

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA EXPLORING JOINT VENTURES IN DEFENCE SECTOR

### Context

- India and Saudi Arabia are enhancing defence cooperation by focusing on joint ventures and industrial collaboration to localise defence production.

### India Saudi Defence collaboration

- India and Saudi Arabia are focusing on strengthening defence ties to achieve self-reliance and mutual growth in defence manufacturing.
- Common goals:** Saudi Arabia aims to localise 50% of its defence spending under Vision 2030, aligning with India's Make in India initiative.
- Saudi Arabia signed a \$250 mn contract** for ammunition from Munitions India Limited, a Defence Public Sector Undertaking.
- Saudi Arabia has procured the **155mm Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)** from Bharat Forge.
- Joint exercises:**
  - Sada Tanseeq:** The inaugural Army exercise held in Rajasthan in January 2024.
  - Tarang Shakti:** Saudi Arabia participated as an observer in India's largest air exercise.
  - Al Mohed Al Hindi:** Bilateral naval exercise initiated in 2022.

### India Saudi Arabia Relations

- Political Relations:** The two countries established diplomatic relations in **1947**.
  - The royal visit of 2006 resulted in the signing of the **Delhi Declaration**, which was followed in 2010 by the **Riyadh Declaration** that elevated bilateral ties to a strategic partnership.
  - The Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) Agreement** was signed during the **2019** visit of the Indian PM to Riyadh, which established a high-level council to steer the Indo-Saudi relationship.
- Economic Relations:** India is Saudi Arabia's second-largest trade partner; Saudi Arabia is India's fourth-largest trade partner.
  - The bilateral trade between the partners stood at **\$43.3 billion in 2023-24**. Saudi's direct investments in India amounted to **\$3.15 billion** (as of March 2022).
  - There were 2,783 Indian companies registered as joint ventures/ 100% owned entities with investments worth approximately \$2 billion in the kingdom. (As of January 2022)

- Energy Cooperation:** Saudi Arabia was India's **third largest** crude and petroleum products source for **FY23**.
  - India imported **39.5 million metric tonnes (MMT)** of crude from the country in FY23, amounting to **16.7%** of India's total crude imports.
  - India's LPG imports from Saudi Arabia stood at **7.85 MMT**, and **11.2%** of its total petroleum product imports, in FY 23.
- Indian diaspora:** As of 2023, there were **2.6 million** Indians in Saudi Arabia. This is the second largest number of foreign workers in the country, after Bangladesh.

### Future Outlook

- The shared aspiration to reduce dependence on defence imports and boost local production presents significant opportunities for both nations.
- Joint ventures and collaboration in **cutting-edge technologies such as AI and cybersecurity** can enhance strategic autonomy.
- By aligning their goals under **Vision 2030 and Make in India**, India and Saudi Arabia can emerge as pivotal partners in shaping the global defence landscape.
- Continued collaboration is essential to ensure Indian workers' success in Saudi Arabia, contributing to greater economic stability and development for both countries.

Source: TH

## 100 YEARS FOR BELAGAVI SESSION OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

### Context

- The **Indian National Congress (INC)** has planned a series of events in **Belagavi** to mark the 100th anniversary.
- These include a two-day extended session of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) and a public rally themed 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan'.

### About the Belagavi Session of the INC (December 26-27, 1924)

- It was the **39th session of the INC** that took place in **Belagavi (then Belgaum), Karnataka**. It was a period marked by intense political activity and growing momentum for India's freedom movement.
- It was **presided over by Mahatma Gandhi**, the **only time he served as the Congress president**.

- **Participants in the 1924 Congress session** : The session was attended by several senior Congress leaders including Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Sarojini Naidu, and Khilafat movement leaders Muhammad Ali Jauhar and Shaukat Ali, among others.
- It was a testament to the power of unity, non-violence, and collective action in the face of oppression.

### Key Decisions and Outcomes

- **Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience:** Mahatma Gandhi reiterated his commitment to non-cooperation and civil disobedience as effective tools against British rule.
  - ♦ These principles became the cornerstone of subsequent movements, including the **Salt March and Quit India Movement**.
- **Promotion of Khadi:** The session emphasized the importance of promoting Khadi (hand-spun cloth) as a symbol of self-reliance and resistance against British economic policies.
  - ♦ This initiative aimed to revive indigenous industries and reduce dependence on British goods.
- **Communal Harmony:** Gandhi stressed the need for communal harmony and unity among different religious and ethnic groups in India.
  - ♦ It was crucial in countering the divisive tactics employed by the colonial administration.

### Significance of Belagavi Session of INC

- **Gandhi's Leadership:** Mahatma Gandhi's presidency underscored his commitment to non-violence, communal harmony, and self-rule (Swaraj).
  - ♦ Gandhi's ideas and strategies laid the groundwork for future movements against British colonial rule.
- **Impact on the Freedom Movement:** The session promoted peasant consciousness, spread khadi, and encouraged village industries, especially in Karnataka. It also led to increased peasant participation in Congress-led initiatives.
- **Unity and Inclusivity:** The session brought together prominent leaders from various parts of India, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, C. Rajagopalachari, Sarojini Naidu, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and many others.
  - ♦ It symbolized the unity and collective resolve of Indian leaders to achieve independence.
- **Cultural and Social Impact:** Noted vocalist **Veene Seshanna** performed the song 'Udayavagali Namma Chaluva Kannada Nadu' which became an **anthem for Karnataka's unification movement**.

- ♦ The event highlighted the role of cultural expressions in the freedom struggle.

Source :IE

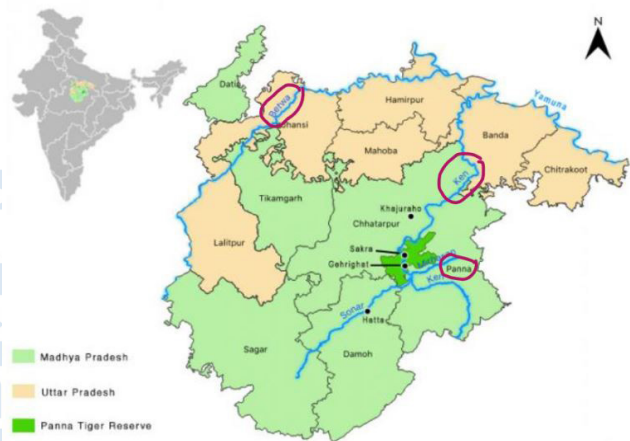
## KEN-BETWA RIVER LINKING PROJECT

### Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the interstate Ken-Betwa river linking project.

### Ken-Betwa River Linking Project

- In 2021, a memorandum of agreement was signed among the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the governments of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to implement the Ken-Betwa Link Project.



### Project:

- ♦ Transferring water from the Ken river to the Betwa river, both tributaries of the Yamuna.
- ♦ The Ken-Betwa Link Canal will be 221 km in length, including a 2-km tunnel.
- ♦ It has two phases. Phase-I will involve building the Daudhan Dam complex and its subsidiary units.
- ♦ Phase-II will involve three components — Lower Orr Dam, Bina Complex Project and Kotha Barrage.
- ♦ It is the project under the **National Perspective Plan** for interlinking rivers

### Regions to be Benefited:

- ♦ The project lies in Bundelkhand, which spreads across 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- ♦ The project will be of immense benefit to the water-starved region.
- **Completion:** It is proposed to be implemented in eight years.

### National Perspective Plan of Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) Programme

- The Ministry of Water Resources (then Union Ministry of Irrigation) and Central Water Commission formulated a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for water resources development in 1980.
- **The National Water Development Agency (NWDA)** has been entrusted with the work of **Interlinking of Rivers** under it.
- The NPP has two components:
  - ◆ Himalayan Rivers Development;
  - ◆ and Peninsular Rivers Development.
- **30 link projects** have been identified under the NPP.
  - ◆ 14 links under Himalayan Component and 16 links under Peninsular Component.
- **Himalayan Rivers Development:** Construction of storage reservoirs on the principal tributaries of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra in India, Nepal and Bhutan.
  - ◆ Inter-linking canal systems to transfer surplus flows of the eastern tributaries of the Ganga to the west.
- **Peninsular Rivers Development Component** is divided into **four major parts:**
  - ◆ Interlinking of Mahanadi-Godavari-Krishna-Cauvery Rivers and building storages at potential sites in these basins.
  - ◆ Interlinking of west flowing rivers, north of Mumbai and south of Tapi.
  - ◆ Interlinking of Ken-Chambal rivers.

### Significance of River Linking Projects

- **Reduction of Water Scarcity:** It helps transfer surplus water from water-rich regions to water-deficient areas, addressing water scarcity issues.
- **Improved Water Availability for Agriculture:** Increased water availability in dry regions to enhance agricultural productivity.
- **Mitigation of Floods:** Interlinking rivers help distribute excess water during periods of heavy rainfall, reducing the risk of floods in specific regions.
- **Increased Hydropower Potential:** The construction of reservoirs and canals for interlinking projects create opportunities for hydropower generation.
- **Job Creation:** The construction and maintenance of interlinking infrastructure create job opportunities, contributing to economic development.

- **Conflict Resolution:** River interlinking projects potentially reduce inter-state disputes over water resources by providing a more equitable distribution of water.

### Concerns with the River Linking Projects

- **Ecosystem Disruption:** Altering natural river courses and diverting water can disrupt ecosystems, leading to habitat loss, changes in biodiversity, and potential extinction of species.
- **Displacement of Communities:** The construction of dams, reservoirs, and canals for river interlinking result in the displacement of communities, leading to social and economic hardships for affected populations.
- **Inter-State Disputes:** River interlinking projects often involve multiple states, and disagreements arise over water sharing, leading to inter-state disputes.
- **Financial Viability:** The construction of large-scale infrastructure for river interlinking projects can be economically challenging, with costs often exceeding initial estimates.
- **Seismic Risks:** Areas prone to earthquakes face increased risks due to the construction of large dams and other infrastructure.
- **Maintenance Issues:** Neglecting maintenance can lead to system failures and adverse consequences.
- **Community Resistance:** Local communities and environmental activists often oppose river interlinking projects due to concerns about their impact on the environment, livelihoods, and cultural heritage.

### Conclusion

- Addressing the concerns requires comprehensive planning, environmental impact assessments, community engagement, and transparent decision-making processes.
- Sustainable water management practices, incorporating modern technologies and adaptive strategies, are essential to mitigate the potential negative consequences of river interlinking projects.

Source: IE

## ANNUAL SURVEY OF UNINCORPORATED SECTOR ENTERPRISES (ASUSE) 2023-24

### Context

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** has released the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises

(ASUSE) for 2023-24 for the reference period October, 2023 – September, 2024.

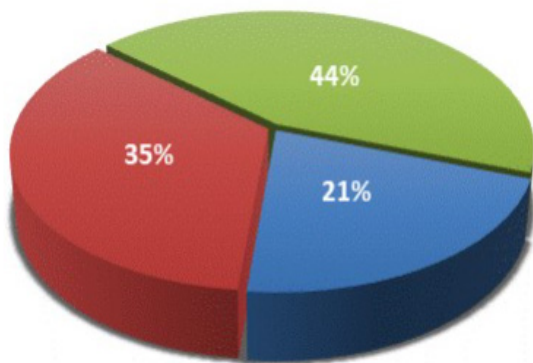
### Coverage of ASUSE

- **Geographical coverage:** ASUSE covers the rural and urban areas of the whole of India (except the villages in Andaman and Nicobar Islands).
- **Sector-wise,** this survey captures unincorporated non-agricultural establishments belonging to three sectors viz., Manufacturing, Trade and Other Services (excluding construction).
- **Economic characteristics:** Number of workers, GVA, emoluments paid, fixed asset owned, outstanding loan etc.

### Key highlights from the ASUSE 2023-24

- **Growth in Establishments:** The total number of establishments in the sector increased substantially from 6.50 crore in 2022-23 to **7.34 crore in 2023-24**, representing a **12.84%** growth.

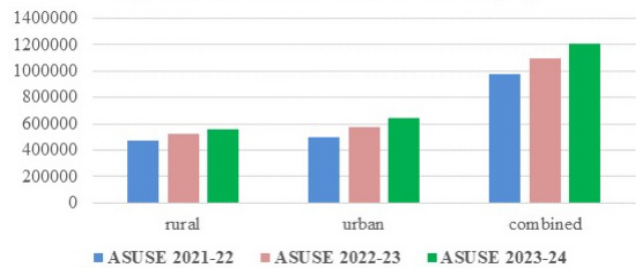
### Contribution of Broad Activity Categories in GVA



■ Manufacturing ■ Trade ■ Other Services

- **The Gross Value Added (GVA)**, a key indicator of economic performance, rose by **16.52%** driven by a 26.17% growth in other services sectors.
  - ♦ **Gross Value Added (GVA) per worker**, a measure of labour productivity of the sector, rose to **Rs. 1,49,742 in 2023-24** from Rs. 1,41,769 in 2022-23 in current prices showing a **5.62% increase**.
- **Productivity Metrics:** The Gross Value of Output (GVO) per establishment increased from Rs. 4,63,389 to **Rs. 4,91,862** in current prices.
- **Strong Labour Market Performance:** The percentage of female-owned proprietary establishments has increased from 22.9% in 2022-23 to **26.2%** in 2023-24.
  - ♦ **The average emolument per hired worker** also increased by **13%** in 2023-24 compared to the previous year, signaling improvements in wage levels.

Fig 1: Estimated Number of Workers ('00)



- **Better Digital Penetration:** Percentage of establishments using the internet has grown significantly from 21.1% in 2022-23 to **26.7% in 2023-24**.

### Concluding remarks

- The data serves as a key input for policymaking, supporting National Accounts Statistics, fulfilling the requirements of Ministries such as M/o Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME), Textiles, Labour & Employment, and empowering stakeholders to make informed, data-driven decisions.

Source: PIB

## U.S. AND CHINA RENEW S&T AGREEMENT

### Context

- China and the U.S. agreed to extend their Agreement on **Co-operation in Science and Technology for an additional five years**.

### About

- The Agreement was first signed in **1979**.
  - ♦ Since then, the Agreement has been renewed **every five years**.
- The U.S. and China each appoint **co-chairs and an agency** from each country is nominated as the 'executive agent'.
- There are also additional protocols between agencies and 40 sub-agreements in different areas, from agriculture to nuclear fusion.
- The renewed Agreement includes provisions to enhance researcher safety and data reciprocity, and restricts cooperation to basic research and intergovernmental levels

### Significance of Bilateral Science and Technology Agreements

- They pave the way for forms of cooperation that aren't confined to state institutions.
- They also facilitate joint research, mobility between the countries for students and scientists, encourage institutional cooperation, and set up bilateral research centers.

- ◆ India has such agreements with **83 countries**.

### What Does the Renewed Agreement between China and USA Mean?

- Before the Agreement was renewed this year, the U.S. was faced with three options:
  - ◆ to renew it as usual for five years,
  - ◆ to rescind it or
  - ◆ to renew it with new measures to restrict the scope and add additional conditions.
  - ◆ The U.S. opted for the third, while there are deep concerns about the Agreement's continued usefulness to the U.S..
- **Basic Research:** It will be confined to the intergovernmental level, to basic research, and to previously identified themes of mutual benefit.
- **Exclusion:** The agreement explicitly excludes work related to developing critical and emerging technologies and includes new guardrails for implementing agencies to protect the safety and security of their researchers.
  - ◆ China won't extract disproportionate benefits, allegedly at the U.S.'s expense.

### Implications of U.S.-China S&T Agreement Renewal and India's Stakes in USA and China Relations:

- **Increased Global Competition:** India faces increased R&D competition with China rapidly advancing in technology and innovation, posing challenges in AI, 5G, and quantum computing.
- **Strategic Collaboration:** India's future growth in fields like space research, IT, and pharmaceuticals will depend on deepening technological and research partnerships with developed countries.
- **Stronger Bilateral Agreements:** India should enhance its bilateral S&T agreements with other countries, focusing on the U.S., Japan, and European nations, to ensure competitiveness.
- **Geopolitical Opportunities:** Tensions between China and the USA may provide India with opportunities to strengthen its strategic position, particularly through alliances like the Quad, as India aligns with the USA and its allies in countering China's influence in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Trade and Economic Risks:** As both China and the USA are major trading partners, deteriorating relations between them can disrupt global trade, potentially affecting India's economy.
  - ◆ India's trade with both nations might be influenced by tariffs, sanctions, or supply chain disruptions.
- **Security Concerns:** Growing USA-China tensions could lead to increased military activity and competition in the Indo-Pacific, which

heighten security concerns for India, particularly along its border with China.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- The Agreement catalysed China's rise from a junior partner in 1979 to a formidable global competitor in science and technology.
- While Trump's administration might scrutinise the Agreement more closely, it recognises the importance of maintaining cooperation with China.
- The renewal of the U.S.-China S&T Agreement highlights the need for India to strengthen its R&D capabilities and international collaborations to ensure competitiveness and maintain its standing in the global technological landscape.
- India needs to navigate tensions between these two giants while leveraging trade and investment opportunities.
- India aims to maintain its strategic autonomy, avoiding forced alignment with either the USA or China, while balancing security partnerships with the USA and economic ties with China.
- India should enhance its global influence in science and technology to ensure its contributions are recognized and keep pace with technological advancements.

Source: TH

## EC'S CONDUCT OF ELECTION RULES AMENDMENT

### In News

The Ministry of Law and Justice issued a notification amending Rule 93(2)(a) of the Conduct of Election Rules.

### Conduct of Election Rules

- The Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, is a set of rules which provide for provisions on how to conduct the elections as per the Representation of People Act.

### Recent Amendment

- The recent amendment was done by the **Union Law Ministry following a recommendation from the Election Commission (EC)**.
- Before the amendment, the rule stated that all election-related papers should be open to public inspection.
  - ◆ After the amendment, the rule now states that only specified election-related papers are available for public inspection.

### Rationale behind the Amendment

- The amendment follows a direction from the **Punjab and Haryana High Court** for the **Election Commission (EC)** to share all election documents, including CCTV footage of polling stations.
- The Election Commission argued that there were concerns over violating the secrecy of votes and the potential misuse of CCTV footage (using artificial intelligence).
- The amendment aimed to clarify that electronic records (e.g., CCTV footage) are not automatically included under the term “election papers”.

### Criticism

- Activists argue the amendment limits citizens’ right to access election-related information, which is central to transparency in elections.
- The amendment restricts access to documents (such as Presiding Officers’ diaries on voter turnout) that are important for transparency but were not specifically mentioned in the Conduct of Election Rules.
- The Opposition has criticized the amendment, claiming it reflects their concerns about the deterioration of electoral integrity.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- Amendments to the Conduct of Election Rules represent an important effort to adapt the electoral process to the demands of modern societies.
- By increasing transparency, improving accessibility, bolstering security, and embracing new technologies, these changes seek to improve the election system, making it more efficient and trustworthy.
- However, the success of these amendments will depend on careful implementation, continued monitoring, and a focus on inclusivity.

Source : TH

## NEWS IN SHORT

### PM-ABHIM SCHEME

#### In News

The Delhi High Court directed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the implementation of the PM-ABHIM.

### About Pradhan Mantri - Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM):

- It was launched on 25th October 2021 with an outlay of Rs. 64,180 Crore.
  - ♦ To be implemented over five years (2021-2026).
- It includes both **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)** and **Central Sector (CS)** components.
- It focuses on improving health systems at primary, secondary, and tertiary care levels, and preparing for future pandemics.
- **Objectives** :Aims to strengthen public health infrastructure, surveillance, and health research across urban and rural areas.
- **Key Measures under PM-ABHIM:** Support for States/UTs to build Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAM) in rural and urban areas.
  - ♦ Strengthening of Block Public Health Units and Integrated District Public Health Labs.
  - ♦ Development of Critical Care Hospital Blocks.
  - ♦ Enhancing surveillance, health emergency response, research, and pandemic preparedness.
  - ♦ One Health approach to manage infectious diseases in humans and animals.

Source :TH

### LION-TAILED MACAQUE

#### In News

A recent study highlights the growing threat to the lion-tailed macaque due to increased human-wildlife interactions.

#### Lion-tailed macaque(*Macaca silenus*)

- It is a member of the silenus group.
- It is known for its adaptability to human-altered environments.
- **Habitat** : Mainly arboreal, this species prefers the upper canopy of primary tropical evergreen rainforest
- **Distribution** : It is endemic to the Western Ghats hill ranges in southwestern India.
  - ♦ It can be found in states of Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
- **Threats** :Its population faces **threats** from habitat loss, fragmentation, and human encroachment.
- **Protection status** : It is classified as **endangered** on the **IUCN Red List** and protected under Appendix I of CITES.

Source :TH

## CORRELATION BETWEEN MITOCHONDRIAL DNA AND BIOLOGICAL AGING

### Context

- Researchers have found that deletion mutations and aberrant expression of mtDNA correlated with biological aging in humans, offering potential to delay mitochondrial decline.

### What are mitochondria?

- Mitochondria are cellular powerhouses responsible for **Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP)** synthesis, the energy currency of cells.
  - ♦ mtDNA encodes only a small subset of proteins required for mitochondrial function.
  - ♦ And their dysfunction plays a key role in aging.
    - Age-related deletion mutations in mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) contribute to a decline in mitochondrial function, particularly in muscle cells.
- Many more mitochondrial proteins are encoded by the nuclear genome, and enter the mitochondria after they are made in the part of the cell lying outside the mitochondrion and the nucleus (i.e. the cytoplasm).
  - ♦ Individuals inherit their mitochondria only via the mother's egg.

### Loss of Muscle Mass

- As we age, we lose bits of our genome in tissues such as the skeletal muscle and the brain.
- These losses, called **deletion mutations**, gradually erode the function of a cell component called the mitochondrion.
- Muscle cells lacking a sufficient number of functional mitochondria to support their contractile function die and this causes a loss of muscle mass.

Source: TH

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR JALLIKATTU

### Context

- The State government of Tamil Nadu has issued an elaborate Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to be followed to ensure the safe conduct of Jallikattu events in 2025.

### Key Highlights

- Jallikattu events must comply with the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Conduct of Jallikattu) Rules, 2017.

- ♦ Permission should only be given for events conducted in designated areas as notified by the government.
- The revenue department must inspect the venue for adequate space and safety, including closing nearby wells within a 5 km radius.

### Jallikattu

- **Meaning:** The term 'jallikattu,' comes from Tamil terms 'salli kaasu' which means **coins**, and kattu which means **package tied to the horns of bulls** as prize money.
  - ♦ It is usually held during the **Pongal season**.
- It is a **sport where men compete against each other** to hold on to the humps of agitated bulls that are released into an open arena.
- **Historical linkages:** Jallikattu is a dated tradition. An ancient reference to bull taming is found in a seal discovered at **Mohenjo-daro**, which is dated between **2,500 BC and 1,800 BC**.
  - ♦ The sport was called **Yeru thazhuval** or "embracing the bull".

### Constitutional Safeguards and Legislation in India

- **According to Article 48A**, it is the responsibility of the State to improve the strength of animals and safeguard the wildlife of the country.
- **According to Article 51A(g)**, it is the Fundamental Duty of every citizen to protect and improve forests and wildlife and to have compassion for all living creatures.
- Parliament enacted the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA Act), 1960**.
- **The Wildlife Protection Act, of 1972** aims to preserve the wildlife species of both fauna and flora and establishes reserved places for their survival.

Source: TH

## THE REAL EFFECTIVE EXCHANGE RATE (REER)

### Context

- According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the real effective exchange rate (REER) index of the rupee touched a record 108.14 in November, **strengthening by 4.5%** during this calendar year.

### About The Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER)

- The REER **compares a nation's currency value** against the weighted average of the currencies of its major trading partners.



- It is an **indicator of the international competitiveness** of a nation in comparison with its trade partners.
- **An increasing REER indicates** that a country is losing its competitive edge.
- Unlike the nominal exchange rate, which only reflects currency value, the REER **adjusts for inflation (domestic and foreign)** to compare relative price levels.

#### Significance:

- **Appreciation:** A higher REER indicates that a country's currency has appreciated in real terms, making its exports more expensive and imports cheaper. This can reduce export competitiveness.
- **Depreciation:** A lower REER suggests that the currency has depreciated in real terms, improving export competitiveness and making imports more expensive.

Source: IE

## VEER BAL DIWAS

#### Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the Veer Baal Diwas celebrations in New Delhi, where Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) awardees were honoured.

#### About the Veer Bal Diwas

- Translated as 'Day of Brave Children,' **Veer Bal Diwas** is observed annually on **December 26**. **First observed in 2022**, it commemorates the martyrdom of the younger sons of the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh—**Sahibzada Zorawar Singh (9) and Sahibzada Fateh Singh (7)**.
- The two young boys were **bricked alive** on December 26, 1705, on the orders of the **Nawab of Sirhind Wazir Khan** since they refused to give up their religion.
- After the brick wall fell, Khan ordered the executioners to slit the throats of both the young princes.

#### Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP)

- It is awarded annually to children in the **age group of 5-18 years** for their exceptional abilities and outstanding achievements in **seven categories**: Bravery, Art & Culture, Environment, Innovation, Science & Technology, Social Service and Sports.
- This award is the **highest civilian honor for children** in India. Each awardee of PMRBP is given a medal, certificate and a citation booklet.

Source: IE

## GOOD GOVERNANCE DAY

#### Context

- Good Governance Day is observed annually on December 25 to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

#### About: Good Governance Day

- The day was **first celebrated** in 2014 and is also known as **Sushasan Diwas**.
- This day aims to promote **awareness among citizens** about government accountability and administration while also instilling "good governance" as a practice for Indian civil servants.
- The theme for the **2024 Good Governance Day** is "India's Path to a Viksit Bharat: Empowering Citizens through Good Governance and Digitalisation."

#### Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- **Born:** December 25, 1924, in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.
- **Early involvement in politics:** Joined the Quit India Movement in 1942 during his student days.
- **Prime Ministerial terms:** Served three times as India's Prime Minister — briefly in 1996, for 13 months in 1998-1999, and full-time from 1999 to 2004.
- **First non-Congress leader:** Became the first non-Congress leader to complete a full term as Prime Minister.
- **Transformational initiatives:** Introduced major programs like Kisan Credit Card, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and National Rural Health Program.
- **Nuclear achievement:** Oversaw India's declaration as a full-fledged nuclear state.
- **UN General Assembly:** First Indian leader to address the UN General Assembly in Hindi.
- **Bharat Ratna:** Awarded India's highest civilian honor, the Bharat Ratna, in 2015.

Source: IE

## BOXING DAY

#### Context

- The Boxing Day Test is being held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), featuring India and Australia.

#### About

- Boxing Day is a **holiday celebrated the day after Christmas Day**.

- ◆ In the United Kingdom, as well as a number of other countries like Scotland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada—Boxing Day is a public holiday that became official in **1871**.
- **Origin:** The term “Boxing Day” was first recorded in **1833**, but the official origin of the name has never been determined.
  - ◆ It is associated with the tradition of giving to the less fortunate.
  - ◆ It was believed that on this day, employers would give gifts, known as “Christmas boxes,” to their servants.
- ◆ The servants worked on Christmas Day and would have the next day off to go visit their own families.
- Boxing Day has recently become **synonymous with watching sports**.
  - ◆ A number of leagues in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland hold football and rugby matches, while Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa are known for cricket matches on Boxing Day.

**Source: IE**

