

## CURRENT AFFAIRS : APRIL 2022

### **URBAN LOCAL BODIES (ULBS)**

Recently, Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2022 was enacted that seeks to reunify the three Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCD).

- Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act 2022 amends the 'Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957', to effectively undo the earlier 2011 amendment to the Act by which erstwhile MCD was trifurcated into separate Municipal Corporation of North, South, and East Delhi.

### **Key Provisions of the MCD Act 2022**

- It empowers the central government to decide various matters like building regulations, sanctioning of consolidation of loans by a corporation etc.
- Total number of seats in the new corporation should not be more than 250.
- It allows the Centre to appoint a Special Officer to exercise powers of the Corporation until the first meeting of unified MCD takes place.
- It omits the provision for a Director of Local Bodies.
- Establishing an e-governance system for citizen services on anytime-anywhere basis for better, accountable, and transparent administration.
- MCD commissioner has been made accountable only to the Centre

### **About Municipal corporations**

- Municipal Corporations are urban local level governments in India which works for the development of any Metropolitan City with a population of more than one million. It's also called as Mahanagar Palika, Nagar Palika, Nagar Nigam, City Corporation, etc.
- The first Municipal Corporation was set-up in Madras in 1688, and followed by similar corporations in Bombay and Calcutta in 1726.

- Their sources of revenue include property tax, water tax, professional tax, drainage tax, etc and some fixed aid from the state government.
- The members of the Municipal Corporation are directly elected by the people and are called Councillors.
- Elections to the Municipal Corporations are conducted under the guidance, direction, superintendence and control of the State Election Commission.
- Municipal corporations are established in states by acts of the concerned state legislatures, and in the union territories by the acts of Parliament of India.
- Lord Ripon (1880-84), the Viceroy of India introduced elections in Municipal Corporation and is known as “father of Local Self-government in India”.
- To provide for a common framework and strengthen urban local bodies (ULBs) functioning as effective units of self-government, 74th Amendment Act, 1992 has inserted Part IX-A into the Constitution which deals with administration of Municipalities and Nagar Palikas.

### **Steps taken by government to strengthen ULBs**

- World Bank assisted Capacity Building for Urban Development (CBUD) Project: It is proposed as a Central Scheme to enhance capacity building and strengthening of ULBs to implement urban reforms with World Bank credit.
- Peer Experience and Reflective Learning (PEARL) program: To foster cross learning among cities and institutions.
- Rapid Training Program (RTP): To prioritize slow performing cities that have lagged behind in accessing JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission) funds, on three prioritized modules- Governance & Reforms, Supervision/Preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and Project Management and Implementation.

### **UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA (UIDAI)**

Recently, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit on the ‘Functioning of UIDAI’ presented in Parliament has found that the data stored in the Aadhar Data Vault of the institution is “vulnerable.”

- The findings are part of the first performance review by the country's independent auditor of UIDAI, which was carried out over a four-year period between FY2015 and FY2019.

o After being launched in 2010, the Aadhaar database reached 1.29 billion records by March 2021 and is considered as one of the largest biometric based identification systems in the world.

## About UIDAI

- It is a **statutory authority** established under provisions of the **Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016** ("Aadhaar Act 2016").
- It is under jurisdiction of **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** (MeitY).
- It was established in 2009 and functions as part of the then Planning Commission.
- It issues a **12-digit unique identity number called Aadhaar** to each resident of the country.
- As of 2021, UIDAI had issued 131.68 crore Aadhaar numbers.

## INDIA'S INVESTIGATIVE AGENCIES

Recently, Chief Justice of India (CJI) called for creating an "independent umbrella institution" to bring various investigating agencies like Central Bureau Investigation (CBI), Enforcement directorate (ED) and Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) under one roof.

<b>CBI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the <b>premier investigating police agency</b> in India, established in 1963, and functions under <b>Ministry of Personnel, Pension &amp; Public Grievances</b></li> <li>Its establishment was recommended by <b>Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962-64)</b>.</li> <li>It is the <b>nodal police agency in India</b>, which coordinates investigation on behalf of Interpol Member countries.</li> <li><b>Motto: Industry, Impartiality and Integrity.</b></li> <li>It is <b>not a statutory or constitutional body</b>.</li> <li>It is governed by the <b>Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946</b>.</li> <li>It focuses on <b>combating corruption in public life, curb economic and violent crimes</b> through meticulous investigation and prosecution.</li> <li>It helps to fight <b>cyber and high technology crime</b>.</li> <li><b>Lokpal Act, 2014</b> provided the appointment of CBI director through high-powered committee comprising Prime Minister, CJI and leader of opposition.</li> <li>In 2021, <b>President promulgated two ordinances</b> to extend the <b>tenures of the Directors of the CBI and ED for up to five years</b>, from fixed tenure of two years.</li> <li>It provides assistance to <b>Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and Lokpal</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>ED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Established in 1956</b> with its Headquarters at <b>New Delhi</b>.</li> <li>Specialized financial investigation agency under <b>Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance</b>.</li> <li>Responsible for enforcement of <b>Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA)</b> and certain provisions under <b>Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002</b>.</li> <li>FEMA is a civil law while PMLA is criminal law.</li> </ul>
<b>SFIO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a multi-disciplinary organization under <b>Ministry of Corporate Affairs</b>.</li> <li>Consists experts in field of <b>accountancy, forensic auditing, law, information technology, investigation, company law, capital market and taxation</b> for detecting and prosecuting or recommending for prosecution white-collar crimes/frauds.</li> <li>Headquarter at <b>New Delhi</b>.</li> <li>Accorded <b>statutory status under Companies Act, 2013</b>.</li> <li><b>Power to arrest accused people</b> for violation of Company law.</li> <li>To assist officers of SFIO on investigations, the <b>Computer Forensic and Data Mining Laboratory (CFDML)</b> was set up in 2013.</li> </ul>
<b>National Investigation Agency (NIA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governed by its own <b>NIA Act, 2008</b>.</li> <li>Headquarters is at <b>New Delhi</b>.</li> <li>Gives powers to the central agency to <b>take suo motu cognizance of terror activities</b> across the country.</li> <li>Governing body is <b>Ministry of Home Affairs</b>.</li> <li>Functions as the <b>Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency</b> in the country.</li> </ul>

## PRISON REFORMS

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued guidelines for implementation of the Modernisation of Prisons (MoP) Project.

### Background

- Prison is a State subject under List-II of the Seventh Schedule in the Constitution.
- The management and administration of Prisons falls exclusively in the domain of the State Governments, and is governed by the Prisons Act, 1894 and the Prison Manuals of the respective State Governments.

- However, the Ministry of Home Affairs provides regular guidance and advice to States and UTs on various issues concerning prisons and prison inmates.

## **Objectives of MoP project**

- o Filling the existing gaps in security infrastructure of jails.
- o Providing new security equipment to jails in line with modern day technologies.
- o Strengthening the jail security system through security equipment like Door Frame/ Metal Detectors/ Security Poles, Baggage Scanners/ Frisking/ Search/ Jamming Solutions etc.
- o Focus on correctional administration, which includes bringing attitudinal change in the mindset of prison officials handling inmates through extensive training and by introducing appropriate programs for inmates for their skill development and rehabilitation, including engagement of trained correctional experts, behavioural experts, psychologists, etc.
- Project will cover all States and UTs and shall broadly cover the following prison types- Central Jails, District Jails, Sub-Jails, Women Jails, Open Jails, Special Jails etc.
- Core components of MoP project are video conference infrastructure, body worn cameras, door frame/Metal detector/Security Poles etc., Baggage Scanners/ Frisking/ Search/ Jamming Solutions etc, correctional programmes etc.

## **Need for Prison Reforms**

- Overcrowding: "Prison Statistics India", brought out by National Crime Records Bureau stated that in 2019, there were nearly 4.8 lakh inmates in 1,306 facilities against the sanctioned strength of 4.1 lakh, with an occupancy rate of 118%.
  - o This undermines the ability of prison systems to meet the basic needs of prisoners, such as healthcare, food, and accommodation.
  - o This also endangers the basic rights of prisoners, including the right to have adequate standards of living and the right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health.



- No separation of under-trials: Around 75% of inmates in our jails are under-trials. As these awaiting trial inmates come into touch with their incarcerated inmates, they get influenced into the world of crime.
- Health consequences of imprisonment: Prisoners health conditions deteriorate in prisons which are overcrowded, where nutrition is poor, sanitation inadequate and access to fresh air and exercise often unavailable.
- Imprisonment and poverty: Imprisonment contributes directly to the impoverishment of the prisoner, of his family.

Family experiences financial losses as a result of the imprisonment of one of its members, exacerbated by the new expenses that must be met -such as the cost of a lawyer, food for the imprisoned person, transport to prison for visits and so on.

- Severe staff crunch: About 30% of the sanctioned jail executive staff posts still lie vacant. At national level there is an average 7 inmates per staff in all jails in India (2020).
- Issues of women prisoners: There is a severe lack of female staff, inadequate numbers of toilets, bathrooms and other basic preconditions for sanitation and hygiene. Also physical and sexual violence is a common scenario in prison.

## Important Reform Measures taken so far in India

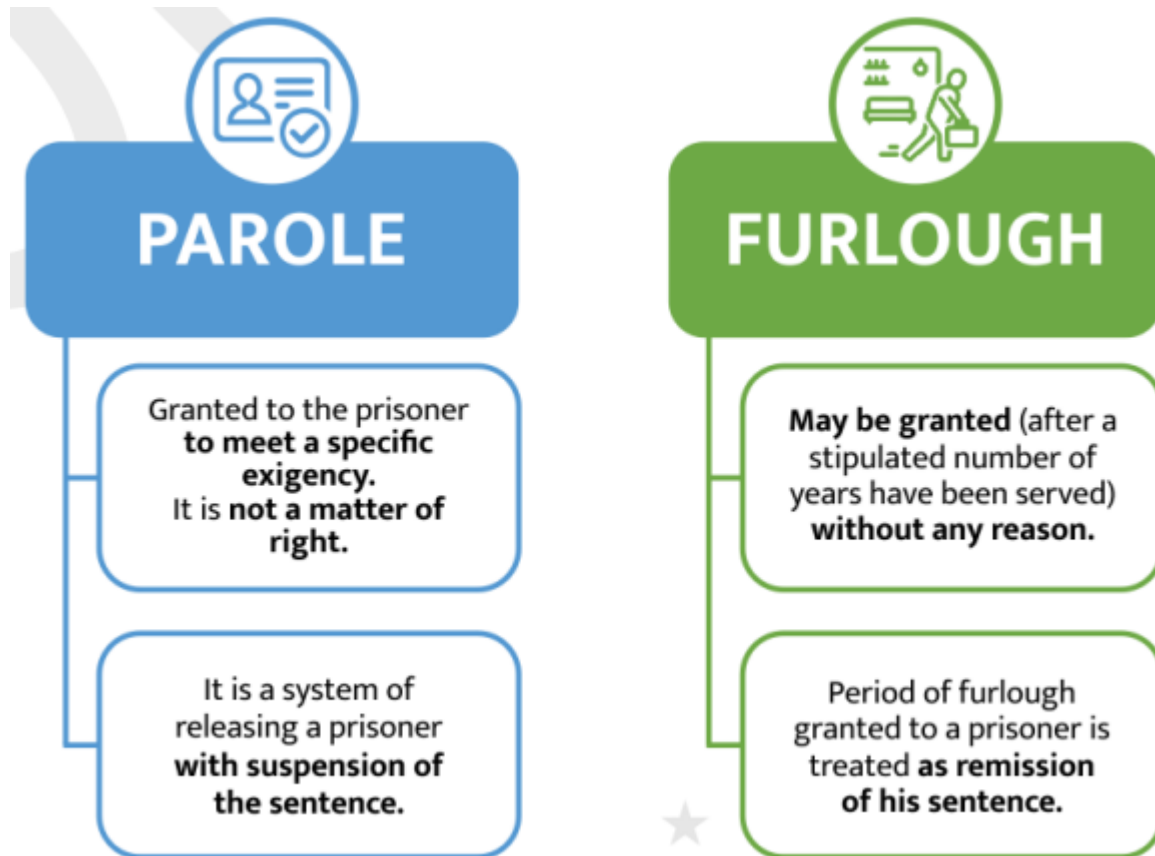
- The modern prison system was **conceptualised by TB Macaulay** in 1835.
- In 1836, a **Prison Discipline Committee** was **constituted by William Bantick** to improve discipline in prisons.
- **Prison Act, 1894**, enacted to bring uniformity in the working of the prisoners in India. The Act provided for classification of prisoners.
- **All India Jail Committee (1919-1920)** was first ever comprehensive study that was launched on this subject.
- **All India Jails Manual Committee 1957-59** to prepare a model prison manual.
- **All India Committee on Jail Reforms 1980-83** under Justice A N Mulla.
- In 1987, the GoI appointed the **Justice Krishna Iyer Committee** to undertake a study on the situation of women prisoners in India
- **Draft National Policy on Prison Reforms** and Correctional Administration, 2007
- **Model Prison Manual 2016** aims at bringing in basic uniformity in laws, rules and regulations governing the administration of prisons and the management of prisoners all over the country.
- **SC had constituted a 3-member committee in 2018** to look into entire gamut of prison reforms across the country and suggest measures to deal with them.
- **Report on 'Women in Prisons'** by Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2018.

- Adherence to key international rules and standards such as:

- o UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) that set out the minimum standards for the treatment of people in prison and for good prison management.

- o UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) give guidance to reduce unnecessary imprisonment of women, and to meet the specific needs of women who are imprisoned.

o UN Standard Minimum Rules for Noncustodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules) provide a set of basic principles to promote the use of non-custodial measures and sanctions, as well as minimum safeguards for persons subject to alternatives to imprisonment.



## PHONE TAPPING

Recently, an IPS officer was under probe for tapping the phones of political leaders in 2019.

### About phone tapping

- Definition: Phone tapping refers to the monitoring of internet-based communications and phones by a third party by secret means. The word 'phone tapping' also means wiretapping or line bugging or interception of the phone. It was first commenced in the USA in the 1890s after the invention of the telephone recorder.
- Legal provisions: Phone tapping is regulated by the Indian Telegraphic Act, 1885.



## The Indian Telegraphic Act, 1885

- Power for phone tapping: Both, the Central and the State Governments have a right to tap phones under Section 5(2) of Indian Telegraphic Act, 1885.
  - o In the states, police have the powers to tap phones.
  - o At the Centre, 10 agencies are authorised to do so: Intelligence Bureau, CBI, Enforcement Directorate, Narcotics Control Bureau, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, National Investigation Agency, R&AW, Directorate of Signal Intelligence, and the Delhi Police Commissioner.
  - o Tapping by any other agency would be considered illegal.
- Grounds for phone tapping: Phone tapping can be done by the Centre or states if they are satisfied that it is necessary in the interest of “public safety”, “sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence”.
- Power to issue the order for phone tapping: According to the Rule 419A of the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Rules, 2007, phone tapping orders could be issued only by the Secretary, Union Ministry of Home Affairs or his State Counterpart. The order has to be conveyed to the service provider in writing; only then can the tapping begin. The competent authority must record reasons for tapping in writing.

## IMPORTANT CASES ON PHONE TAPPING



### PUCL v. UOI (1996)

Held: Telephone tapping infringed the **fundamental right to privacy**, and **created safeguards** against arbitrariness in the exercise of the state's surveillance powers.



### K.L.D Nagasree v. Government of India (2006)

Held: the occurrence of any public emergency or the existence of a public safety interest is the **sine qua non** under Section 5(1) & (2).



### Rayala M. Bhuvaneswari vs Nagaphanender Rayala (2008)

Held: Act of tapping conversation of **wife by husband illegal**.



## NORMS FOR QUOTA IN PROMOTIONS

- The Department Of Personnel And Training (DoPT) has asked all departments of central government to collect the data on inadequacy of representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes before implementing the policy of reservation in promotion in government offices.

- o The memorandum referred to the January verdict of the SC ( upheld the M. Nagaraj v. Union of India, 2006 judgement) having three conditions were laid down by the apex court

✓ The collection of quantifiable data regarding the inadequacy of representation of SCs and STs.

✓ The application of this data to each cadre separately.

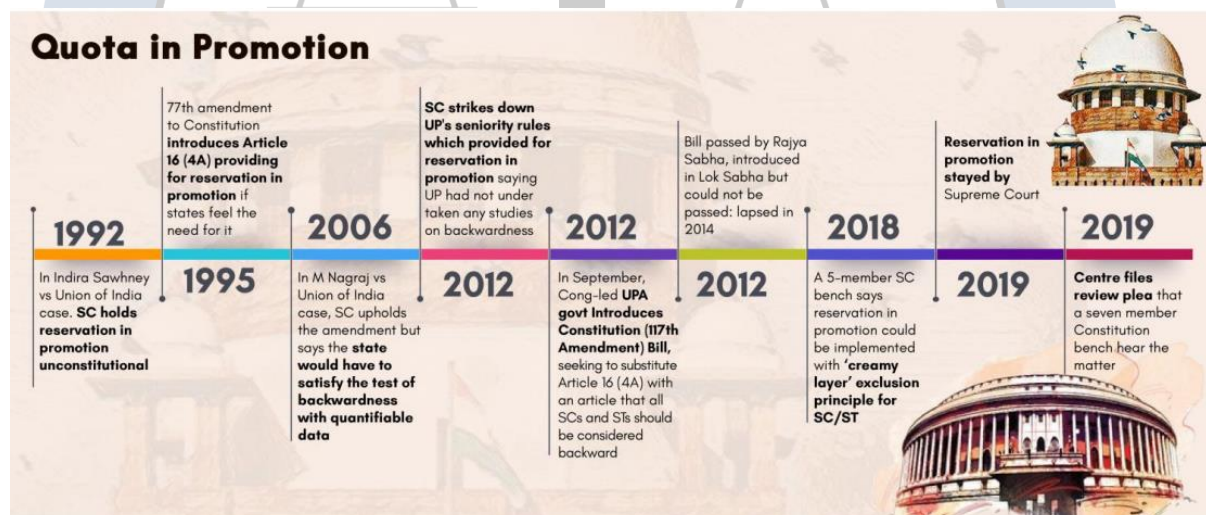
✓ The cadre being the unit of operation of the promotion roster.

- Reservation in promotion

- o Article 16 (4A): Empowers State to make provisions for reservation in matters of promotion to SC/ST.

- o Nagaraj v. Union of India, 2006: SC laid down 3 criterion to be followed for implementing reservation in promotion.

- o Jarnail Singh v L.N. Gupta (2018): SC held that states need not be required to collect quantifiable data on the backwardness of the SCs and STs.



## FAST AND SECURED TRANSMISSION OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS (FASTER)

- Recently, CJI launched the FASTER, a digital platform for court officials to instantly send e-copies of the orders.

- It will transmit e-authenticated copies of the interim orders, stay orders, bail orders and record of proceedings to the duty-holders for compliance and due execution through a secured electronic communication channel to intended parties.
- It is developed on directions from Supreme Court (SC) after suo motu cognisance on delayed release of convicts from Jail after court order.

## **UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

- UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for Russia to be suspended from the UN Human Rights Council.
- The resolution was moved by the US to suspend Russia from the Council over allegations that Russian soldiers killed civilians while retreating from towns near the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.
- The resolution was adopted with 93 votes in favour, 24 against and 58 abstentions.
- India has abstained on the vote asserting that India has chosen side of "peace and stands for an immediate end to violence".

## **About UN Human Rights Council**

- It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system, made up of 47 States, is responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. It reports directly to the General Assembly's 193 members.
- Background: It was established in 2006 by Resolution 60/251 as a subsidiary body to the UN General Assembly. It replaced the former Commission on Human Rights, which operated from 1946 to 2006.
  - o Commission on Human Rights was created in 1946 as a subsidiary body of the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
  - o The initial mandate of the commission was to establish international human rights standards and develop an international bill of rights.
- Membership: The Council comprises 47 members apportioned by geographic region.



- o Eligibility: All U.N. members are eligible to run for a seat on the Council. Countries are nominated by their regional groups and elected by the General Assembly through secret ballot with an absolute majority required.
- o The General Assembly takes into account the candidate States' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.
- o Term: Members of the Council serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms.
- o Suspension of Membership: If a Council member commits "gross and systematic violations of human rights," the General Assembly may suspend membership with a two-thirds vote of members present.

## India and UNHRC

- In May 2017, for third time in less than ten years, **India's human rights record was reviewed** under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism of the UNHRC.
- India also presented its **Voluntary National Review (VNR)** on the implementation of the **seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** under the 2030 Agenda at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) of the ECOSOC at the United Nations in July 2017.
- In October 2021, India was **re-elected to the UNHRC for a sixth term (2022-2024)**. The overwhelming majority (**184 votes** in the 193-member assembly against required majority of 97) is a **robust endorsement** of our strong roots in **democracy, pluralism and fundamental rights**.

## WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (WMD)

Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022 to ban funding of weapons of mass destruction was recently passed in Lok Sabha.



- The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022 amends the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005.

o The 2005 Act prohibits unlawful activities (such as manufacturing, transport, or transfer) related to weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery. The recent amendment extends the scope of banned activities to include financing of already prohibited activities.

- The amendment bill bars persons from financing any prohibited activity related to WMD and their delivery systems directly or indirectly.
- It empowers the central government to freeze, seize or attach financial assets and economic resources of people engaged in such activities.

### About Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

- There is no single, authoritative definition of a WMD in international law and the expression is usually understood to cover nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons.
- According to the United States Department of Homeland Security, “A weapon of mass destruction is a nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological, or other device that is intended to harm a large number of people.

### Definitions of WMDs as per India's WMD Act, 2005

<b>Nuclear weapons</b> 	<b>Chemical weapons</b> 	<b>Biological Weapons</b> 
<p>Those which are categorized as having nuclear capabilities and recognized by the Government of India. In general, these machinery and weapons use the process of nuclear fission in order to facilitate an explosion.</p>	<p>Toxic chemicals and their precursors (except where used for peaceful purposes); munitions and devices specifically designed to cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of those toxic chemicals; and any equipment specifically designed for use in connection with the employment of these munitions and devices.</p>	<p>Microbial or other biological agents, or toxins of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes; and weapons, equipment or delivery systems specially designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.</p>

## THE INDIAN ANTARCTIC BILL, 2022

Recently, the government has tabled The Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022 in Lok Sabha. The draft bill is the first domestic legislation about the Antarctica in India.

### Key Provisions of the Bill

- **Applicability:** Provisions applicable to any, Indian or foreign person, vessel or aircraft that is involved in any Indian expedition to Antarctica.
- **Establishment of a Committee on Antarctic Governance and Environmental Protection** chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences along with ten members and two experts by the Union Government.
- **Prohibited activities:**
  - o Nuclear explosion, disposal of radioactive wastes.
  - o Introduction of non-sterile soil.
  - o Introduction of specified substances and products.
  - o Discharge of garbage, plastic, or other substance harmful to marine environment in Antarctica.

### India's other endeavours in Antarctica

- The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (the Environmental Protocol or Madrid Protocol) entered into force for India in 1998.
- India is also a member of Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programme (COMNAP), Scientific Committee of Antarctica Research (SCAR) and Commission for Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).
- India's Research stations: Maitri at Schirmacher Hills, Bharati at Larsemann Hills (Dakshin Gangotri was the first Indian base established in 1984).

- The Antarctic operations of India are currently funded from the budget allocated to the Ministry of Earth Sciences under relevant head.

### **RNOR (RESIDENT BUT NOT ORDINARILY RESIDENT)**

- It is a class of residential status under the Income-tax law. RNOR represents a person who does not qualify as an ordinary resident.
- It includes person who
  - Spends over 120 but less than 182 days, and
  - Earns ₹15 lakh or more from assets in India.

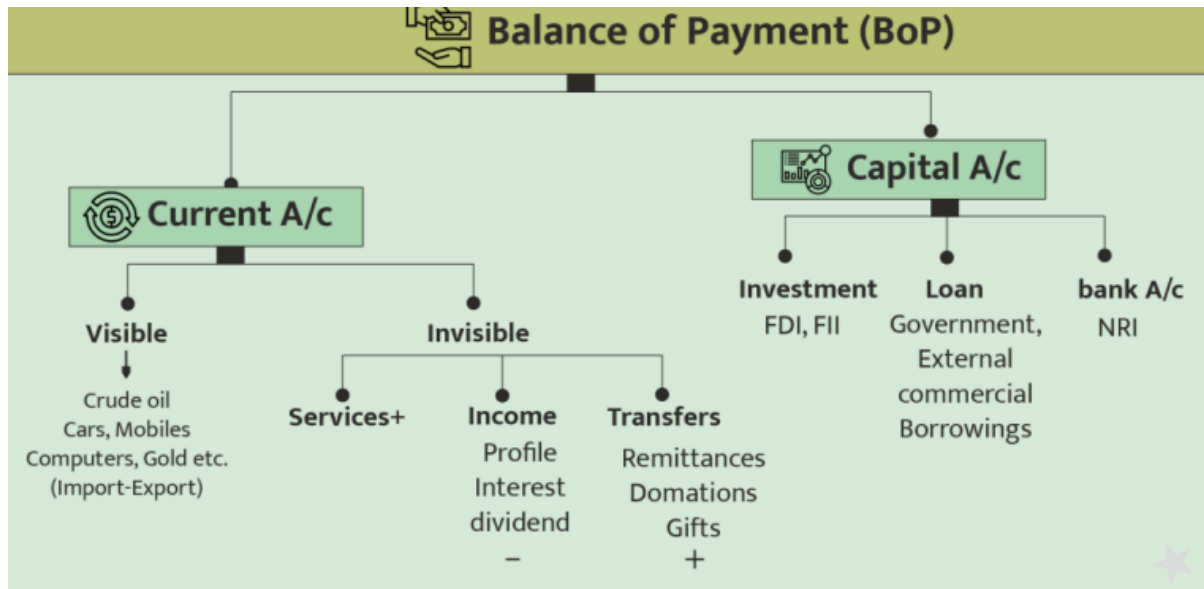
### **CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT (CAD)**

In the December quarter of FY2022 India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) reached \$23 billion (2.7% of GDP), a nine-year high since the CAD touched \$31 billion during the December quarter of 2012.

### **Current Account Deficit (CAD)**

- Balance of Payments (BoP) records the transactions in goods, services, and assets between residents of a country with the rest of the world for a specified time period typically a year.
  - When viewed from the perspective of investment-savings dynamics, the current account can also be expressed as the difference between national (both public and private) savings and investment.
- One of the two main accounts in the Balance of Payments (BoP), CAD records exports and imports in goods and services and transfer payments of a country.
  - When exports exceed imports, there is a trade surplus and when imports exceed exports there is a trade deficit.
  - Transfer payments are receipts received by the residents 'for free', without any present or future payments in return. It includes remittances, gifts and grants.

- Capital account is the second account, recording all international purchases and sales of assets such as money, stocks, bonds, etc. for a specified time, usually a year.



## ZERO DEFECT ZERO EFFECT (ZED) CERTIFICATION SCHEME

- The Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) launched a revamped ZED Certification

Scheme (originally launched in 2016), with an aim to make Indian companies globally competitive and help them get easier access to capital.

- MSMEs will get subsidy as per the following structure, on the cost of ZED certification:
  - o Micro Enterprises: 80%
  - o Small Enterprises: 60%
  - o Medium Enterprises: 50%

## DIGITAL BANKING UNITS

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released Guidelines on Establishment of Digital Banking Units (DBUs).
- This is part of the announcement made in the Union Budget 2022-23 to set up 75 DBUs in 75 districts to commemorate the 75 years of independence of our country (Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav).

<b>What are DBUs?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DBUs are <b>specialised fixed point business unit / hub</b> housing certain minimum digital infrastructure <b>for delivering digital banking products &amp; services</b> as well as servicing existing financial products &amp; services digitally.</li> </ul>
<b>Who is permitted to start DBUs?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All scheduled commercial banks</b> (except Regional Rural Banks, Payment Banks and Lead Area Banks) with past digital banking experience <b>are permitted to open DBUs in Tier 1 to Tier 6 centres</b> without having the need to take permission from the central bank in each case.</li> <li>• These DBUs <b>will be treated as Banking Outlets (BOs)</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure and resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each DBU shall be housed distinctly, with the <b>separate entry and exit provisions</b>. They will be <b>separate from an existing BO</b> with formats and designs most appropriate for digital banking users.</li> <li>• Banks are <b>free to adopt an in-sourced or out-sourced model for operations</b> of the digital banking segment including DBUs.</li> </ul>
<b>Products and services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each DBU should offer a certain minimum digital banking products and services such as</li> <li>• <b>Liability Products and services:</b> Account opening, Digital Kit for customers and merchants etc.</li> <li>• <b>Asset Products and services:</b> Making applications for and onboarding of customer for identified retail, MSME or schematic loans etc.</li> <li>• <b>Digital Services:</b> Cash withdrawal and Cash Deposit only through ATM and Cash Deposit Machines respectively, Internet Banking Kiosk, Lodging of grievance digitally etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Other features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banks will have the <b>options to engage digital business facilitator /correspondents</b> to expand the virtual footprint of DBUs.</li> <li>• DBUs to offer hands-on <b>customer education on safe digital banking products and practices</b> for inducting customers to self-service digital banking services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>The district</b> where the DBU is located <b>will be the catchment area for the purpose</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There should be adequate digital mechanism to offer real time assistance and redress customer grievances, directly or through Business Facilitators / Correspondents.</li> </ul>

- There is also provision for additional subsidy for Women/SC/ST Entrepreneurs or MSMEs in NER/Himalayan/LWE/Island territories/aspirational districts.

## INDIA INVOKES PEACE CLAUSE

- In order to meet the domestic food security needs of poor population, India has invoked peace clause of World Trade Organisation (WTO) for exceeding the 10% ceiling on support offered to rice farmers.

o India informed the WTO that value of its rice production in 2020-21 was \$45.56 billion while it gave subsidies worth \$6.9 billion, which comes out to 15.14% as against the permitted 10%.



o India became the first country to invoke peace clause in 2020 as rice subsidies exceeded cap in 2018-19.

o Under peace clause, WTO member countries are refrained from challenging any breach in prescribed subsidy ceiling given by a developing nation at dispute settlement forum of WTO.

## **KWAR HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT**

- Cabinet has approved the 540 MW Kwar Hydroelectric Project in Kishtwardistrict of Jammu and Kashmir to harness the vast hydro potential of River Chenab.

o Chenab basin is estimated to have hydro power potential of around 11,283 MW.

- A number of hydroelectric (HE) projects (running or under-construction) are initiated to harness this potential such as:

o Baglihar HE Power project; Dulhasti Power Station; Salal Power Station; PakalDul HE Project; Kiru HE Project; Kirthai-II HE Project.

## **ARMED FORCES (SPECIAL POWERS) ACT (AFSPA) IN NORTH EAST**

Recently, the Union Government has partially withdrawn the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958 from parts of three Northeast states— Assam, Nagaland and Manipur.

### **About AFSPA**

- AFSPA grants extra-ordinary powers and immunity to the armed forces to bring back order in the “disturbed areas”.

o A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA.

o An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.

✓ The Central Government, or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

- Section 4 of the AFSPA empowers armed forces with provisions like legal immunity for their actions, arrest anyone without warrant, stop and search any vehicle etc.

- Presently, AFSPA is operational in Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Nagaland, Manipur (except Imphal Municipal area) and parts of Arunachal Pradesh.

- o Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were brought under the Act by way of The Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990.

## **INDIA THIRD HIGHEST MILITARY SPENDER IN 2021**

- Findings are part of new data published by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

- o SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

- Key highlights

- o World military spending continued to grow in 2021, reaching an all-time high of \$2.1 trillion despite economic fallout of the pandemic.

- o Five largest spenders were U.S., China, India, U.K. and Russia. U.S. and China alone accounted for 52% spending.

## **EXERCISES IN NEWS**

- LAMITIYE-2022: It is an India - Seychelles Joint Military Training Exercise.

- VARUNA: It is a bilateral Naval Exercise between Indian and French Navies.

## **FIRST CARBON-NEUTRAL PANCHAYAT**

- Palli in Jammu becomes India's first carbon-neutral panchayat.

- Carbon neutrality means having a balance between emitting carbon and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere in carbon sinks.

- o Removing carbon oxide from the atmosphere and then storing it is known as carbon sequestration.

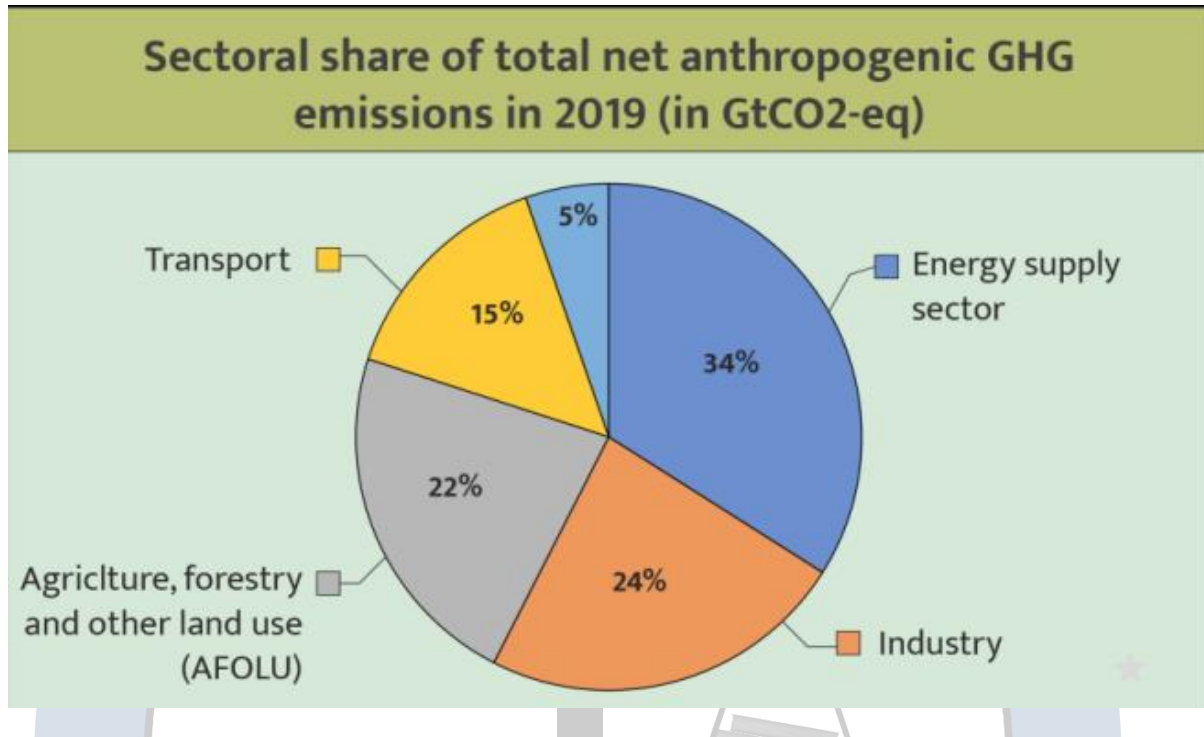
## IPCC'S SIXTH ASSESSMENT REPORT: PART III

- The IPCC released the second part of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), titled 'Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change', the Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report.

### Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Is India a member? 

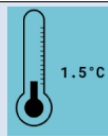
- **Genesis:** An intergovernmental organization created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- **Objective:** To provide governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies.
  - IPCC is the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change
- **Headquarter:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Membership:** 195 members
- **Other key information:**
  - Its main activity is to prepare Assessment Reports, special reports, and methodology reports assessing the state of knowledge of climate change.
    - ✓ However, the IPCC does not itself engage in scientific research. Instead, it asks scientists from around the world to go through all the relevant scientific literature related to climate change and draw up the logical conclusions.
  - 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.



#### What needs to be done

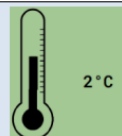
##### To limit global warming to 1.5°C

- Global GHG emissions peak before 2025, reduced by 43% by 2030.
- Reach Global net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the early 2050s.
- Methane reduced by 34% by 2030.



##### To limit global warming to 2°C

- Global GHG emissions peak before 2025, reduced by 27% by 2030.
- Reach Global net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions around the early 2070s.



##### For both-

- **Rapid and deep GHG emissions reductions immediate GHG in all sectors follow throughout 2030, 2040 and 2050.**
- **Negative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions after the point of net zero.**

## HELINA

- Recently, indigenously developed helicopter launched Anti-Tank Guided Missile 'HELINA' was successfully flight tested.
- About HELINA (Helicopter based NAG):
  - o It is third generation fire and forget class anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system mounted on the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).
  - o The system has all weather day and night capability.

- o It can defeat battle tanks with conventional armour as well as explosive reactive armour.
- o Developed by: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

## **MOTHER NATURE' A 'LIVING BEING' WITH LEGAL ENTITY: MADRAS HC**

- Invoking 'parens patriae jurisdiction', the HC bestowed 'legal entity' status upon nature and directed the State and Central governments to protect it.
- o Parens Patriae in Latin means "parent of the nation". It allows the guardianship of the State of the rights of entities that are unable to fight for their own rights.
- o Earlier, in 2017 Uttarakhand HC, granted the Ganga and Yamuna rivers had the same legal status as human beings, however Supreme Court overruled this order.
- o Also, in 2018, Uttarakhand HC declared the "entire animal kingdom including avian and aquatic" as legal entities.
- Significance:
  - o The court ruled that Mother Nature will have rights, duties and liabilities enjoyed by a living person.

## **PRAKRITI**

- Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched Prakriti mascot to spread awareness among masses about small changes that can be sustainably adopted for a better environment.
- Also, following initiatives were launched for plastic waste management:
  - o National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic (SUP) and Plastic Waste Management (MoEFCC)
  - o Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Portal for Plastic Packaging (CPCB) for improving accountability, traceability, transparency and facilitating ease of reporting compliance to EPR Obligations.
  - o Mobile App for SUP Grievance Redressal (CPCB) to empower citizens to check sale/usage/manufacturing of SUP in their area and tackle the plastic menace.



## OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLE

- Tamil Nadu will set up an international olive ridley turtle protection and rehabilitation centre in Chennai.
- About Olive Ridley turtle:
  - o Smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles.
  - o Inhabits warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
  - o Diet: Carnivores, feed on jellyfish, shrimp, snails, crabs etc.
  - o Threats: Unintended capture in fishing gear, Direct Harvest of Turtles and Eggs, loss and degradation of habitat, marine debris, climate change etc.
  - o IUCN status: Vulnerable

## STEEL SLAG ROAD

- Surat has become the first city in the country to get a processed steel slag (industrial waste) road.
- Steel slag, a by - product of steel making, is produced during the separation of the molten steel from impurities in steel -making furnaces.

## GEOMAGNETIC STORM

- Space Weather Prediction Centre (SPWC) under National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has issued two geomagnetic storm (GMS) watches.
- o When Coronal Mass Ejections (CME) collide with the Earth, it causes GMS.
- GMS is a disturbance in the earth's magnetosphere, which is the area around the planet controlled by its magnetic field.
- o Earth's magnetosphere protects its inhabitants from most of the particles emitted by the sun.
- o It is caused by massive exchange of energy from the solar wind into the space environment surrounding the Earth.

## **GAGAN**

- Airports Authority of India (AAI) successfully conducted flight trials using GAGAN based LPV approach procedure.
- India is the first country in the Asia Pacific Region to achieve such a landmark in field of Air Navigation Services (ANS).
- About GAGAN (GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation)
  - o GAGAN is an Indian Satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS) jointly developed by AAI and ISRO for India and neighbouring countries in the equatorial region.

## **CYCLOPEAN WALL**

Bihar government has again sent a proposal to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to get Cyclopean wall listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

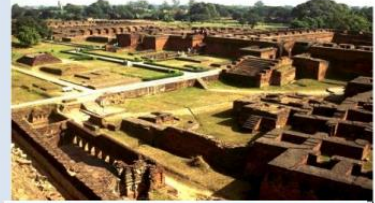
About Cyclopean Wall

- The Cyclopean Wall is a 40 km long wall of stone (more than 2,500 years old structure) which encircled the ancient city of Rajgir in Bihar.
- o The ancient city of Rajgir was the capital city of King Bimbisara and his son Ajatshatru who were contemporaries of the Buddha.
- It was built in the pre-Mauryan era (before 3rd century BC).

## Other UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Bihar

- **Nalanda University:** It was listed in 2002 as the Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of India list.
  - It is one of the famous universities of ancient India and historic center of higher learning. It was **founded by Kumaragupta (Shakraditya)** of the Gupta dynasty in the early 5th century, and it flourished for 600 years until the 12th century.
  - It has been listed as an **"Institute of National Importance"** by the government.
- **Mahabodhi temple of Bodhygaya:** It was also listed in UNESCO World Heritage Sites of India list in 2002.
  - It is the site where **Lord Buddha had attained enlightenment** is one of the four holy sites related to the life of the Lord Buddha. The other three are: **Lumbini (Birth) in Nepal, Sarnath (Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana - 1st Sermon) and Kushinagar (Mahaparinirvana- death) in Uttar Pradesh.**
  - The original structure was **built by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka** which was reconstructed entirely in brick in late Gupta period. The present temple dates from the 5th or 6th centuries.

## Nalanda University



## SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI, LALIT KALA AKADEMI AWARDS

- Vice president will confer the Sangeet NatakAkademi Fellowship and Sangeet Natak Awards for 2018 while the Lalit Kala Akademi's Fellowship and National Awards for 2021 on April 19

### • Sangeet Natak Akademi

o Sangeet Natak Akademi, the apex body in the field of performing arts in the country, was set up in 1953 for the preservation and promotion of the vast intangible heritage of India's diverse culture expressed in forms of music, dance and drama.

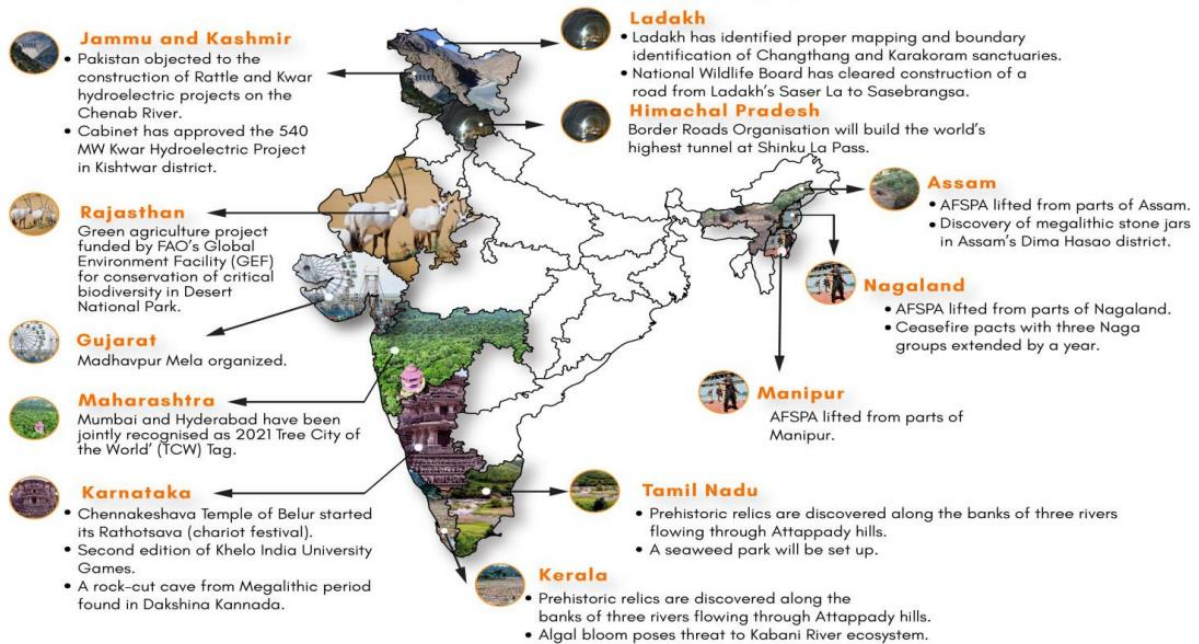
o Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards are national honours given by the government to performing artists, teachers and scholars in the field of performing arts.

### • Lalit Kala Akademi

o It was inaugurated in New Delhi in 1954.

o Lalit Kala Akademi manifests a commitment to the service of the visual arts by establishing, preserving and documenting visual art of the highest order that in turn reflects the vitality, complexity and unfolding patterns of ancient, modern and contemporary art in India.

## Places in News: India



## Places in News: World

