

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INTERNET SHUTDOWNS IN INDIA

Context

- India witnessed the highest number of Internet shutdowns in the world in 2023, a record it has held for the sixth straight year, according to a report.

About

- India has collectively had more than 500 instances of Internet shutdowns.
- A total of 13 States and Union Territories imposed shutdowns in 2023, where seven of them disrupted Internet services five or more times.
- Shutdowns spanning over five days or more shot up from 15% of all shutdowns in 2022 to more than 41% in 2023.
- With 37 orders, Myanmar, where the military seized power in a coup in 2021, recorded the second-highest number of Internet shutdowns, followed by Iran (34), Palestine (16), and Ukraine (8).

Legal Provisions Relating to Internet Shutdown

- Grounds:** Indian States and Union Territories can impose an internet shutdown only in case of a “public emergency” or in the interest of “public safety”, according to the Indian Telegraph Act.
 - However, the law does not define what qualifies as an emergency or safety issue.
- Till the year 2017, shutdowns were imposed largely under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).
 - Section 144 of CrPC gave the police and the District Magistrate the powers in order to prevent unlawful gathering of people and also to direct any person to abstain from a certain activity.
- However, in 2017 the law was amended and the Government promulgated the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rule 2017.

Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India Case:

- In 2020 the Supreme Court by ruling on Jammu and Kashmir Internet shutdown held that indefinite internet shutdowns by the State is not permissible under Indian Constitution.
- The apex Court further stated that imposition of Section 144 can not be used as a mechanism to avoid genuine protest which is permitted under the Constitution.

- Section 144 has very specific parameters, only if those parameters are satisfied then only a Magistrate can pass the orders.
- Key Highlights of the orders:
 - Usage of the Internet is the Fundamental Right under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.
 - Internet shutdowns can be of temporary period but not for indefinite period.
 - Government to publish all orders imposing restrictions under Section 144.
 - The Court had also said that any order with regard to Internet Shutdowns will come under Judicial Scrutiny.

Implications

- Impact on Freedom of Expression:** Internet shutdowns infringe upon the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Indian Constitution.
- Global Image and Investment:** Frequent internet shutdowns can impact India's global image, raising concerns among investors and international partners.
- Human Rights Concerns:** Internet shutdowns raise human rights concerns, including the right to access information, freedom of speech, and the right to peaceful assembly.
- Economic Disruptions:** India has a rapidly growing digital economy, and internet shutdowns lead to significant economic losses.
- Educational Challenges:** With the increasing use of online platforms for education, internet shutdowns severely affect students' access to learning resources, online classes, and communication with teachers.
- Lack of Transparency:** The government needs to provide clear justifications for such actions and communicate transparently about the duration and reasons for the shutdown.

Conclusion

- In a democracy Governments need to provide a rationale for disrupting the internet services in a periodic manner.
- Indiscriminate shutdowns have high social and economic costs and are often ineffective.
- For better internet governance the Indian civil society needs to push for a transparent and accountable system.

Source: TH

MORE THAN A THIRD OF URBAN CHINESE LIVING IN SINKING CITIES

Context

- A recent study in China found that more than a third of the country's urban population, some **270 million** people, live in sinking cities.

Key Highlights

- The study combined rates of subsidence with projected sea-level rise to estimate that the urban area in China below sea level could triple in size by 2120, affecting between **55 million and 128 million** residents.
- It was found that **37 of the 82 cities** they looked at were sinking, and nearly 70 million people are experiencing rapid subsidence of 10mm a year or more.

Land Subsidence

- According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), subsidence is the "**sinking of the ground because of underground material movement**".
- The NOAA also mentions that this phenomenon can "happen over very large areas like whole states or provinces, or very small areas like the corner of your yard."
- Across the world, many cities are slowly sinking including tropical megacities like **Jakarta in Indonesia or Manila in the Philippines**, or places like **New Orleans, Vancouver, Mexico City** etc.
- Land subsidence has affected around **65 percent** of the houses in the pilgrimage town of **Joshimath in Uttarakhand** in 2023.

Why are the cities sinking?

- Groundwater Extraction:** It causes the soil to compact and the land surface to sink, especially in areas with young geological sediments like river deltas and floodplains.
- Land Reclamation:** In regions like China's coast, extensive land reclamation projects involve filling coastal areas with soil and debris to create new land for development. The weight of this fill material compresses the underlying soil, causing it to sink.
- Mining Activities:** Cities built over areas with extensive mining activities are prone to subsidence as underground mines collapse over

time. The voids left by mining activities can lead to the ground above sinking unevenly.

- Natural factors:** Processes such as soil compaction, sediment consolidation, and tectonic movements contribute to sinking of the cities.

Impact of sinking cities

- Uneven Subsidence:** Cities often sink unevenly, which can lead to infrastructure damage, uneven settling of buildings, and increased risks to urban stability.
- Traffic and Infrastructure:** Differential subsidence, especially near subways and highways, can exacerbate infrastructure challenges.
 - In Beijing, rapid sinking near transportation routes like subways and highways, up to 45mm a year, can lead to increased maintenance costs and safety concerns.
- Coastal Vulnerability:** Coastal cities like Tianjin face heightened vulnerability due to sinking land reinforcing the effects of climate change-driven sea-level rise.
 - The devastation caused by **Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005** was manifold as the sinking land exacerbated the impact of the storm.
- Social Disruption:** Sinking cities may face social disruption as communities grapple with the impacts of subsidence, including displacement, loss of livelihoods, and increased vulnerability to natural disasters.

Measures needed to address the challenge

- Improved Urban Planning:** Incorporating subsidence risk assessments into urban planning processes can help identify vulnerable areas and inform land use decisions.
- Coastal Protection Measures:** In low-lying coastal areas investing in coastal protection measures such as dikes, seawalls, and levees can help mitigate the impacts of subsidence and sea-level rise.
- Deep soil mixing** involves injecting stabilizing agents deep into the ground to reinforce the soil and prevent land subsidence caused by soil compression.
- Using alternative construction techniques** such as lightweight building materials and foundation systems can help reduce the weight of buildings thus minimizing the risk of land subsidence.

Way Ahead

- Focus should be on Artificial recharge which involves injecting water into depleted aquifers to replenish them, thus reducing the need for excessive pumping and preventing further subsidence.
- The satellite measurements data can be used to regularly identify trends, and provide an important step on the road towards a solution to sinking cities.

Source: TH

FIRST SET OF CERTIFICATES HANDED OVER UNDER CAA

In News

- The Union Government granted citizenship certificates to more than 300 people who applied under the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019**.

About the Act

- Earlier, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notified the Citizenship Amendment Rules, 2024.
- The notification enabled the **implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)** that was passed by Parliament In December 2019.
- It amended the **Citizenship Amendment Act, 1955**, making two key changes to facilitate citizenship to undocumented migrants belonging to six non-Muslim communities — **Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan**, who entered India on or before December 31, 2014

Other features

- It reduced the period to qualify for citizenship from the existing requirement of continuous stay of 11 years to continuous stay of five years.
- However, Pakistani Hindus were anyway eligible for citizenship under Section 5 and Section 6 (1) of the Citizenship Act, 1955. The CAA only helped fast track the application process.
- The Rules grant the final authority to accord citizenship to an empowered committee headed by the Director, Census Operations, while the scrutiny of applications filed online on the portal was done by a district level committee (DLC) headed by Department of Post officials.

- On successful verification of documents, the DLCs administered the oath of allegiance to the applicants.

Criticism

- Classifications based on religion and country are manifestly discriminatory.
- Many challenge the law for violating **Article 14 of the Constitution** which guarantees all 'persons' equality before the law and equal protection of law.
- They also argue that making religion a qualifier for citizenship violates secularism, which is a basic feature of the Constitution.
- Most parts of the northeast are exempted from the CAA.
- Groups like the Tamil Hindus in Sri Lanka, the Rohingyas in Myanmar and minority Muslim sects like the Hazaras in Afghanistan also face persecution but have been denied similar protection under this law.

Governments Stand

- Indian Muslims need not worry as the CAA has not made any provision to impact their citizenship and has nothing to do with the present Indian Muslims, who have equal rights like their Hindu counterparts.
- No Indian citizen will be asked to produce any document to prove his citizenship after this Act."
- The Ministry says there is no bar on Muslims from anywhere in the world to seek Indian Citizenship under Section 6 of the Citizenship Act, which deals with citizenship by naturalisation.

Source: LM

ADVOCATES NOT LIABLE UNDER CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

Context

- The Supreme Court held that advocates cannot be held liable under the Consumer Protection Act 1986 (as re-enacted in 2019) for deficiency of services.

Supreme Court judgment

- The court was hearing an appeal against a **2007** ruling by the **National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)**, and overturned the commission's ruling.

- The NCDRC had held that services provided by lawyers fell under **Section 2(o)** of the **Consumer Protection Act, 1986**.
- In its judgment, the court said legal representation for a fee couldn't be classified as a service under the **Consumer Protection Act, 1986**.
- It noted that lawyers provided a unique service, and that there was no indication that the legislature intended to include professionals under the Act.

Doctors in consumer law

- In **1995**, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court in **Indian Medical Association v. VP Shantha** ruled that doctors would be covered under the consumer protection law.
- The Supreme Court also called for reconsidering this judgment that brought doctors under the purview of the **Consumer Protection Act**.

Consumer Protection Act, 2019

- **Definition of consumer:** A consumer is defined as a person who buys any good or avails a service for a consideration. It does not include a person who obtains a good for resale or a good or service for commercial purpose.
 - ♦ It covers transactions through all modes including offline, and online through electronic means, teleshopping, multi-level marketing or direct selling.
- **Rights of consumers:** Six consumer rights have been defined in the Bill, including the right to;
 - ♦ Be protected against marketing of goods and service which are hazardous to life and property;
 - ♦ Be informed of the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods or services;
 - ♦ Be assured of access to a variety of goods or services at competitive prices;
 - ♦ Be heard and assured that the consumer's interest will receive due consideration at appropriate fora;
 - ♦ Seek redressal against unfair or restrictive trade practices;
 - ♦ Consumer awareness.
- **Central Consumer Protection Authority:** It will regulate matters related to violation of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and misleading advertisements.

- **Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission:** Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (CDRCs) will be set up at the district, state, and national levels.
- **Product liability:** Product liability means the liability of a product manufacturer, service provider or seller to compensate a consumer for any harm or injury caused by a defective good or deficient service.

Way Ahead

- The relationship between a client and their lawyer is akin to a contract of personal service. Consequently, lawyers cannot be dragged to consumer courts over alleged deficiencies in service.
- However, they can still be sued in ordinary courts for negligence and other malpractice.

Source: IE

LEGAL POSITION ON LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIPS IN INDIA

Context

- The Allahabad High Court stated that a **Muslim cannot claim rights in a live-in relationship when he or she has a living spouse**.

About

- The judgement called such a relationship **against the tenets of Islam while hearing a writ petition**.
- Live-in relationships with variables of marital status of the partners, their possibly different faiths, birth of children and even separation have occupied the attention of the judiciary at various levels in recent years.

Legal Status in India

- India does not have **any laws that directly address a live-in partnership**.
- As per the top Court, for a man and a woman to live together is part of **'the right to life'**; therefore, a live-in relationship is no longer an offence.
- The concept of live-in relationships was **legally recognized for the first time in 2010** while discussing the safety of women and said that women who were in live-in relationships are **protected under the domestic violence law**.
- Twelve years later, the Supreme Court strengthened the legitimacy of live-in partnerships by **recognizing that children born out of such situations** are entitled to rights under a co-parenting agreement and have a **right to inherit property**.

- The Supreme Court in its various judgments has stated that a man and a woman living like a husband and a wife in a long-term relationship, and even have children, the judiciary will **presume that the two were married and that the same laws would be applicable to them and their relationship.**

Arguments in Favour of Live-In Relationships

- **Changing Social Norms:** Indian society is experiencing significant cultural shifts, Live-in relationships are seen as a reflection of this changing mindset, allowing individuals to explore alternative forms of partnership.
- **Compatibility Testing:** In a country where arranged marriages are still prevalent, live-in relationships offer a way for couples to get to know each other on a deeper level before making a lifelong commitment.
- **Financial Independence:** Living together provides financial independence and allows couples to share living expenses, which can be particularly advantageous in expensive cities.
- **Reduced Stigma:** While live-in relationships may still face stigma in certain conservative segments of Indian society, attitudes are gradually evolving, especially in urban areas.
- **Legal Recognition and Protection:** The Indian legal system has begun to acknowledge the rights of couples in live-in relationships through various judgments by the Supreme Court and High Courts.
- **Personal Freedom and Choice:** Ultimately, live-in relationships in India represent a broader movement towards individual freedom and choice in matters of love and relationships.

Arguments Against Live-In Relationships

- **Social Stigma:** Live-in relationships are often viewed negatively in Indian society, particularly in more conservative communities.
 - ♦ Couples face judgment, criticism, and ostracism from family members, friends, and the broader community.
- **Cultural and Religious Beliefs:** India is a country with diverse cultural and religious traditions, many of which emphasize the sanctity of marriage and family.
 - ♦ Live-in relationships are seen as contrary to these beliefs and perceived as morally and socially unacceptable.

- **Family Pressure:** Live-in relationships may strain familial relationships and lead to conflict with parents who may not approve of the arrangement.
- **Legal Ambiguity:** Despite some legal recognition of live-in relationships by the Indian judiciary, there is still ambiguity and uncertainty regarding the legal rights and protections of couples in such arrangements.
- **Lack of Financial Dependence:** Women may feel pressured to enter into marriage rather than pursue a live-in relationship as marriage is seen as providing more financial security and stability.
- **Impact on Children:** If children are involved in a live-in relationship, they may face social stigma and discrimination, particularly in more conservative communities.
- **Lack of Social Support:** Unlike marriage, which is socially sanctioned and supported, couples in live-in relationships lack the same level of social support and acceptance.
 - ♦ This lead to feelings of isolation and alienation, especially during times of crisis or need.
- **Influence of Media and Westernization:** While attitudes towards live-in relationships may be changing, particularly in urban areas, there is concern that the increasing influence of Western media and culture is eroding traditional values and norms regarding marriage and relationships.
- **Potential for Exploitation and Abuse:** In the absence of legal protections and societal recognition, individuals in live-in relationships may be vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and coercion, particularly if there is a significant power imbalance between partners.

Way Ahead

- Positive and realistic portrayal of live-in relationships in media and popular culture can help normalize these relationships and reduce stigma.
- Family acceptance plays a crucial role in the success of live-in relationships, particularly in the Indian context where familial ties hold significant importance.
- Encouraging open dialogue and understanding within families can facilitate acceptance of diverse relationship choices.
- Ultimately, the way forward for live-in relationships in India lies in upholding the principles of personal choice and freedom.

- Individuals should have the right to choose their relationship dynamics without fear of societal judgment or legal repercussions.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

UNESCO'S MEMORY OF THE WORLD ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL REGISTER

Context

- The Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra and Sah day loka-Locana have been included in 'UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register'.

What is UNESCO's Memory of the World Register?

- The Memory of the World Register, established by UNESCO, is a prestigious and archival holdings of universal value.
- It was established to preserve and digitize humanity's documentary heritage. It reflects the diversity of languages, people, and cultures.

Ramcharitmanas

- **Tulsidas**, a prominent poet-saint of the **16th century**, wrote Ramcharitmanas in the **Awadhi language**. Ramcharitmanas is composed of seven chapters.
- The seven Kands written by Tulsidas are Baal Kand, Ayodhya Kand, Aranya Kand, Kishkindakand, Sundar Kand, Lanka Kand and Uttar Kanda.

Panchatantra

- The Panchatantra is an ancient Indian collection of interrelated **animal fables in Sanskrit** verse and prose, arranged within a frame story.
- It was authored by **Pt. Vishnu Sharma**.

Sah dayāloka-Locana

- 'Sah day loka-Locana', authored by Kashmiri poet **Acharya Anandvardhan**, is a significant literary work in aesthetics and literary criticism.
- It analyzes several aspects of literary composition and provides insights into the principles of Sanskrit poetics.

Source: PIB

GLOBAL ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS (GANHRI)

Context

- Recently, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has deferred the accreditation of India's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) for the second consecutive year.

About GANHRI

- It is a **global network of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)** that coordinates the relationship between NHRIs and the United Nations Human Rights System.
- It is the only **non-UN** body whose internal accreditation system **grants access to UN committees**, based on compliance with the **Paris Principles of 1993**.

Accreditation Process

- GANHRI ensures individual NHRIs' compliance with **internationally recognised minimum standards – the Paris Principles** – to ensure their independence, pluralism, and accountability, through the **Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA)**.
 - ♦ **Paris Principles** lists **six criteria** that human rights bodies must adhere to – **mandate and competence, autonomy from government, independence guaranteed by a statute or Constitution, pluralism, adequate resources and adequate powers of investigation**.
- It is a rigorous, peer-based process, undertaken by representatives of NHRIs from each of the **four regions: Africa, Americas, Asia Pacific, and Europe**.

Accreditation Status

- **'A Status'**: NHRIs have **independent participation rights at the UN Human Rights Council** and some General Assembly bodies and mechanisms.
 - ♦ They are **eligible for full membership of GANHRI**, including the right to vote and hold governance positions.
- **'B status'**: NHRIs participate in GANHRI meetings but are **unable to vote or hold governance positions**.

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

- It was established as a **Statutory Body** in 1993 after the enactment of **Protection of Human Rights Act (1993)**, which was further **amended by an Amendment Act in 2006**.
 - ♦ It was set up in conformity with the Paris Principles.
- It was accredited as **'A Status'** for the **first time in 1999** which was retained in 2006, 2011 and 2017 reviews.
- It is the **first time** India's status has been suspended for **two years in a row**, in **2023 and in 2024**.
 - ♦ Its 'A Status' has only been deferred once before, in 2016, but it was restored in 2017.

Source: The Print

SANGAM: DIGITAL TWIN WITH AI-DRIVEN INSIGHTS INITIATIVE

Context:

- Recently, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) announced the participants for 'Stage 1' of the 'Sangam: Digital Twin with AI-Driven Insights Initiative'.

About the 'Sangam: Digital Twin' Initiative:

- It is a technology that **offers a solution by creating virtual replicas of physical assets**, allowing for **real-time monitoring, simulation, and analysis** for experimental iterations and feedback loop to adapt to the changes for achieving the best outcomes.
- It is a **Proof of Concept (PoC)** distributed in two stages to be conducted in one of the major cities of India.
- It symbolises a collaborative leap towards **reshaping infrastructure planning and design**, combining the prowess of 5G, IoT, AI, AR/VR, AI native 6G, Digital Twin, and next-gen computational technologies with the collective intelligence of public entities, infrastructure planners, tech giants, startups, and academia to break the silos and engage in a whole-of-nation approach.

Stages of 'Sangam: Digital Twin'

- **First Stage:** It is exploratory for clarity of horizon and creative exploration to unleash potential.
- **Second Stage:** It is for practical demonstration of specific use cases generating a future blueprint that may serve as a roadmap to scale and replicate successful strategies in future infrastructure projects through collaboration.

Source: PIB

XENOTRANSPLANTATION

In News

- Recently, the first human recipient of pig kidney transplant, also known as xenotransplant, passed away.

What is xenotransplantation?

- It is the transfer of living cells, tissues, or organs from one species to another.
- Any disease that is treated by human-to-human transplantation could potentially be treated by xenotransplantation.
- The need for such transfer is felt because of the significant gap between the number of transplantations needed by patients and the availability of donor organs.
- Gene editing technology CRISPR Cas9 was used to eliminate desired pig genes that are responsible for producing proteins triggering immune responses.

Why are pigs often used for xenotransplantation?

- The pig's anatomical and physiological parameters are similar to that of humans, and the breeding of pigs in farms is widespread and cost-effective.
- In January 2022, also the first xenotransplantation of a genetically-modified pig heart was done.
- Breeding Pigs on farms is widespread and cost effective.

Concerns

- One of the major concerns is the risk of transmission of animal pathogens, particularly viruses, to recipients and the possible adaptation of such pathogens for human-to-human transmission.

Source: IE

TEA BOARD OF INDIA

Context

- The **Tea Board of India** has indicated a drop in production of about **40% in Assam and 23% in West Bengal up to March 2024** due to lack of sufficient rainfall.

Tea Board of India

- The Tea Board was set up as a **statutory body in 1954** under the **Tea Act, 1953**.
- It was established for the purposes of **regulating the Indian tea industry and protecting the interests of tea producers in India**.
- All teas produced in the tea growing areas of India are **administered by the Tea Board**.
 - Among the Indian teas administered by the Tea Board are the world famous **Darjeeling, Assam and Nilgiri**.
- The Board consists of **32 Members**, including Chairman and Deputy Chairman appointed by the Government of India representing different sections of the Tea industry.
- The Board's **Head Office is situated in Kolkata** and there are two Zonal offices-one each in North Eastern Region at Jorhat in Assam and in Southern Region at Coonoor in Tamil Nadu.

Source: TH

ZIMBABWE

In News

- 3rd Session of India-Zimbabwe Joint Trade Committee held in New Delhi

Key Points

- Both sides agreed to explore signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) for regulatory cooperation in **Digital transformation solutions, Tele-medicines, Rough diamonds, fast payments system** and traditional medicine among others.

About Zimbabwe

- Zimbabwe is a beautiful country in Southern Africa that is known for its dramatic landscapes, its diverse wildlife and its hard working people.
- It is situated in **Central Southern Africa**, between the **Limpopo and the Zambezi rivers**.



- It is **landlocked**, bounded by Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.
- It is home to the **Great Zimbabwe Monument**, the mighty **Victoria Falls** and the majestic Eastern Highlands
- The highest point in the country, **Mount Nyangani**, lies at 2 592m along the eastern border with Mozambique.
- Zimbabwean soils are predominantly derived from **granite**

Source: PIB

KANWAR LAKE

In News

- The condition of the Kanwar Lake has been deteriorating and the drying area has been increasing.

About Kanwar lake

- It is located in Begusarai district of **Bihar**.
- It is locally known as '**Kabartal**'
- It is Asia's **largest freshwater oxbow lake**.
- It draws water from the confluence of the **Gandak, the Bia and the Kareh river**.
- It is the first and only wetland in the state of international importance under the **Ramsar Convention**.
- In 1986, the state government notified it as a protected area.
- Later, the central government declared it as a sanctuary to stop the poaching of birds.

Do you know ?

An oxbow lake is a curved lake formed alongside a winding river as a result of erosion and sediment deposition over time. Oxbow lakes are typically crescent-shaped and are common features in floodplains and low-lying areas near rivers.

Source: DTE

NAKBA DAY

Context

- Recently Palestinians share stories of loss, displacement, and resilience on social media to mark the 76th commemoration of the Nakba, or catastrophe.

About

- Nakba**, stands for “catastrophe” in Arabic. It refers to the forced displacement of Palestinians to facilitate the creation of Israel.
- Nakba Day** is observed on the day after Israel declared its independence on **May 14, 1948**.
- For Palestinians, the Nakba is the ethnic cleansing, forced displacement and process of erasure of them and their land.

Source: **IE**

INDIA DISCUSSING SETTING OF ETO LIMITS WITH CODEX

Context

- India has asked CODEX committee to set limits on the use of ethylene oxide in spices, amid a sales ban on two popular Indian brands.

About

- India has taken up with the CODEX committee the need for setting up limits for ETO usage as different countries have different limits.
- CODEX has not prescribed a limit so far. Also, there is no standard for ETO testing.

Ethylene oxide (ETO)

- Ethylene oxide is generally used as a **disinfectant, sterilizing agent**, as well as an insecticide to reduce microbial contamination in spices.
- However, its use is considered carcinogenic, beyond permissible limits.

Indian Spices industry

- India is the world's **largest spice producer** and one of the largest exporters of spices.

- In 2023-24, India's spice exports totalled **\$4.25 billion**, accounting for a **12%** share of the global spice exports.

Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

- It is an intergovernmental food standards body, set up in **1963**.
- It was established jointly by the **UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** and the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**, within the framework of the Joint Food Standards Programme.
- Objective:** To protect consumer's health and ensure fair practices in the food trade.
- Members:** Currently, **189** members (188 UN member countries and the European Union).
- India** became a member in **1964**.
- Headquarter:** Rome

Source: **BL**

IGLA-S AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

Context

- The Army is all set to begin receiving another set of **Russian Igla-S very short range air defence systems (VSHORAD)**.

About

- Igla-S has been designed specifically to bring down low-flying aircraft and even **can identify and neutralise air targets like drones and cruise missiles**, it can be operated by a crew or an individual.
- These systems are intended for the new air defence formations **for high mountainous terrain along the northern border of the country**.
- The acquisition of the **Igla-S systems addresses the Army's need to replace the outdated Igla-1M systems**.

Source: **TH**

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