CURRENT AFFAIRS : NOVEMBER 2022

ECONOMICALLY WEAKER SECTIONS (EWS) QUOTA

The Supreme Court Constitutional Bench upheld validity of 103rd Constitutional Amendment which introduced 10% quota for EWS in education and public employment.

About EWS quota

• EWS reservation was granted based on recommendations of Sinho commission (submitted report in 2010).

• 103rd Amendment Act 2019 inserted Articles 15(6) and 16(6) in Constitution to provide reservation to EWS among nonOBC and non-SC/ST sections of the population.

> o The act enables both central and state governments to provide reservations to EWS.

> o However, it allows state government to decide whether or not to provide reservations to EWS for appointment in state government jobs and admission to state government educational institutions.

• Act amended Article 15 to additionally permit government to provide for advancement of EWS.

> o Further, up to 10% of seats may be reserved for such sections for admission in educational institutions.

> o Such reservation will not apply to minority educational institutions.

• The Act also amended Article 16 to permit the government to reserve up to 10% of all posts for the "economically weaker sections" of citizens.

• EWS reservation is in addition to existing reservation.

> o A person not covered under reservation for SCs, STs, and OBCs, and whose family had a gross annual income below Rs 8 lakh, was to be identified as EWS for reservation.

> o Also excluded were those who had five acres of agricultural land, or

o A residential flat of 1,000 square feet, or

o A residential plot of 100 square yards and above in notified municipalities, or 200 square yards in other areas.

ARTICLES AMENDED BY 103RD CAA

Article 15 (6)

⇢ It **enables the government to make special provisions for the advancement of any economically weaker sections** other than those already mentioned in 15 (4) and 15 (5). This relates to their admission to the educational insitutions.

⇢ 15 (4) and 15 (5) **relate to the socially and educationally backward classes or SCs/STs.**

Article 16 (6)

⇢ It **enables the government to make special provisions for the advancement of any economically weaker sections other than those mentioned in 16 (4)**. This relates to promotions in appointments or post.

⇢ Article 16 (4) **relates to reservation for those backward classes**, which in the opinion of the state are **not adequately represented** in services.

Key points of Supreme Court verdict (Janhit Abhiyan v Union of India case, 2022)

• Reservation on economic criteria alone did not violate the Basic Structure of the Constitution.

o SC's earlier jurisprudence i.e "economic criteria cannot be sole basis for determination of backwardness" is somewhat restricted to reservation provided to SEBCs.

o And EWS is deemed a separate and distinct category.

Indira Sawhney Case, 1992- Crux of SC's Judgement
- Backward class of citizens can be identified on basis of caste system but cannot be identified only & exclusively with reference to economic criteria.
- Reservation cannot be given beyond the 50% rule.
- Creamy layer must be excluded from the backward classes.

• Exclusion of SC/ST, SEBC was a part of reasonable classification and necessary to avoid double benefits.

   o Also, Reservations as a concept cannot be ruled out in private institutions where education is imparted.

• 50% rule formed in Indira Sawhney judgment in 1992 has not been held to be inflexible and inviolable for all times to come. Further, it had applied only to SC/ST/SEBC/OBC communities and not the general category.

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE (UCC)

Recently a Private Member Bill titled Uniform Civil Code in India Bill, 2020was introduced in Rajya Sabha.

• The bill seeks to provide for a panel to prepare a UCC to be implemented across the country.

• UCC refers to same set of civil laws applicable to all citizens of India in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, custody, adoption and inheritance.
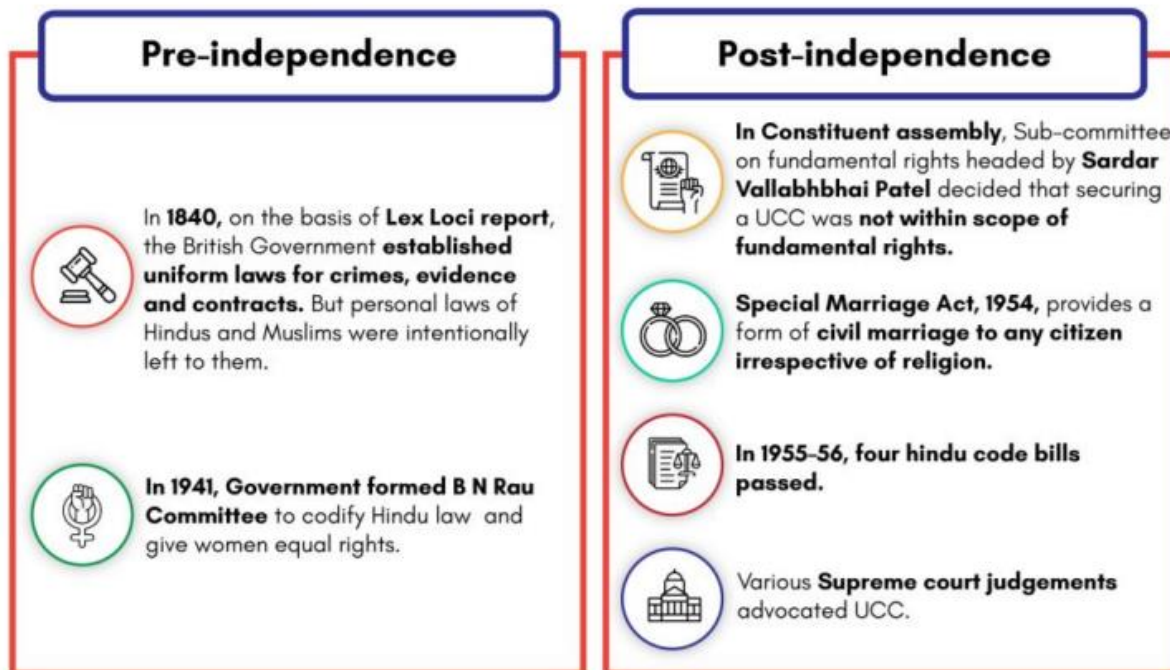
• The provisions for Uniform Civil Code come under Article 44 (Directive Principles of State Policy) of the Constitution.

   o It says that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC for the citizens throughout the territory of India.

   o Thus, UCC comes under non justiciable part of constitution.

   o Also, "Personal laws" comes under Concurrent List.

Historical background ot UCC

Pre-independence

In **1840**, on the basis of **Lex Loci report**, the British Government **established uniform laws for crimes, evidence and contracts.** But personal laws of Hindus and Muslims were intentionally left to them.

In 1941, Government formed **B N Rau Committee** to codify Hindu law and give women equal rights.

Post-independence

In Constituent assembly, Sub-committee on fundamental rights headed by **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** decided that securing a UCC was **not within scope of fundamental rights.**

Special Marriage Act, 1954, provides a form of **civil marriage to any citizen irrespective of religion.**

In 1955–56, four hindu code bills passed.

Various **Supreme court judgements** advocated UCC.

Current Status of Personal Laws in India

• Different religious communities are currently governed by a system of personal laws, which have been codified over the years through various pieces of legislation.

o For example, Hindu personal law is codified in four bills: the Hindu Marriage Act, Hindu Succession Act, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, and Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act.

✓ The term 'Hindu' also includes Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists for the purpose of these laws.

o Certain aspects of Muslim personal law are expressly recognised in India in acts such as the Shariat Application Act and Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act.

o Christian marriages and divorces are governed by the Indian Christian Marriages Act and the Indian Divorce Act, while Zoroastrians are subject to the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act.

• There are some secular laws as well. For example, Special Marriage Act, under which Inter-religion marriages take place, and the Guardians and Wards Act, which establishes the rights and duties of guardians.

• Goa is, at present, the only state in India with a UCC. The Portuguese Civil Code of 1867, which continues to be implemented after India annexed the territory in 1961, applies to all Goans, irrespective of their religious or ethnic community.

    o However, Portuguese Code is not completely a UCC.

    o It makes certain provisions on religious basis. For example, Hindu men are allowed bigamy if wife fails to deliver a child by age of 25, or a male child by age of 30.

Important judicial pronouncements in context of UCC

Shah Bano case (1985): Parliament should outline the contours of a **common civil code** as it is an instrument that facilitates **national harmony and equality before law.**

Ms. Jordan Diengdeh v. S.S. Chopra (1985): Need for framing **Uniform Code for marriage and divorce** was raised by the Court

Sarla Mudgal Case (1995): Reiterated the **need for Parliament to frame a UCC,** which would help cause of **national integration** by removing **ideological contradictions.**

RIGHT TO VOTE FOR UNDERTRIALS

• Supreme Court (SC) has decided to examine law depriving undertrials the right to vote.

• Decision to examine came on a petition challenging Section 62 (5) of Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951 which deprives prisoners of their right to vote.

o This restriction does not apply to a person under preventive detention.

• According to latest National Crime Reports Bureau (NCRB) report, there are around 5.5 lakh prisoners in various jails across country.

Arguments supporting Prisoners right to vote	Arguments against
• Section 62(5) of RPA is **discriminatory because of its broad language** which denies right to vote even to those detained in civil prison. • **Considered unreasonable** as a convicted person allowed to vote if on bail while denying this right to even undertrials, if in prison. • **Right to vote** is cornerstone of a democracy.	• In **Anukul Chandra Pradhan v. Union of India (1997)**, SC upheld **constitutional validity** of **Section 62 (5)** as: o Right to vote is **not conferred as per Article 14** of Constitution. o Right to vote is **subjected to limitations imposed** by legislature. o It helps to **avoid criminalization of politics** and **maintain election integrity.** • **Resource crunch as permitting this** would require greater security arrangements.

INITIATIVES LAUNCHED UNDER E-COURT PROJECT

• Newly launched projects include:

o Virtual Justice Clock: Exhibits vital statistics at Court level giving the details of the cases instituted, cases disposed and pendency.

o JustIS Mobile App 2.0: Tool for judicial officers for effective court and case management by monitoring pendency and disposal of cases.

o Digital court: Initiative to make court records available to judge in digitised form to enable the transition to Paperless Courts.

o S3WaaS Websites: To generate, configure, deploy and manage websites for publishing specified information and services related to district judiciary.

• E-Courts Mission Mode Project (2007) is a national eGovernance project for ICT enablement of district & subordinate courts.

o It was conceptualised based on the report submitted by e-Committee, Supreme Court of India.

o E-Committee is the governing body headed by Chief Justice of India.

• Benefits of e-Courts

o Make functioning of the courts accountable and transparent.

o Effective management of court and cases, bringing down of pendency.

o Will make the justice delivery system affordable, accessible and cost-effective.

• Other initiatives: National Judicial Data Grid NJDG, Virtual Courts, live-streaming of proceedings etc.

POLICE COMMISSIONERATE SYSTEM (PCS)

• Agra, Ghaziabad and Prayagraj to get Police Commissionerate System (PCS).

• Decision to set up PCS has been taken due to increase in population, religious and cultural significance, tourism, provide better policing and maintain law and order.

o Districts would be declared as metropolitan citiesas per rules of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)before implementing PCS.

o Earlier, Lucknow and Noida adopted PCS followed by Kanpur and Varanasi.

Police Commissionerate System (PCS)	Dual Command System (DCS)

• **Commissioner of Police (CP)** is **head** of a **unified police command structure**, is responsible for force in city, and is **accountable to state government**.
  ○ CP is **drawn from Deputy Inspector General rank or above** and is assisted by Special/Joint/Additional /Deputy Commissioners.
  ○ Such police officers have the **power of preventive arrest,** imposing Section 144 of CrPC Act and initiate chapter proceedings.
• Office also has **magisterial powers**, including those related to **regulation, control, and licensing.**
• Various committees constituted to suggest police reforms have recommended **PCS implementation in cities** which have **population of more than 10 lakhs.**
	• District Magistrate (DM) and Superintendent of Police (SP) **share powers and responsibilities** in a district.
	  ○ DM is entrusted with **issuing arrest warrants, licenses** while SP has powers and responsibilities to **investigate crime and make arrests.**
	• System is designed to **ensure lower concentration of power** and making police more accountable to DM at district level.

CRITICAL INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE (CII)

• Census, National Population Register (NPR) databases notified as Critical Information Infrastructure (CII).

• Notification means that any tampering or unauthorized access to data associated with Census applications, NPR database or data centres of Registrar General of India (RGI) will be punishable by ten years imprisonment.

• CII, also known as critical infrastructure, refers to a physical or cyber-based system, incapacitation or destruction of which shall have debilitating impact on national security, economy, public health or safety.

    o CII is declared by government under Section 70 of Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 (amended in 2008).

• Measures taken to protect CI

    o National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) is the nodal agency for taking all measures to protect CIIs.

    o Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents.

    o National Cyber Security Coordinator (NCSC) to coordinate with different agencies at the national level for cyber security matters.

    o National Cyber Security Policy 2013 to build a secure and resilient cyberspace.

ASEAN

Recently, 19th India- ASEAN summit was held in Cambodia.

• 2022 is being celebrated as ASEAN-India Friendship Year as the summit also marked 30th anniversary of India-ASEAN dialogue.

• Key highlights of the summit

    o Both sides elevated ties from strategic to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) to focus on specific areas including Maritime security, projects in Indo-Pacific, Cybersecurity and inter-operability of digital financial systems etc.

    o India announced an additional outlay of $5 million for ASEAN-India Science and Technology Fund.

About ASEAN

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) **was established in 1967 with signing of ASEAN Declaration** (Bangkok Declaration) by Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- **Objective** - It **aims to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development** through joint endeavours among Southeast Asian Nations.
- **The ASEAN Summit** — It is the highest policy-making body in ASEAN comprising the Head of States or Government of ASEAN Member States.
- If ASEAN were a single country, it would be **the seventh-largest economy in the world.** It is projected to **rank as the fourth-largest economy by 2050.**

ASEAN Countries

DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION BILL, 2022

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has released a draft of Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022for public consultations.

• The Bill will establish comprehensive legal framework governing digital personal data protection in India.

• The Bill seeks to provide for processing of digital personal data in a manner that recognizes both right of individuals to protect their personal data and need to process it for lawful purposes.

Features of the draft bill

• Notice and Consent: It contemplates seeking prior consent of data principal, which should disclose description of personal data sought and purpose of processing it.

    o The Data Principal may give, manage, review or withdraw her consent to the Data Fiduciary through a Consent Manager.

• Obligations of the data fiduciary: To ensure that personal data is processed, stored or erased in a safe and proper manner, bill imposes some responsibilities like:

    o If there is a breach, data fiduciary must inform the Board and the data principal.

    o Deletion of personal data once purpose for collection is no longer served, or the retention is no longer necessary.

    o Every data fiduciary must appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO) to address data principal's queries and concerns.

    o Additional obligations while processing personal data of children, which includes seeking consent from parents/guardians.

• Significant Data fiduciary: Central government can identify a data fiduciary as a significant data fiduciary if it handles high volume of sensitive personal data, involves a risk of harm to data principal and impact on sovereignty and integrity of India, security of state, public order, etc.

Key Definitions under the bill

- **Data Principal**: To denote the individual **whose data is being collected**.
- **Data Fiduciary**: Entity (can be an individual, company, firm, state etc), which decides **purpose and means of processing** of an individual's personal data.
- **Consent Manager**: The Consent Manager shall be a registered entity that is accountable to the Data Principal and acts on behalf of the Data Principal.
- **Personal data:** Any data about an individual who is **identifiable by or in relation** to such data.
- **Child:** An individual who has **not completed eighteen** years of age.
- **Data**: A representation of **information, facts, concepts, opinions or instructions** in a manner suitable for **communication, interpretation or processing** by humans or automated means.
- **Person:** Includes: **an individual; a Hindu Undivided Family; a company; a firm; an association of persons or body of individuals**, whether incorporated or not; **State; and every artificial juristic person** (not falling within any of preceding sub-clauses);

BLUEBUGGING

• It is a form of hacking that lets attackers access a device through its discoverable Bluetooth connection.

• Once a Bluetooth connection is established, hackers use brute force attacks to bypass authentication.

• Once a device is blue bugged, a hacker can listen to the calls, read and send messages and steal and modify contacts.

• To prevent: Turning off Bluetooth when not in use, updating the device, limited use of public Wi-Fi, etc.

EXERCISES IN NEWS

• Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2022: It is a Maritime Partnership Exercise involving Royal Australian Navy and Indian Navy.

• Garuda Shakti: It is a bilateral joint training exercise between India and Indonesia amongst the Special Forces of both the sides.

o Note: Garuda is a joint air force exercise between India and France.

• Yudh Abhyas 22: It is an annual India-US exercise.

• Exercise HARIMAU SHAKTI: It is an annual training event between the Indian and Malaysian Army.

27TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP 27)

The 27th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, recently concluded.

About COP27

o Earlier, 26th session of the COP (COP26), held in 2021 in Glasgow, had concluded with parties agreeing to the Glasgow Climate Pact which delivered several pivotal outcomes like adoption of first ever COP decision to explicitly target action against fossil fuels calling for a "phasedown of unabated coal" and "phase-out" of inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies, etc.

About United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

- UNFCCC emerged from the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and **was formally adopted in 1994 with near-universal membership**.
- It **became the first ever global treaty to explicitly address climate change,** with the core objectives of stabilizing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and preventing "dangerous" human interference with the climate system.

About Conference of the Parties (COP)

- The COP is the **supreme decision-making body of the UNFCCC.**
- **State Parties gather annually, along with stakeholders from scientific community and civil society**, to discuss a wide range of subject matter like mitigation, adaptation goals, climate finance, international carbon markets etc.

Key outcomes of the COP27

Areas of discussion	Important Decisions and Developments
Climate targets	• Countries have been requested to **revisit and strengthen their 2030 climate targets by the end of 2023,** as necessary to align with the Paris Agreement.
Mitigation	• **Finalised the details of Mitigation work programme** to urgently scale up mitigation ambition and implementation in this decade.
Adaptation	• **Development of a framework for the global goal on adaptation** to be undertaken through a structured approach under the **Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme in 2023 at COP28.** • **New pledges, totalling more than USD 230 million**, were made to the Adaptation Fund.
Finance	• **Sharm el-Sheikh dialogue launched on Article 2.1c** of the Paris Agreement, which says "financial flows" should be aligned with global temperature targets. ○ It will report back at COP28.
Loss and damage	• **New funding arrangements established** for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, in responding to loss and damage. ○ **A transitional committee** to be set up to make recommendations for the operationalization of the new funding arrangements at COP28.

GLACIERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

According to UNESCO's World Heritage Glaciers Report, a third of Glaciers among the World Heritage sites will disappear by 2050.More about the news

• The World Heritage Glaciers Report is jointly released by UNESCO and IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources).

• Key findings of the report:

o Glaciers have been identified in 50 sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Around 18,600 glaciers have been identified in these sites, representing almost 10% of the Earth's glaciered area.

o They have been retreating at an accelerated rate since 2000 due to rising CO2 emissions.

o The report also states that, if emissions are drastically cut to limit global warming to 1.5°C relative to pre-industrial levels, glaciers in two-thirds of World Heritage sites could be saved.

GLACIERIZED AREA OF INDIA

E-WASTE (MANAGEMENT) RULES 2022

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified E-waste (management) Rules 2022, in the exercise of the powers conferred by the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Key Provisions mentioned in E-waste (management) Rules 2022

• Definition: 'E-waste' means electrical and electronic equipment, whole or in part discarded as waste, as well as rejects from manufacturing, refurbishment and repair processes.

• Application: These rules shall apply to every manufacturer, producer, refurbisher, dismantler, and recycler involved processing of e-waste with certain exceptions.

• Registration: The manufacturer, producer, refurbisher, or recycler of the e-products need to compulsorily register with Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

• Extended Producer Responsibility Certificates: Rules aim to incentivize registered electronic waste recyclers by introducing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) certificates (which were not part of 2016 Rules).

> o EPR means responsibility of any producer of electrical or electronic equipment for meeting recycling targets to ensure environmentally sound management of e-waste.

Status of E-waste generation in India

• India has emerged as 3rd largest Electronic waste producer in the world after China and United States.

> o India produces about 4 mMT (million Metric Tonnes) of e-waste. This is expected to increase 40-fold by 2050.

• Computer devices accounts for nearly 70% of annual e-waste production, followed by telecom sector, medical equipment and electric equipment.

• Only 1.5% of electronic waste generated in India is recycled through institutional processes.

> o Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, and Haryana are among the States that have a bigger capacity to dismantle and recycle e-waste.

GREAT NICOBAR MEGA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has granted environmental clearance for diversion of 130.75 sq. km of forest in Great Nicobar Island (GNI) for mega ₹72,000-crore multi-development projects.

• Key condition for the environmental clearance is the submission of a detailed scheme for compensatory afforestation, which is to be done on non-notified forest land.

Great Nicobar Island (GNI)

- It is **India's southernmost point** and strategically important area.
- It extends from **north of Campbell Bay to Indira Point** and further up to **Pemayya Bay area in south**.
- It is occupied by **Shompen and Nicobarese tribes**.
- Project area falls near **two national parks – Galathea Bay National Park and Campbell Bay National Park**.
- It is home to a **UNESCO World Heritage Site i.e. Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve**.
- It covers **tropical evergreen forest ecosystems**.

Concerns associated with the Nicobar Project

• Infrastructure: 8.5 lakh trees will have to be cut in Great Nicobar for development of infrastructure in an ecologically important and fragile region.

• Tribals: Due to massive infrastructure development on the island, there is persistent threat of livelihood, culture, health etc., to indigeneous tribes on islands which include Shompen and Nicobarese tribes.

• Coral reefs and mangrove: Loss of tree cover will lead to increased runoff and sediment deposits in the ocean, impacting the coral reefs in the area and loss of 12 to 20 hectares of mangrove cover.

o Around 10 hectares of coral cover will have to be translocated.

Compensatory Afforestation

- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 provide that under compensatory afforestation, **when forest land is diverted for non-forest use like mining or infrastructure, the project proponents are required to**
  - provide funds to the state forest department to do afforestation in a non-forest land of equal size or
  - improve a degraded forest land of double the size of the diverted land.
- The government enacted **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act 2016** to provide a proper institutional mechanism for compensatory afforestation matters.
  - To streamline the management of the funds, **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)** has been set up at the state level to monitor, assist and evaluate compensatory afforestation activities in the respective states.
  - The state-level CAMPAs are monitored by a National CAMPA Advisory Council.

RIGHT TO REPAIR

Government is planning to set up a unified national portal for multi-brand gadget repair.

• The single-point portal will roll out the Ministry of Consumer Affair (MoCA) 'Right to Repair (RTR)' policy.

• MoCA has written to leading consumer electronics firms such as Samsung, Phillips etc., to provide brand manuals, repair charges, service centres and overhaul costs, which will be accessible on the unified portal.

• Decision to set up portal is in line with LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) movement.

   o Earlier, Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) set up committee on RTR to emphasize on LiFE movementthrough sustainable consumption.

What is Right to Repair?

• It refers to a framework that requires manufacturers to disclose product details to customers so that they can repair devices by themselves or through third parties rather than relying on the original producers.

  o It aims to cut down restrictive practicesintroduced by some manufacturers.

  o Key sectors identified for RTR framework include Farming Equipment, Mobile Phones/ Tablets, Consumer Durables and Automobiles & Automobile Equipment.

• While there is no specific law on RTR in India, Competition Commission of India (CCI) in Shamsher Kataria v. Honda Siel Cars India Ltd. case, 2014 determined that exclusive access to spare parts only to authorised repairers of vehicle manufacturers amounted to an anti-competitive practice.

  o Thus, CCI mandated that manufacturers need to make spares available to all the repairers to promote healthy market competition.
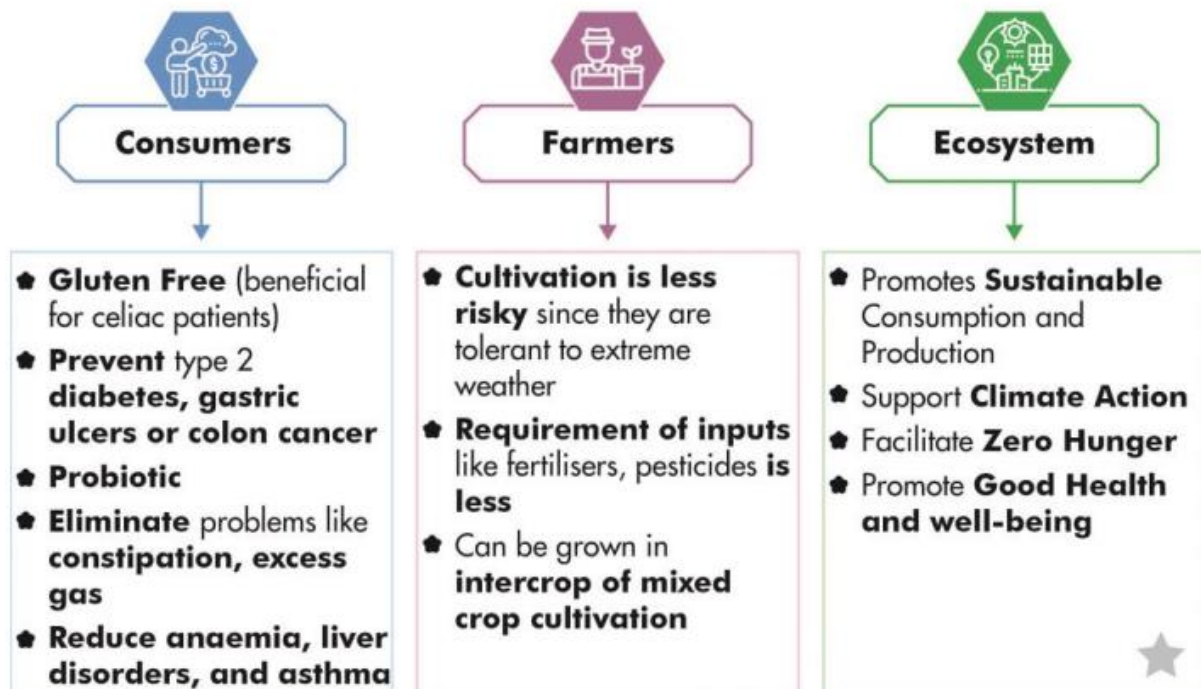
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS (IYM) 2023

Recently, The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, organized an opening ceremony for the International Year of Millets – 2023 (IYM2023) in Rome, Italy.

About millets

• Millets are a diverse family of small-grained cereals (Poaceae family), indigenous to various parts of India.

• They are popularly known as Nutri-cereals as they provide most of the nutrients required for normal functioning of the human body.

• They contain 7-12% protein, 2-5% fat, 65-75% carbohydrates and 15-20% dietary fibre.

Benefits of millets

Consumers	Farmers	Ecosystem
• **Gluten Free** (beneficial for celiac patients) • **Prevent** type 2 **diabetes, gastric ulcers or colon cancer** • **Probiotic** • **Eliminate** problems like **constipation, excess gas** • **Reduce anaemia, liver disorders, and asthma**	• **Cultivation is less risky** since they are tolerant to extreme weather • **Requirement of inputs** like fertilisers, pesticides **is less** • Can be grown in **intercrop of mixed crop cultivation**	• Promotes **Sustainable Consumption and Production** • Support **Climate Action** • Facilitate **Zero Hunger** • Promote **Good Health and well-being**

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

The 19th Meeting of Conference of the Parties (CoP 19) to CITES was held in Panama.

• CoP of CITES is also known as the World Wildlife Conference.

• On India's initiative a proposal to clarify the quantity of **Shisham** (Dalbergia sissoo) items such as furniture was considered.

    o Shisham is included in Appendix II of convention, thereby requiring to follow CITES regulations for trade of the species.

    o Indian rosewood or the shisham tree is used to make durable dark-reddish tables, beds, bookshelfs or chairs.

    o It is also the state tree of Punjab.

About CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)

- It is an **international agreement** between governments to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants **does not threaten their survival.**
- CITES was drafted as a result of **a resolution adopted in 1963** at a meeting of members of **IUCN (World Conservation Union).** Text of Convention was **finally agreed** in Washington in 1973 and **entered into force in 1975.**
- The **CITES secretariat** is administered by **United Nations Environment Programme** and is located at **Geneva, Switzerland.**
  - There are **currently 184 parties** (including India) to the Convention.
  - All 184 Parties to CITES have **right to attend**, to **put forward proposals** to consider, and to **vote on all decisions.**
- Although CITES is **legally binding** on the Parties, it **does not take the place of national laws**. Rather it provides a framework to be **respected by each Party**, which has to **adopt its own domestic legislation** to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level.
- The species covered by CITES are listed **in three Appendices**, according to the **degree of protection** they need (Refer infographic).

ACECLOFENAC

• Indian Veterinary Research Institute has demanded a ban on using aceclofenac in cattle.

  o Aceclofenac is a veterinary painkiller.

• This is because study showed that aceclofenac metabolises into diclofenac in water buffaloes and cows which eventually threatens vulture populationsin the country.

  o Diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory drug, was banned in 2006 as it was the main cause of dramatic decline (99 per cent) of vulture population across Asia.

HIMALAYAN YAK

• Food Safety and Standard Authority of India has accepted Himalayan Yak as a 'food animal'.

o Food Animals are animals that are raised and used for food production or consumption.

o It is expected to check its population decline by making it part of the conventional milk and meat industry.

WORLD POPULATION GROWTH

The world's population, recently, reached 8 billion according to estimates from the United Nations Population Fund(UNPFA).

Trend in World population growth

• Temporal disparity: Much of the world's population growth has come in the last century as better living standards and health advancements extended life expectancy.

o While the human population reached the first one billion in hundreds of thousands of years, it reached from 7 billion to 8 billion just since 2010.

• Spatial disparity:

o Declining population growth in developed countries: Population growth slowdown is largely driven by wealthy countries particularly on account of burden of raising a child and falling marriage rates.

o Rising population in low income countries (LICs): They would drive much of the population growth with just eight accounting for the majority of a projected increase until 2050.

✓ These countries are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.

• By 2050, India would become the most populous country surpassing China.

• Average life expectancy: Global life expectancy soared from 34 years in 1913 to 72 years in 2022 and is expected to continue on that long-term trajectory.

• Slow growth rate: The global population is growing at its slowest rate since 1950 and has fallen under 1% in 2020.

o It took the global population 12 years to grow from 7 to 8 billion, but will reach 9 billion in about 15 years, in 2037.

MOTHER TONGUE SURVEY OF INDIA (MTSI)

• Ministry of Home Affairs recently completed MTSI.

• MTSI surveys the mother tongues, which are returned consistently across two and more Census decades and analyses their linguistic features.

• As per analysis of 2011 linguistic census data, more than 19,500 languages or dialects are spoken in India as mother tongues.

    o Hindi is the most widely spoken mother tongue, with 43.6 per cent of population declaring it as mother tongue.

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN SPACE SECTOR

Vikram-S, India's first privately built rocket was launched recently from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

• Named 'Mission Prarambh', it is India's first private space mission.

• The rocket has been developed by Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace, a company that was started in 2018.

• It was launched with support from ISRO and IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre).

• It is called Vikram-S, named after Vikram Sarabhai, the founder of India's space programme.

• The rocket reached an altitude of 89.5 km. The target for the rocket was to reach space, which begins at an altitude of around 80 km, and to attempt touching the Karman Line located at around the 100-km altitude mark.

    o The Kármán line is a boundary that borders Earth's atmosphere and the beginning of space.

ARTEMIS 1

Recently, NASA's Artemis 1 mission successfully lifted off from the Kennedy Space Centre.

About Artemis 1 mission

• It will be the first in a series of increasingly complex missions to build a long-term human presence at the Moon for decades to come.

• It will be an uncrewed flight testthat will provide a foundation for\human deep space exploration.

YOTTA D1

• Country's biggest 'Data Centre' was recently inaugurated in Uttar Pradesh.

• North India's first hyperscale data centre 'Yotta D1', has been built at a cost of Rs 5,000 crore, in Greater Noida.

    o The data centre will increase data storage capacity of the country, which until now stood at 2%.

    o This is despite India having 650 million internet users in the world are from India, using 20 percent of data.

Data Centre

    o It is a dedicated secure space within a centralized location where computing and networking equipment is concentrated for purpose of collecting, storing, processing, distributing or allowing access to large amounts of data.

Places in News: India

Jammu and Kashmir
- India Post Payments Bank conducted India's first floating financial literacy camp at Dal Lake.

Ladakh
- Work on India's first-ever night sky sanctuary in Ladakh's Hanle will be over in a month.

Himachal Pradesh
- Tashigang polling station (world's highest) witnessed 100 percent voting.

Nagaland
- President visited Kohima World War II Cemetery.

Uttar Pradesh
- Ranipur Tiger Reserve became 53rd tiger reserve of India.
- Country's biggest 'Data Centre' inaugurated at Greater Noida.
- Kashi Tamil Sangamam organized in Varanasi.

Tamil Nadu
- Cauvery South Wildlife Sanctuary notified as state's 17th wildlife sanctuary.

Places in News: World

Russia
Shiveluch volcano in Russia's far eastern Kamchatka peninsula is gearing up for its first powerful eruption

Egypt
Cop27 summit held at Sharm el-Sheikh.

Belarus
11th Session of India-Belarus Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation was held.

Korean Peninsula
North Korea and South Korea fired a number of missiles into waters near each other's coasts.

Central African Republic
Central African Republic seeks Indian investments to mine gold, uranium.

Hawaii
Mauna Loa, the world's largest active volcano, started erupting.

Equatorial Guinea
Equatorial Guinea President, world's longest serving president (in power since 1979), won the 6th term

Indonesia
A 5.6-magnitude earthquake struck Java.

Argentina
Indian team in Argentina to scout for lithium deals.

Tanzania
Indian Navy maiden Trilateral Exercise with Mozambique And Tanzania.

Pakistan
Indian pilgrims to participate in birth anniversary celebrations of Sant Shadaram Sahib.

East Timor
ASEAN has agreed in principle to admit East Timor as the group's 11th member.

Mozambique
Indian Navy maiden Trilateral Exercise with Mozambique And Tanzania.

Ethiopia
Peace deal signed between Ethiopian Government and Tigray People's Liberation Front.