

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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10 YEARS OF BETI BACHAO, BETI PADHAO (BBBP) AND SUKANYA SAMRIDHI YOJANA (SSY)

In Context

- Marking the **10th anniversary** of the **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP)** movement and the **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY)**, India celebrates a decade of transformative initiatives aimed at promoting **gender equality**, empowering the **girl child**, and improving the **Child Sex Ratio (CSR)**.
 - ♦ The celebrations, spanning from **22nd January 2025 to 8th March 2025 (International Women's Day)**, include the launch of the **Mission Vatsalya Portal** (for child welfare) and the **Mission Shakti Portal** (for women's empowerment and safety).

About Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP)

- **Genesis:** Launched on **22nd January 2015** in **Haryana**, in response to the **dismal CSR of 918 girls per 1,000 boys** (2011 Census) caused by societal norms favoring male children.
- **Objectives:** Improve the **Child Sex Ratio (CSR)**.
 - ♦ Promote **gender equality** and **women empowerment**.
 - ♦ Prevent **gender-biased, sex-selective elimination**.
 - ♦ Ensure **survival and protection** of the girl child.
 - ♦ Encourage the **education and participation** of girls.
- **Implementation:** Executed by states with **100% Central Assistance**.
 - ♦ No provision for **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)**.
- **Ministries Involved:** **Women and Child Development**.
 - ♦ **Health and Family Welfare**.
 - ♦ **Education** (formerly Human Resource Development).

About Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY)

- **Launched as Part of BBBP:** Aimed at securing the financial future of girl children by encouraging families to invest in their education and welfare through **tax-saving, high-return savings accounts**.
- **Eligibility:** Families with a **girl child below 10 years**.
 - ♦ A **Sukanya Samriddhi Account (SSA)** must be opened in the girl's name.
 - ♦ Only **resident Indians** are eligible; **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)** are excluded.

Achievements Over the Decade

- **Improved Child Sex Ratio (CSR):** Awareness campaigns and the enforcement of the **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994** helped increase CSR.
 - ♦ CSR at birth rose from **918 (2014-15)** to **933 (2022-23)**.
- **Increased Female Enrollment in Schools:** Free and subsidized education, improved infrastructure (e.g., toilets under the **Swachh Bharat Mission**), and scholarships like SSY reduced dropout rates.
 - ♦ Programs like **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyas** significantly boosted enrollment in **primary and secondary schools**.
- **Women Entrepreneurs and Policy Synergy:** The **Women's Welfare Budget** grew over **200%**, from ₹0.97 lakh crore (FY 2014) to ₹3.10 lakh crore (FY 2025).
 - ♦ **2.3 crore MSMEs** are now led by women.
 - ♦ Under **PM Mudra Yojana**, **70% of loans** are availed by women.
 - ♦ Initiatives like **Jan Dhan Yojana** (banking access for 30 crore women) and **Lakhpati Didi** (helping 1 crore women earn ₹1 lakh+ annually) empowered women economically.
- **Empowering Women Through Awareness:** Campaigns like **Selfie with Daughter** and **National Girl Child Day** inspired participation from all sections of society.
 - ♦ **Panchayati Raj institutions** and grassroots organizations celebrated the **birth of girl children** and trained workers to combat gender stereotypes.

Challenges

1. **Deep-Rooted Patriarchy:** Societal norms continue to favor male children, creating a persistent challenge for gender equality.
2. **Implementation Gaps:** Uneven implementation of BBBP across districts highlights the need for **stronger governance and monitoring**.
3. **Resource Allocation:** Excessive focus on **awareness campaigns** led to insufficient allocation for **education, healthcare, and welfare schemes**.

Recent Developments

- **New Portals:**
 - ♦ **Mission Vatsalya:** Focuses on child welfare and protection.
 - ♦ **Mission Shakti:** Aims to enhance women's safety and empowerment.

- **Growth in the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana:**
 - ♦ More families have adopted SSY as a **financial tool** to prioritize girls' education and secure their futures.

Road Ahead

- **Strengthening Grassroots Programs:** Expand **community-driven initiatives** to reach remote areas and address regional disparities.
- **Enhancing Education Infrastructure:** Focus on **secondary and higher education**, including improved scholarships and facilities for girls.
- **Combating Violence Against Women:** Integrate BBBP with existing schemes addressing **domestic violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking**.
- **Holistic Resource Allocation:** Balance funding across **awareness campaigns, education, and healthcare** to ensure long-term impact.
- **Innovative Financial Support:** Enhance SSY by integrating it with digital platforms for easier access and tracking.

Source: TH

DIFFERENTIAL PRICING

In News

- The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** has raised concerns over alleged **differential pricing practices** employed by ride-hailing **companies Ola and Uber** based on the type of **smartphone used by consumers**.

What Is Differential Pricing?

- Differential pricing is a strategy where businesses charge varying prices for the same product or service based on factors such as:
 - ♦ Location
 - ♦ Demand fluctuations
 - ♦ Consumer demographics
 - ♦ Purchasing behavior
- This pricing approach is driven by market dynamics, allowing companies to optimize revenues while catering to different customer segments.

Types of Differential Pricing

- **Price Localization:** Adjusting prices to reflect local purchasing power or competition.
- **Real-Time Pricing:** Dynamically adjusting prices based on demand, competition, and availability.
- **Subscription-Based Pricing:** Offering discounts for long-term commitments.

- **Seasonal Discounts:** Reducing prices during specific periods, like holidays.
- **Volume Discounts:** Incentivizing bulk purchases with lower per-unit costs.

Why Do Companies Use Differential Pricing?

- **Maximize Revenue:** Charging higher prices to customers with higher willingness to pay.
- **Boost Market Penetration:** Lower initial prices attract new customers.
- **Encourage Bulk Purchases:** Volume-based pricing clears inventory faster.
- **Increase Profit Margins:** Higher prices during peak demand maximize profitability.
- **Compete Locally:** Adjusting prices to match local purchasing power.

Ethical Considerations

- **Transparency:** Businesses should be transparent about their pricing practices.
- **Fairness:** Differential pricing should not discriminate against or exploit any group of customers.
- **Consumer Protection:** Businesses should ensure that differential pricing practices do not harm consumer welfare.

Legal Provisions Governing Differential Pricing in India

- **Consumer Protection Act, 2019:** Differential pricing that discriminates between consumers or exploits them can be challenged under the Consumer Protection Act. Section 2(47) prohibits practices that harm consumer interests.
- **Section 4 of Competition Act, 2002:** Prohibits dominant players from indulging in discriminatory pricing that exploits customers or restricts market access.
- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has scrutinized pricing practices in sectors like aviation and ride-hailing.
- **Essential Commodities Act, 1955:** Differential pricing for essential goods like food, fuel, or medicine is restricted to prevent exploitation during shortages or emergencies.
- **Pallavi Refractories v. Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd. (2005):** The Supreme Court upheld differential pricing when it is rational and based on clear criteria, such as market segmentation or cost differences.
- **Bottled Water Pricing:** In 2017, the government clarified that identical bottled water sold in multiplexes, airports, and retail stores must have the same MRP under the Legal Metrology Rules.

Regulation and Oversight

- **Government Regulation:** Governments should regulate differential pricing to protect consumers and ensure fair competition.
- **Industry Self-Regulation:** Industry associations can develop guidelines for ethical differential pricing.
- **Consumer Awareness:** Educating consumers about differential pricing practices can help them make informed decisions.

Source: TH

MOST FAVOURED STATUS (MFN)

Context

- Under the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework, the **Most Favored Nation (MFN) principle** requires member countries to treat all trade partners equally by extending the same trade benefits (e.g., reduced tariffs or market access) to all signatories.

MFN in the Context of India-US Trade

- **US Trade Deficit Concern:** The U.S., under its America First Trade Policy, has consistently raised concerns over its trade deficit with India (over \$35 billion in FY24) and demanded reduced tariffs on products of interest, particularly agricultural goods.
- **India's MFN Compliance:** In 2023, India agreed to lower import duties on frozen turkey, duck, cranberries, and blueberries following U.S. demands. However, due to the MFN principle, these tariff reductions were applied to all WTO member countries, not just the U.S.

Most Favoured Status (MFN)

- **Aim:** The MFN principle was designed **to prevent countries from giving different treatment to one partner over the other.**
 - ♦ Each member treats all the other members equally as "most-favoured" trading partners.
- If a country improves the benefits that it gives to one trading partner, it has to give the same "best" treatment to all the other WTO members so **that they all remain "most-favoured"**.
- **Principle:** It seeks to replace the frictions and distortions of power-based (bilateral) policies with the guarantees of a rules-based framework where trading rights do not depend on the individual participants' economic or political clout.
- **Countries outside the WTO:** Countries such as Russia, Iran, North Korea, Syria and Belarus are not a part of WTO & WTO members can impose whatever trade measures they wish without flouting global trading rules.

- **Exceptions:** There can be exceptions to allow for preferential treatment of developing countries, regional free trade areas and customs unions.

Removal of MFN status

- There is **no formal procedure for suspending MFN treatment**, it does formally allow the members to increase import tariffs or impose quotas on goods, or even ban them.
- In 2019 India suspended Pakistan's **MFN status after a suicide attack by a Pakistan-based Islamist group**. Pakistan never applied MFN status to India.

What does losing MFN status mean?

- Revoking MFN status sends a strong signal that the member countries do not consider the losing country an economic partner.
- Members can increase import tariffs or impose quotas on goods, or even ban them, and to restrict services out of the country.

Source: BL

RAREST OF RARE DOCTRINE IN DEATH PENALTY

Context

- The recent conviction of Sanjay Roy for the rape and murder of doctor at **Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital** has sparked widespread public outrage.
 - ♦ While the court sentenced Roy to life imprisonment, many are demanding the death penalty.

Death Penalty in India: Current Statistics

- The **death penalty or capital punishment**, is the most severe form of legal penalty in India.
- According to a report by **Project 39A**, **120 death sentences were awarded by trial courts in 2023** across the country, while **561 inmates remained on death row** by the end of the year.
 - ♦ It marks the **highest** number of convicts on **death row in nearly two decades**.
 - ♦ It also noted that only one death sentence was confirmed in 2023, making it the year with the lowest rate of death sentence confirmations by appellate courts since 2000.

Legal Framework

- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS):**
 - ♦ **Section 103 (Section 302 in IPC):** Murder;
 - ♦ **Section 71 (Section 376A in IPC):** Rape leading to death or resulting in a persistent vegetative state;

- ♦ **Section 147 (Section 121 in IPC):** Waging war against the Government of India;

Arguments in Favour

- In the **35th Report of Law Commission of India (1962)** favoured retaining the death penalty.
- **Acting as a deterrent**, and ensures justice for victims by proportionately punishing the offender.
- Maintaining law and order.

Arguments Against Death Penalty

- **Low Imposition Rates:** Supreme Court has affirmed the death penalty in only 7 cases over the past 6 years, indicating limited utility.
- **Arbitrariness:** Sentencing can be inconsistent due to subjective judgments of individual judges.
- **Inhumane Nature:** Inflicts severe mental anguish on convicts and their families, violating principles of human dignity.
- **Procedural Flaws:** Lack of rigor and transparency in sentencing processes undermines fairness.
- **Economic Disparity:** 74.1% of death row inmates come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, highlighting systemic inequities.
- **Global Trends:** Over two-thirds of countries globally have abolished the death penalty in law or practice (Amnesty Report, 2021).

Key Reforms and Guidelines (After Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab Case, 1980)

- **'Rarest of Rare' Doctrine:** The **Supreme Court** mandates that the death penalty can **only be imposed in exceptional cases** where the crime is so heinous that no other punishment would suffice.
- **Aggravating and Mitigating Factors:**
 - ♦ **Aggravating factors** include the brutality of the crime, the impact on the victim and society, and the criminal's prior record.
 - ♦ **Mitigating factors** include the accused's age, mental health, and potential for rehabilitation.
- **Review and Appeal Process:** It includes **multiple levels of review and appeal** to ensure that the decision is fair and just.
 - ♦ It includes the possibility of **mercy petitions to the President or Governor**, depending on the jurisdiction.
- **Procedural Safeguards:** It includes ensuring that the accused has access to legal representation and a fair trial.
- **MHA Guidelines:** The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has issued guidelines to safeguard the interests of death row convicts, emphasizing a **minimum period of 14 days** between the communication of the death sentence and its execution.

Recent Developments

- In November 2024, reports indicated that **India plans to reform its criminal sentencing norms** to address criticisms of arbitrary punishments.
 - ♦ It aims to introduce a **grading system** to standardize sentencing, aligning more closely with systems in countries like Britain, Canada, and New Zealand.

Source: IE

INDIA BECOMES KENYA'S LARGEST TEA IMPORTER

In News

- India has become the largest importer of tea from Kenya, with imports rising by **288%**, from **3.53 million kg** (January-October 2023) to **13.71 million kg** during the same period in 2024.

India's Tea Industry: Present Status

- **Global Ranking:** India is the **second-largest tea producer** after China, contributing **21%** of global tea production.
- **Exports:**
 - ♦ India is the **fourth-largest exporter**, with a **12% global export share**.
 - ♦ India's tea exports also increased from 184.46 million kg from January to October in 2023 to 209.14 million kg during the same phase in 2024.
 - ♦ Top export destinations include the **UAE, Russia, Iran, U.S., and U.K.**
- **Domestic Market:**
 - ♦ Domestic consumption accounts for **80% of total production**, driven by India's tea-drinking culture.
- **Regional Production:**
 - ♦ **Assam produces 55% of India's tea**, making it the largest tea-producing state.
 - ♦ However, India's total tea production dropped by **50 million kg** in 2024, with Assam facing a loss of **20 million kg**.

Significance and Potential of Indian Tea

- **Economic Contributions:** The Indian tea industry provides numerous **direct and indirect job opportunities**, especially in rural areas.
 - ♦ It generates significant **foreign exchange** and **government revenue**.
- **Global Reputation:** Strong **geographical indications**, advanced **tea processing facilities**, and **innovative products** have positioned Indian tea as one of the best globally.

- **Strategic Growth Areas:** Expanded product mix, **value addition**, and strategic market growth have enhanced Indian tea's competitiveness.

Challenges Facing India's Tea Industry

- **Stagnant Prices and Oversupply:** A **widening demand-supply gap** has led to stagnant prices, impacting profitability.
- **Cheaper Imports:** Entry of low-cost teas from other countries has caused **quality concerns** and a decline in exports.
- **Rising Input Costs:** Many tea estates are struggling due to increased costs, leading to closures or reliance on **subsidies** from parent companies.

About Tea

- **Botanical Background:** Tea is an evergreen flowering plant, prized for its leaves and leaf buds, which are used to produce one of the world's most popular beverages.
- **Cultivation Requirements:**
 - ♦ **Soil:** Well-drained soil with high organic content and a pH of **4.5 to 5.5**.
 - ♦ **Climate:** Grows best in tropical and subtropical climates.
- **Origin in India:** Tea plants were introduced by British colonialists from China and Southeast Asia around three centuries ago.
- **Geographic Spread:**
 - ♦ Primarily grown in **Northeast India** and **West Bengal**, but also in **Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu**, and **Uttar Pradesh**.
 - ♦ **Darjeeling Tea** is one of India's most coveted products and the **first GI (Geographical Indication)** registered product.

Tea Board of India

- **Overview:** A statutory body under the **Ministry of Commerce**, established under the **Tea Act of 1953**.
 - ♦ Succeeded the **Central Tea Board** and the **Indian Tea Licensing Committee**.
- **Composition:** Consists of **31 members**, including a Chairman.
 - ♦ Members include **MPs**, tea producers, traders, brokers, consumers, state representatives, and trade unions.
- **Functions:** Promotes Indian tea domestically and internationally.
 - ♦ Regulates tea cultivation and exports, ensuring compliance with global standards like the **International Tea Agreement**.

Recommendations

- **Boost Exports:** Focus on **value addition** to improve pricing and attract premium international markets.
- **Technology Integration:** Strengthen **blockchain technology** for supply chain transparency and enhance **research and development** in cultivation techniques.
- **Global Marketplaces:** Establish a **global e-marketplace** to directly connect tea growers with buyers.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Encourage **eco-friendly cultivation methods** to ensure long-term viability.
- **Policy Support:** Provide targeted subsidies, skill development, and financial incentives to sustain tea estates.

Source: TH

PROSPECTS FOR CHILDREN IN 2025: BUILDING RESILIENT SYSTEMS FOR CHILDREN'S FUTURES

Context

- The latest report, *Prospects for Children 2025: Building Resilient Systems for Children's Futures*, by the **UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)** has warned that the world is entering a new era of crisis for children.

Key highlights of the report

- **Doubling of Children Living in Conflict Zones:** Over **473 million children**—more than one in six globally—are currently residing in areas affected by conflict.
 - ♦ The proportion of children living in conflict zones has surged from **10% in the 1990s to nearly 19% today**, with the world witnessing the highest number of conflicts since World War II.
- **Debt Crisis Hurting Children's Futures:** Nearly **400 million** children live in countries burdened by debt, a figure projected to rise without urgent fiscal reforms.
- **Climate Crisis and Its Consequences:** Only 2.4% of multilateral climate finance is allocated to child-responsive initiatives.
 - ♦ Children are disproportionately affected by climate-related events, from food insecurity to displacement caused by natural disasters.
- **Unequal Access to Technology:** While internet access is nearly universal in high-income countries, only **53% of youth aged 15-24 are online in Africa**.

- ♦ **Adolescent girls and children with disabilities** face the greatest exclusion, with **90%** of young women in low-income countries remaining offline.

Policy recommendations

- **National Planning and Policy:** Governments must integrate children's vulnerabilities and needs into **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**.
- **Climate Financing:** Despite commitments made at COP29, only 2.4% of multilateral climate finance is child-responsive, highlighting an urgent need for additional and targeted funding to address loss and damage impacting children.
- **Business Regulation:** Environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) frameworks must explicitly address risks to children.
- **Legal frameworks** must prioritize intergenerational equity and the right of children to a sustainable future.

Steps taken by India for Children

- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015:** Provides a robust framework for protecting children affected by conflict and exploitation.
- **Operation Smile and Operation Muskaan:** Initiatives to trace and rehabilitate missing children, including those affected by conflicts.
- **PM CARES for Children:** Financial support for children orphaned due to the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing their education and healthcare needs.
- **Digital India Initiative:** Aims to improve internet connectivity in rural and remote areas, reducing the digital divide for children.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):** Promotes education and empowerment of adolescent girls, addressing gender disparities.
- **The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009:** Guarantees free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14 years, ensuring equity.
- **The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:** Provides safeguards for children against exploitation and abuse.

Way Ahead

- The future of children in 2025 hinges on building resilient systems that protect their rights and address their vulnerabilities.
- By prioritizing investments in children today, nations can secure a sustainable and equitable tomorrow.

Source: DTE

NITROGEN USE EFFICIENCY

Context

- A report by the Food and **Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**, highlighted that the rise in nitrogen fertilizers has resulted in biodiversity loss and exacerbated climate change.

About

- Nitrogen is an essential component of food constituents, particularly amino acids and proteins required for the growth of plants, animals, and humans.
- **Improving Nutrient use efficiency (NUE) is critical for;**
 - ♦ Reducing excessive use of nitrogen fertilizers,
 - ♦ Mitigating environmental pollution, such as nitrate leaching and greenhouse gas emissions,
 - ♦ Enhancing crop yields.

Key Findings of the Study

- **Nitrogen Use Trends:** Humans introduce approximately **150 teragrams (Tg)** of reactive nitrogen annually through agriculture and industry, over twice the pre-industrial levels.
 - ♦ This could rise to **600 Tg per year by 2100**, driven by climate change, increasing nitrogen losses into the environment.
- **Contributors to Nitrogen Pollution:** Livestock farming accounts for about **one-third** of human-induced nitrogen emissions.
 - ♦ Synthetic fertilizers, land-use changes, and manure emissions further exacerbate nitrogen pollution.
- **Regional Disparities:** Nitrogen pollution is most severe in regions like **North America, Western Europe, and parts of Asia**, where fertilizers have been overused for decades.
 - ♦ Conversely, in some low- and middle-income countries, restricted access to fertilizers leads to nitrogen depletion, soil degradation, and reduced crop productivity.

Impacts of Nitrogen Pollution

- **Health Impacts:**
 - ♦ It causes **methemoglobinemia (blue baby syndrome)** in infants by reducing blood's oxygen-carrying capacity.
 - ♦ It is linked to **cancers, reproductive issues**, and thyroid problems from long-term nitrate exposure.
- **Environmental Impacts:**
 - ♦ It leads to **eutrophication**, harmful algal blooms, and oxygen-depleted **"dead zones"** in water bodies.

- It contributes to climate change through **nitrous oxide** emissions, **300 times** more potent than carbon dioxide.

Policy recommendations

- Fertilizer Production:** The fertilizer industry should minimize greenhouse gas emissions during nitrogen fertilizer production.
 - Efforts should also focus on reducing wasteful losses during storage, transportation, and application.
- Biological Nitrogen Fixation:** Governments should promote leguminous crops like soybean and alfalfa to enhance nitrogen fixation through sustainable crop rotations.
- National Climate Commitments:** Integrate sustainable nitrogen management into **nationally determined contributions (NDCs)** and mitigation actions, targeting reduced nitrous oxide emissions to align with the **Paris Agreement's 1.5 °C goal**.
- Sustainable Practices:** Encourage investment in high-efficiency, low-emission fertilizers and promote recycling organic residues to improve system efficiency and reduce environmental pollution.

Concluding remarks

- Sustainable nitrogen management is integral to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030**, particularly those focusing on hunger eradication, health improvement, clean water, climate action, and preserving ecosystems.
- Hence governments, industries, and individuals must collectively work towards achieving this goal to ensure a resilient and sustainable future for all.

Source: FAO

NEWS IN SHORT

LAKE NAIVASHA

In News

- The **water hyacinth invasion** of **Kenya's Lake Naivasha** has caused severe economic and environmental challenges for local fishermen, reflecting the broader impact of invasive species.

About Lake Naivasha

- Lake Naivasha is a freshwater lake situated in the **Great Rift Valley of Kenya**.
- The lake is primarily fed by the perennial **Malewa and Gilgil Rivers**, which flow from the Aberdare Mountains in central Kenya.

- It is designated as a **Ramsar Site**, emphasizing its importance as a wetland of international importance.

About Water Hyacinth

- The **water hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes)** is an aquatic plant native to South America, introduced to Kenya in the 1980s.
- It thrives in polluted waters, as it grows rapidly in the presence of contaminants, making it the most invasive aquatic plant species globally.

Source: TH

RHODAMINE B

Context

- In India, the rampant use of Rhodamine B in food items has raised significant health concerns.

What is Rhodamine-B ?

- Rhodamine-B or RhB** is a chemical commonly used for dyeing in the textile, paper, leather, and paints industry as a coloring agent that helps in attaining the red and pink spectrum.
- In powdered form the chemical is **green in color** and upon being added to

water, it turns pink.

- It is widely used as a food additive in the **manufacturing, packaging, import, and sale of various food items**.

Why is it harmful?

- According to studies, even if consumed in small quantities, the chemical is highly

toxic and carcinogenic.

- If consumed regularly, Rhodamine-B can cause severe **damage to the cerebellum tissue** in the brain and to the brainstem that connect the brain to the spinal cord.
- This damage can lead to **functional abnormalities** and can **hinder human motor functioning**.
- As per the **Food Safety Standards Act, 2006**, preparation, packaging, importing, selling and serving food items with Rhodamine-B in wedding ceremonies and other public events is a punishable offense.
- In **early 2024, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka** banned cotton candy and certain street foods after detecting the harmful dye Rhodamine B in samples.

Source: TH

10,000 GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI) TAGS BY 2030

Context

- The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, set a target of reaching **10,000 Geographical Indication (GI) Tags by 2030**.

About

- The number of GI tags issued by the department till date stands at 605.
- The number of authorized users for GI tags increased from 365 to 29000 and the number of patents granted increased from 6000 to 100000, in the last 10 years.

What is a GI Tag?

- A geographical indication (GI) is a **sign used on products** that have a **specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- GIs are part of the **intellectual property rights** that come under the **Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property**.
- Administration in India:** GI registration is administered by the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999**.
- Products:** Agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts, and industrial products.
- Validity:** For a period of **10 years**, it can be renewed from time to time for a further period of 10 years each.
- Related Facts:** The first GI tag in the country was given two decades ago to the famous **Darjeeling tea**.
 - Uttar Pradesh** retains its position as the state with the most GI-tagged products in India, reaching a total of 75.
 - Tamil Nadu** follows behind with 58 GI products.

Benefits of GI Tag

- It confers **legal protection** to Geographical Indications in India which in turn **boost exports**.
- Prevents **unauthorised use** of a Registered Geographical Indication by others.
- It promotes **economic prosperity of producers** of goods produced in a geographical territory.

Source: PIB

DHANAURI WATER BODY

Context

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed the Uttar Pradesh government to place on record the status of notifying the Dhanauri water body as a wetland.

About

- While a state government can notify lakes and water bodies as wetlands to accord them protection, a **Ramsar site** is given final approval by the Centre.
- Under the international Ramsar Convention treaty of 1971** signed in Iran, wetlands that meet a certain criterion on ecological and biodiversity grounds are **chosen for special conservation measures**.

Dhanauri Water Body

- It is nestled within the **floodplains of Yamuna Basin within 15 kms of River Yamuna**.
- It is located **near the Jewar Airport**.
- It is a **Sarus crane hotspot** which is **Uttar Pradesh's state bird and is vulnerable (IUCN Status)**.



- Concerns:** Dhanauri had completely dried in May 2021,
 - a sarus crane and chick were found dead in December 2021,
 - and encroachments and attempts to change the land use were reported in May 2021.

What is a Wetland?

- A wetland is a place in which the land is covered by **water—salt, fresh, or somewhere in between—either seasonally or permanently**. It functions as its **own distinct ecosystem**.
- It includes **water bodies** such as lakes, rivers, underground aquifers, swamps, wet grasslands, peatlands, deltas, tidal flats, mangroves, coral reefs, and other coastal areas as well.
- These wetlands can be classified into three segments such as **inland wetlands, coastal wetlands, and human-made wetlands**.
- A wide variety of species live in wetlands.**

Source: IE

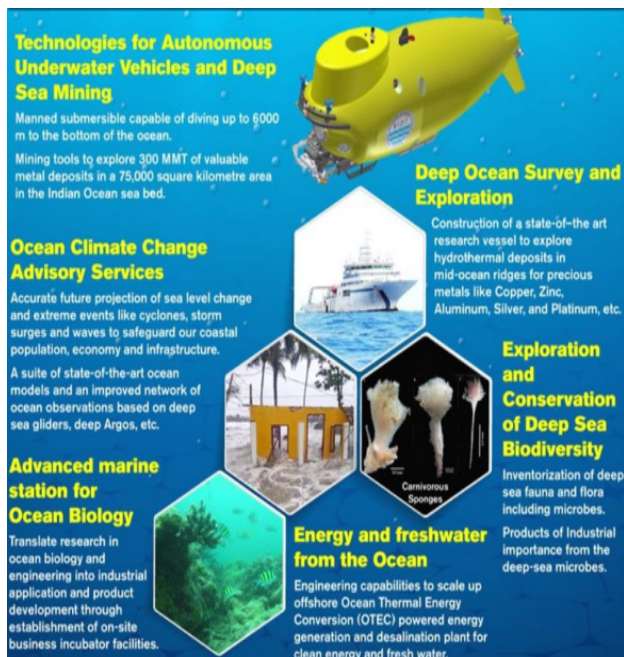
INDIA'S 1ST HUMAN-OPERATED SUBMERSIBLE UNDER DEEP OCEAN MISSION

In News

- India is preparing to deploy its first human-operated underwater submersible as part of the **Deep Ocean Mission**.

About Submersible

- The submersible will initially operate at depths of up to 500 meters, with future plans to extend its reach to 6,000 meters.
- It aims to explore underwater resources, enhance understanding of deep-sea ecosystems, and boost India's blue economy.
- Key objectives include identifying critical minerals, rare metals, and new marine biodiversity, contributing to sustainable fisheries and conservation.



Deep Ocean Mission

- The Deep Ocean Mission, launched on September 7, 2021, by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It is a Central Sector Scheme approved by the Cabinet.
- A key project under this mission, **Samudrayaan**, focuses on developing the **MATSYA 6000** manned submersible.
- The mission also includes the deployment of the Ocean Mineral Explorer (OMe 6000), an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) used for deep-sea mineral exploration.

Source: AIR

MEMECOINS

In News

- Donald Trump & Melania Trump launched their **memecoins—\$Trump and \$Melania**.

What is a Memecoin?

- Memecoins are **cryptocurrencies** created as jokes, often based on internet memes, and typically lack intrinsic value.
- They can be **created for free by anyone using platforms like Pump.fun**, and often **gain value through hype and public interest**.
 - Anyone can create a memecoin using blockchain networks like Solana or Ethereum.
 - Memecoins like Dogecoin and Shiba Inu gained popularity through viral marketing and high-profile endorsements.
- Difference from Traditional Cryptocurrencies:** Memecoins differ from traditional cryptocurrencies (like Bitcoin) because they don't have underlying value.
 - Memecoins can rise in value through speculative trading, influencer promotion, and social media hype.
 - Market caps are based on trading volume and demand, not underlying value or assets.
- Trading Memecoins:** Memecoins' liquidity is created through liquidity pools, where both the memecoin and a known cryptocurrency (e.g., Ether) are deposited.
 - This sets an initial price and helps establish the coin's market value.
- Risks of Memecoins:** Memecoins are highly volatile and have been linked to fraudulent schemes, including "pump-and-dump" and "rug pull" scams, where creators withdraw funds, leaving investors with worthless coins.

Source: IE

KASHMIR CHINARS

In News

- The Jammu and Kashmir government has launched a **"Digital Tree Aadhaar" program** to conserve the iconic Chinar trees.

About Kashmir Chinars (*Platanus orientalis*)

- The **Kashmir Chinar (*Platanus orientalis*)**, native to Greece and Southern Europe, thrives throughout Kashmir, particularly in the **Eastern Himalayas**.
- It is famously associated with **Char Chinar**, an island on Dal Lake, Srinagar, named after the **four Chinar trees present there**.

- They can grow up to 30 meters tall, taking approximately 150 years to reach full height.

Applications

- **Medicinal Use:** Various parts of the tree, such as bark and leaves, are used in traditional medicine.
- **Wood:** The wood is prized for making interior furniture due to its durability and aesthetic appeal.
- **Dye Production:** The tree is also utilized in the preparation of natural dyes.
- **Cultural Significance:** The Chinar tree is often considered a symbol of Kashmir, deeply rooted in its history, culture, and natural beauty.

Source: TH

CBP ONE ENTRY PROGRAMME

In News

- Donald Trump terminated the **CBP One app** which had allowed migrants to schedule asylum-seeking appointments at the US-Mexico border.

- ♦ It is part of a broader set of executive orders aimed at reducing immigration.

CBP One App

- It was launched in January 2023 and replaced a complex system for asylum-seekers and allowed migrants from Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to schedule interviews with immigration authorities.
- It granted **1,450 daily appointments** at eight border crossings, serving as the **sole route for legal asylum applications**.
- It provided a system to **grant immigration parole**, allowing migrants to temporarily enter the US for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefits, without full admission.

Source :IE

