

CURRENT AFFAIRS AUGUST 2021

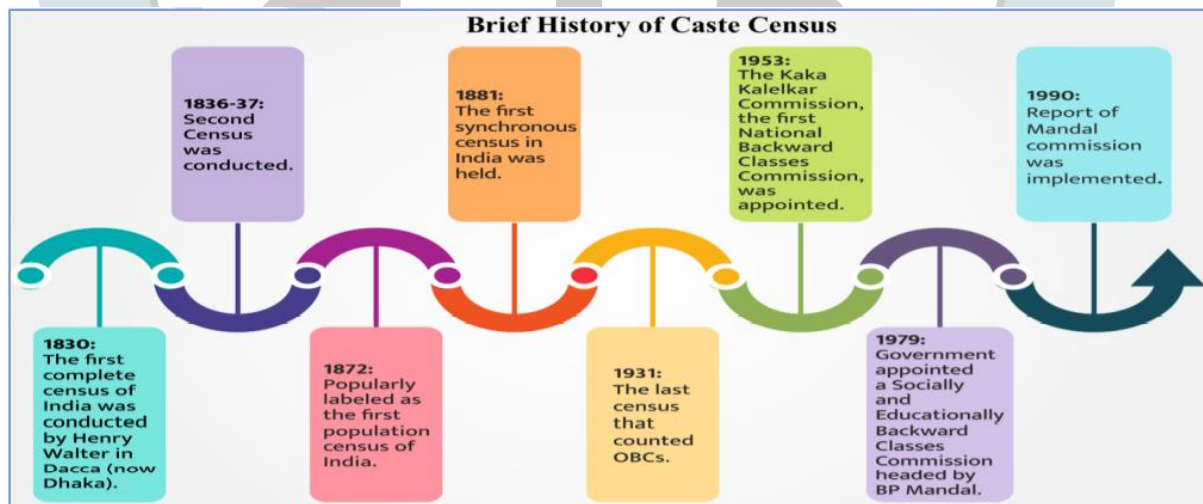
POLITY

CASTE CENSUS

Demands by various political parties to have a caste-based enumeration in the 2021 Census has triggered a serious debate.

What is a caste census?

- Caste Census is the caste-wise tabulation of population in the census exercise.
- Caste, was last included in the Census of India back in 1931. The practice was stopped by the British in 1941 and the post 1947, the government did not revive it.
- While India publishes separate data on Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), since the first exercise in independent India in 1951, the Census does not include data on other castes.



Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC), 2011

- This was a distinct exercise from the Census of 2011.
- It is a study of socioeconomic status of rural and urban households and allows ranking of households based on predefined parameters.
- It had three census components.
 - o Census in Rural Area: Department of Rural Development (DoRD).
 - o Census in Urban areas: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA).
 - o Caste Census: The Ministry of Home Affairs, Registrar General of India (RGI) and Census Commissioner of India.
- It provides information like- structure of the houses of household (Kuccha or Pucca), ownership status, main source of income among others. But the entire SECC data has not been made public.

SECC DATA	
Total households in the country (rural plus urban)	24.49 Crore
Total rural households	17.97 Crore
Total excluded households (based on fulfilling any of the 14 parameters of exclusion). Some of the major parameters are - I. Motorized 2/3/4 wheeler/fishing boat. ii. Mechanized 3-4 wheeler agricultural equipment. iii. Kisan credit card with credit limit of over rs. 50,000/-. iv. Household member government employee. v. Households with non-agricultural enterprises registered with government. vi. Any member of household earning more than rs. 10,000 per month. vii. Owns more than 2.5 acres of irrigated land with 1 irrigation equipment.	7.07 Crore (39.35%)
Automatically included (based on fulfilling any of the 5 parameters of inclusion - I. Households without shelter. ii. Destitute, living on alms. iii. Manual scavenger families. iv. Primitive tribal groups. V. Legally released bonded labour.	15.95 Lakh (0.89%)
Households considered for deprivation	10.74 Crore
Households not reporting deprivation	2.01 Crore
Households with any one of the 7 deprivation	8.73 Crore

DECLINING PRODUCTIVITY OF PARLIAMENT

Recently, in the Monsoon session, Lok Sabha saw only 21 hours of functioning and 22% productivity of the House before being adjourned sine die.

About summoning the sessions of Parliament

- The summoning of Parliament is specified in **Article 85** of the Constitution.
- The power to convene a session of Parliament rests with the government. The decision is taken by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs. This decision is formalised by the President, in whose name MPs are summoned to meet for a session.
- India does not have a fixed parliamentary calendar. By convention, Parliament meets for **three sessions** in a year the longest, the Budget Session, the Monsoon Session, and the Winter Session.

WOMEN IN JUDICIARY

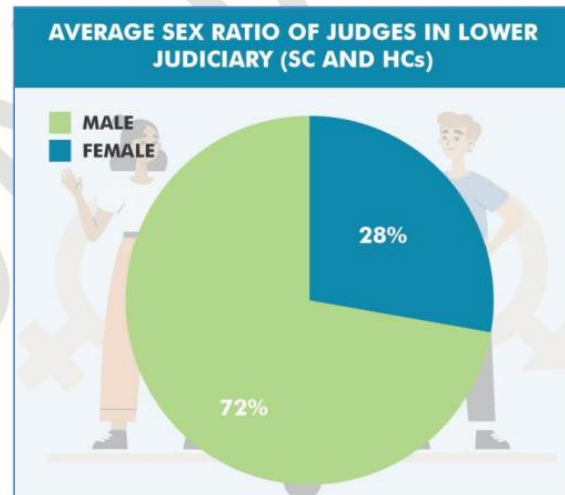
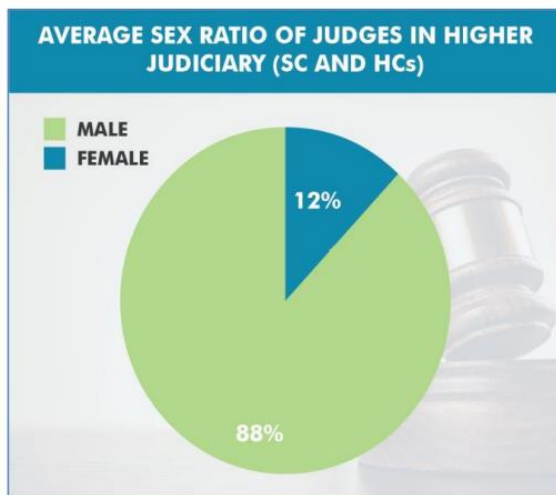
Recently, in first for Supreme Court, 9 judges including three women took oath in one go.

- With the latest appointments, the working strength of the top court has risen to 33 judges, against the sanctioned strength of 34.
 - Marking another first, the top court will now have as many as four women judges.
- o Until now, right from 1950, of the total 247 judges appointed so far, there have been only eight women judges. In 1980, Justice M Fathima Beevi became the first woman judge to be appointed to the apex court.

Appointments of judges in the Higher judiciary

- Articles 124(2) and 217 of the Constitution govern the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts respectively.

- Under both provisions, the President has the power to make the appointments “after consultation with such of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary”.
- In three cases, which came to be known as the Judges Cases, in 1981, 1993 and 1998, the Supreme Court evolved the collegium system for appointing judges.



GAMBLING

Recently, a plea in Delhi High Court sought appropriate steps to prohibit online gambling websites.

- The plea claimed that despite there being laws enacted by various States prohibiting such activities, a large number of websites providing gambling, betting and wagering games are still accessible in India.
- The Delhi High Court was informed by the Centre that online gambling is a State subject and the State governments have to make laws to regulate such activities.
- Centre also claimed that the legislative competence to determine whether a game is a game of skill or a game of chance or is involved in gambling (played with stakes or not) is conferred on the States only or to the court of laws (which possess the judicial wisdom).

GAMBLING



It is a **State subject** under Entry 34 of List II of the Seventh Schedule.

According to the **Finance Act, 1994** act "**Betting or Gambling**" means putting on stake something of value, particularly money, with consciousness of risk and hope of gain on the outcome of a game or a contest, whose result may be determined by chance or accident, or on the likelihood of anything occurring or not occurring.

LOTTERY



Lottery is enumerated under **Entry 40 of List I of the Seventh Schedule** of the Constitution of India and has been generally excluded from the ambit of "gambling".

It is governed by the **Lotteries (Regulation) Act**.

Legal position of gambling in India right now

- **Horse racing is legal in India.** Horse racing involves some prior skills so it isn't all about gambling.
- **Several Indian states have legalized lotteries.** These are Goa, Kerala, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Punjab, Nagaland, West Bengal, and Sikkim.
- **Online gambling and land-based casinos are legalized in Goa, Sikkim, Nagaland, and Daman** under the Public Gambling Act, 1976.
- **Maharashtra has prohibited gambling** and considers gambling as illegal under the Bombay Prevention of Gambling Act, 1887.
- **E-gaming (games of chance) has been legalized in Sikkim and Nagaland.**
- **Telangana and Arunachal Pradesh consider the game of skill as illegal** as per the Telangana State Gaming Act, 1974.
- **All India Gaming Federation, The Rummy Federation, and Federation of Indian Fantasy Sports have adopted a self-regulation code** for all their advertisements.

The Lodha Committee

- It was **constituted by the Supreme Court** under RM Lodha to examine and make suitable **recommendations for reforms in the Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI)**.
- The committee a **sharp distinction between betting and fixing**, favouring the legalising of the former and criminalising the latter.
- **Key recommendations**
 - **Legalise betting:** Legalise betting, with strong safeguards, except for those covered by the BCCI and IPL regulations. players, team officials, members and employees should be prohibited from betting.
 - **Strengthening regulatory watchdogs:** It would be necessary to ensure that the betting houses as well as those transacting there, are strictly monitored, failing which their registrations would be susceptible to cancellation.
 - **Declaration of income and assets:** By the players, administrators and others closely associated with the sport would be required to furnish the details of their income and assets for the sake of transparency.
 - **Licensing:** Licence would have to be issued to those placing the bets as well, with age and identification details recorded.

INTERNATIONAL

TALIBAN CONTROL OVER AFGHANISTAN

Taliban have seized power in Afghanistan and captured Kabul triggered by the U.S. withdrawal.

- On February 29, 2020, the United States and the Taliban signed an agreement in Doha to end the war in Afghanistan.
- US president Joe Biden had set the date of 31 August 2021 for final withdrawal of all US troops from Afghanistan.
- The Taliban and their several allied militant groups began their offensive in May 2021, simultaneous with the withdrawal of most U.S. troops from Afghanistan.
- The Taliban militants entered Kabul on August 15 and sought the unconditional surrender of the central government.



Indian investments in Afghanistan



Assistance in constructing, upgrading, rebuilding or restoring buildings and various types of infrastructure. Examples–

- Building of Afghanistan's Parliament in Kabul.
- Reconstruction of the Salma dam, now known as the Afghan-India Friendship Dam.
- Establishment of an electricity transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul.
- Construction of Zaranj-Delaram road.
- High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) program to finance medium scale projects in areas such as education, health, water management, government buildings, sport facilities, agriculture and irrigation, etc.



Transfer of various objects like ambulances, buses, biscuits, medicine, military vehicles and helicopters, etc. Examples–

- Mi-25 and Mi-35 choppers for the air force.
- Airbus aircraft for the national airlines.
- Materials for substations and a transmission line in the Faryab province.
- Military vehicles for the Afghan National Army.
- Ambulances for public hospitals.



People-to-people exchanges in the form of offers for Afghan citizens to gain knowledge and experience from India. Examples–

- Providing Indian technical advisers to Afghan institutions
- Offering scholarships for Afghan students.
- Organizing training for Afghan soldiers, policemen and public servants.

ECONOMY

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN RAILWAYS

Recently, bids for public-private partnership (PPP) in Passenger Train Operations project were opened.

o This is the first initiative of private investment for running Passenger Trains over Indian Railways network. The first set of 12 trains is estimated to roll out by 2022-23, thereafter 45 trains in 2023-2024, 50 in 2025-26, and finally the remainder 44 in 2026-27.

o The private entity shall be responsible for financing, procuring, operation and maintenance of the trains.

It shall pay to Indian Railways fixed haulage charges, energy charges as per actual consumption and a share in Gross Revenue determined through a transparent bidding process.

o Trains shall be designed for a maximum speed of 160 kmph. The running time taken by a train shall be comparable to or faster than the fastest train of Indian Railways operating in the respective route.

About Indian Railways

- Indian Railways has the fourth largest rail network in the world after the United States, China, and Russia.
- Railways runs about 13,300 passenger trains and 9,200 freight trains daily, covering around 7,200 stations. These trains carry 23 million passengers and around 3 million tonnes of freight every day.
- Railways employs around 1.33 million people.
- It is the world's second largest rail network under one central management. It has a monopoly in the rail segment, with private participation seen only in certain ancillary activities.



- **High Speed Rail:** At present Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project is the only sanctioned project of High Speed Rail (HSR) in the country. It is under execution with the financial and technical assistance from Government of Japan.

- o A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), namely National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has been formed to implement the Project.



SECURITY

FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY

Recently, in order to empower the Indian police with information technology, Government has approved implementation of the National Automated Facial Recognition System (NAFRS).

- Facial recognition is a way of identifying or confirming an individual's identity using their face. Facial recognition systems can be used to identify people in photos, videos, or in real-time.
- NAFRS is to be used by police pan-India and will be issued by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
- It would be a mobile and web-based application hosted in Delhi to help in crime prevention and detection, and fast track document verification.
- It is supposed to be interlinked with other existing databases like Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS), Integrated Criminal Justice System (ICJS), Statespecific database systems and the Khoja-paya portal.
- It will use facial recognition technology: to facilitate investigation of crime or for identifying a person of interest (e.g., a criminal) regardless of face mask, makeup, plastic surgery, beard, or hair extension.

WOMEN IN ARMED FORCES

Recently, for the first time ever, Indian Army's Selection Board has promoted five women officers to Colonel Rank.

Brief Background of Women in Army

1888	The role of women in the Indian Army began when the 'Indian Military Nursing Service' was formed during the British Raj.
1992	Women officers were commissioned in Army, Air force and Navy as short service commission (SSC) officers for a period of five years in certain chosen streams such under Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES). This was the first time women were allowed to join the military outside the medical stream.
2006	WSES scheme was replaced with SSC (short service commission) scheme and women were commissioned for a period of 10 years, extendable up to 14 years.
2015	One of the turning points for women in the military when IAF decided to induct them into the fighter stream
2021	Excluding the medical wing in which women have been serving for decades, but in terms of percentage, women still form a small part of the military - 0.56% of the army, 1.08% of the air force and 6.5% of the navy.

ENVIRONMENT

IPCC'S SIXTH ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently released its Sixth Assessment Report (AR6).

About IPCC

- Created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the objective of the IPCC is to provide governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies.
- The IPCC currently has 195 members including India.
- In 2007, the IPCC and U.S. Vice-President Al Gore were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change.

Key Findings

- a. Human influence has unequivocally warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land.
 - Observed increases in well-mixed greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations since around 1750 are unequivocally caused by human activities.
 - Human influence has been linked with widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere such as Global retreat of glaciers.
- o Sea level rise.
- o Drop in oxygen levels in many upper ocean regions.
- o Observed precipitation changes.
- o Changes in near-surface ocean salinity.

- o Global acidification of the surface open ocean.
- o Decrease in Northern Hemisphere spring snow cover
- b. Scale of recent changes across the climate system are unprecedented.
- c. Human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe:
 - It has been linked to extreme weather events such as heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts, and tropical cyclones etc.

KIGALI AMENDMENT TO MONTREAL PROTOCOL

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the ratification to the Kigali Amendment of the Montreal Protocol.

About Ozone layer, its depletion, and Montreal Protocol

- Ozone (O₃) layer is a high ozone concentration region in the stratosphere (15-35 km above earth surface), protecting life on earth by absorbing harmful ultraviolet radiations from the Sun.
- Though produced and destroyed continuously, in the mid-1970s, scientists first realized the threat to ozone from gases containing halogens (chlorine and bromine).
- Ozone depletion, i.e., thinning of the ozone layer by ozone depleting substances was confirmed in 1985 through formation of ozone hole over the Antarctic during the Southern Hemisphere spring.

LEADED PETROL: PHASED OUT GLOBALLY

Recently, UNEP announced the eradication of highly polluting leaded petrol from the world as Algeria- the last country to use this fuel, exhausted its supplies.

About Tetraethyl Lead and its use as an Additive

- Tetraethyl lead (TEL), or Organic lead, is a colorless liquid whose antiknock properties were first found in 1921.

- When mixed with petrol, called Leaded Petrol, it improves the octane rating of fuel as compared to unleaded petrol.
- As a result, it became a popular additive in petrol and jet fuels as knocking in engine causes loss of power with risks of damage to the engine.

Health Impacts of Leaded Petrol

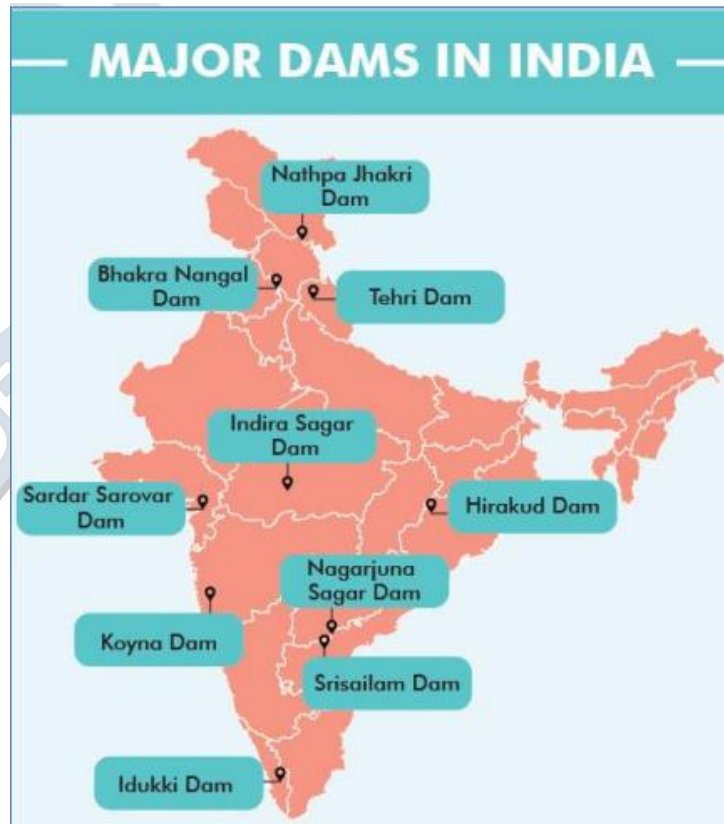
- Tetraethyl lead is toxic in nature, and it is absorbed rapidly by the skin, the lungs, and the gastrointestinal tract.
- A serious environmental threat to human health (identified as early as 1924), it contaminates the air, dust, soil, water, and crops on release through exhaust fumes, evaporation losses and accidental spills.
- Exposure to it can cause Heart disease, Cancer, stroke, and lower IQ (especially in children) by impacting brain development.

DAM SAFETY

Recently, India and World Bank signed a \$250 million project for Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP Phase II) to make existing dams safe and resilient.

Dams in India

- India ranks third globally after China and U.S with 5334 large dams in operation and 411 underconstruction. They are vital for ensuring the water security of the country and constitute a major responsibility in terms of asset management and safety.
- o As per the data of the **National Register of Large Dam (NRLD)** of 2018, Maharashtra has maximum number of Dams followed by Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.
- Major dams in India:
 - o Highest Dam: Tehri Dam in Uttarakhand is built on Bhagirathi River.
 - o Longest Dam: Hirakud Dam in Odisha is built on Mahanadi River.
 - o Oldest Dam: Kallanai Dam in Tamil Nadu is built on the Cauvery River is about 2000 years old.



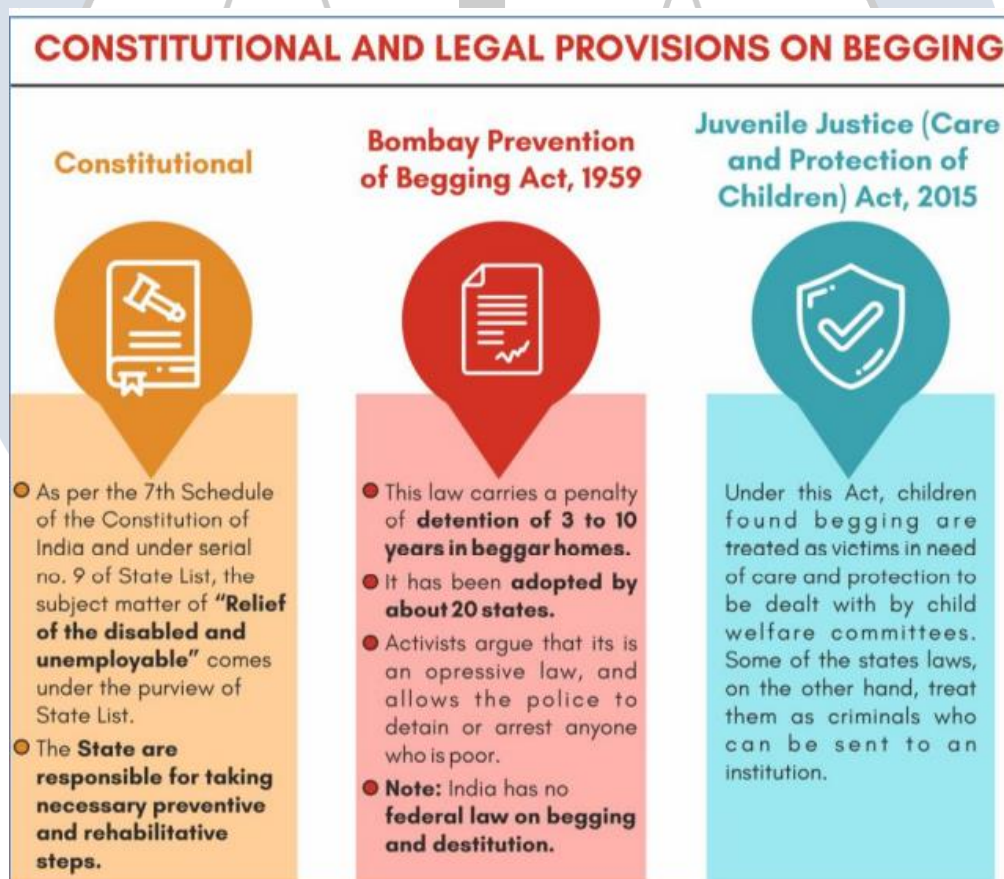
SOCIAL ISSUES

PREVENTION OF BEGGING

The Supreme Court (SC) recently refused to ban begging.

About beggary

- Begging is defined in Indian law as soliciting or receiving alms in public places by exposing wound, injury, deformity, or disease, whether of oneself or of any other person or animal. It is the practice of imploring others to grant a favor, often a gift of money, with little or no expectation of reciprocation.



Constitutional	Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959	Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● As per the 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India and under serial no. 9 of State List, the subject matter of “Relief of the disabled and unemployable” comes under the purview of State List.● The State are responsible for taking necessary preventive and rehabilitative steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● This law carries a penalty of detention of 3 to 10 years in beggar homes.● It has been adopted by about 20 states.● Activists argue that its is an oppressive law, and allows the police to detain or arrest anyone who is poor.● Note: India has no federal law on begging and destitution.	<p>Under this Act, children found begging are treated as victims in need of care and protection to be dealt with by child welfare committees. Some of the states laws, on the other hand, treat them as criminals who can be sent to an institution.</p>

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

QSIM – QUANTUM COMPUTER SIMULATOR TOOLKIT

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) recently launched QSim – Quantum Computer Simulator Toolkit.

About QSim

- QSim toolkit allows researchers and students to write and debug Quantum Code that is essential for developing Quantum Algorithms.
- It aims to enable Researchers and Students to carryout research in Quantum Computing (QC) in a cost-effective manner.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS

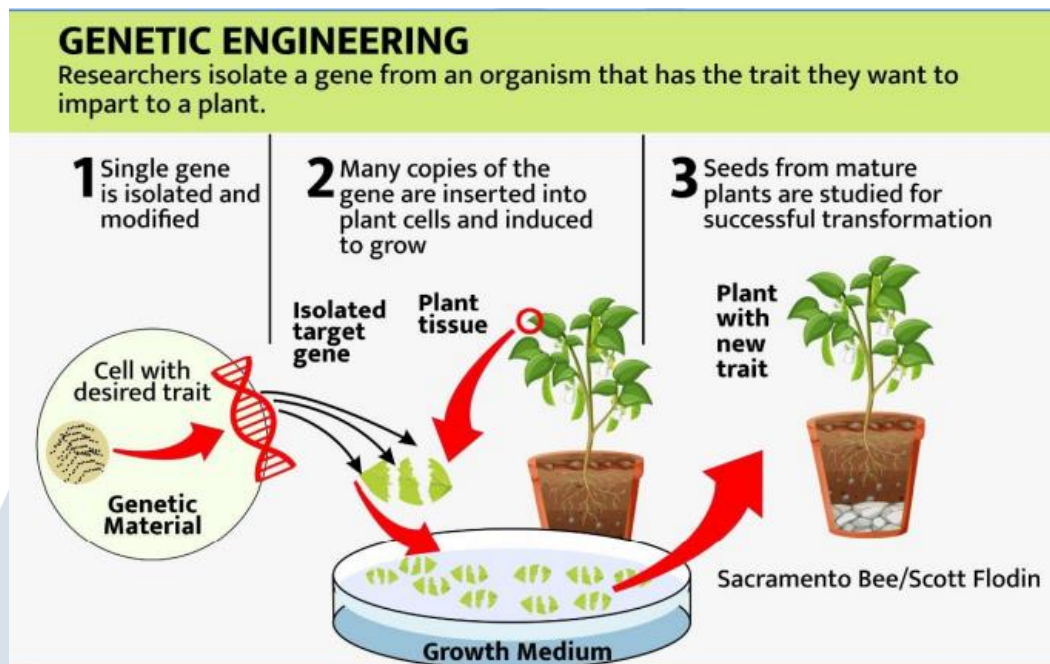
India will import genetically modified soyameal for the first time to be used as livestock feed.

- All India Poultry Farmers and Breeders Association (AIPFBA) has been lobbying to the government for duty free imports of GM soyameal to tide over domestic shortages and reduce prices.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) cleared the proposal, on the grounds that material was non-living.

o Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), a special committee under the ministry entrusted to govern matters related to GM crops, was bypassed, given the non-living nature of the material.

- Soymeal is a protein-rich solid leftover raw material after extracting oil from soyabean seed. It is a major ingredient of poultry feed.

- Poultry feed makes up 65% of the cost of production for the farmer and poor harvest of soy have led to high prices of soymeal.



CULTURE

JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

Prime Minister of India recently unveiled the plaque and dedicated the renovated complex of Jallianwala Bagh Smarak at Amritsar to the nation and inaugurated Museum/Galleries.

EVENTS THAT LED TO THE MASSACRE	
Passage of Rowlatt Act and Initiation of Rowlatt Satyagraha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rowlatt Act (Black Act) authorized the government to imprison or confine, without a trial, any person associated with seditious activities. This led to nationwide unrest. • Gandhiji initiated Satyagraha to protest against the Rowlatt Act and the British issued to prohibit him from entering Punjab.
Arrest of leaders in Amritsar and Unrest in Punjab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satyapal, the two prominent leaders organised a peaceful protest against the Rowlatt Act in Amritsar and were subsequently arrested. • Soldiers fired upon demonstrators demanding release of the 2 leaders, resulting in violent outbreaks where railway lines, telegraph posts and government buildings were destroyed and Europeans and Indians killed.
Punjab placed under Martial law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of Punjab was under martial law and civil liberties, including freedom of assembly, were curtailed. • Brigadier-General Dyer banned gatherings of more than four people.
Gathering at Jallianwala Bagh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A crowd of around 10,000 had gathered at Jallianwala Bagh to celebrate the festival of Baisakhi on April 13, 1919 and to protest against the arrest of the 2 leaders.
The Massacre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigadier-General Dyer, headed to the Bagh with his troops, blocked the only exit and ordered them to open fire without giving any warning. • The firing continued for 10-15 minutes and ceased only after the ammunition had run out. • The total estimated figure of the dead as given by General Dyer and Mr Irving was 291. However, other reports including that of a committee headed by Madan Mohan Malviya put the figure of dead at over 500.

Aftermath of the Massacre

- The news of Jallianwala Bagh spread and led to widespread demonstrations to which the government responded with brutal repression. Seeing the violence, Mahatma Gandhi called off the Anti-Rowlatt Satyagraha.
- Rabindranath Tagore renounced his Knighthood in protest.

- In October 1919, the Disorders Inquiry Committee, also known as the Hunter Commission, was formed to inquire about the massacre.
- In 1920, the Commission censured Dyer for his actions, directed him to resign from his appointment as Brigade Commander and informed him that he would receive no further employment in India.
- Later in 1940, at Caxton Hall in London, Udham Singh, an Indian freedom fighter, killed Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab during the massacre, who had approved of Dyer's action and imposed martial law in Punjab after the firing, thereby ensuring that the news did not get out.
- The shock and outrage led to the non-cooperation movement of 1920-22, which proved a step in the direction of ending the British rule of India 25 years later.

MISCELLANEOUS

THE CONSTITUTION (ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

- Aim of the Bill is to clarify some provisions in the 102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2018 to help restore power of states to identify backward classes.
- 102nd CAA, 2018 had given constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) under Article 338B.
 - o It also inserted two new articles - Article 324A which deals with Central List of the socially and educationally backward classes and article 366(26C) which defines socially and educationally backward classes.
 - o However, issue arose when while scrapping quota for Marathas, Supreme Court ruled that after 102nd CAA 2018, only the Centre can notify socially and educationally backward classes, not the states.
- In India, separate OBC lists are drawn up by the Centre and each state concerned since 1993.
 - o Articles 15(4), 15(5) and 16(4) expressly conferred power on a state to identify and declare the list of socially and educationally backward classes
- Thus, by amending 338B, 324A and 366(26C), the 127th Amendment Bill seeks to clarify that State Government and Union territories are empowered to prepare and maintain their own State List/ Union territory List of SEBCs.

CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEME FOR FAST TRACK SPECIAL COURTS

- The scheme has been extended for 2 years from 01.04.2021 to 31.03.2023
- Central share is to be funded from Nirbhaya Fund.
 - o The Nirbhaya Fund provides for a non-lapsable fund for safety and security of women to be administered by the Department of Economic Affairs.
- **Fast Track Special Courts** are dedicated courts for swift justice for victims of sexual offences and strengthen the deterrence framework for sexual offenders.

- o They were introduced under **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018** for expeditious disposal of **Cases of Rape and POCSO Act**.
- o A total of 1023 FTSC were set up for the purpose out of which 389 FSTC were exclusively for POCSO Act cases.
- o Each FSTC has one judicial member and seven staff members.
- o The responsibility of setting up FSTCs lies with state and UT government.
- ✓ Currently covering 28 States, it is proposed to be expanded to cover all 31 states which are eligible to join the Scheme.

MARITAL RAPE A GROUND FOR DIVORCE, RULES KERALA HC

- Kerala High Court, in a significant judgment, upheld that marital rape, although not penalised in India, is a good ground to claim divorce.
- o Court observed that a spouse in a marriage has a choice, a choice not to suffer, which is fundamental to the autonomy guaranteed under natural law and the Constitution.
- o Law cannot compel a spouse to suffer against his or her wish by denial of divorce by the court.
- Section 375 (Exception) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) exempts unwilling sexual intercourse between a husband and a wife over fifteen years of age from Section 375's definition of "rape" and thus immunizes such acts from prosecution.
- India is one of only 36 countries where marital rape is not a legal crime.

Legal safeguards available to women:

- o Section 498A deals with women being subjected to cruelty by her husband or any relative of her husband.
- o Domestic Violence Act, 2005 recognises forced sexual activity as punishable under the Indian law.
- ✓ However, a magistrate under the law has absolutely no power to criminalise the act of a man raping his wife, neither can the man be sentenced.

INDIA TAKES OVER UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENCY FOR AUGUST

- This is India's first presidency in the UNSC during its 2021-22 tenure. India's two-year tenure as a non-permanent member began on January 1, 2021 (This is the 8th tenure as non-permanent member in the UNSC).
- o The presidency of UNSC rotates on a monthly basis among each of the 15 members, following the English alphabetical order of the Member States names.

E-RUPI

- "e-RUPI" is an electronic voucher based digital payment system which is person-specific and purpose-specific payments system.
- o These vouchers are like e-gift cards, which are prepaid in nature.
- o The code of the cards can be shared either via SMS or the QR code can be shared.
- It has been developed by the National Payments Corporation of India on its UPI platform.

E-SHRAM PORTAL FOR REGISTRATION OF UNORGANISED WORKERS

- The labour ministry has launched the National Database for Unorganised Workers (NDUW) or e-Shram portal.
- o According to the Economic Survey (2018-19), 93 per cent of the total workforce in India is in the unorganised sector.
- o They are often deprived of any social security benefits like pension, insurance etc.

Key Features

- o All registered workers shall be issued an eShram card with Universal Account Number (UAN) to avail benefits of various social security schemes of the government (like PMShram Yogi Maan-DhanYojana).

o Provision of accidental cover of Rs. 2 lakh in case of death or permanent disability and Rs. 1 lakh in case of partial disability.

MILITARY EXERCISES/OPERATIONS

- **Malabar Exercise:** Indian Navy is participating in Exercise Malabar 2021 along with the US, Japan and Australia.

o Malabar series of maritime exercise commenced in 1992 as an India-USA Exercise.

o In 2015, Japan joined Malabar as a permanent member. The 2020 edition witnessed participation of Australia.

- **Exercise Konkan 2021:** Recently the annual bilateral Indo-UK Naval Exercise was conducted in the English Channel with the participation of INS Tabar and HMS Westminster.

- **KAZIND-21:** It is the 5th edition of IndoKazakhstan joint training exercise and will be held at Training Node, Aisha Bibi, Kazakhstan.

- **Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT)** military exercise: The Indian Navy demonstrated its maritime manoeuvres in U.S. Navy-led Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) military exercise in Singapore.

- **Zayed Talwar** exercise: Naval exercise between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) off the Abu Dhabi coast to increase bilateral military cooperation.

- **Operation Devi Shakti:** It is India's evacuation mission from Afghanistan.

BCG (BACILLUS CALMETTEGUERIN) VACCINE

- It has been 100 years since the BCG vaccine was first used in humans in 1921 against tuberculosis (TB).

- It was developed by two Frenchmen, Albert Calmette and Camille Guerin, by modifying a strain of *Mycobacterium bovis* that causes TB in cattle.

- Currently, BCG is the only licensed vaccine available for the prevention of TB.

- In India, BCG was first introduced in a limited scale in 1948 and became a part of the National TB Control Programme in 1962.

INDIGAU

- It is India's first Cattle Genomic Chip for the conservation of pure varieties of indigenous cattle breeds and helps towards doubling farmers' income by 2022.
- o It is the largest cattle chip in the world with 11,496 markers.
- Till now India's dairy development program has been referring to chips which are developed for foreign western breeds of cattle.
- This indigenous chip was developed by the National Institute of Animal Biotechnology(Hyderabad), an autonomous institution under the aegis of the Department of Biotechnology.

BHARAT SERIES (BH-SERIES)

- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified Bharat series of "BH" series of registration to facilitate free movement of personal vehicles across States/UTs of India upon relocation to a new State/UT.
- o Under section 47 of Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, a person is allowed to keep vehicle for not more than 12 months in any state other than the state where the vehicle is registered.
- BH-series will be available on voluntary basis to Defence personnel, Government employees and private sector companies/organizations, which have their offices in four or more States/UTs