Turtles

#### [Background]:

Indian tent turtle is listed in Schedule –I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and is thereby provided the highest degree of protection. There are no reports to indicate that the Indian tent turtle is on the verge of extinction due to illegal mining in Narmada River.

#### [Concept]:

**Indian tent turtle.**





- \* These turtles, known as natural cleaners, survive by eating moss and algae etc. and increase the amount of oxygen in the water.
- \* Zoological Survey of India scientist Pratyush Mohapatra, who is researching turtles, said that five years ago, turtles were found on the banks of Narmada near Narmadapuram, Harda and Khandwa from Jabalpur, which were not visible in January this year.
- \* The female tortoise goes to her residence by laying eggs in the sand, which are incubated in summer. Illegal mining of sand is disrupting their breeding.
- \* Pangshura tentoria or Indian tent turtles are found in Narmada. It is a species of tortoise found in India and Bangladesh.
- \* In view of the danger looming over them, they have been kept in Schedule-I.

**3.10 [News]. New materials & processes for carbon capture and utilization could show new light for global warming challenge.**

**[Background],**

A group of scientists from Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, IICT, Hyderabad have designed a hybrid material which can absorb greenhouse gas methane and convert it to clean hydrogen.

They have simulated a process of capturing carbon dioxide and converted it to high purity hydrogen from non-fuel grade bioethanol. These scientists have also designed a facility that can test such materials and help further carbon capture research at the institute.

Ministry of Science and Technology in a statement yesterday said that these new materials and processes for carbon capture and utilisation could show new light for global warming challenge.

[Concept],

### **Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage (CCUS)**

- \* It encompasses methods and technologies to remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the flue gas and from the atmosphere, followed by recycling the CO<sub>2</sub> for utilization and determining safe and permanent storage options.
- \* CO<sub>2</sub> captured using CCUS technologies is converted into fuel (methane and methanol), refrigerants and building materials.
- \* The captured gas is used directly in fire extinguishers, pharma, food and beverage industries as well as the agricultural sector.
- \* CCUS technologies can play an important role in meeting net zero targets, including as one of few solutions to tackle emissions from heavy industry and to remove carbon from the atmosphere.
- \* CCUS is considered an important tool to help countries halve their emissions by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050.

- \* These goals are crucial to meet the Paris Agreement targets for restricting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), and preferable to  $1.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ , over pre-industrial levels.

### 3.11 [News]: World's loudest bird

[Background].



- \* Bellbirds have the loudest bird calls yet documented in the world, according to a study.
- \* The study found that their mating songs pack more decibels than the screams of howler monkeys and the bellows of bison.
- \* The male white bellbird's mating call is about three times louder than screaming phias – the previously loudest bird singer.

## 4.SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

4.1 [News]: **Illegal variety occupies about a fifth of GM cotton seed market**

[Background]:

A flourishing illegal trade in a new unapproved herbicide-tolerant variety has come to occupy nearly a fifth of the genetically modified (GM) cotton seeds market in India.

[Concept]:

**Bt cotton**

- ✓ Bt cotton is a genetically modified organism (GMO) or genetically modified pest resistant plant cotton variety, which produces an insecticide to combat bollworm.
- ✓ Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) cotton has been commercially grown in India for the past 19 years.
- ✓ The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) approved the release of Bt cotton for commercial cultivation in 2002 in western and southern parts of the country.
- ✓ In Punjab, Bt cotton was released for cultivation in 2005. Before the release, it was adopted by 72% farmers on 22% of the cotton area.

4.2 [News]: **Pinaka Mk-I (Enhanced) Rocket System and Pinaka Area Denial Munition Rocket Systems successfully flight-tested by DRDO & Indian Army.**

[Background]:



- \* Pinaka Mk-I (Enhanced) Rocket System (EPRS) and Pinaka Area Denial Munition (ADM) rocket systems have been successfully flight-tested by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Army at Pokhran Firing Ranges.
- \* A total of 24 EPRS rockets were fired for different ranges during the last fortnight.
- \* Required accuracy and consistency was achieved by the rockets meeting all trial objectives satisfactorily.
- \* With these trails, the initial phase of technology absorption of EPRS by the industry has successfully been completed and the industry partners are ready for user trials/series production of the rocket system.

- \* The Pinaka rocket system has been developed by Armament Research and Development Establishment, Pune supported by High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, another Pune-based laboratory of DRDO.

#### 4.3 [News]: Anti-Tank Guided Missile 'HELINA' successfully flight tested

[Background].



- \* Indigenously developed helicopter launched Anti-Tank Guided Missile 'HELINA' was successfully flight tested on April 11, 2022 at high-altitude ranges as part of user validation trials.
- \* The flight-test was jointly conducted by the teams of scientists from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF).
- \* The flight trials were conducted from an Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and the missile was fired successfully engaging simulated tank target. The missile is guided by an Imaging Infra-Red (IIR) Seeker operating in the Lock

on Before Launch mode. It is one of the most advanced anti-tank weapons in the world.

- \* In continuation to validation trials conducted at Pokhran in Rajasthan, proof of efficacy at high altitudes paves the way for its integration on the ALH. The trials were witnessed by senior Army commanders and senior scientists of the DRDO.
- \* Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO and the Indian Army for the maiden achievement through joint work. Secretary Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr G Satheesh Reddy congratulated the teams for the commendable job performed in difficult conditions.

#### 4.4 [News]. India likely to miss year's solar capacity target

[Background].

Report cites inadequate uptake of rooftop solar as among the reasons for the shortfall. India is likely to miss its 2022 target of installing 100 gigawatts (GW) of solar power capacity, largely due to inadequate uptake of rooftop solar, according to a report by JMK Research and the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

[Concept].

**Key takeaways**

- \* As of December 2021, India's cumulative installed solar capacity was 55 GW, with grid-connected utility-scale projects making up 77% of the total and the rest from grid-connected rooftop solar (20%) and mini or micro off-grid projects (3%).
- \* With just eight months of 2022 remaining, only about 50% of the 100GW target has been met.

**Factors impeding rooftop solar installation include.**

- \* pandemic-induced supply chain disruption
- \* policy restrictions,
- \* regulatory roadblocks;
- \* net metering limits;
- \* the twin burdens of basic customs duty (BCD) on imported cells and modules and issues with the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM);
- \* unsigned power supply agreements (PSAs) and banking restrictions;
- \* financing issues and delays in or rejection of open access approval grants;
- \* The unpredictability of future open access charges.

**4.5 [News]. All we know about the Bernardinelli-Bernstein comet, the largest one ever seen**

**[Background].**



National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Hubble Space Telescope has confirmed that the huge Bernardinelli-Bernstein comet is indeed the largest icy comet nucleus ever seen by astronomers.

[Concept]:

### Bernardinelli-Bernstein Comet



- \* The comet was discovered by astronomers Pedro Bernardinelli and Gary Bernstein in archival images from the Dark Energy Survey at an astronomical observatory in Chile.
- \* It was discovered in November 2010 and has been intensively studied since.
- \* The comet has been travelling towards the sun for over a million years and it is believed to have originated in the Oort Cloud.
- \* The Bernardinelli-Berstein comet follows a 3-million-year-long elliptical orbit and has an estimated temperature of minus 348 degrees Fahrenheit.
- \* It is warm enough to sublimate carbon monoxide (CO) from the surface to produce the dusty coma.

#### 4.6 [News]: Bihar ranks third in new HIV infections

##### [Background]:

Bihar ranks third in the country, after Maharashtra and UP, in new HIV infections every year, despite a 27% reduction in new infection rate from 2010.

##### [Concept]:

#### **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)**

- \* Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a lentivirus, which is a sub-classification of the retrovirus. It causes the HIV infection which over time leads to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).
- \* AIDS is a deadly condition in which the affected person's immune system fails, leading to the spread of life-threatening infections and cancers in his body.
- \* HIV demolishes a particular type of WBC (White Blood Cells) and the T-helper cells. This virus also makes copies of itself inside these cells.
- \* T-helper cells are also known as CD4 cells.
- \* The average survival period for a person affected with HIV without treatment is nine to eleven years, subject to the subtype of HIV.
- \* HIV infection can occur by the transference of blood, breast milk, vaginal fluid, semen, or pre-ejaculate.

- \* HIV occurs as both free virus particles and as a virus inside the infected immune cells within the above-mentioned bodily fluids.
- \* A weak immune system makes a person prone to opportunistic infections and cancer.
- \* It becomes difficult for a person infected with this virus to recover from even a minor injury or sickness.
- \* By receiving treatment, a severe form of HIV can be prevented.

4.7 [News]: OIL commissions India's first pure green hydrogen plant in Assam

[Background],



- \* Solar-powered pump station has installed capacity for 10 kg hydrogen per day.
- \* Exploration and production major Oil India Limited (OIL) has commissioned "India's first 99.999% pure" green hydrogen plant in Assam. Green hydrogen, which has the potential to replace fossil fuels, is the name given

to hydrogen gas produced using renewable energy such as wind or solar power that do not entail greenhouse gas emissions.

**[Concept]:**

## Hydrogen

- \* Hydrogen is one of the most abundant elements on earth for a cleaner alternative fuel option.
- \* Type of hydrogen depend up on the process of its formation.
- \* Green hydrogen is produced by electrolysis of water using renewable energy (like Solar, Wind) and has a lower carbon footprint.
- \* Electricity splits water into hydrogen and oxygen.
- \* By Products : Water, Water Vapor.
- \* Brown hydrogen is produced using coal where the emissions are released to the air.
- \* Grey hydrogen is produced from natural gas where the associated emissions are released to the air.
- \* Blue hydrogen is produced from natural gas, where the emissions are captured using carbon capture and storage.

## Uses:

- \* Hydrogen is an energy carrier, not an energy source and can deliver or store a tremendous amount of energy.
- \* It can be used in fuel cells to generate electricity, or power and heat.

- \* Today, hydrogen is most commonly used in petroleum refining and fertilizer production, while transportation and utilities are emerging markets.
- \* Hydrogen and fuel cells can provide energy for use in diverse applications, including distributed or combined-heat-and-power; backup power; systems for storing and enabling renewable energy; portable power etc.
- \* Due to their high efficiency and zero-or near zero-emissions operation, hydrogen and fuel cells have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emission in many applications.

**4.8 [News]:** India's 35-year-old research station in Antarctica needs urgent upgrades, says NCPOR director.

**[Background]:**

- \* India has two operational research stations at the South Pole — Maitri and Bharati. Dakshin Gangotri, the first station built before 1985, is now operating as a base transit camp mainly for supplying goods.
- \* Maitri, India's second research station operating in Antarctica, needs to be urgently revamped and the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) is working towards this upgradation, said Mirza Javed Beg, Centre director.

- \* Presently, India has two operational research stations at Antarctica – Maitri and Bharati. Dakshin Gangotri was first station to be built before 1985 but is no longer operational.

#### 4.9 [News]: Earth Day: the history and impact of the environmental movement

##### [Background].

- \* The theme of the 2022 Earth Day is “invest in our planet”.
- \* The story so far: Every year, people across the world celebrate Earth Day on April 22 to show their support for the protection of the earth and the environment. Events on the day include plantation drives, protests, awareness sessions, competitions for children, and so on. Earth day is believed to be one of the largest civic observances in the world.

##### [Concept].

##### Why do we celebrate Earth Day?

- \* The first-ever Earth Day was celebrated in 1970 and is attributed to Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. politician who served as a Governor and a Senator during his career. In 1969, Santa Barbara in California was ravaged by a massive oil spill which served as a motivation for the Senator to work towards the protection of the environment.

#### 4.10 [News]: Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) Prime

##### [Background]:

- \* Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) Prime and the sixth Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC-6) meant to encourage defence start-ups during DefConnect 2.0.
- \* Aims to support projects, requiring support beyond Rs 1.5 crore up to Rs 10 crore, to help ever-growing start-ups in the defence sector.
- \* iDEX has, so far, introduced more than 100 winners to the market, providing direct & indirect employment to thousands of skilled and semi-skilled people.
- \* Stressed on continuous strengthening of all sectors, especially the security apparatus, to deal with the challenges that may emanate from the fast-changing world order.

#### 4.11 [News]: What is Zero shadow day?

##### [Concept]:

##### What does it mean?

- \* A sub-solar point is when the sun is directly overhead at a particular latitude. When the sun is at the zenith (the highest point in the sky) its rays will be hitting a particular point exactly perpendicular to the surface.

- \* This will make your shadow be exactly under you, making it look like there are no shadows. Take a small jump and you can see your shadow.

**How often does it happen?**

- \* It occurs twice a year.





## 5.INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

5.1 [News]: Sri Lanka announces \$51-billion debt default to combat crisis

[Background]:

‘Emergency measures’ come ahead of negotiations with IMF for a loan package. Sri Lanka on Tuesday announced a pre-emptive default on all its foreign debt totalling \$51 billion as a “last resort”, while the island nation struggles to cope with a grave economic crisis.

[Concept]:

### International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- \* Its an organization of 190 member countries, each of which has representation on the IMF's executive board in proportion to its financial importance, so that the most powerful countries in the global economy have the most voting power.

### Objectives of IMF

- \* Foster global monetary cooperation
- \* Secure financial stability
- \* Facilitate international trade
- \* Promote high employment and sustainable economic growth

- \* And reduce poverty around the world
- \* Macro-economic growth
- \* Policy advise & financing for developing countries,
- \* Promotion of exchange rate stability, and an international payment system

### History of IMF

- \* The IMF, also known as the Fund, was conceived at a UN conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, United States, in July 1944.
- \* The 44 countries at that conference sought to build a framework for economic cooperation to avoid a repetition of the competitive devaluations that had contributed to the Great Depression of the 1930s.
- \* Countries were not eligible for membership in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) unless they were members of the IMF.

### 5.2 [News]. ADB Financing to Support Urban Development in Nagaland [Background].

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank today signed a \$2 million Project Readiness Financing (PRF) Loan for designing climate resilient urban infrastructure, strengthening institutional capacity and improving municipal resource mobilization in 16 district headquarter towns (DHTs) in Nagaland.

[Concept]:

### **Asian Development Bank**

- \* ADB, established in 1966 is owned by 68 members–49 from the region.
- \* It is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.
- \* Further, it assists members and partners by providing loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments to promote social and economic development.
- \* It aims to promote social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific.
- \* As of 31st December 2019, ADB's five largest shareholders are Japan and the United States (each with 15.6% of total shares), the People's Republic of China (6.4%), India (6.3%), and Australia (5.8%).
- \* It is headquartered in Manila, Philippines.

5.3 [News]: Explained. Why is the Black Sea crucial to Russia, and the loss of 'Moskva' a significant blow?

[Background]:

The sinking of the warship Moskva, the 600-foot, 12,500-tonne flagship of the Russian Black Sea Fleet — whether due to a Ukrainian missile strike or, as Russia claims, a fire on board — is a serious setback for Russia.

**[Concept]:**

**Black Sea.**



- \* The Black Sea, also known as the Euxine Sea, is one of the major water bodies and a famous inland sea of the world.
- \* This marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean, located between Eastern Europe and Western Asia.
- \* It is surrounded by the Pontic, Caucasus, and Crimean Mountains in the south, east and north respectively.
- \* The Turkish straits system – the Dardanelles, Bosphorus and Marmara Sea – forms a transitional zone between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.
- \* The Black Sea is also connected to the Sea of Azov by the Strait of Kerch.
- \* The bordering countries of Black Sea are: Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania.

5.4 [News]: On World Heritage Day, event takes museum into the classroom

[Background]:

For next two weeks, seven Kolkata schools students will learn history through art. In a bid to “democratise “access to art and connect it to how students understand their nation’s history, a two-week programme began on Monday — World Heritage Day — involving seven schools in Kolkata.

[Concept]:

#### **World Heritage Day**

- \* In 1982, The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) proposed that April 18 should be observed as the World Heritage Day.
- \* Later, the date was approved by UNSECO at the 22nd General Conference in 1983.
- \* It is an internationally recognised day to protect and preserve monuments and historical sites and the rich inheritance associated with them.
- \* 2022 Theme: “Heritage and Climate”

#### **Aims :**

- \* It is aimed at enhancing knowledge about cultural heritage and monuments and sensitising people to conserve them.

- \* Hence, this day has also been called The International Day for Monuments and Sites.

#### **Significance:**

- \* It is observed to celebrate national heritage. The day also creates international solidarity to strengthen and safeguard historical and cultural sites.
- \* It also intends to recognize the efforts of all people like architects, engineers, geographers, civil engineers, artists and archaeologists, who contribute towards conserving the heritage.

#### **5.5 [News]: UN: Yemen's Houthi rebels agree to stop using child soldiers**

#### **[Background]:**

More than 10,200 children have been killed or maimed in the war, the U.N. says. It's unclear how many may have been combatants. Yemen's Houthi rebels have agreed to rid their ranks of child soldiers, who have fought by the thousands during the country's seven years of civil war, the United Nations said Monday.

#### **[Concept]:**

#### **Yemeni Civil War**

- \* The civil war began when in September 2014, the government of Yemen was deposed by the Houthis following a battle between them and the government forces in the capital of Sana'a.
- \* The Houthis are an Islamist political and armed movement that emerged from Sa'dah in northern Yemen in the 1990s. The movement was called Houthis because its founder is from the Houthi tribe.
- \* On March 21 2015, the Houthis ordered a general mobilisation to drive into southern Yemen which was under loyalist control of forces under the erstwhile president of Yemen Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. Fighting began in earnest and key loyalist centres such as Lahij began to fall and by March 25 of that year, the Houthi forces had reached the outskirts of Aden, where Hadi's government had their seat of power.
- \* The same day he fled the country while at the same time a coalition led by Saudi Arabia launched military operations against the Houthis in order to restore the former Yemeni government.
- \* Despite no evidence to the contrary, it has been noticed that the Houthis have been funded and armed by the Iranian government and as such, the Yemeni Civil War is considered an extension of the Iran-Saudi Arabia proxy conflict.
- \* Currently Houthi forces are in control of Sana' and most of Northern Yemen. They have clashed with Saudi-supported government forces loyal to Hadi. The Houthis have suffered a significant defeat when in 2018 they lost Aden.

Ever since then the Houthi coalition has been largely fractured into infighting.

## 5.6 [News]: China, Solomon Islands sign landmark security pact

[Background].



Amid concern from Australia, New Zealand and the U.S., the Solomon Islands said there was no agreement for a Chinese military base. China said on Tuesday it had signed a security pact with the Solomon Islands, a first-of-its-kind arrangement that could pave the way for further Chinese security deals overseas.

[Concept].

**Soloman Islands.**



- \* Solomon Islands is a nation in Melanesia, east of Papua New Guinea, comprising more than 990 islands. Its capital is Honiara, located on the island of Guadalcanal.
- \* The Solomon Islands have been inhabited by Melanesian people for at least 30,000 years.
- \* It consists of a double chain of volcanic islands and coral atolls in Melanesia.
- \* Melanesia is a subregion of Oceania in the southwestern Pacific Ocean.
- \* The country comprises most of the Solomons chain—with the exception of Buka and Bougainville, two islands at the northwestern end that form an autonomous region of Papua New Guinea.
- \* The island is a constitutional monarchy, with the British monarch, represented by a governor-general, serving as the formal head of state. Still, the country, a member of the Commonwealth, is independent, and the governor-general is appointed on the advice of the unicameral National Parliament.

**5.7 [News]: Cohesion and co-operation. On power imbalances in BIMSTEC**

**[Background],**

India must assuage any apprehensions of power imbalances among members of BIMSTEC. The adoption of the Charter at the Fifth Bay of Bengal Initiative for

Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit promises to re-energise the 25-year-old grouping at a time of growing global uncertainties.

**[Concept],**

**BIMSTEC.**

- \* This sub-regional organization came into being in 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- \* Initially, it was formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri-Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- \* It became renamed 'BIMST-EC' in 1997, following the inclusion of Myanmar.
- \* With the admission of Nepal and Bhutan in 2004, the name of the grouping was changed to 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).

**Objectives of BIMSTEC**

- \* Creating an enabling environment for the rapid economic development of the sub-region.
- \* Encouraging the spirit of equality and partnership.
- \* Promoting active collaboration and mutual assistance in the areas of common interests of the member countries

- \* Accelerating support for each other in the fields of education, science, and technology, etc.



## 6.Indian History and Culture

### 6.1 [News]: Jagan launches Thalli Bidda Express

#### [Background]:

They will help mothers and children. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday flagged off YSR 'Talli-Bidda' Express, a dedicated transportation facility for new mothers who deliver at government hospitals, here.

#### [Concept]:

#### Talli-Bidda' Express

- \* 500 vehicles that were flagged off would be sent to various parts of the State to cater to the needs of mothers and newborn children.
- \* The 'Talli-Bidda' vehicles would provide free transport to pregnant women, mothers and infants.
- \* The service is coordinated by 102 /108 call centre which operates 24X7.