



CURRENT AFFAIRS : FEBRUARY 2022

CRIMINAL LAWS AMENDMENT

Recently, the Centre has initiated the process for comprehensive amendment of criminal laws in consultation with all stakeholders.

About Criminal Laws in India

Criminal law and criminal procedure fall under the Concurrent List while matters relating to Police and Prisons fall under the State List. The laws that govern criminal law in India are the Indian Penal Code 1860; the Indian Evidence Act, 1872; and the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 (CrPC).

Earlier amendments to Criminal law

- **Criminal (Amendment) Act, 2013:** The Act was introduced to make the rape laws in India more stringent. This amendment widened the definition of rape by including oral sex and the infiltration of other objects into women's bodies as a crime. Stalking had also been criminalized under this act.
- **Criminal (Amendment) Act, 2018:** This Act was furthered to strengthen the rape laws. The quantum of punishment was increased from at least 7 to 10 years. Provisions for punishment for rape of a girl under 12 years and 16 years were also added under it.

Major changes required in criminal laws

- **Criminalization of Marital rape:** Till now, marital rape has not been considered as rape in India. Criminalization of marital rape has been a long-standing recommendation of the law commission, various committees and the criminalization of marital rape has been demanded by many sections of society.
- **Gender Neutrality in the definition of sexual offences under IPC:** The language of the sections relating to sexual offences needs to be amended to a neutral gender rather than continuing with language relating to the female gender.

- **Amendment in the language of Section 124A of the IPC which deals with sedition law:** The language of the law is ambiguous and that is why even a simple dissent from the policies and decision making of the government may attract a sedition charge that is why the amendment is required in the language of this section.
- **Laws on custodial torture and death:** A tough law is required over this topic as there is seen a rise in cases related to custodial torture.

Recent landmark Criminal Law judgments:

There were many judgements where the Supreme Court has tried to either give clarity regarding the sections of Criminal laws as per contemporary times or played a key role in evolution of sections of criminal laws.

- **Amish Devgan v. Union of India (2020):** In this case of hurting religious sentiments of community, sections concerned included Section 153B and Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.
 - Supreme Court held that it is important to make a **difference between free speech and hate speech**. While free speech does comprise the right to criticize government policies, hate speech refers to the spreading of hatred against a group or community.
- **Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020):** One of the issues in the case was regarding the **excessive imposition of Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973**.
 - Supreme Court held that **Section 144 CrPC cannot be used as a tool to prevent legitimate expression of opinion**. The court further held that Section 144 CrPC is not only remedial but also preventive and shall be exercised only in cases where there is danger or apprehension of danger.
- **Navtej Singh Johar Vs. Union of India 2018:** Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalised consensual sexual intercourse between persons of the same sex for being “against the order of nature”.
 - However, the Court **upheld the right to equal citizenship of all members of the LGBTQI** community in India. Thus, it read down Section 377 to exclude consensual sexual relationships between adults, whether between same-sex individuals or otherwise.
 - **Joseph Shine v. Union of India, 2018:** The Supreme Court struck down Section 497 of IPC which criminalised adultery while treating = a married woman as the commodity of her husband.
 - The court held that the provision was based on gender stereotypes and hence violated Article 14 (equal protection of laws) and Article 15 (non-discrimination on grounds of sex) of the Indian Constitution.

IDENTIFICATION OF MINORITIES

Supreme Court expressed displeasure that the Centre has not yet filed its counter affidavit on a plea seeking minority status for Hindus in states where their numbers are low.

- The plea has sought a direction that followers of Judaism, Bahaim and Hinduism can establish minority educational institutions in states where they are in a minority.
- It relies on the majority judgment of Supreme Court in the 2002 TMA Pai case, which lays down that for the purposes of Article 30, the religious and linguistic minorities have to be considered state-wise. Thus, it has sought direction to the Centre to lay down guidelines for identification of minority at the state level.

About minorities and related constitutional provisions

- The Constitution of India uses the word 'minority' or its plural form in some Articles –29 to 30 and 350A to 350 B – but does not define it anywhere. It conceives 'minority' as an open category to protect the interests of various religious, linguistic and culturally distinctive groups.

- o **Article 29** has the word "minorities" in its marginal heading but speaks of "any sections of citizens". The Supreme Court held that the scope of this article is not necessarily restricted to minorities only, as words 'section of citizens' in the Article include minorities as well as majority.

- o **Article 30** speaks specifically of two categories of minorities – religious and linguistic.

- o Together, these two articles confer four distinct rights on minorities.

- o The remaining two Articles (350A and 350B) relate to linguistic minorities only.

- ✓ **Article 350A:** Facilities for instruction in mother tongue at primary stage.

- ✓ **Article 350 B:** Special Officer for linguistic minorities.

- Other constitutional safeguards that have a bearing on the status and rights of minorities are:

- o Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion (article 25)
- o Freedom to manage religious affairs (article 26)
- o Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion (article 27)
- o Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions (article 28)
- o Special provision relating to language spoken by a section of the population of a State (article 347)
- o Language to be used in representations for redress of grievances (article 350)

Identification of minorities:

- Linguistic minorities: Since there is no majority at the national level and the minority status is to be essentially decided at the State/Union Territory level.
- Religious minorities: As regards religious minorities at the national level in India, all those who profess a religion other than Hinduism are considered minorities.
 - o National Commission for Minorities Act (1992) also does not offer a definition of the term 'religious minority'. Instead, it is the central government that is empowered to notify a few communities as "minority" for the purpose of this Act.
 - o Following this mandate, the Central government notified five religious communities: Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) as national religious minorities in October 1993. This list was amended in 2014 when Jains were also notified as a national minority.

Important Supreme Court judgements guiding the way forward

- The Kerala Education Bill (1958): In this case, the question of ascertaining the status of a minority community first arose in front of the Supreme Court. While the Court stated that a minority simply means a community which is numerically less than 50% but remained

unclear regarding '50% of what'. Whether such numerical inferiority is limited to the entire country, or an entire state or a part thereof was not stated.

- DAV College case of 1971: It was held that "Religious or linguistic minorities are to be determined only in relation to the particular legislation which is sought to be impugned." If a Central legislation like the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 is challenged, "minority" would have to be calibrated with reference to the population of the whole of India, not any one state.
- TMA Pai case (2002): Court came to a conclusion that since the reorganization of States in India had been on linguistic lines, religious and linguistic minorities have to be considered state wise.
- Bal Patil case (2005): It treats religious minorities and linguistic minorities differently. While linguistic minorities are to be identified on the basis of their population within a particular state of India, calibrating religious minority status on the basis of their population at the state level would militate against the integrity and secular fabric of India.

- o Court observed that it is pertinent to declare religious minorities nation-wise to preserve the unity and integrity of the nation.

- o For instance, the Christians are majority in Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland and there is a significant population of them in Arunachal, Goa, Kerala, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal but they are treated as Minority as they are a minority at the National level.

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA RESTORES MAXIMUM LIMIT ON STAR CAMPAIGNERS

- Citing decline in COVID-19 cases, ECI has restored the number of star campaigners a party can field for campaigning in the ongoing polls in five states.
- Star campaigners are nominated by political parties to campaign in a given set of constituencies for a specified duration.

- o List of star campaigners must be communicated to Chief Electoral Officer and ECI within a week from the election notification date under section 77(1) of Representation of People Act (RPA), 1951.

- o A recognised political party can have 40 Star campaigners and an unrecognised (but registered) political party can have 20.
- o There is no law that defines who can be a star campaigner.
- Expenditure incurred on campaigning by such notified star campaigners is exempt from being added to the election expenditure of a candidate.
 - o However, this only applies when a star campaigner limits oneself to a general campaign for the political party one represents.
 - o If a candidate or his/her election agent shares stage with a star campaigner at a rally, then the entire expenditure on that rally, other than the travel expenses of star campaigner, is added to candidate's expenses.

INTER-OPERABLE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM PROJECT

- Ministry of Home Affairs has approved implementation of ICJS project Phase II during 2022-23 to 2025-26, as a Central Sector Scheme.
 - o ICJS is an initiative of e-Committee of Supreme Court to enable seamless transfer of data and information among different pillars of criminal justice system.
- ICJS is a national platform for enabling integration of the main IT system used for delivery of Criminal Justice in the country by five pillars namely:
 - o Police (Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems)
 - o e-Forensics
 - o e-Courts
 - o e-Prosecution for Public Prosecutors
 - o e-Prisons
- Phase-II is built on the principle of 'one data one entry' whereby data is entered only once in one pillar and the same is then available in all other pillars.
 - o Under Phase-I, individual IT systems have been implemented and stabilized; search of records has been enabled.

- National Crime Records Bureau will be responsible for the implementation of ICJS in association with National Informatics Center, in collaboration with States and UTs.

About e-Committee of Supreme Court

- e-Committee is governing body charged with overseeing e-Courts Project conceptualized under “National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary 2005”.
- e-Courts is a pan India project to transform the judicial system of the country by ICT enablement of courts.

NORD STREAM 2

- Germany has suspended the certification process of Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia.
- Nord Stream 2 is 1,230-kilometer-long natural gas pipeline run from Ust-Luga in Russia to Greifswald in Germany through the Baltic Sea and will carry 55 billion cubic metres of gas per year.
- It is designed to double Russia's gas exports to Germany.
- It runs parallel to an earlier Nord Stream pipeline which has been working since 2011 and would double its capacity, to 110 billion cubic meters of gas a year.
- Russian state-owned gas company Gazprom owns half of Nord Stream 2.

DONETSK AND LUHANSK REGIONS

- Russian President recognized two separatist eastern Ukrainian regions- Donetsk and Luhansk.
 - o Donetsk and Luhansk regions are collectively known as the Donbas.
- The region comprises both Ukraine-controlled parts as well as separatist-controlled areas.
 - o Its main industries are coal mining and steel production.

- Most of the people living in these regions speak Russian, result of migration of Russian workers after World War II, during the Soviet era.



SOCIETY FOR WORLDWIDE INTERBANK FINANCIAL TELECOMMUNICATION (SWIFT)

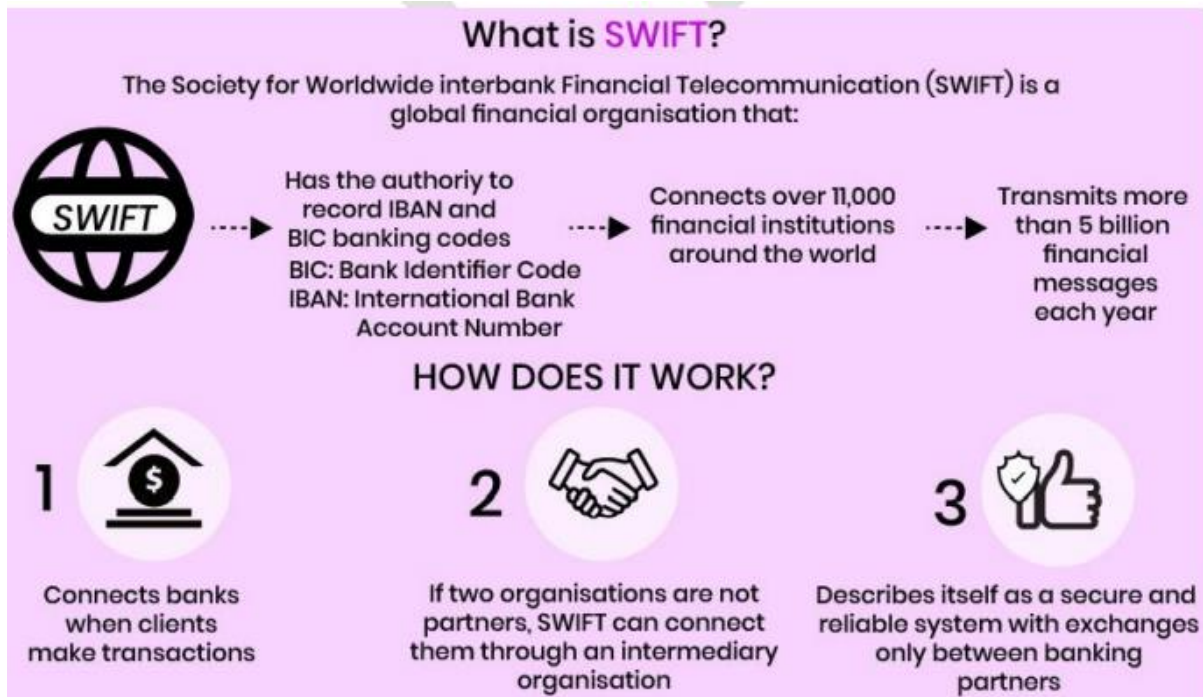
Recently, few Russian banks have been disconnected from SWIFT amidst Russia-Ukraine crisis.

About SWIFT

- Founded in 1973, SWIFT is a messaging network used by banks and financial institutions globally that provides safe and secure exchange of information pertaining to financial transactions.
- It works by assigning each member institution a unique eight-digit SWIFT ID code or a Bank Identification Code that identifies not only the bank name but the country, city, and branch.

o If a person, say, in New York with a Citibank account, wants to send money to someone with an HSBC account in London, the payee would have to submit to his bank, the London-based beneficiary's account number along with the eight-digit SWIFT code of the latter's bank. Citibank would then send a SWIFT message to HSBC.

Once that is received and approved, the money would be credited to the required account.



UNIFIED PAYMENTS INTERFACE (UPI)

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) announced that Nepal will be the first foreign country to adopt India's UPI system.

- o It is expected to serve the larger digital public good in Nepal and bolster interoperable real-time person-to-person (P2P) and person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions.

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank), merging several banking features.

- Key Features of UPI: Instant transfer of funds, bill sharing facility, can be used 24 hours and on all public holidays etc.

OMBUDSPERSON APP

- To ensure transparency and accountability, Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj has launched Ombudsperson App for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA.

About app

- o Developed for smooth reporting and categorization of grievances based on complaints received from various sources related to the implementation of the MGNREGA.
- o At present, the reporting of complaints, passing awards and disposal of complaints are in physical form.
- o This will strengthen Ombudsperson in the discharge of her/his duty in a hassle-free manner by enabling easy tracking and timely passing of awards on each case.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE FOR NORTHEAST (PM-DEVINE)

- This new scheme was announced in Union Budget 2022-23, with initial allocation of Rs. 1,500 crore.
- It will fund infrastructure (in the spirit of PM GatiShakti) and social development projects based on felt needs of the North-East.
- This will enable livelihood activities for youth and women, filling the gaps in various sectors.
- It is to be implemented through the North-Eastern Council, and will not be a substitute for existing central or state Schemes.

LAVENDER CULTIVATION UNDER CSIR-IIIM'S AROMA MISSION

- Purple or Lavender Revolution was launched by the Ministry of Science & Technology through the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research's (CSIR) Aroma Mission, which aimed at increasing lavender cultivation in Jammu and Kashmir.
 - o Lavender cultivation is practiced in almost all the 20 districts of J&K.
 - o However, the crop is native to Europe.

- Lavender water, which separates from lavender oil, is used to make incense sticks. Hydrosol, which is formed after distillation from the flowers, is used to make soaps and room fresheners.
- Aroma Mission is envisaged to bring transformative change in the aroma sector through desired interventions in the areas of agriculture, processing and product development for fuelling the growth of aroma industry and rural employment.



WATER TAXI SERVICE

- India's first water taxi service connecting the twin cities, Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, was flagged off by Union Shipping Minister.

- o The water taxi will ply between Domestic Cruise Terminal in South Mumbai and the newly inaugurated Belapur Jetty in Navi Mumbai.

- Benefits

- o Promise a comfortable and stress-free journey;
- o Time-saving and eco-friendly;
- o Major boost to the tourism sector;
- o Opens avenues for employment generation

CYBERCRIME

According to the recent National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, India reported an 11.8% jump in cybercrime in 2020.

Cybercrime in India

- It is defined as an unlawful act wherein the computer is tool or target or both. It is a criminal activity that uses computer as instrument for perpetuating crimes.

- o Information Technology Act, 2000 provides legal recognition for electronic communication, electronic commerce, and cybercrimes etc.

- Status of cybercrime:

- o As per NCRB data from "Crime in India, 2020", Cybercrimes have increased four times or 306 percent in the past four years and rate of cybercrime(incidents per lakh population) increased in 2020.

- o India is among the top five targets for cyberattacks in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region, particularly security breaches that involve cyber espionage, as per 'Cyberthreats to Financial Organizations in 2022' report.

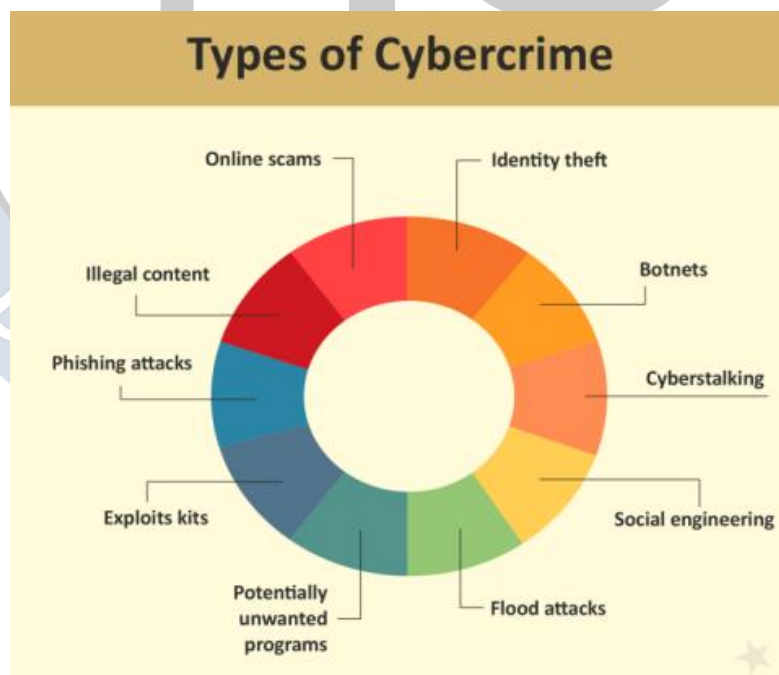
o As per State of Ransomware 2021, 68% of organizations in India deals with ransomware.

What is the present cyber security architecture in India?

National Cyber Security Policy, 2013: It was the first comprehensive document brought out by government to create a secure and resilient cyberspace ecosystem and strengthen the regulatory framework.

o It aims to protect information infrastructure in cyberspace, reduce vulnerabilities, build capabilities to prevent and minimize damage from cyber incidents through a combination of institutional structures, people, processes, technology and cooperation.

• National Cyber Security Strategy 2020: It was conceptualized by the National Security Council Secretariat to ensure a safe, secure, trusted, resilient and vibrant cyberspace for Nation's prosperity.



• Other initiatives to combat cyber-crime:

- o Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C): It was rolled out by Ministry of Home Affairs for the period 2018-2020 to combat cybercrime in the country, in a coordinated and effective manner.
- o Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In): It serves as national agency for responding to cyber security incidents as per provisions of IT Act, 2000. It issues alerts and advisories regarding latest cyber threats/vulnerabilities and counter measures to protect computers and networks on regular basis.
- o National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC): It is multi-stakeholder cybersecurity and e-surveillance agency, under CERT-In. It generates situational awareness of existing and potential cyber security threats and enable timely information sharing for proactive, preventive and protective actions by individual entities.
- o National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC): It is created under IT Act, 2000 (amended 2008) and designated as National Nodal Agency to facilitate safe, secure and resilient information infrastructure for critical sectors of the Nation.
- o Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre): It has been launched for detection of malicious programs and provide free tools to remove the same.
- o National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal: It caters to complaints pertaining to cybercrimes only with special focus on cybercrimes against women and children.

INDIA APPOINTS FIRST NATIONAL MARITIME SECURITY COORDINATOR

- Proposed after the 26/11 terror attacks (2008), the National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC) will be part of the National Security Council Secretariat and will report to National Security Advisor (NSA).
 - o NMSC has been a long pending requirement since the Kargil Group of Ministers (GoM) recommended it.

MILITARY EXERCISES IN NEWS

MILAN 2022

- Latest edition of Indian Navy's (IN) biennial multilateral exercise commencing in Visakhapatnam will witness its largest ever participation, with more than 40 countries.
- It was first conceived by IN in 1995 at Andaman and Nicobar Command with participation of four countries (Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand)

COBRA WARRIOR 22

- Ex-Cobra are the largest annual exercises conducted by the UK's Royal Air Force.

EASTERN BRIDGE-VI

- The 6th edition of bilateral exercise, 'Eastern Bridge VI' Air Force Exercise is taking place between India and Oman at Air Force Station Jodhpur.

ONE OCEAN SUMMIT

- At One Ocean Summit (OOS), UNESCO has announced that at least 80% of the seabed will be mapped by 2030, compared to 20% currently.
- Seafloor mapping, also called seabed imaging, is the measurement of water depth of a given body of water.
 - o Bathymetric survey measures the depth and map the underwater features of water body.
- In 2017, UNESCO joined with Nippon Foundation, Japan's private foundation to launch Seabed 2030 Project.

CENTRE CONSTITUTES KENBETWA LINK PROJECT AUTHORITY (KBLPA)

- Centre has constituted a KBLPA and a national steering committee for interlinking the two rivers.
 - o KBLPA has been constituted as a vertical of National Water Development Agency.
 - o It will comprise of secretaries from ministries of environment, power and tribal affairs.
 - o All central funds for the project will be routed through KBLPA.

- About KBLP:

- o This project involves transfer of water from the Ken river to the Betwa River.
- o It aims to address the perennial water scarcity in the parched regions of Bundelkhand region, spread across the states of MP and UP.
- o Concerns: Daudhandam, to be built on the Ken River will involve a submergence of about 7.6% of the total Panna Tiger Reserve area

WHITE CHEEKED MACAQUE

- Scientists from Zoological Survey of India have recorded presence of White-Cheeked Macaque (*Macaca leucogenys*) from central Arunachal Pradesh in India.
- The species was first discovered in 2015 in China and its existence was not known in India before this.
- They have distinct white cheeks, long and thick hair on neck and longer tail than other Macaque species.
- It is the last mammal to have been discovered in Southeast Asia.

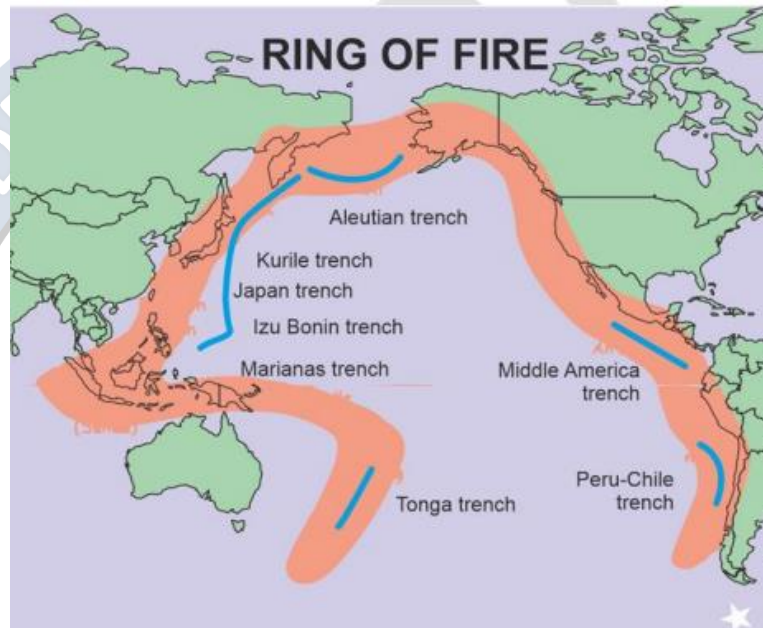
TONGA VOLCANO PLUME REACHED THE MESOSPHERE

- The plums from the recently volcanic eruption in Tonga has reached to mesosphere (layer of Earth's atmosphere extending from about 50 to 85 km).
 - o An explosive combination of extreme heat from the volcano and moisture from the ocean helped propel volcanic plume to such a startling height.
 - o As per experts, it was the biggest volcanic event recorded anywhere in the world in over three decades.

About Tonga Volcano

- o It lies along Pacific 'Ring of fire', and is just over 60 kilometres from island nation of Tonga.

- o Along the Ring of Fire, tectonic plates move towards each other creating subduction zones. Along this subduction, rocks melt, become magma and move to Earth's surface and cause volcanic activity.
- o In case of Tonga, Pacific Plate was pushed down below the Indo-Australian Plate and Tonga plate.



NATIONAL MEANS-CUM-MERIT SCHOLARSHIP

- Government has approved continuation of the scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26 with financial outlay of Rs. 1827 crore.
- Also, modifications have been made in eligibility criteria such as increasing income ceiling from Rs. 1.5 lakh per annum to Rs. 3.5 lakh per annum and revising renewal criteria.

About scheme

- o Launched in 2008-09, it is a Central Sector scheme.
- o Objective is to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest drop-out at class VIII.
- One lakh fresh scholarship of Rs.12,000/- per annum per student are awarded to selected students of class IX and renewed in classes X to XII

CHEME FOR RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN TARGETED AREAS (SHRESTHA)

- Ministry of Education has joined hands with Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for SHRESTHA.
- Objective of SHRESTHA: Enhance reach of development Intervention of the Government and fill the gap in service deficient SCs dominant areas.
- Earlier known as 'Grant in-aid to voluntary and other organisations for Scheduled Castes', SHRESTHA has two Modes with:
 - o **Mode 1:** To provide high quality residential education to bright scheduled caste (SC) students.
 - o **Mode 2:** It provides Grant-in-aid to Schools/Hostels run by voluntary and other organisations meeting the required criteria.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT LAUNCHED "SMILE:

- SMILE, a Central Sector scheme, is designed to provide welfare and rehabilitation to Transgender community and people engaged in the act of begging.
 - o The scheme will be implemented from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- Two sub-schemes of SMILE scheme are
 - o 'Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons'
 - o Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging with focus on Survey and identification, Mobilisation, Rescue/ Shelter Home and Comprehensive resettlement.

SCHEME FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF DNTS (SEED)

- It is to be an umbrella scheme for empowering Denotified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Communities (DNTs, NTs, SNTs).

- De-notified Tribes' stands for those communities which were notified as 'born criminals' under colonial-era Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) 1871.
 - o Post-independence, CTA, 1871 was repealed, and these communities were "De-Notified".
 - o It was replaced with Habitual Offenders Act, 1952
- Nomads and semi-nomads are applied to 'social groups who undertook a fairly frequent, usually seasonal physical movement as part of their livelihood strategy in the recent past.

STEM CELLS

- Recently, A US patient became the First woman reported to be cured of HIV after stem cell transplant (SCT).
- She became the third person to date to be cured of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) after receiving a SCT from a donor who was naturally resistant to virus that causes AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

About stem cells

- Stem cells are special human cells that are able to develop into many different cell types. Stem cells provide new cells for the body as it grows and replaces specialized cells that are damaged or lost.
- They have two unique properties that enable them to do this:
 - o They can divide over and over again to produce new cells.
 - o As they divide, they can change into the other types of cells that make up the body

CHANDRAYAAN-3

Minister of State for Atomic Energy and Space, in a written reply to Lok Sabha, stated that Chandrayaan-3 is scheduled for launch in August 2022.

About Chandrayaan-3

- Chandrayaan-3 is a follow-on mission to Chandrayaan-2 and is meant to demonstrate lunar landing and roving capability.
- Chandrayaan-3 will carry only a modified lander and rover and will use the orbiter of the Chandrayaan 2 mission to communicate with the earth.
- Scientific payloads that are being carried on-board are:
 - o Lander: Langmuir probe, Chandra's Surface Thermo Physical Experiment (ChaSTE) and Instrument for Lunar seismic activity (ILSA).
 - o Rover payloads are Alpha Particle X-Ray Spectrometer (APXS) and Laser Induced Breakdown spectroscopy (LIBS).
- Chandrayaan-3 lander is planned to perform an in-situ experiment of surface and sub-surface measurements of temperature.

TAMIL NADU SAYS NO TO INDIAN NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY (INO) PROJECT IN THENI

- Tamil Nadu government has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court stating that it would not permit the proposed INO at Bodi West Hills in Theni district.

About Neutrinos

- Neutrinos are tiny, neutral, elementary particles which interact with matter via the weak force. The weakness of this force gives neutrinos the property that matter is almost transparent to them.
- The Sun, and all other stars, produce neutrinos copiously due to nuclear fusion and decay processes within their core.
- Neutrinos provide a tool to study the structure of nucleons (protons and neutrons), to learn how matter evolved from simple particles into more complex composites of particles.

PARAM PRAVEGA SUPERCOMPUTER

- It is one of the most powerful super-computers in India, and the largest in an Indian academic institution.

- It was installed and commissioned by Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) under National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).
- NSM was launched to enhance the research capacities and capabilities in the country by connecting them to form a Supercomputing grid, with National Knowledge Network as backbone.

RAMANUJAN PRIZE FOR YOUNG MATHEMATICIAN

- For the year 2021, the award has been facilitated upon Professor Neena Gupta, for her outstanding work in affine algebraic geometry and commutative algebra.

About the award (named after Srinivasan Ramanujan)

- o Awarded annually since 2005, it was originally instituted by International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Niels Henrik Abel Memorial Fund, and International Mathematical Union.
- o Awarded to a researcher from a developing country who is less than 45 years of age and is working on any branch of the mathematical sciences.

CONVERSION THERAPY

- National medical commission held that conversion therapy is banned in India.
- Conversion therapy - sometimes called "reparative therapy" or "gay cure therapy" - tries to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Several countries (Brazil, Ecuador, Malta, Switzerland, Germany, Chile etc.) have introduced criminal bans for those found to be practicing conversion therapy.

POLIOMYELITIS (POLIO)

- Malawi has recorded Africa's first wild poliovirus (WPV) case in five years.

About Polio:

- o Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious viral disease that largely affects children under 5 years of age.
- o It may affect the spinal cord causing muscle weakness and paralysis.
- o Transmitted by person-to-person spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a contaminated water or food).
- o Wild poliovirus (WPV) is the most commonly known form of the poliovirus.
- o There are 3 strains of WPV- type 1, type 2 and type 3.
 - ✓ type 2 was eradicated in 1999
 - ✓ no case of type 3 has been found since 2012.
 - ✓ As of 2020, type 1 affects two countries: Pakistan and Afghanistan.

ARTIFICIAL SNOW

- For the first time in the history of the Winter Olympics, athletes will compete on 100% artificial snow in Beijing.
- Artificial snow is small particles of ice that are used to increase the amount of snow available for winter sports such as skiing or snowboarding.
 - o It is produced by a machine that uses a high pressure pump to spray a mist of water into the cold air. The water droplets subsequently crystallize to form fake snow.

SAINT RAMANUJACHARYA

216-feet tall 'Statue of Equality' commemorating Sri Ramanujacharya was recently dedicated to the nation.

- The statue has been inaugurated at Hyderabad in the backdrop of celebrations of 'Festival of equality', marking the 1000th birth anniversary of the Saint.
- The statue has been conceptualized by Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swami of Sri Ramanujacharya Ashram.

- It is made of 'panchaloha', a combination of five metals: gold, silver, copper, brass, and zinc and is among one of the tallest metallic statues in sitting position, in the world.

About Sri Ramanujacharya

- Born in Tamil Nadu in the 11th century, Ramanujacharya is revered as a Vedic philosopher and social reformer.
- Contributions of Sri Ramanujacharya as a Philosopher
 - o He was deeply influenced by the Alvars (Vishnu worshippers) and according to him the best means of attaining salvation was through intense devotion to Vishnu.
 - o He propounded the doctrine of Vishishtadvaita or qualified oneness.
 - o Ramanuja revived the Bhakti movement, and his preachings inspired other Bhakti schools of thought. He is considered to be the inspiration for poets like Annamacharya, Bhakt Ramdas, Thyagaraja, Kabir, and Meerabai.

About Sri Ramanujacharya's Philosophy - Vishishtadvaita

- According to him the soul even when united with the Supreme God remained distinct.
- Philosophy believes that the supreme reality is Saguna Brahman, a personal being with countless auspicious attributes, and it is a qualified whole of which Brahman is the soul, and the Jiva and the Jagat (the soul and material nature) constitute the body, which has an inseparable relationship with the whole.

100 YEARS OF CHAURI CHAURA INCIDENT

Year 2022 marks the completion of 100 years of Chauri Chaura Incident.

About Chauri Chaura Incident

- The incident occurred in the last phase of the Khilafat-Non Cooperation Movement (NCM).

- Chauri Chaura is a village in Gorakhpur district in United Province, which awoke to violence on February 5, 1922 owing to a clash between the police and the protesters.
- The police had opened fire on the protestors who were protesting against liquor sale and high food prices.
- In retaliation, the agitated crowd torched the police station with policemen inside resulting in the death of 22 policemen.
- In response to the violence at Chauri Chaura in 1922, Gandhi called off the NCM unilaterally and thus, on 12 February 1922, the Non-Cooperation Movement came to an end.

About Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement

- It was a mass movement that the British Raj in India faced between **1919 to 1922**.
- **Movement was based on three demands**
 - **Favourable treatment of Turkey** - Khilafat movement was born out of resentment of Indian Muslims owing to mistreatment of Turkey (which was ruled by spiritual leader, Khalifa) by the British after the First World War.
 - Also, the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre, imposition of the Rowlatt Act, and the economic situation of the country** post the first world war, all added fuel to the fire.
 - **Establishment of Swaraj.**
- **Techniques used:** Boycott of government-run schools, colleges, law courts, municipality and government service, foreign cloth, liquor; setting up of national schools, colleges, panchayats and using khadi; second stage to include civil disobedience by non-payment of taxes.

PUNAURA DHAM, BIHAR

- Punaura Dham in Sitamarhi district was included in Ramayana Circuit of Swadesh Darshan scheme.
 - Also, it was included in PRASHAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual Augmentation Drive) scheme.

- Punaura Dham is considered to be birthplace of Goddess Sita.
 - Shrine compound has a Ram Janki temple, a pond called Sita Kund and a hall.
- PRASHAD scheme, launched by Ministry of Tourism, focuses on developing and identifying pilgrimage sites across India for enriching the religious tourism experience.
- Swadesh Darshan Scheme aims to promote, develop and harness potential of tourism in India through Central Financial Assistance for infrastructure development of circuits.

KARAKATTAM DANCE

- Kerala Nattukala Kshema Sabha has demanded that Karakattam (known as Kumbakkali in certain parts) be recognised as agricultural art form of Kerala.
- Karakattam is an ancient folk dance of Tamil Nadu performed in praise of the rain goddess Mariamman. It's performed in different parts of Kerala as well.
- It is performed at festivals, roadshows and primarily at Mariamman festivals.

PANRUTI CASHEWS

- Cashew Processors and Exporters based in Tamil Nadu have sought GI tag for Panruti Cashews.
 - Known as the 'goldmine' of Cuddalore, demand for Panruti Cashew is huge because of its unique taste and quality.
- A GI is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of GI relating to goods in India.

MEDARAM JATARA

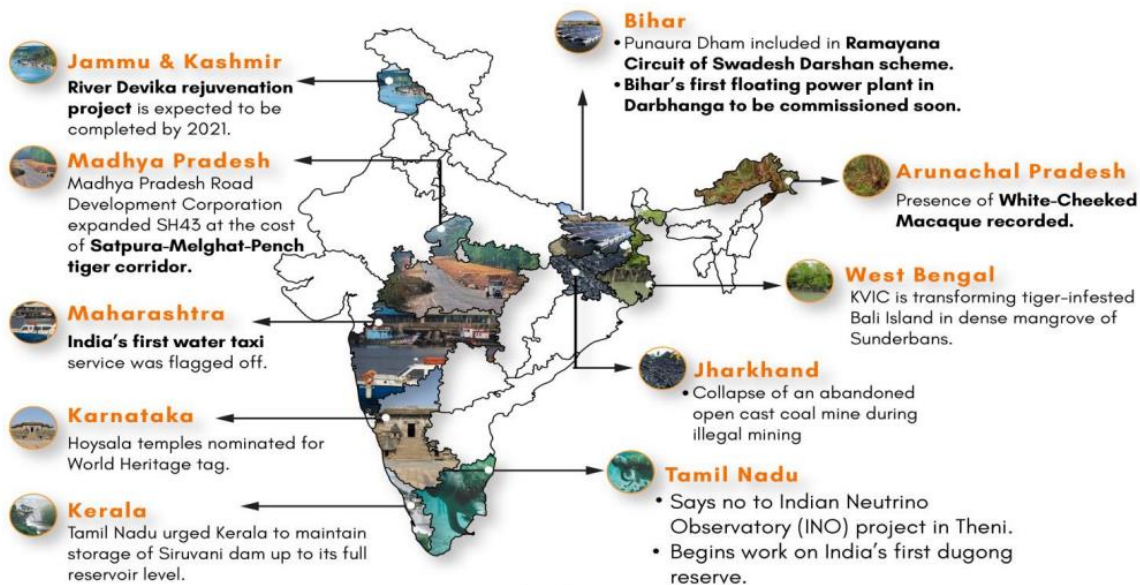
- Recently, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has sanctioned ₹2.26 Crores for Medaram Jathara.

- It is the second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela.
- It is celebrated by the tribal community of Telangana for four days.
- It is biennially celebrated and organized by the Koyas tribes in collaboration with the Telangana government.
- It is a festival with no Vedic or Brahmanic influence.
- Jampannavagu river (a tributary to river Godavari) is worshiped as one of the parts of rituals.
- It assists the tribals to preserve their unique Tribal Traditions, Culture and Heritage.

ANGADIAS

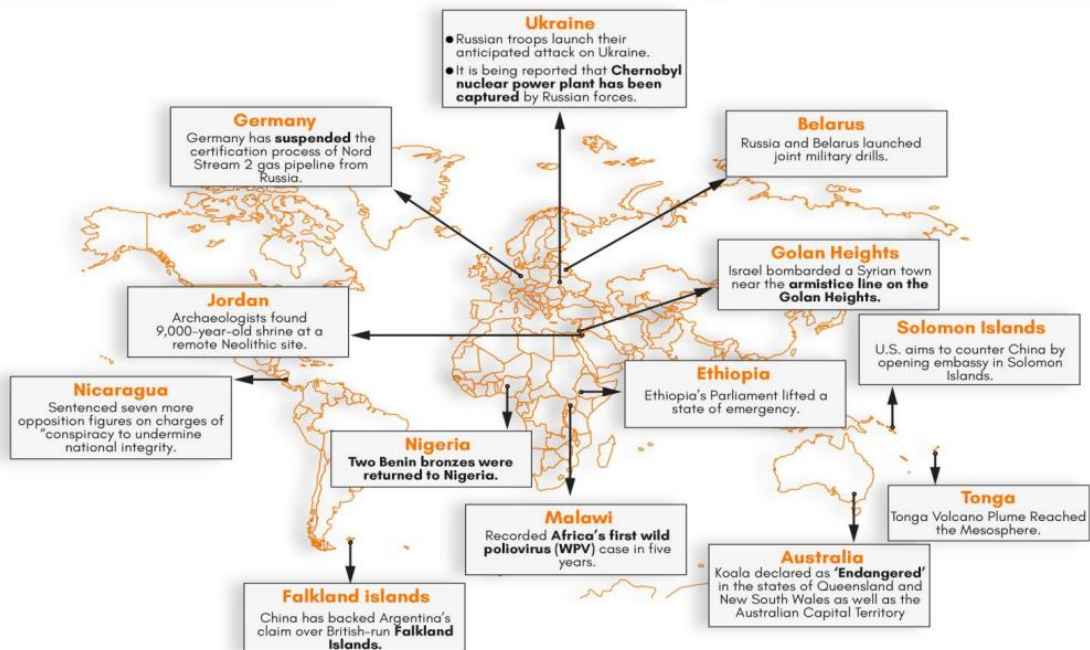
- It is a century-old parallel banking system in the country where traders send cash generally from one state to another through a person called Angadia that stands for courier.
- It is used largely in jewellery business.
- The cash involved is huge and it is the responsibility of the Angadia to transfer cash from one state to another for which they charge a nominal fee.
- Generally, it is the Gujarati, Marwari and Malbari community that are involved in the business.
- They have recently been under attack by robbers owing to the large quantities of cash they carry.

Places in News: India



- Jammu & Kashmir**
River Devika rejuvenation project is expected to be completed by 2021.
- Madhya Pradesh**
Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation expanded SH43 at the cost of Satpura-Melghat-Pench tiger corridor.
- Maharashtra**
India's first water taxi service was flagged off.
- Karnataka**
Hoysala temples nominated for World Heritage tag.
- Kerala**
Tamil Nadu urged Kerala to maintain storage of Siruvani dam up to its full reservoir level.
- Bihar**
 - Punaura Dham included in Ramayana Circuit of Swadesh Darshan scheme.
 - Bihar's first floating power plant in Darbhanga to be commissioned soon.
- Arunachal Pradesh**
Presence of White-Cheeked Macaque recorded.
- West Bengal**
KVIC is transforming tiger-infested Bali Island in dense mangrove of Sunderbans.
- Jharkhand**
Collapse of an abandoned open cast coal mine during illegal mining.
- Tamil Nadu**
 - Says no to Indian Neutrino Observatory (INO) project in Theni.
 - Begins work on India's first dugong reserve.

Places in News: World



- Ukraine**
 - Russian troops launch their anticipated attack on Ukraine.
 - It is being reported that Chernobyl nuclear power plant has been captured by Russian forces.
- Germany**
Germany has suspended the certification process of Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia.
- Belarus**
Russia and Belarus launched joint military drills.
- Golan Heights**
Israel bombarded a Syrian town near the armistice line on the Golan Heights.
- Solomon Islands**
U.S. aims to counter China by opening embassy in Solomon Islands.
- Ethiopia**
Ethiopia's Parliament lifted a state of emergency.
- Nicaragua**
Sentenced seven more opposition figures on charges of "conspiracy to undermine national integrity."
- Nigeria**
Two Benin bronzes were returned to Nigeria.
- Malawi**
Recorded Africa's first wild poliovirus (WPV) case in five years.
- Tonga**
Tonga Volcano Plume Reached the Mesosphere.
- Australia**
Koala declared as 'Endangered' in the states of Queensland and New South Wales as well as the Australian Capital Territory.
- Falkland Islands**
China has backed Argentina's claim over British-run Falkland Islands.