

CURRENT AFFAIRS : AUGUST 2023

DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT 2023

The President of India recently granted assent to the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill (DPDP), 2023.

Background

- In 2017, the Supreme Court recognised privacy as a fundamental right in the K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India case.
- Following this, the Justice Srikrishna Committee (established by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)) proposed the initial draft of the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill in 2018.
- The government revised the draft and introduced it as the PDP Bill 2019. Bill referred to a joint committee of both the Houses of Parliament (JPC).
- However, in 2022, the government withdrew the PDP Bill 2019 by citing the extensive changes made by the Joint Committee of Parliament to it.
- MeitY released a draft of the DPDP Bill 2022 for public consultations, which later became the DPDP Act 2023.

About Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023

- DPDP Act aims to regulate the processing of digital personal data while ensuring individuals' right to protect their data and the need to process it for lawful purposes.
- It protects digital personal data (that is, the data by which a person may be identified) by providing:
 - o The obligations of Data Fiduciaries (that is, persons, companies and government entities who process data) for data processing (that is, collection, storage or any other operation on personal data);
 - o The rights and duties of Data Principals (that is, the person to whom the data relates);
 - o Financial penalties for breach of rights, duties, and obligations.

Specifications	Details
Applicability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processing of digital personal data within India where such data is collected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in digital form or in non-digital form and digitised subsequently. Processing of personal data outside India if it is for offering goods or services in India. Does not apply to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal data processed for any personal purpose. personal data that is made or caused to be made publicly available by- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Data Principal to whom such personal data relates; or ✓ any other person who is under legal obligation to make such personal data publicly available.
Consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal data may be processed only for a lawful purpose after obtaining the consent of the Data Principal (who shall have the right to withdraw consent at any time). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent will not be required for 'legitimate uses' including the provision of benefits or services by the government, medical emergency etc. For a child or a person with a disability, consent will be provided by the parent or legal guardian.
Data Protection Board of India (DPBI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for the establishment of DPBI by the Central government. Key functions of the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring compliance and imposing penalties. Directing data fiduciaries to take necessary measures in event of a data breach. Hearing grievances made by affected persons. Board members will be appointed for two years and will be eligible for re-appointment. Appeals against its decisions will lie with the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)
Rights and Duties of Data Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data principal will have the right to- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain information about processing. Seek correction and erasure of personal data. Grievance redressal. Right to nominate a person to exercise rights in case of death or incapacity. Data principals must not register a false or frivolous complaint and furnish any false particulars. Violation of duties will be punishable with a penalty of up to Rs 10,000.
Obligations of Data Fiduciaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Fiduciary (Entity determining the purpose and means of processing) must- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the accuracy and completeness of data. Build reasonable security safeguards to prevent a data breach. Inform DPBI and affected persons in the event of a breach. Erase personal data as soon as the purpose has been met and retention is not necessary for legal purposes.
Significant Data Fiduciaries (SDF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Government may notify any Data Fiduciary as SDF, based on factors such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volume and sensitivity of personal data processed. Risk to the rights of data principal Potential impact on the sovereignty and integrity of India Security of the State Risk to electoral democracy Public order SDF will have certain additional obligations including appointing a data protection officer and an independent data auditor and undertaking impact assessment.
Exemptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rights of the data principal and obligations of data fiduciaries (except data security) will not apply in specified cases, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For notified agencies, in the interest of security, sovereignty, public order, etc.; For research, archiving or statistical purposes; For other notified purposes of the Data Fiduciary.

Limitations of Act

- Violate Fundamental Rights:** Exemptions for the State may lead to data collection, processing, and retention beyond what is necessary and may violate the fundamental right to privacy.

o Using exemptions, a government agency may collect data about citizens to create a 360-degree profile for surveillance.

- **Inadequate Safeguard:** The transfer of personal data outside India may not ensure adequate data protection standards in the countries where the transfer of personal data is allowed.
- **No compensation:** The Act has removed Section 43A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, which mandated companies to compensate users in case of mishandling their data.
- **Complicated approach to grievance redressal:** Aggrieved individuals are required to first approach the data fiduciary's redressal mechanism.

- o Unresolved grievances can be escalated to the Data Protection Board, with further appeals to the TDSAT.

- **RTI Exemption:** The Act proposes that the personal information of public officials will not be disclosed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, which could aid corrupt practices by not disclosing assets, liabilities etc.

REFORMING INDIA'S CRIMINAL LAWS

The government introduced three bills in the Lok Sabha to replace the existing criminal laws in India.

- The three bills include:
 - o Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 replacing the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860.
 - o Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 replacing the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973.
 - o Bharatiya Sakshya Bill 2023 replacing the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.
- These bills have been referred to the Standing Committee.

Need of these bills

- **Addressing large pendency in courts:** Union Law Minister stated that almost 4.7 crore cases are pending collectively in the Supreme Court, High Courts and Subordinate Courts.
- **Timely justice delivery:** Complex legal procedures and a lack of resources have led to many undertrials languishing in jails, constituting around 70% of the prison population.
- **Increasing conviction rates:** The criminal justice system's inefficiencies, including inadequate forensic investigation, policing deficiencies, and the influence of powerful individuals on law enforcement, contribute to low conviction rates (around 50%).

- **Evolution of the criminal justice system:** Societal changes and emerging challenges require an evolving and adaptable criminal justice system.

- o Also, integrating modern technology in evidence gathering, storage, and presentation would aid in discovering various criminal dimensions.

- **Erasing colonial legacy:** India's criminal justice system is rooted in its colonial past, which has led to a set of laws and procedures that may not be entirely relevant or suitable for the country's current socio-economic and cultural context.

BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA 2023

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 will repeal the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC), which is the principal law on criminal offences.

Background

- In 1834, the first Indian Law Commission was constituted under the Chairmanship of Lord Thomas **Babington Macaulay** to examine the jurisdiction, power and rules of the existing Courts as well as the police establishments and the laws in force in India.

- o It produced a draft of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in 1837, which was based on the English common law and with colonial interests in mind.

- o The enactment of the IPC was delayed due to subsequent revisions and the 1857 revolt. It was enacted in 1860 and came into force in 1862.

- After independence, it underwent several amendments, and all these alterations and modifications made it a complicated code of law.

- The new bill aims to:

- o strengthen law and order,

- o focus on simplifying the legal procedure, and

- o make existing laws relevant to the contemporary situation of the common man.

Major Provisions of the Bill

- **Sedition:** The Bill removes the offence of sedition (Section 124A of IPC). It instead penalises the following*:

- o exciting or attempting to excite secession, armed rebellion, or subversive activities,
- o encouraging feelings of separatist activities, or
- o endangering the sovereignty or unity and integrity of India.

*These offences may involve the exchange of words or signs, electronic communication, or the use of financial means. These will be punishable with imprisonment of up to seven years or life imprisonment and a fine.

- **Terrorism as an offence:** The Bill defines terrorism as an act that intends to threaten the unity, integrity, and security of the country, to intimidate the general public or disturb public order. Terrorist acts include:

- o Using firearms, bombs, or hazardous substances (biological or chemical) to cause death, danger to life, or spread a message of fear,
- o Destroying property or disrupting essential services, and
- o Activities included in the treaties listed in the Second Schedule of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, such as unlawful seizure of aircraft or taking of hostages.

- **Organised Crime as an offence:** The Bill defines organised crime as a continuing unlawful activity such as kidnapping, extortion, contract killing, financial scams, cyber-crime etc., carried out by individuals acting singly or jointly as members of or on behalf of a crime syndicate.

BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA 2023

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 will repeal the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The Code provides for the procedure for arrest, prosecution, and bail for offences under various Acts, including the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

Background

- CrPC was first enacted in 1882 by the British Parliament and has undergone several amendments, most importantly in 1898, 1923 and 1955.

- The Law Commission of India, in its 41st report, recommended a significant revision of the code, which led to the creation of CrPC 1973.

Major Provisions of the Bill

- **Detention of Undertrials:** First-time offenders will be released on bail if they have completed detention for one-third of the maximum imprisonment for an offence.

o If the accused has spent half of the maximum period of imprisonment during investigation or trial, he/she must be released on a personal bond. This does not apply to offences which are punishable by death and life imprisonment.

- **Trials in electronic mode:** All trials, inquiries and proceedings can be held in electronic mode.
- **Medical examination of the accused:** Any police officer can request for medical examination of the accused in certain cases, such as rape.
- **Forensic investigation:** It mandates forensic investigation for offences punishable with at least seven years of imprisonment.

o If a state does not have a forensics facility, it shall utilise such facility in another state.

- **Signature and finger impressions:** It allows for the collection of specimen signatures, handwriting, finger impressions and voice samples from any person, whether arrested or not.
- **Timelines:** It prescribes timelines for various procedures such as giving judgment, informing victims of the progress of the investigation and framing of charges.
- **Trial in the absence of offender:** It provides for the conduct of trial and pronouncement of judgment in the absence of a proclaimed offender.

o Proclaimed offender refers to a person who is accused of an offence punishable with imprisonment of at least 10 years or death and fails to appear at a specified time and place as specified by a Court.

- **Stopping political waiver of punishments:** The bill adds that death sentences can only be converted to life imprisonment and life imprisonment can be pardoned only within seven years of punishment.

BHARATIYA SAKSHYA BILL 2023

Bhartiya Sakshya Bill, 2023 will repeal the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. The Act provides rules for the admissibility of evidence in legal proceedings.

Background

- The Evidence Act was enacted in 1872 with a view to consolidate the laws relating to evidence on which the court could come to a conclusion and pronounce the judgment.
- The law of evidence (not being substantive or procedural law), falls in the category of 'adjective law', which defines the pleading and methodology by which the substantive or procedural laws are operationalised.
- The existing law does not address the technological advancement undergone in the country during the last few decades.

Major Provisions of the Bill

- **Electronic or digital records as evidence:** It provides that electronic or digital records will have the same legal effect as paper records.
 - o It expands electronic records to include information stored in semiconductor memory or any communication devices (smartphones, laptops).
 - o This will also include records on emails, server logs, smartphones, locational evidence and voicemails.
- **Oral evidence:** Oral evidence includes statements made before Courts by witnesses in relation to a fact under inquiry. The Bill adds any information given electronically to be considered as oral evidence.
- **Joint trials:** It refers to the trial of more than one person for the same offence. In a joint trial, if a confession made by one of the accused which also affects other accused is proven, it will be treated as a confession against both.

- **Substantive Law:** These are basically laws derived from **Common, Statutory, Constitution and the Principles found in judicial decisions**. E.g., Penal Law, law of property etc.
- **Procedural Law:** It is that law which prescribes a **method of enforcing rights or obtaining redress for their invasion**; machinery for carrying on a Suit. E.g., Code of Civil Procedure, Code of Criminal Procedure etc.

CEC AND OTHER EC (APPOINTMENT, CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND TERM OF OFFICE) BILL, 2023

Recently, the Union Government introduced the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023, in Rajya Sabha.

- It repeals the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.
- Bill aims to regulate the appointment, conditions of service and term of office of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs).
 - It also seeks to set up a procedure for the transaction of business by the Election Commission and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The present process of appointment of CEC and EC:

- As per **Article 324**, the Election Commission consists of the CEC and such a number of other ECs as the President may decide.
- Supreme Court in Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India judgment declared that the President shall make appointment of CEC and the ECs on the advice of a Committee consisting of the
 - Prime Minister,
 - Leader of the Opposition (LoP) of the Lok Sabha, and in case no LoP is available, the leader of the largest opposition Party in the Lok Sabha in terms of numerical strength and
 - Chief Justice of India (CJI).

- Till this SC ruling, Election Commissioners and CECs had been appointed by the President after recommendations from the government.

GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI (AMENDMENT) ACT 2023

The Parliament passed the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) (Amendment) Act 2023.

- GNCTD (Amendment) Act repeals the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance 2023.
- The ordinance, giving the Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) more powers over the Delhi government, was issued after the decision of the Supreme Court in the GNCTD vs. Union of India (2023) case.
 - o The question before the Court was whether the Delhi government (headed by the elected Chief Minister) or the LG (appointed by the President) would have control over services and civil servants in Delhi.
 - o The Supreme Court granted that the government of Delhi had complete command over most services in the capital, leaving out public order, land, and police, over which the central government has exclusive powers.
- In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled that the LG did not have independent decision-making powers and was bound to follow the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.

The governance model of Delhi NCT

- **Classification as a Union Territory (UT):** Under the States' Reorganization Act of 1956, Delhi was classified as a UT, governed under Article 239 of the Constitution.
 - o It states that UTs are directly governed by the President or an administrator appointed by the President.
- **Special Status:** Following the recommendations of the S Balakrishnan Committee, the 69th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1991 conferred special status on Delhi and designated it as the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD).
 - o It added Article 239AA to the Constitution and made Delhi a UT with a legislature and a council of ministers.
 - o The Lieutenant Governor (LG) is designated as the administrator of Delhi, operating with the aid and advice of the council of ministers of Delhi.

- **Powers of Delhi Legislature:** The Delhi Legislative Assembly has the power to legislate over subjects in the State List and Concurrent List, except for police, public order, and land. The Delhi government has executive powers over the same subjects.

- o Also, Parliament can legislate over all matters in the State and Concurrent Lists related to Delhi.

- **GNCTD Act:** The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act, 1991 lays down the framework for the functioning of the Delhi Assembly and the Delhi government.

- o It outlines the powers of the Assembly, the discretionary powers of the LG, and the Chief Minister's duty to provide information to the LG.

Key provisions of the Act

- **National Capital Civil Services Authority (NCCSA):** The Act establishes the NCCSA to make recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi (LG) on certain matters related to services.

- **Functioning of NCCSA:** The central government will appoint both the Principal Home Secretary and Chief Secretary.

- o All decisions of the Authority will be based on a majority vote of the members present and voting.

- **Powers of the LG:** Matters where the LG may act solely on his discretion are:

- o Matters outside the legislative competence of the Delhi Legislative Assembly but which have been delegated to the LG, or

- o Matters where he/she is required by law to act in his discretion or exercise any judicial or quasi-judicial functions.

- **Primacy to LG:** The Act expands the discretionary role of the LG by giving him powers to approve the recommendations of the NCCSA, or return them for reconsideration.

- o In the case of a difference of opinion between the LG and the NCCSA, the former's decision will be final.

NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

Recently, the union government faced a no-confidence motion in the Monsoon session of the parliament.

About No Confidence motion

- **No-confidence motion:** A legislative resolution introduced in the Lok Sabha that allows the Opposition to challenge the government's majority and ability to govern.
 - o In a parliamentary democracy, a government can be in power only if it commands a majority in the directly elected House. Implying that if a No-confidence motion is passed, the Government of the day will have to resign.
 - o The motion of No-Confidence can only be moved in Lok Sabha by any of its MPs.
- **Constitutional articles/rules of business in Lok Sabha**
 - o **Article 75(3) of our Constitution** embodies this rule by specifying that the Council of Ministers are collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha.
 - o **Rule 198 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha** provides a provision regarding the motion of No Confidence in Council of Ministers.
- **Grounds:** A Motion of No-confidence need not set out any grounds on which it is based.
 - o Even when grounds are mentioned in the notice and read out in the House, they do not form part of the Noconfidence Motion.

MEDIATION BILL, 2023

Both houses of Parliament recently passed the Mediation Bill 2023 seeking to promote mediation as a preferred mode of Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in India.

About Mediation Bill, 2023

- **Defines Mediation:** It includes expression mediation, pre-litigation mediation, online mediation, community mediation, conciliation or an expression of similar import.
 - o Here, parties attempt to reach an amicable settlement of their dispute with the assistance of a third person referred to as mediator.
- **Voluntary Pre-litigation Mediation:** Parties can attempt to settle civil or commercial disputes by mediation before approaching any court or certain tribunals.
- **Disputes not fit for mediation:** Centre may amend this list. List includes:
 - o relating to claims against minors or persons of unsound mind,

- o involving criminal prosecution,
- o affecting the rights of third parties.
- **Territorial Jurisdiction:** Mediation to take place within the territorial jurisdiction of the court or tribunal of competent jurisdiction, unless parties agree otherwise or undertake mediation in online mode.
- **Timeline for conducting Mediation:** Must be completed within 120 days, which may be extended by another 60 days with the consent of the parties.
 - o A party may withdraw from mediation after two sessions.
 - o Court annexed mediation must be conducted as per the rules framed by the Supreme Court or High Courts.
- **Establishment of Mediation Council of India (MCI):** To promote mediation and develop India as a robust centre for domestic and international mediation and make regulations for registration of mediators.
 - o MCI consist of 1 chairperson, 2 full-time member (with experience in mediation or ADR), 1 part-time member(including the Law Secretary, and the Expenditure Secretary) and 3 ex officio members
- **Defines Mediation Service Providers:** As a body or organization recognized by the MCI for conducting mediation.
 - o Mediation can be done by the Authority, constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 also.

About Alternative dispute resolution (ADR)

- ADR refers to the different ways people can resolve disputes without a trial. **Other than Mediation ADR mechanisms include**
 - o **Arbitration:** Procedure in which a dispute is submitted, by agreement of the parties, to one or more arbitrators who make a binding decision on the dispute.
 - o **Conciliation:** A non-binding procedure in which an impartial third party, the conciliator, assists the parties to a dispute in reaching a mutually satisfactory agreed settlement of the dispute.
 - o **Negotiation:** A non-binding procedure in which discussions between the parties are initiated without the intervention of any third party with the object of arriving at a negotiated settlement to the dispute.
- **Other steps to promote ADR in India**
 - o **Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 and Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019** for establishment of the **Arbitration Council of India**.
 - o Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987
 - o **New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (NDIAC) Act, 2019** for the establishment NDIAC for facilitating institutional arbitration.
 - o **Commercial Courts Act, 2015** provides for the such Commercial Courts for **adjudicating commercial disputes**.

ADVOCATES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

- The bill, passed by Rajya Sabha, seeks to make the act of 'Tout' punishable and repeal certain provisions of Legal Practitioners Act, 1879 which have become obsolete.
- Provisions
 - o Bill provides that every high court and district judge can frame and publish lists of touts.
 - o Such persons named in the list of touts will be excluded from entering the court premises.
 - o Tout refers to a person who either proposes to procure or procures the employment of a legal practitioner in return of any payment.

BRICS

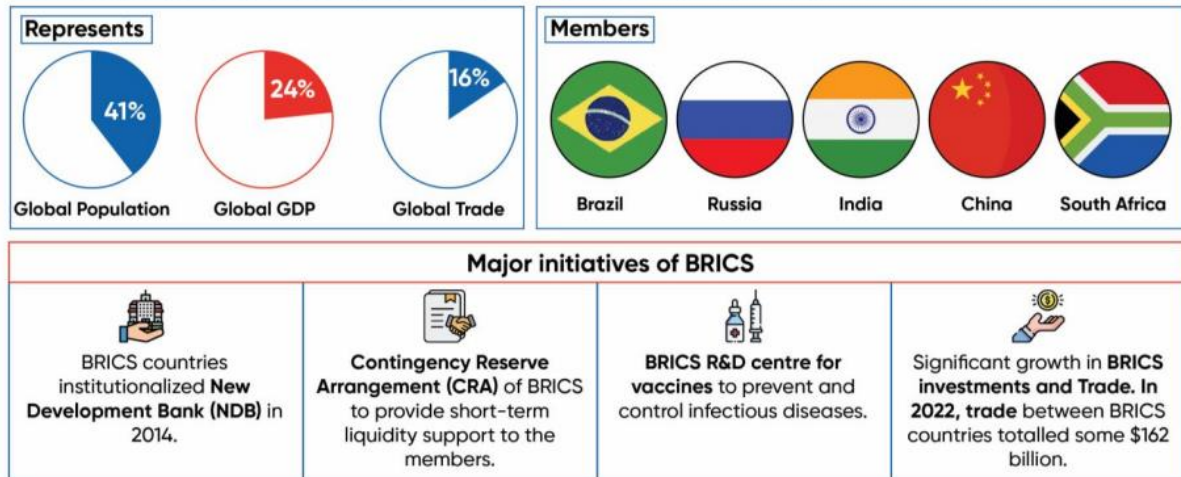
The 15th BRICS summit, the first in-person meeting since 2019 was held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

- South Africa has chosen the theme "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism" for the summit.
- Apart from BRICS leaders, South Africa had invited all 55 members of the African Union (AU) to the event and about 20 other leaders from Asia, South America and Small Island States who represent the Global South for sessions on the sidelines of the summit.

BRICS

Conception

- Conceived of in the early 2000s in a Goldman Sachs paper as a **grouping of the fastest growing developing economies not in the G-7**.
- BRIC countries started their dialogue in 2006, with the induction of South Africa in 2010, BRICS came into existence.



Outcome of BRICS Summit

- **Expansion of BRICS:** BRICS members agreed to induct six new member countries with their membership coming into effect from January 2024. These countries include Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
- **Johannesburg II Declaration:** It encapsulates significant BRICS viewpoints on global economic, financial and political matters.
- **Three pillars:** BRICS members committed themselves to strengthening the framework of mutually beneficial BRICS cooperation under the three pillars of
 - o Political and security,
 - o Economic and financial, and
 - o Cultural and people-to-people cooperation

MALABAR EXERCISE

India, Japan, the United States and Australia held the Malabar naval exercise off the coast of Sydney (Pacific Ocean) for the first time. Previously, it was held in the Indian Ocean.

Background of the exercise in conjunction with QUAD

- **1992:** Malabar naval exercise commenced in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between India and USA.
- **2007:** For the first time, the exercise also included Australia, Japan and Singapore.
 - o In the same year, the US, Japan, Australia and India converged in the Quad 1.0 (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue).
- **2008:** Due to China's protest to the accord, Australia and, subsequently, Japan dropped out of the exercise and Quad.
- **2015:** Japan became a permanent participant in the Malabar exercise
- **2020:** Australia rejoined it after the revival of Quad (**Quad 2.0**).
 - o The '**China factor**'—which was key to the failure of Quad 1.0 to take off—just a decade later appears to be serving as the pivot around which Quad 2.0 rejuvenated.
 - o In the decade since 2007, rising Chinese domination via its land and maritime disputes, the increasingly questionable intent of its **One Belt, One Road (OBOR) programme**, and its related debt trap diplomacy have encouraged the idea of Quad further.

PANAMA CANAL

- Shipping disruptions occurred in a drought hit Panama Canal.
- Panama Canal is a constructed waterway that connects the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans.
 - o It enables ships to avoid the lengthy and hazardous voyage around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America.
 - o Panama Canal connects nearly 2,000 ports in 170 countries.
- Panama is an isthmus connecting North and South America.



BHARATNET

The Government recently approved Rs 1.39 lakh crore for modernising the BharatNet project.

- It involves changing its execution strategy and providing fibre connections to the last mile through **Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs)**.
 - o VLEs, known as Udyamis, will take the fibre connections to households on a 50:50 revenue-sharing basis.
- With this upgrade, the government is looking to speed up its process of connecting all 640,000 villages over the next two years.
- The cost of taking the infrastructure to the home will be borne by the government.
 - o Rural entrepreneur will only need to be involved in the maintenance and operations of home connections, including addressing consumer complaints related to fiber cuts, etc.

FUNCTIONING OF MAJOR PORTS IN INDIA

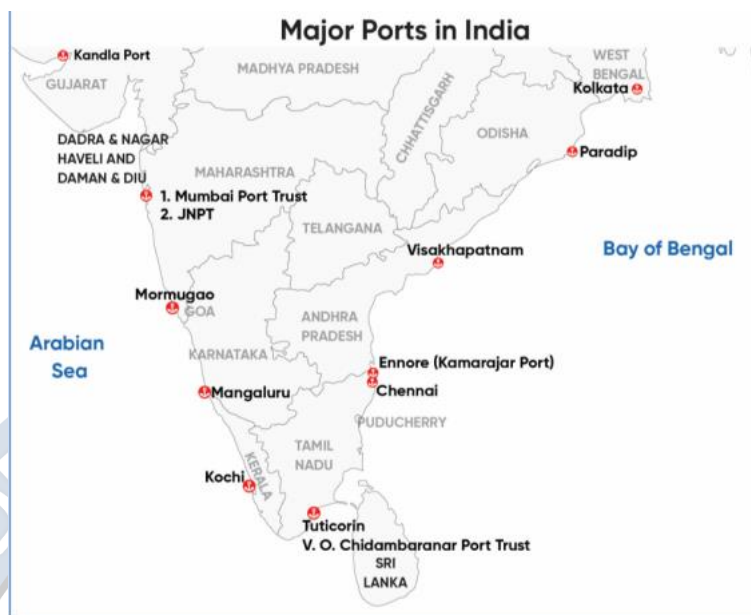
Recently, the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture presented the 352nd Report on 'Functioning of Major Ports in the Country'.

Ports in India

- Ports in India are broadly categorised into two types based on traffic they handle.
 - **Major Ports:** They are under the direct administrative control of the Central Government and fall in the Union List in the 7th Schedule of the Constitution.
 - **Minor Ports:** They fall under the jurisdiction of the respective State Maritime Board and fall in the Concurrent List.
- There are 12 major ports and about 213 non-major ports.
- The Major Port Authorities Act, 2021 and the Indian Ports Act are the two principal statutes governing the functioning of Major Ports.

Performance of Ports in India

- **Turn Around Time (TRT):** The turnaround time (time spent by a vessel at the port from its arrival to its departure) across Indian ports has been consistently declining from 94 hours (FY13-14) to 52 hours (FY23-24).
- **Traffic:** Indian ports have witnessed a consistent rise in container traffic from 555 million tonnes (FY13-14) to 796 million tonnes (FY23-24).
- **Cargo:** Cargo handling of the Major Ports has steadily increased over the years, with a 10% increase from last year.
- **Operating Ratio:** The operating ratio, the rupee spent for every rupee earned, has come down to Rs. 48 from Rs. 53 in 2020-21 (i.e., Rs. 48 is spent for every Rs. 100 earned).



MEDICAL AND WELLNESS TOURISM

The Ministry of Home Affairs recently notified the creation of a new category of AYUSH visa for foreign nationals for treatment under AYUSH systems of medicine, i.e. easing medical and wellness tourism in India.

- A new chapter, i.e. **Ayush Visa**, has been incorporated under the Medical Visa of the Visa Manual, which deals with treatment under the Indian systems of medicine.
 - o Accordingly, necessary amendments have been made in various chapters of the Visa Manual, 2019.
- This will boost Medical Value Travel in India and strengthen our endeavour to make Indian traditional medicine a global phenomenon.
- AYUSH is an acronym for Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy; however, it also includes other traditional and non-conventional health care systems such as Sowa Rigpa, etc.

About Medical and Wellness Tourism

- Medical tourism is a term used to describe the rapidly growing practice of travelling across international borders to seek healthcare services.

o Services typically sought by travellers include elective procedures, complex surgeries, etc.

- Wellness Tourism is a travel associated with maintaining or enhancing one's well-being. It includes the pursuit of physical, mental, spiritual or environmental 'wellness' while travelling for either leisure or business."
- Medical and Wellness Tourism are part of the Wellness economy.

'BHAGWA' POMEGRANATE

- APEDA facilitated the export of the first trial shipment of 'Bhagwa' pomegranate to the USA in collaboration with NPPO.
- 'Bhagwa' (Saffron-colored) Pomegranate
 - o High antioxidant content and super fruit characteristics
 - o Solapur (Maharashtra) contributes almost 50% of pomegranate export from India.
- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is a statutory body under the APEDA Act, 1985.
 - o It is an apex-Export Trade Promotion authority.

INTER-SERVICES ORGANISATION (COMMAND, CONTROL & DISCIPLINE) BILL, 2023

Both houses of the Parliament cleared this bill recently.

- There are various Inter-services Organisations (ISO) like Andaman and Nicobar Command or Defence Space Agency and joint training establishments like National Defence Academy or National Defence College.
 - o The personnel are presently bound by respective provisions of the Air Force Act 1950, the Army Act 1950 and the Navy Act 1957.
- Commander-in-Chief or Officer-in-Command of such ISO are not empowered to exercise disciplinary or administrative powers over the personnel belonging to other services.
 - o Consequently, the personnel serving in ISO needed to be reverted to their parent Service units for any action, which was time-consuming & cumbersome and had financial implications.

- Accordingly, a need arises to empower these officer of ISO to exercise control over the service personnel serving under their command.

Key Highlights of the bill

- Define Inter-services Organisation (ISO): as a body of troops including a Joint Services Command consisting of persons subject to the Air Force Act, 1950, the Army Act, 1950 and the Navy Act, 1957 or any two of the said Acts.
- Centre to constitute ISO: which has personnel belonging to at least two of the three services: the army, the navy, and the air force. This may also include a joint service command.
- Empowers the Commander-in-Chief: The Chief is empowered to take disciplinary and administrative actions over personnel serving in Inter-services Organisations in accordance with their respective service acts.

MILITARY EXERCISES

- **AUSINDEX-23** is a biennial maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy.
- **BRIGHT STAR-23** is a biennial multilateral tri-service exercise held in Egypt. For the first time, Indian Air Force is participating in it.
 - o Other participating countries include US, Saudi Arabia, Greece, and Qatar.

DHOLPUR-KARAUJI TIGER RESERVE (DKTR)

- National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) accords final approval to DKTR.
- Now, after being notified by the State government DKTR will become the 54th Tiger Reserve (TR) of India and 5th of Rajasthan.
 - o Ranthambore, Sariska, Mukundra Hills and Ramgarh Vishdhari are the remaining four TRs in Rajasthan.
 - o TRs are notified by State Governments on the advice of NTCA under Section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) or WPA Act, 1972.
- A TR, considered as critical for tiger conservation, consists of two parts:

- o Core or critical tiger habitat: National Park or Sanctuary status
- o Buffer or peripheral area: A lesser degree of habitat protection is required

TURTLES AND TORTOISES

- Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (Uttar Pradesh) and Turtle Survival Alliance (NGO) joined hands for turtles and tortoises conservation.
- Turtles and tortoises both are reptiles.
- Turtles:
 - o They live in water some or nearly all of the time.
 - o Omnivorous.
 - o They have thinner, more water-dynamic shells.
 - o They have more flipper like legs, or webbed feet.
- Tortoises:
 - o Land creatures (found in deserts to wet tropical forest)
 - o Generally herbivores
 - o They have rounded and domed shells
 - o They have club-like forelegs and 'elephantine' hind legs

MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY (MTP) ACT

- Supreme Court (SC) allows rape survivor to terminate pregnancy beyond 24 weeks.
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) (Amendment Act), 2021, allows rape survivors to terminate their pregnancies upto 24 weeks (refer table).
 - o Any abortion which is in contravention to MTP Act is a punishable offense under Section 312 and 313 of Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- However, taking note that such a pregnancy is not voluntary, SC allowed the survivor to terminate 27-Week Pregnancy.

Duration of Pregnancy	Process of termination
Up to 20 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available to all women on the advice of one doctor
20-24 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available only in two conditions (serious ailment to the child or risk of life or mental health to the women) on the advice of two doctors. Available to rape survivors, victims of incest and other vulnerable women like differently abled, minors, among others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All women irrespective of marital status are covered.
Beyond 24 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available only on the grounds of fetal abnormalities based on the advice of a medical board. All state/ UTs are mandated to constitute a Medical Board consisting of gynecologists, pediatrician, etc.

CHANDRAYAAN-3 SOFT LANDING

Chandrayaan-3 lander accomplished a 'soft landing' on the Moon's south pole.

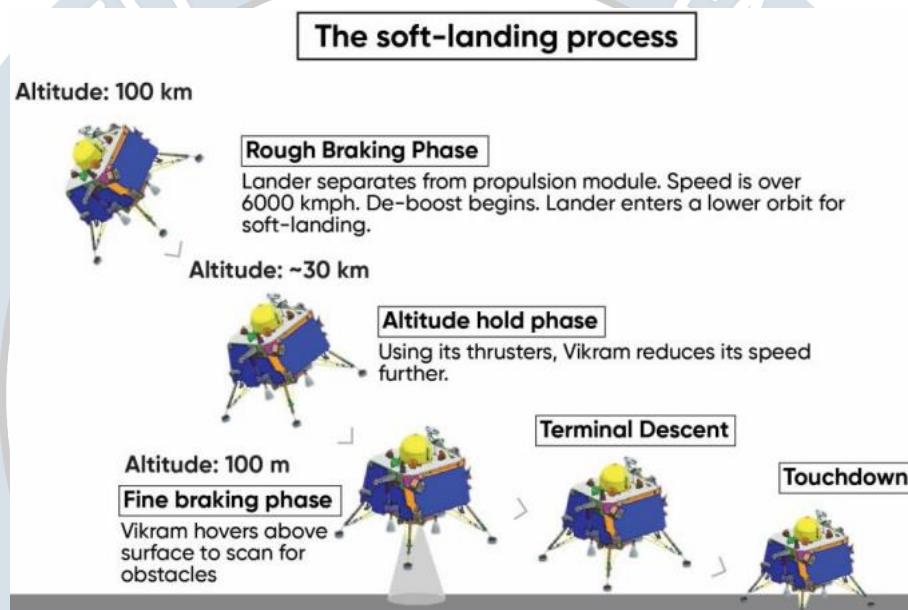
- The spot where the Chandrayaan-3 Vikram lander made a soft landing would be named Shiv Shakti Point.
- The site where the Chandrayaan-2 lander crash-landed on the Moon's surface in 2019 would be known as Tiranga Point.
- **August 23**, the day the Chandrayaan-3 lander touched down on the lunar surface, would be celebrated as '**National Space Day**'.
- Chandrayaan-3 had 3 objectives:

o Accomplished:

- ✓ Demonstration of a Safe and Soft Landing on the Lunar Surface
- ✓ Demonstration of Rover roving on the moon.

o Underway:

- ✓ Conducting in-situ scientific experiments. (The lander and the rover, with a mission life of one Lunar day (14 Earth days), have scientific payloads to conduct experiments on the lunar surface.)
- Chandrayaan-3 successfully underwent a 'hop experiment': On command, it fired the engines, elevated itself by about 40 cm as expected and landed safely.
 - o The success of this 'kick-start' experiment raises hopes for future missions such as sample return missions or human missions.



NEERAKSHI

- India launched its first of its kind Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) named 'Neerakshi'.
 - o It can be used for mine detection, mine disposal, underwater surveys etc.
 - o It has an endurance of four hours and can go up to 300 metres deep.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI) TAGS

- Recently, various products were given a Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai.

Udaipur Koftgari Metal Craft (Rajasthan)

- The art of decorating arms and weaponry is known as Koftgiri.
- It is the art of ornamenting surfaces by inlaying light metal on a dark one using gold or silver wires.

Bikaner Kashidakari Craft (Rajasthan)

- It involves fine stitching and mirrorwork on cotton, silk, or velvet, primarily for objects related to weddings and gift items.

Jodhpur Bandhej Craft (Rajasthan)

- It is the Rajasthani art of tying and dyeing.
- The fabrics used for Bandhej are muslin, silk and voile. Cotton thread is used for tying the fabric.

Bikaner Usta Kala Craft (Rajasthan)

- It is also known as gold nakashi or gold manauti work.
- It was done on walls, ceilings, glass, wood, marble and artefacts made of camel leather.

Mankurad Mango (Goa)

- Named by Portuguese as malcorada (means 'poor coloured').
- Mankurad has a uniform yellow colour, less fibre and balanced sugar.

Goan Bebinca (Goa)

- It is a traditional Indo-Portuguese pudding.
- It is also referred to as the **queen of Goan desserts**.

Jalesar Metal Craft (Uttar Pradesh)

- It is known for decorative metal crafts and brassware (like anklets, bells)
- The Thatheras community, which resides in a mohalla (locality) named Hathuras, makes these products.

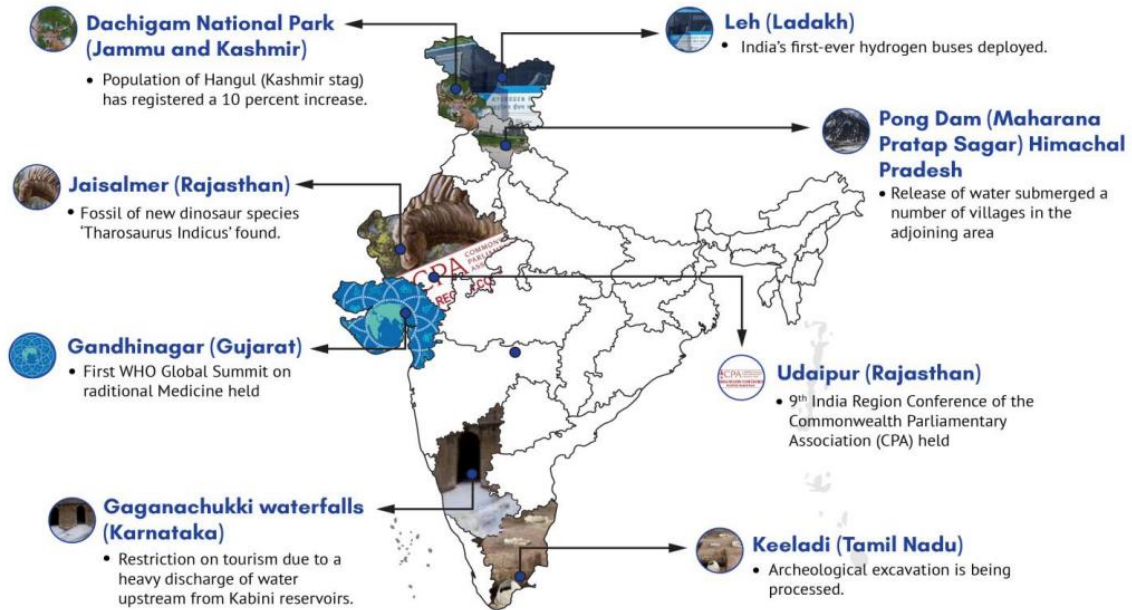
Matti Banana (Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu)

- Matti Banana is commonly known as 'Baby Banana' and is known for its distinct fragrance and honeylike taste
- Its low total soluble solids content (TSSC) recommends it as a baby food.

NATIONAL FILM AWARDS, 2023

- The winners of the 69th National Film Awards were announced recently.
- **About the Award:**
 - o It was first awarded in 1954, initially they were called the 'State Awards' given for regional languages.
 - o It aims at encouraging the production of films of aesthetic and technical excellence and social relevance.
 - o Presented by The President of India.
 - o Categories: – Features, Non-Features, and Best Writing on Cinema.

Places in News: India



Places in News: World

