

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 24-04-2024

Table of Content

- Satellite Insights: Expanding Glacial Lakes in the Indian Himalayas
- Denying women childcare leave violation of Constitution: SC
- Law on Abortion in India
- An Overview of the PMAY-U Scheme
- International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.
- CSR Initiatives Transforming Rural Development

NEWS IN SHORT

- India 4th largest military spender in 2023: SIPRI
- Psychoanalysis
- Pink Hydrogen
- Golden Trevally
- NABARD to Mobilise Green Financing
- New Schengen Visa Rules for Indians
- INSV Tarini
- Netzah Yehuda Battalion

SATELLITE INSIGHTS: EXPANDING GLACIAL LAKES IN THE INDIAN HIMALAYAS

In News

- Satellite monitoring shows 27% glacial lakes in the Himalayas expanding.

Do you know ?

- The Himalayan Mountains, often referred to as the **Third Pole** because of their extensive glaciers and snow cover, are highly sensitive to changes in the global climate, both in terms of their physical characteristics and their societal impacts.

What are Glacial lakes ?

- Research conducted worldwide has consistently shown that glaciers across the globe have been experiencing unprecedented rates of retreat and thinning since the onset of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century.
- This retreat leads to the formation of new lakes and the enlargement of existing ones in the Himalayan region.
- These bodies of water, created by the melting of glaciers, are known as **glacial lakes**
 - ♦ The glacial lakes are categorized based on their formation process into four broad categories, namely
 - **Moraine-dammed** (water dammed by moraine),
 - **Ice-dammed** (water dammed by ice),
 - **Erosion** (water dammed in depressions formed by erosion), and other glacial lakes.
- Among the 676 expanding lakes, the majority of them are Moraine-dammed (307) followed by Erosion (265), other (96), and Ice-dammed (8) glacial lakes, respectively.
- They play a crucial role as freshwater sources for rivers in the Himalayan region.

Risks

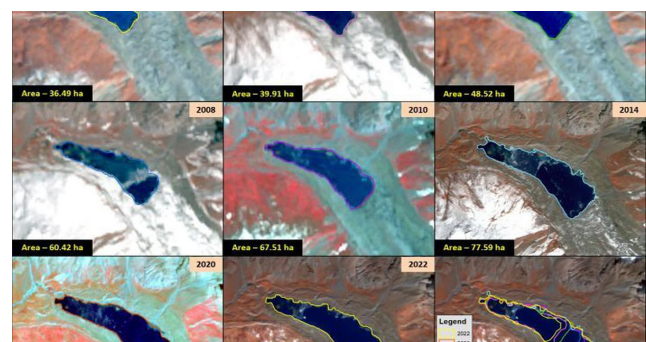
- They pose significant risks, such as **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)**, which can have devastating consequences for communities downstream.
 - ♦ GLOFs occur when glacial lakes release large volumes of meltwater due to the failure of

natural dams, such as those made of moraine or ice, resulting in sudden and severe flooding downstream.

- ♦ These dam failures can be triggered by various factors, including avalanches of ice or rock, extreme weather events, and other environmental factors
- **Monitoring and studying** the occurrence and **expansion of glacial lakes** in the Himalayan region is challenging due to inaccessible and rugged terrain.

Findings of recent study

- The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) long-term satellite imagery covering the catchments of Indian Himalayan river basins from 1984 to 2023 have shown significant changes in glacial lakes.
- According to the ISRO, of the 2,431 lakes larger than 10 hectares identified during 2016-17, **676 glacial lakes** have notably **expanded since 1984**.
 - ♦ Specifically, **130** of these **lakes are situated within India**, with 65, seven, and 58 lakes located in the Indus, Ganga, and Brahmaputra River basins, respectively.
 - ♦ Of these lakes 601 lakes (89%) have expanded more than twice, 10 lakes have grown between 1.5 to 2 times and 65 lakes 1.5 times



Importance of recent study

- Satellite remote sensing technology proves to be an excellent tool for inventory and monitoring due to its wide coverage and revisit capability.
- Assessing long-term changes in glacial lakes is crucial for understanding glacier retreat rates, assessing GLOF risks, and gaining insights into climate change impacts.
- It provides valuable insights for understanding glacial lake dynamics, which are essential for

assessing environmental impacts and developing strategies for **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF)** risk management and climate change adaptation in glacial environments.

Source: TH

DENYING WOMEN CHILDCARE LEAVE VIOLATION OF CONSTITUTION: SC

Context

- In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court declared that two-year childcare leave, alongside mandatory maternity leave, is a constitutional right for women employees.

Background

- The petitioner, whose son suffers from a rare genetic disorder, faced denial of childcare leave due to the state's non-adoption of the provision of child care leave, as provided under Rule 43-C of the Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972.
- Despite approaching the High Court, relief was denied, prompting the appeal to the Supreme Court.

Supreme Court Verdict

- Participation of women in the workforce is a matter not just of privilege but a constitutional entitlement protected by **Article 15** of the Constitution.
- The state as a model employer cannot be oblivious to the special concerns which arise in the case of women who are part of the workforce.
- It directed the State Government to revise its policy on childcare leaves (CCLs) to make it consistent with the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016** (RPWD Act).
- The court asked the state chief secretary to **constitute a committee** consisting of the state commissioner appointed under the RPWD Act, secretary of Women and Child Department and secretary of Social Welfare Department to look into all aspects of the matter.
 - This committee's report is mandated to inform policy decisions promptly.

Need for Child Care Leave

- Offering child care leave enhances employee retention and productivity. It leads to **higher female labor force participation rates**, which, in turn, contribute to economic growth and stability.

- Child care leave provides crucial support for working mothers to balance their professional and personal responsibilities. It acknowledges the dual role they play as caregivers and employees.

Constitutional Provisions for women

- Fundamental rights**
 - Article 15 (1):** The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.
 - Article 15 (3):** Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.
 - Article 16 (1):** There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.
- Directive Principles of State Policy**
 - Article 39 (a):** The citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means to livelihood.
 - Article 42:** The State shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

Way Ahead

- The provision of child care leave to women sub-serves an important constitutional objective of ensuring that women are not deprived of their due participation as members of the workforce.
- Otherwise, in the absence of provision for child care leave, a mother may be constrained to leave the workforce.

Source: TH

LAW ON ABORTION IN INDIA

Context

- Recently, the Supreme Court of India has allowed a 14-year-old victim of sexual assault to terminate her almost 30-week pregnancy.

About Abortions Law in India

- Abortion, a subject often surrounded by ethical, moral, and legal debates, is regulated in India by the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971**.
- It permits licensed medical professionals to perform abortions under specific predetermined situations.

Historical Background

- In the 1960s, due to a high number of induced abortions taking place, the **Shantilal Shah Committee** was constituted to deliberate on the legalisation of abortion in the country.
- To reduce maternal mortality owing to unsafe abortions, the MTP Act was brought into force in 1971.
- It is an **exception to the Indian Penal Code (IPC)** provisions of 312 and 313 and sets out the rules of how and when a medical abortion can be carried out.

Key Provisions of the MTP Act

- It allows the termination of pregnancy under certain circumstances.
 - ♦ **Up to 20 weeks:** Termination is allowed on the advice of one doctor.
 - ♦ **20-24 weeks:** Abortion is allowed as an exception, but only under certain categories, after two registered medical practitioners have evaluated the right to seek termination.
 - ♦ **After 24 weeks of pregnancy:** The law requires that **a medical board** be set up in approved facilities, which may **allow or deny termination of pregnancy only if there is substantial foetal abnormality.**
- Under **Section 312 of the IPC**, a person who 'voluntarily causes a woman with child to miscarry' is liable for punishment, attracting a jail term of up to three years or fine or both, unless it was done in good faith where the purpose was to save the life of the pregnant woman.
 - ♦ It effectively makes unconditional abortion illegal in India.
- **Section 313 of the IPC** states that a person who causes the miscarriage without the consent of the pregnant woman, whether or not she is in the advanced stages of her pregnancy, shall be punished with life imprisonment or a jail term that could extend to 10 years, as well as a fine.

Amendments to the MTP Act

- Broader amendments to the original Act were introduced in 2020 and the amended Act came into force in 2021.
- It increased the upper gestation **limit from 20 to 24 weeks** for special categories of women, including survivors of rape, victims of incest, and

other vulnerable women like differently abled and minors.

- A confidentiality clause was added which said that the name and other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated cannot be revealed except to a person authorised by law.
- It extended MTP services, under the clause of failure of contraceptive, to unmarried women to provide access to safe abortion based on a woman's choice, irrespective of marital status.

Current Scenario

- Despite the liberal and pro-choice nature of India's MTP Act, frequent cases of women approaching the court late in their pregnancies appear to suggest a legislative gap.
- The **Supreme Court of India** ruled that all women, whether married or not, have equal rights to access abortion up to 24 weeks of gestation, in compliance with the provisions of the MTP Act.
- Recently, the Supreme Court noted that the **continuation of the pregnancy against the will of the minor** may impact **negatively on the physical and mental well-being of a minor** who is barely 14 years old.
 - ♦ It allowed a 14-year-old victim of sexual assault to terminate her almost 30-week pregnancy.

Conclusion

- The recent ruling by the Supreme Court underscores the complexities of the issue of abortion, particularly in cases involving minors and sexual assault victims. While the MTP Act is considered liberal and pro-choice, frequent cases of women approaching the court late in their pregnancies appear to suggest a legislative gap.
- It highlights the need for ongoing discussions and potential revisions to the existing laws to ensure the rights and well-being of women and girls are adequately protected.

Source: IE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PMAY-U SCHEME

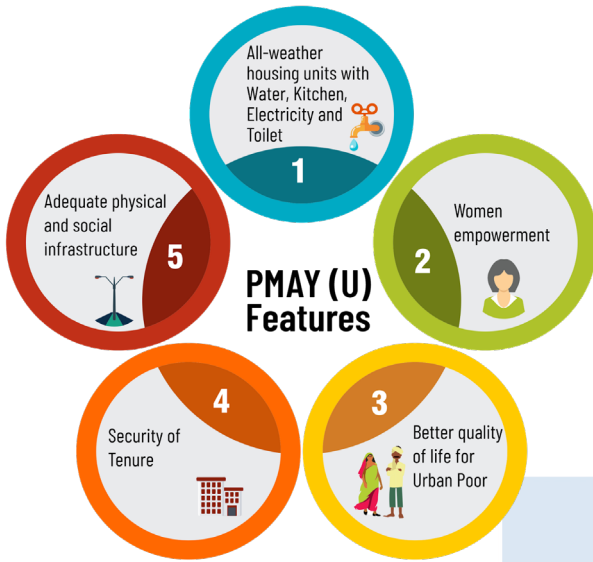
Context:

- Recent estimates of the government show that there is a shortage of three million houses in urban centres.

About the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) Scheme

- It is a flagship and Centrally Sponsored Scheme by the Union **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**, launched in 2015, to provide affordable housing to the urban poor.

Objectives



- The PMAY scheme aims to address the urban housing shortage among the *Economically Weaker Section (EWS)*, *Lower Income Group (LIG)*, and *Middle Income Group (MIG)* categories, including slum dwellers.
- It includes the *rehabilitation of slum dwellers* with the participation of private developers, promotion of affordable housing for the **weaker sections through Credit Linked Subsidy Schemes (CLSS)**, affordable housing in partnership with public and private sectors, and **subsidy for Beneficiary-led Construction (BLC)**.
- It ensures a **pucca house** to all eligible urban households (**housing for all**) by the year 2022, coinciding with the **75th year of India's Independence**.

Coverage

- It covers the **entire urban area** consisting of *Statutory Towns, Notified Planning Areas, Development Authorities, Special Area Development Authorities, Industrial Development Authorities* or any such authority under State legislation which is entrusted with the functions of urban planning & regulations.

Components (Four Verticals)

- In-situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR):** It involves the rehabilitation of slum dwellers with the participation of private developers.
- Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP):** This involves the promotion of affordable housing for the weaker sections through partnerships with the public and private sectors.
- Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS):** This scheme provides interest subsidy on housing loans to eligible beneficiaries.
- Beneficiary-led Construction (BLC):** This involves providing central assistance to eligible families for the construction or enhancement of houses.

Additional Initiatives of MoHUA under PMAY

- Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs):** It is a **sub-scheme under PMAY-U** that aims to provide ease of living to urban migrants/poor in the Industrial Sector as well as in the non-formal urban economy by providing access to dignified affordable rental housing close to their workplace.
- Global Housing Technology Challenge – India (GHTC-India):** It aims to identify and mainstream a basket of innovative construction technologies from across the globe for the housing construction sector that are sustainable, eco-friendly, and disaster-resilient.

Progress of the PMAY Scheme

- As of now, the PMAY (Urban) scheme has sanctioned 118.64 lakh houses, grounded 114.15 lakh houses, and completed 82.16 lakh houses.
- The Central Assistance Committed is 2 Lakh Cr., and the Central Assistance Released is 163926 Cr. The total investment is 8.07 Lakh Cr.

Challenges ahead of the scheme:

- Housing Shortage:** The urban housing shortage has increased by 54%, from 1.88 crore in 2012 to 2.9 crore in 2018.
 - As of April 2024, there is a shortfall of around 40 lakh houses from the sanctioned and completed segments.
- Implementation Issues:** There is a shortfall of around 40 lakh houses from the sanctioned and completed segments.

- **In-situ Slum Redevelopment:** The ISSR vertical has failed, with only 2,10,552 houses sanctioned for eligible beneficiaries.
 - ◆ Under the ISSR, only 2,10,552 houses have been sanctioned for eligible beneficiaries.
 - ◆ Even if the remaining houses are constructed by the end of 2024, it would have addressed just about 37% of the real need.
 - ◆ Almost 2.4 crore households will still be without a roof.
- **Unmet Targets:** The PMAY-U has only addressed about 25.15% of the housing shortage by delivering 80 lakh homes.

Future of the PMAY Scheme

- In August 2022, the government approved the continuation of the **PMAY-U up to December 31, 2024**, for the completion of already sanctioned houses till March 31, 2022.
- However, the current housing programme, which was a kind of **merger of the Rajiv Awas Yojana into the PMAY**, has spent over \$29 billion in the last five years providing support for both rural and urban low-cost housing.
- Despite this focus and budgetary infusion, 'Housing for All' remains an unfulfilled promise.

Conclusion

- PMAY is a significant step towards achieving the goal of 'Housing for All' by 2022. It has made some progress in addressing India's urban housing shortage, but fallen short of its ambitious goals.
- The challenges faced by the scheme highlight the complexities of urban development and the need for comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

Source: TH

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE.

Context

- The Prime Minister addressed the **6th edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.**

About

- CDRI is a **global partnership of National Governments**, UN agencies and programmes,

multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, academic and knowledge institutions.

- CDRI was launched by the Prime Minister during the **United Nations Climate Action Summit in 2019, at New York.**
- **Members:** 31 Countries, 6 International Organizations and 2 private sector organizations.
- **Secretariat:** New Delhi
- **Theme for 6th ICDRI:** Investing today for a more resilient tomorrow.

What is Disaster Resilient Infrastructure?

- **Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (DRI)** refers to the **design and construction** of infrastructure systems that can **withstand, adapt to, and rapidly recover from disasters.**
- This resilience ensures **uninterrupted essential services even during calamities.**
- As urbanization and national growth accelerate, infrastructure, such as power, water, and transportation become ever more crucial.

Need for the DRI?

- Disasters exacerbated by climate change are **diminishing infrastructure investments across the world.**
 - ◆ **Flash floods in megacities like New York and Seoul** claimed many lives and crippled urban infrastructure systems.
 - ◆ **Earthquakes in Morocco and Turkey** were not only devastating for infrastructure but as well as lives and livelihoods.
 - ◆ **A cloudburst led to glacial lake overflow in Sikkim** claiming many lives causing a great amount of damage to the critical infrastructure including roads connecting the mountain state with the rest of India.
- **Resilience during Disasters:** These consecutive disaster events serve as a stark reminder of the critical importance of designing and investing in infrastructure that is resilient during unpredictable disasters.
- **Future Outlook:** It is now estimated that by 2030, without substantial investments in fortifying cities globally against potential threats, natural disasters could inflict an annual financial burden of approximately US\$314 billion on cities.
 - ◆ Therefore, transitioning to Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (DRI) and flexible urban

strategies is essential for improving the quality of life for people.

- With the mounting threats of climate change intensifying natural disasters, the shift towards DRI isn't just strategic—it's **vital for economic stability and human well-being**.

Pathways to Make Infrastructure Disaster Resilient

- At the core of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (DRI) is an **understanding of evolving risks**, like shifting cyclonic patterns due to global warming.
 - ♦ This knowledge helps setting up appropriate building codes and design standards, crucial components that pave the way for integrated resilience across diverse sectors.
- **Tailored infrastructure design**, such as those responsive to flood risks or preparatory activities like pre-monsoon drain cleaning, **solidifies a system's disaster resilience**.
- **Regular infrastructure risk assessments** are pivotal to find vulnerabilities in critical sectors like transport, power, and telecommunications.
 - ♦ These assessments, bolstered by risk mitigation strategies, protect against potential damages.
- **Localized evaluations** in cities and towns further contribute essential data for holistic planning.

India's Pathway to DRI

- India's path to resilience encompasses **enhancing disaster risk comprehension** across diverse landscapes, powered by **geographic information systems (GIS) mapping and innovative technologies**.
 - ♦ Effective DRI necessitates the confluence of data-driven infrastructure planning, potent risk-informed investments, and propagation of early warning systems.
- Further, central to achieving DRI is the **collaboration** between all governance tiers, academia, private enterprises, infrastructure experts and local communities.
 - ♦ For instance, **the successful implementation of the Integrated Flood Risk Management Plan (IFRMP) in Assam's River Basins** (Beki, Buridehing, and Jiadhal) focused on a multi-disciplinary approach involving key stakeholders.

- ♦ The project reduced flood and river erosion risks for approximately 100,000 people along the Beki and Buridehing rivers, and 10,000 will have access to updated flood shelters.

Conclusion

- Building a disaster-resilient infrastructure is a complex task, requiring a blend of strategic planning, innovation, finance, and most importantly, a collective approach.
- Nations need to champion these components, ensuring they are not only prepared for future calamities but also poised for sustainable growth.

Source: News on Air

CSR INITIATIVES TRANSFORMING RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Context

- From improving farmer livelihoods to driving innovation and sustainability, Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in transforming the agricultural sector have great potential.

CSR in the agricultural sector

- In India, the agriculture sector alone contributed approximately **39 percent** to the rural **gross domestic product (GDP)** in the financial year **2023**.
- The interdependence of agricultural activities with socio-economic development highlights the significance of corporations engaging in CSR initiatives within this sector.
- The future of agriculture lies in sustainable and inclusive practices, and CSR will be instrumental in achieving that.

Challenges faced by farmers and their financial growth?

- Around half of India's farmers **lack necessary farming tools and machinery**, hindering their efficiency and productivity.
- Three out of every four farms face **potential crop damage** from pests and adverse weather conditions, leading to significant losses in yield and income.
- Around 50 percent of farmers struggle to **access traditional sources of financing**, limiting their

ability to invest in farm improvements and expand their operations.

- ◆ Even for those able to secure credit, prevailing interest rates often exceed market norms by **10 to 25 percent**, imposing additional financial burdens on farmers and restricting their ability to invest in growth.
- **Unpredictable weather patterns**, exacerbated by climate change, lead to crop failures, loss of livestock, and increased vulnerability to natural disasters like floods, droughts, and cyclones, which devastate farmers' livelihoods and financial stability.

How can CSR benefit farmers ?

- CSR initiatives can **provide farmers with essential resources** such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and modern farming equipment, which are often beyond the reach of small and marginal farmers.
- Through **skill development workshops and training programs**, CSR can impart valuable knowledge about modern agricultural practices and sustainable farming techniques, thereby enhancing farmers' capabilities and efficiencies.
- It can facilitate the **adoption of technology in agriculture**, including the use of precision farming techniques, IoT (Internet of Things) devices, and agricultural drones, leading to improved yields and productivity.
- CSR can promote **environmentally sustainable farming practices** such as organic farming, water conservation methods, and agroforestry.
- CSR initiatives can **facilitate market linkages** and connect farmers with agribusinesses, retailers, and export markets.
 - ◆ This enables farmers to access fair prices for their produce and tap into lucrative markets.
- Through strategic investments, partnerships with local communities, and holistic interventions, CSR can contribute to the **overall development of rural economies** by creating employment opportunities, supporting local businesses, and fostering economic growth.

Technologies for sustainable farming

- **Precision agriculture** involves the use of advanced technologies such as sensors, drones, GPS, and data analytics to optimize farming practices.

- ◆ These technologies enable farmers to monitor crop health, soil moisture levels, and nutrient requirements in real-time, allowing for precise application of irrigation, fertilizers, and pesticides.
- **Renewable energy sources** such as solar power, wind energy, and biogas should be widely adopted.
 - ◆ It will help reduce reliance on fossil fuels, lower carbon emissions, and make farming operations more sustainable.
- More focus should be placed on biotechnology and **genetically modified crops (GMOs)** as they help increase the resistance of crops against pests and environmental stressors.

Way Ahead

- India's agricultural sector can potentially add up to \$600 billion to the GDP of the country by 2030.
- However, achieving this goal necessitates proper training of farmers and empowering them with the latest farming technologies.
- By empowering farmers and enhancing the resilience of agricultural systems, CSR initiatives contribute to India's agricultural sustainability and inclusive growth agenda in the long term, thereby benefiting both farmers and the broader society.

What Is Corporate Social Responsibility?

- It is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders.
- The CSR concept in India is governed by **Section 135** of the **Companies Act, 2013**.
- The Companies Act encourages companies to spend **2%** of their average net profit in the previous three years on CSR activities.

Source: BL

NEWS IN SHORT

INDIA 4TH LARGEST MILITARY SPENDER IN 2023: SIPRI

Context

- Recently, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released the

report based on the Global Military Expenditure including India.

About the Global Military Expenditure

- According to the SIPRI report, the **world military expenditure rose by 6.8% in real terms** (i.e. when adjusted for inflation) to \$2443 billion in 2023, the highest level ever recorded by SIPRI.
 - ♦ In 2023 military spending **increased in all five geographical regions** for the first time since 2009.
- Total military expenditure accounted for 2.3% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023.
- The **five biggest spenders in 2023** were the **United States, China, Russia, India and Saudi Arabia**, which together accounted for 61% of world military spending.

India's Military Spending

- India's military spending in 2023 was up by 4.2% from 2022 and by 44% from 2014.
 - ♦ It was mainly a result of growing personnel and operations costs, which made up almost 80% of the total military budget in 2023.
- SIPRI highlighted that **India's** military expenditure was the **fourth** and it is worth **\$83.6 billion in 2023**.
- It aligns with the government's priority to strengthen the operational readiness of the armed forces amid ongoing tensions with China and Pakistan.

About SIPRI

- It was founded **in 1966 by the Swedish parliament** as an independent research institute to conduct research on issues related to international peace and security, including arms control, disarmament, and conflict resolution.
- It is funded by a combination of government grants, private donations, and project-based funding.
- SIPRI's flagship publication is the **SIPRI Yearbook**, which provides comprehensive data and analysis on global military expenditure, arms transfers, and other relevant security issues.
- It produces **other reports, briefs, and databases** on various topics related to conflict, arms control, and peacebuilding.

- It maintains an *extensive database of military expenditure, arms transfers, and other relevant data*, which is freely available on its website.
- **SIPRI is based in Stockholm, Sweden**, but has a global reach and influence, with its research and analysis informing policy decisions and public debates in many countries.

Source: IE

PSYCHOANALYSIS

Context

- Sudhir Kakar, a pioneering Indian psychoanalyst, author, and cultural critic passed away at the age of 85.

What is Psychoanalysis?

- Psychoanalysis is a psychological theory and therapeutic method developed by **Sigmund Freud**, an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis.
- It's based on the belief that unconscious conflicts and desires, often rooted in childhood experiences, shape our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
- It proposed that much of human behavior is determined by **unconscious thoughts, memories, and desires** that lie outside of conscious awareness.
- Freud believed that human development occurs in distinct stages, each characterized by the dominance of a particular erogenous zone and associated conflicts.

Source: IE

PINK HYDROGEN

Context

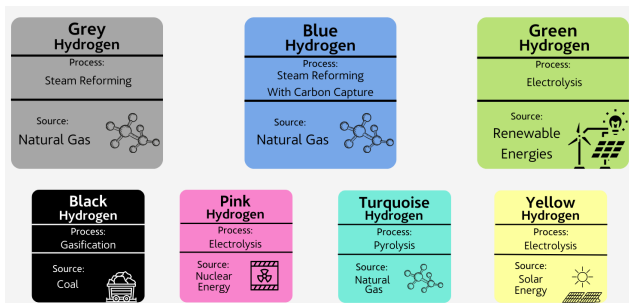
- Recent studies claim that pink hydrogen facilities can achieve a high capacity factor due to the steady base load profile of nuclear power.

About the Pink Hydrogen

- **Hydrogen, a versatile energy carrier**, has been gaining attention as a key player in the transition to a sustainable energy future.
 - ♦ While **green hydrogen, produced using renewable energy**, another variant, known

as pink hydrogen, is emerging as a promising alternative.

- **Pink hydrogen** is generated through the electrolysis of water, similar to green hydrogen. However, the **key difference lies in the source of electricity used** for the process.
- Pink hydrogen **uses electricity generated by nuclear power**.
 - ♦ It makes **pink hydrogen a potential game-changer in the energy sector**, as it can enable large-scale hydrogen production without emitting greenhouse gases.



Role of Nuclear Power

- Nuclear power, with its ability to provide a steady supply of electricity, is well-suited for the production of pink hydrogen.
- The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** has developed a **Hydrogen Economic Evaluation Program (HEEP)** to support the development of pink hydrogen projects worldwide.

Do you know?

- In India, the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, restricts private ownership of nuclear plants.
- However, proposed amendments to the Act could facilitate private investments in the nuclear sector, including the promotion of clean power like pink hydrogen.
- The production of pink hydrogen underscores the complexity of decision-making in advancing such projects.

Source: BL

GOLDEN TREVALLY

In News

- The ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi has developed seed production technology for **golden trevally**.

About Golden trevally(Gnathanodon speciosus)

- It is also known as the golden **kingfish** and **It is a high-value** marine fish.
- **Physical Characteristics** : It is a silver grey fish with yellowish colouration on the belly, with scattered black patches and all fins coloured yellow and a black tail.
- The juveniles are more golden in colour with the black bands giving them a very attractive look and hence a preference for aquarium keeping.



- **Distribution** : It is distributed throughout the **Indo-West Pacific**.
 - ♦ It is primarily found in reef area fishing grounds in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, Karnataka, and Gujarat,
- **Importance** : It is a promising marine aquaculture species due to its rapid growth rates, high meat quality, and high market demand for consumption and ornamental purposes.
- **IUCN Red List status** : Listed as Least Concern.

Source: TH

NABARD TO MOBILISE GREEN FINANCING

In News

- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) unveiled its **Climate Strategy 2030 document** which aims to address India's need for green financing.

Green Financing

- Green finance is any structured financial activity that's been created to ensure a better environmental outcome.
- It aims to increase the level of financial flows (from banking, micro-credit, insurance and investment) from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to sustainable development priorities.

- A key part of this is to better manage environmental and social risks, take up opportunities that bring both a decent rate of return and environmental benefit and deliver greater accountability.

Importance

- Green financing could be promoted through changes in countries' regulatory frameworks, harmonizing public financial incentives, increases in green financing from different sectors, alignment of public sector financing decision-making with the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals, increases in investment in clean and green technologies, financing for sustainable natural resource-based green economies and climate smart blue economy, increase use of green bonds

Scenario in India

- As of 2019-20, India garnered about \$49 billion in green financing, merely a fraction of what is needed.
 - ♦ India requires approximately \$170 billion annually to reach a cumulative total of over \$2.5 trillion by 2030, the current green finance inflows are critically insufficient.

NABARD's Climate Strategy 2030

- It is structured around four key pillars which include accelerating green lending across sectors, playing a broader market-making role, internal green transformation and strategic resource mobilisation.

About NABARD

- It is an **apex regulatory agency** for Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative Banks under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Finance**.
- In 1982 on the recommendations of **B.Sivaraman Committee** to implement the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act 1981.
 - ♦ It replaced the Agricultural Credit Department (ACD) and Rural Planning and Credit Cell (RPCC) of Reserve Bank of India, and Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC).
- The **initial corpus of NABARD was Rs.100 crores**.

- It helps in promoting agriculture and rural development through participative financial and non-financial interventions, innovations, technology and institutional development for securing prosperity.

Source: TH

NEW SCHENGEN VISA RULES FOR INDIANS

Context

- Recently, the European Union (EU) has announced the **new Schengen visa rules** for Indian nationals.

What are the new rules?

- Until now, those Indians who intend to travel to one or more Schengen countries are required to apply for the much sought-after **Schengen visa**, which is given for a maximum of three months.
- However, under the new Schengen visa regime, Indians will now be able to enter any of the Schengen countries multiple times for two years, which is further extendable by 5 years, and stay there like visa-free nationals.
 - ♦ But the only catch is that they won't be allowed to work and earn there like a local citizen.
- To qualify for this two-year visa, applicants must have successfully obtained and used two Schengen visas in the past three years.

Schengen Area

- The Schengen area consists of 29 European countries (of which 25 are EU states): Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden, along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Source: LM

INSV TARINI

Context

- **Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Tarini** carrying **two women officers** has returned to its base port in

Goa after undertaking a “**historic transoceanic expedition**” of nearly two months.

About

- This particular expedition conducted under the aegis of **Indian Naval Sailing Association (INSA)** marks a **significant milestone in naval ocean Sailing history** as it is the **first-ever transoceanic sortie** undertaken by **Indian women in a double-handed mode**.
- Both the women officers will now prepare for their next voyage – a **circumnavigation of the globe** (Sagar Parikrama -- IV expedition) – on INSV Tarini.
 - ♦ The Sagar Parikrama is scheduled to commence in September this year.
- The transoceanic expedition of INSV Tarini signifies the nation’s growing **prominence in global maritime activities and gender equality** on the high seas.

Source: TH

NETZAH YEHUDA BATTALION

Context

- **The United States** has indicated that it is **planning to impose sanctions against the Netzah Yehuda battalion** of the **Israel Defense Forces (IDF)**.

About

- It was established in **1999** to accommodate the **religious beliefs of ultra-Orthodox Jews** and other religious nationalist recruits in the army.
 - ♦ It was established to **facilitate military service** for these communities, accommodating their religious observances by scheduling prayer and study times, and restricting their interactions with female soldiers.
- The battalion is historically **stationed in the occupied West Bank region** and faces intense scrutiny for allegedly committing **human rights violations against Palestinians**.
- Israel maintains that Netzah Yehuda serves as an **active combat unit and works within the legal standards**.

Source: LM

