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Time: 45 Min

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INDIA-EUROPEAN COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP

Context

- Recently, a delegation led by **European Commission (EC) President** Ursula von der Leyen is **in India** for a two-day visit exploring a '**security and defence partnership**'.

European Commission (EC)

Historical Background

- It traces its origins to the formation of the **European Economic Community (EEC) in 1958**, following the **Treaty of Rome.**

- The **Maastricht Treaty (1993)** and the **Lisbon Treaty (2009)** further strengthened its powers, ensuring that it remains a key player in EU governance.

Structure and Composition

- The **European Commission (EC)** is the **executive arm of the** European Union (EU)**,** which is **based in Brussels, Belgium**, and operates independently from the national governments of EU member states.

- EC is composed of **27 Commissioners,** one from each EU member state, are **appointed for a five-year term.**

Key Components

- **President of the Commission:** It is nominated by the European Council and approved by the European Parliament.
  - Sets the overall political agenda of the Commission.
  - Appoints Vice-Presidents and assigns portfolios to Commissioners.
- **Commissioners (College of Commissioners):**
  - Each member state nominates one Commissioner.
  - Responsible for different policy areas such as trade, environment, and competition.
- **Directorates-General (DGs) and Services:** These departments function like ministries and are responsible for drafting policies and implementing laws.
- **High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy:**
  - Oversees the EU's diplomatic and security policies.
  - Serves as Vice-President of the Commission.
- **Functions of the European Commission**
  - Legislative Initiative;
  - Enforcement of EU Laws;
  - Policy Implementation and Budget Management;
  - International Representation;

About India-European Commission (EC) Partnership

Historical Context:

- **1962: Diplomatic relations** between **India and the European Economic Community (EEC),** the precursor to the European Union**;**
- **1994:** Signing of the India-EU Cooperation Agreement;
- **2004: Strategic Partnership**, a shift towards deeper collaboration in trade, security, and global governance.
- **2020: 'India-EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025',** outlining ambitious goals for cooperation in various sectors, including digital innovation, climate action, multilateralism, and global peace.

Economic Cooperation:

- **Trade:** The EU is one of **India's largest trading partners**, accounting for **nearly 11% of India's total trade**, and the USA (10.8%) and China (10.5%).
  - As of 2023, bilateral trade between India and the EU reached approximately 120 billion.
  - The EU is the **second-largest destination for Indian exports** (17.5% of the total) after the USA (17.6%), while China only ranks fourth (3.7%).
- **Investment and Business Ties:** The EU is one of the largest foreign investors in India, with cumulative FDI inflows of over $100 billion in sectors such as automobiles, renewable energy, and information technology.

- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Both are focusing on diversifying supply chains, particularly in semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and critical minerals.
- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Negotiations:** The **India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA),** officially known as the **India-EU Broad-Based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA),** has been under negotiation since 2007.
  - It aims to enhance market access, reduce tariffs, and streamline trade regulations.

Strategic and Security Cooperation:

- **Maritime Security:** EU's **Global Gateway Strategy** and **India's Indo-Pacific Strategy** are working together to ensure free and open sea lanes in the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Counter-Terrorism:** The **India-EU Counter-Terrorism Dialogue** facilitates intelligence-sharing and counter-radicalization measures to combat terrorism and cyber threats.
- **Defense Cooperation:** The EU and India are exploring deeper defense collaboration, including joint military exercises, cybersecurity cooperation, and technology-sharing agreements.

Climate Change and Sustainable Development:

- **India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership:** Focuses on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and green financing.
- **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** The EU actively supports India's ISA initiative, which aims to promote solar energy deployment worldwide.

- **EU-India Green Hydrogen Partnership:** Aims to accelerate the use of green hydrogen in industrial sectors to reduce carbon emissions.

Technology and Digital Transformation:

- **India-EU Digital Partnership:** Focuses on 5G, artificial intelligence (AI), and cybersecurity to enhance digital connectivity.
- **Data Protection and Privacy:** India and the EU are discussing frameworks to align data protection laws, ensuring a secure digital ecosystem.
- **Research and Innovation:** India's participation in Horizon Europe, the EU's flagship research program, fosters collaboration in space, biotechnology, and health sciences.

Geopolitical and Multilateral Engagement:

- G20 (India hosted the G20 Summit in 2023 with strong EU participation);
- United Nations (India supports EU's role in global governance);
- World Trade Organization (WTO) (Both advocate for fair trade practices);

Challenges in the India-EU Partnership

- **Trade Barriers:** Tariff and non-tariff barriers, particularly in the agriculture, automotive, and pharmaceutical sectors, have slowed FTA negotiations.
- **Human Rights and Labor Standards:** The EU has raised concerns over labor rights, environmental standards, and digital governance in India.
- **Geopolitical Divergences:** India's neutral stance on the Russia-Ukraine war has led to some diplomatic tensions with EU nations.
- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Differences in data privacy laws, intellectual property rights (IPR), and digital taxation require further negotiation.

Future Prospects

- Expansion of India's role in EU-led global initiatives, including the Global Gateway and climate financing projects.
- Conclusion of the **India-EU Free Trade Agreement** in the coming years.
- Enhanced defense cooperation, including joint defense production.
- Stronger collaboration in space technology and AI-driven innovation.
- With both sides committed to deepening their strategic alliance, the India-EU partnership aims to play a crucial role in shaping the global economic and security landscape in the decades ahead.

Source: IE

INITIATIVES LAUNCHED TO STRENGTHEN MARITIME SECTOR

Context

- The Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways launched major initiatives to **modernize India's maritime infrastructure, strengthen global trade presence, and promote sustainability.**

Initiatives Launched

- **One Nation-One Port Process (ONOP):** Aimed at standardizing and streamlining operations across India's major ports, reducing inefficiencies, operational delays, and costs.
- **Sagar Ankalan - Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI):** A tool to enhance efficiency and global competitiveness of India's ports, measuring key performance indicators like cargo handling and turnaround time.
- **Bharat Global Ports Consortium:** Strengthening global trade by expanding India's maritime reach and enhancing trade resilience.
- **MAITRI (Master Application for International Trade and Regulatory Interface) App:** To streamline trade processes, reduce bureaucratic redundancies and expedite clearances, reinforcing India's commitment to ease of doing business.
- **India Maritime Week (October 27-31, 2025):** A bi-annual global maritime event to celebrate India's maritime heritage and development, expecting 100 countries and 100,000 delegates.

India's Maritime Sector

- **Strategic Position:** Located along the world's busiest shipping routes, India is a key trading hub and a rising global power.
- **India's Maritime Sector Overview**: Handles 95% of India's trade by volume and 70% by value, with port infrastructure critical to the economy.
- **Growth in Cargo-handling:** Between 2014-15 and 2023-24, major ports increased their annual cargo-handling capacity by 87.01%.
- **Surge in Merchandise Exports:** India's merchandise exports rose to USD 451 billion in FY23, up from USD 417 billion in FY22.
- **Maritime Sector's Importance:** India is the **16th-largest maritime nation**, occupies a key position in global shipping, with major trade routes passing through its waters.
- **Future Goals:** India has outlined investments of **US$ 82 billion in port infrastructure projects by 2035** to bolster the maritime sector.
  - India plans to establish a new shipping company to e**xpand its fleet by at least**

1,000 ships within a decade.

Functional Major and Non-Major Ports in India

Sr. No.	State / UT	Non-Major Ports	Major ports
1	Andhra Pradesh	15	1
2	Goa	5	1
3	Gujarat	48	1
4	Karnataka	13	1
5	Kerala	17	1
6	Maharashtra	48	2
7	Odisha	14	1
8	Tamil Nadu	17	3
9	West Bengal	1	1
10	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	24	-
11	Daman & Diu	2	-
12	Puducherry	3	-
13	Lakshadweep	10	-
(As of July 26, 2024)		Total = 217	12

Challenges

- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Inadequate port infrastructure and outdated facilities at some ports, limiting capacity and efficiency.
- **Congestion:** High traffic volumes at major ports leading to delays, increased turnaround times, and reduced productivity.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Pollution and sustainability issues, including emissions from ships and port operations.
- **Logistics Bottlenecks:** Inefficient transport connectivity between ports, roads, and railways, impacting smooth cargo movement.
- **Global Competition:** Rising competition from other global maritime hubs, necessitating continuous investment and modernization.

Initiatives by Government

- **Sagarmala Programme:** Focuses on leveraging India's coastline and of navigable waterways.
    - Supports port infrastructure, coastal development, and connectivity.
    - Financial aid for projects like coastal berths, rail/road connectivity, fish harbours, cruise terminals.
- **Maritime India Vision 2030 (MIV 2030):** Aiming for India to become a top 10 shipbuilding nation by 2030 and create a world-class, efficient, and sustainable maritime ecosystem.
    - Includes 150+ initiatives across ten key maritime sectors.
- **Inland Waterways Development:** 26 new national waterways identified by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).

- Provides alternative, sustainable transport, easing road/rail congestion.
- **Green Tug Transition Program (GTTP):** Aims to replace fuel-based harbour tugs with eco-friendly, sustainable fuel-powered tugs.
    - Transition to be completed by 2040 across major ports.
- **Sagarmanthan Dialogue:** An annual maritime strategic dialogue to position India as a global center for maritime conversations.
- **Maritime Development Fund:** 25,000 crore fund for long-term financing to modernize ports and shipping infrastructure, encouraging private investment.
- **Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy (SBFAP 2.0):** Modernized to help Indian shipyards compete with global giants.

Conclusion

- India's maritime sector is poised for significant growth, underscored by its strategic initiatives and government schemes.
- The first edition of Sagarmanthan has further cemented India's commitment to becoming a global maritime leader, bringing together stakeholders to discuss key themes such as sustainability, connectivity, and governance.
- The efforts will take India's maritime sector toward a sustainable, innovative, and future-ready ecosystem, ensuring its place as a central player in the global maritime landscape.

Source: PIB

NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY 2025

Context

- National Science Day is celebrated every year on 28th February to commemorate the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' made by the physicist Sir C.V. Raman.

About

- Sir C.V. Raman was awarded the **Nobel Prize in 1930** for the discovery of the Raman Effect.
- **The first celebration** took place on **February 28, 1987**, marking the beginning of a tradition that continues to inspire generations.
- **The objective** of the observation of National Science Day is to spread the message of the importance of science and its application among the people.
- **Theme for 2025:** Empowering Indian Youth for Global Leadership in Science & Innovation for VIKSIT BHARAT.

About C V Raman

- He founded the **Indian Journal of Physics in 1926**.

- He became the **first Indian director of the** Indian Institute of Science **(IISc) in 1933.**

- He established the Raman Research Institute in **1948.**

- In **1954,** the Government of India honored him with the Bharat Ratna.

Raman Effect

- When a beam of light passes through a **transparent medium** (such as a liquid or gas), a small fraction of the **scattered light changes in wavelength.**

- This change occurs due to the **interaction of light with the vibrational and rotational energy levels** of the molecules in the medium.

Key advancements in Science and Technology in 2024

- **Global Standing in Innovation and IP:** India has secured **39th rank** in the **Global Innovation Index 2024** and **6th position** in **global Intellectual Property (IP)** filings, as per the **WIPO report**.

- **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)** is accelerating India's research and development ecosystem.
  - **PM Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG)** supports young researchers, providing them with the resources to pursue independent research.
  - **EV Mission** aims to foster innovation in electric vehicle technology, making India self-reliant in sustainable mobility.

- **The National Quantum Mission (NQM),** with a **Rs. 6003.65 crore** investment, is propelling India to the forefront of quantum technology.

- **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM):** India's computational power expanded to **32 PetaFlops** in 2024 through NSM, with plans to reach **77 PetaFlops** using indigenous technology.
  - **The BharatGen initiative** is working on India's first multilingual **Large Language Model (LLM)** for AI.

- **The Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) program**, aims to attract and support young talent in science and research.

- **Bridging the Gender Gap in STEM:** India is also making strides in gender parity with programs like **WISE-KIRAN,** which supports women in scientific research.

Ancient India's Contributions to Global Science

The Idea of Zero
Aryabhata introduced the symbol for zero, enabling modern arithmetic operations.

The Decimal System
India developed the decimal system, revolutionizing arithmetic calculations.

Numeral Notations
Indian numeral system, adopted by Arabs and later the West, became "Arabic numerals."

Fibonacci Numbers
The Fibonacci sequence was first recorded in India through Sanskrit prosody.

Binary Numbers
Pingala introduced the concept of binary numbers in his work on poetic meters.

Chakravala Method of Algorithms
Brahmagupta devised an early algorithm to solve quadratic equations.

Ruler Measurements
Harappan rulers had precise calibrations used in ancient architecture.

Theory of Atom
Kanad proposed an atomic theory centuries before John Dalton.

Heliocentric Theory
Aryabhata described Earth's rotation and revolution around the Sun.

Wootz Steel
High-quality Indian steel was renowned worldwide for its strength and pattern.

Smelting of Zinc
India pioneered the distillation process for zinc production.

Seamless Metal Globe
Mughals created seamless metal globes using lost-wax casting.

Plastic Surgery
Sushruta developed advanced surgical techniques, including rhinoplasty.

Cataract Surgery
Sushruta performed the first recorded cataract surgeries.

Ayurveda
Charaka laid the foundation for holistic medicine and preventive healthcare.

Iron-Cased Rockets
Tipu Sultan developed iron-cased rockets, influencing modern warfare.

Source: AIR

NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL POLICY 2022

In Context

- The **National Geospatial Policy 2022** positions India as a global leader in geospatial technology, ensuring that location-based intelligence powers the nation's progress and prosperity.

About National Geospatial Policy (NGP)

- It was announced by the Centre in 2022 and it **replaces the National Map Policy, 2005.**

- It builds on the **Department of Science and Technology (DST) guidelines** issued in February 2021.

  - These guidelines deregulated the geospatial sector and liberalized the acquisition, production, and access to geospatial data.

- It outlines a **strategic plan to develop geospatial infrastructure**, services, and platforms at both national and sub-national levels.

- It aims to strengthen the **location-centric industry to support the information economy.**

- A key objective of the NGP is to establish a high-resolution topographical survey and **mapping system by 2030,** along with creating a highly accurate Digital Elevation Model (DEM) for the entire country.

- It aims to drive India toward its vision of a self-reliant **"Viksit Bharat" by 2047.**

> **Do you know ?**
>
> - **Geospatial data** are descriptions of events or occurrences with a location on or near the surface of the earth.
>
> - This location can be static – relating to earthquakes, vegetation, etc., or dynamic – a person walking on the road, a package being tracked, etc.
>
> - The location data obtained is usually combined with other characteristic attributes or recorded parameters to provide meaningful insights in the form of geospatial data.

Features

- It acknowledges the r**ole of geospatial technology in governance**, economic growth, and societal development.

- It promotes self-reliance by empowering Indian companies and reducing dependency on foreign geospatial data.

- It focuses on **enhancing institutional frameworks**, coordination, and a vibrant geospatial ecosystem.

- It emphasizes **data-driven decision-making** to modernize infrastructure and improve governance.

- It encourages **open access to geospatial data** and services via geospatial platforms.

- It is **aligned** with **PM Gati Shakti,** which aims to streamline infrastructure development across 16 Ministries.

Related Steps

- **Operation Dronagiri:** It was launched in 2024, as a pilot project to showcase geospatial technology applications in governance, business, and citizen services.

  - Initially implemented in five states (Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra).

  - It Integrates government, industry, and startups for geospatial innovation.

  - It facilitates seamless access and sharing of geospatial data for urban planning, environmental monitoring, and disaster management.

Allocations and Trends from the Union Budget 2025

- The Government of India has allocated 100 crore for the National Geospatial Mission.

  - This mission aims to develop foundational geospatial infrastructure and data, playing a crucial role in modernizing land records, urban planning, and infrastructure design

Conclusion

- The National Geospatial Policy 2022 is a significant step towards strengthening India's geospatial ecosystem.

- By simplifying data access, promoting innovation, and fostering enterprise development, the policy is creating a robust and dynamic geospatial sector that supports governance, industry, and research.

Source :PIB

NUCLEAR WEAPONS:'ONE-WAY ROAD TO ANNIHILATION'

Context

- United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres warned that the risk of nuclear conflict is rising as global security arrangements weaken, urging governments to push for total disarmament.

Dangers of nuclear weapons

- The catastrophic consequences of **nuclear weapons** were first witnessed during the bombings of **Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.**

    ◆ It resulted in over **200,000 deaths** and long-term health issues due to radiation exposure.

- The **Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)**, demonstrates how close humanity has come to catastrophic outcomes due to misunderstandings and miscalculations.

- **The "Doomsday Clock,"** a symbolic measure of humanity's proximity to catastrophe, was moved one second closer to midnight in **January 2025**. It highlights the increasing danger posed by nuclear weapons.

    ◆ This calls for renewed efforts toward nuclear disarmament to ensure global security and stability.

- A nuclear war could trigger a **"nuclear winter,"** where soot and debris block sunlight, disrupting global agriculture and threatening mass starvation.

- **Human error**, technical malfunctions, or cyberattacks could trigger unintended nuclear detonations.

Nuclear Powers in the World

- There are **nine countries** recognized as possessing nuclear weapons.

- These countries are often referred to as "**nuclear-armed states" or "nuclear powers."**

- United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel.

What is Nuclear Disarmament?

- Disarmament refers to the **act of eliminating or abolishing weapons** (particularly offensive arms) either unilaterally or reciprocally.

- It may refer either to **reducing the number of arms, or to eliminating entire categories of weapons.**

Treaties Related to Nuclear Disarmament

- **The Conference on Disarmament (CD)** is the world's sole multilateral forum for negotiating arms control and disarmament agreements.

    ◆ Comprising **65 member states,** the Conference has played a key role in shaping treaties such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

- **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT):** Signed in **1968** and entered into **force in 1970,** the NPT aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and promote disarmament.

- **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW):** Adopted by the United Nations in **2017** the TPNW aims to prohibit the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

    ◆ It represents a significant step towards nuclear disarmament, although it has not been signed by nuclear-armed states.

- **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT):** Opened for signature in **1996**, the CTBT aims to ban all nuclear explosions for both civilian and military purposes.

    ◆ While the treaty has been signed by **185** countries and ratified by **170**, it has not entered into force as nuclear-armed states must ratify it to become operational.

- **Outer Space Treaty:** This multilateral agreement entered into force in **1967** and bans the siting of weapons of mass destruction in space.

    ◆ All nine states believed to have nuclear weapons are parties to this treaty.

India's stance on nuclear disarmament

- India is **not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**, and stated that the NPT is discriminatory and perpetuates a two-tiered system of **nuclear haves and have-nots** by unfairly restricting access to peaceful nuclear technology for non-nuclear weapon states.

- **National Security:** India's nuclear weapons programme is a legitimate expression of its national sovereignty, and that India has the right to defend itself against potential threats.

    ◆ India adopted a **No First Use (NFU) policy in 1998** after its nuclear tests.

Way Ahead

- Disarmament is seen as a crucial step towards reducing the risks and promoting international peace and stability.

- While achieving complete Disarmament may be a long-term objective, incremental progress can still be made through concerted international efforts and cooperation.

Source: UN

NEWS IN SHORT

NANAJI DESHMUKH

In News

- Union Home Minister paid tribute to Bharat Ratna Nanaji Deshmukh on his 15th death anniversary.

About

- Born on 11th October 1916 in Maharashtra, Chandikadas Amritrao Deshmukh, widely known as **Nanaji Deshmukh**, emerged as a prominent figure in social reform, politics, and rural development.
- Inspired by **Lokamanya Tilak's nationalism** and the teachings of Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, the founder of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), dedicated his life to nation-building through grassroots empowerment.
- He was a firm believer in self-reliant villages, aligning with **Mahatma Gandhi's Gram Swaraj model** and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's 'Antyodaya' philosophy.
- Founded **Chitrakoot Gramoday Vishwavidyalaya**, India's first rural university, providing education tailored to rural needs.
- Established **Saraswati Shishu Mandirs**, schools that continue to impart traditional Indian values and modern education to thousands of children.
- Was **nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 1999**, recognizing his contributions to public service.

Legacy and Recognitions

- **Padma Vibhushan (1999)** for outstanding service in social work.
- **Bharat Ratna (2019, posthumous)** for his transformative efforts.

Source: PIB

HERATH FESTIVAL

Context

- Herath festival holds deep religious and cultural significance for the Kashmiri Hindu community.

About 'Herath' Festival

- The name Herath is derived from the **Sanskrit term Hararatri, meaning "The Night of Hara", a reference to Lord Shiva.**
- The festival is observed with a night of prayers, followed by a day of feasting and celebrations.
- **Key Rituals and Practices:**
  - **Vatuk Pooja:** Main worship using a Kalash filled with water and walnuts, symbolizing the four Vedas.
  - **Dooni-Mavas:** Walnuts are distributed as sacred offerings.
  - **Greetings: "Herath Poshte"** is used to wish others well.
  - **Food:** Fish and mutton are prepared and consumed, unlike other fasting traditions for Maha Shivratri.

Source: TH

TORRENTIAL RAIN

In News

- Torrential rains hit Bolivia, resulting in 37 deaths since November.

Torrential rain

- Rain occurs when atmospheric water vapor condenses into droplets, which fall to the earth due to gravity.
- Torrential rain refers to th**e heavy downpour of rain.**
- **Causes:** It is caused by moisture moving along weather fronts, convective clouds, and mountainous regions. It can also result from urban heat on islands.
- **Impacts: It** can lead to significant water accumulation on the ground, often causing flooding, landslides, and disruption to daily life.
  - Such rain is typically associated with strong weather systems, like thunderstorms, tropical cyclones, or monsoon activity.

Source: AIR

'HERORATS' IN TB DETECTION

In News

- Using African giant pouched rats (HeroRATS) have been successful in **detecting TB in sputum samples.**

African giant pouched rats

- They are nicknamed HeroRATs.
- They are predominantly nocturnal, omnivorous rodents found throughout sub-Saharan Africa, except in southern South Africa.

Role in TB Detection

- These rats are trained to identify TB by their highly sensitive olfactory abilities, offering faster and more accurate results than traditional methods.
- Studies in Tanzania have shown that rats detected TB cases in children at twice the rate of conventional tests.

Status in India

- **Tuberculosis (TB)** is caused by a bacterium (or germ) called **Mycobacterium tuberculosis.**

- It remains a major health challenge in India, with around 28% of global cases and 5 lakh deaths annually.

- The **National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP)** aims to eradicate TB by 2025, but challenges like slow detection, especially in children and rural areas, persist.

- The **HeroRATS method** could be a viable secondary diagnostic tool for India, particularly in high-burden states.

- Experts suggest integrating HeroRATS into the NTEP to enhance TB detection, save lives, and support TB eradication efforts.

Source :TH

UYGHURS

In News

- At least 40 **Uyghur men**, detained in Thailand for over a decade, have been deported to China.

Uyghurs

- The **Uighurs (also spelled as Uyghurs)** are an ethnic minority group mostly living in the **Xinjiang autonomous region** of the People's Republic of China.

- The Uighurs are **predominantly Muslims.**

- The Uyghurs speak their own language, which is similar to Turkish, and see themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.

- China has been accused of committing crimes against humanity and possibly genocide **against the Uyghur population** and other mostly-Muslim ethnic groups in the north-western region of Xinjiang.

Source: IE

HAGUE SERVICE CONVENTION

In Context

- The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) formally requested the Indian government to serve summons on Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani under the **Hague Service Convention.**

What is the Hague Service Convention?

- The Hague Service Convention (1965), formally known as the **Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents** in Civil or Commercial Matters, is a multilateral treaty that simplifies the process of serving legal documents across international borders in civil and commercial cases.

How Does It Work?

- Each member country designates a **Central Authority to handle requests.**

- The convention ensures efficient document service while protecting the rights of defendants.

- It excludes criminal cases and applies only when both the requesting and receiving countries are signatories.

- **India and the U.S. are both members of the convention**, making this route a valid legal mechanism for service.

India's Reservations Under the Hague Service Convention

- **Opposition to Alternative Service Methods:** India mandates that all service requests must go through the Ministry of Law and Justice.

  - U.S. courts cannot serve summons via email, postal mail, or consular channels unless the recipient is a U.S. national residing in India.

- **Language and Documentation Requirements:** Requests must be submitted in English or include an English translation.

- **Timeframe for Service Completion:** Typically, service under the Hague Convention takes 6 to 8 months in India.

  - Upon completion, an acknowledgment certificate is sent to the requesting country.

Source: TH

MAKE THE WORLD WEAR KHADI CAMPAIGN

Context

- **The Make the World Wear Khadi campaign** is launched by the Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

About

- **Goal:** Blend India's textile heritage with global fashion trends, positioning Khadi as a global brand.

- **Target Audience**: Advertising professionals and freelancers from domestic and international markets.

- **Part of:** Inaugural World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES).

  - It is a key forum for promoting discussions, collaboration, and innovation in the media and entertainment (M&E) industry.

Khadi

- Khadi is a traditional Indian fabric made from hand-spun and hand-woven cotton, silk, or wool.
- It is associated with the Indian independence movement led by **Mahatma Gandhi.**
  - It symbolizes **self-reliance and the promotion of indigenous products.**
- **Key Characteristics of Khadi:**
  - **Hand-Spun:** The yarn is spun by hand using a spinning wheel (charkha).
  - **Hand-Woven:** The yarn is woven into fabric using traditional looms.
  - **Eco-Friendly:** Since it is hand-made, Khadi is more sustainable compared to machine-made fabrics.
  - **Natural Fabric:** It is made from cotton, silk, or wool, all of which are natural fibers.

Source: PIB

BIODIVERSITY LEAK

Context

- A recent study published in the Science journal highlights how conservation efforts in some countries can lead to biodiversity loss in other regions.

What is Biodiversity Leak?

- Biodiversity leak refers to the **unintended consequences of conservation policies** where restrictions on agriculture in one region increase the demand for imports from other biodiversity-rich areas.
- This displacement can lead to **deforestation, habitat destruction, and biodiversity loss** in the exporting regions.

Global Conservation Initiatives

- **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** aims to protect **30%** of land and sea areas by **2030** to counter biodiversity loss.
- **The European Union's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030** (under the European Green Deal) seeks to reverse ecosystem degradation and safeguard at least 30% of land and marine ecosystems by the decade's end.

Recommendations to Address Biodiversity Leak

- **Tracking changes in food or wood production** within intervention areas as part of routine programme monitoring.
- **Reducing demand for high-leakage goods** and improving efficiencies in line with production decreases.

- **Targeting conservation efforts** in areas where biodiversity restoration will cause minimal displacement of production.
- **Increasing yields** within or near conservation project areas to offset losses.

Source: DTE

PRANI MITRA AND JEEV DAYA AWARD

Context

- The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) has announced the Prani Mitra and Jeev Daya Award Ceremony, to be held in New Delhi.

About

- This initiative aims to **recognize outstanding individuals and organizations** for their remarkable contributions to animal welfare and protection.
- The awards will be presented under **two major categories:** Prani Mitra Award and Jeev Daya Award.
  - **The Prani Mitra Award** will be conferred under **five sub-categories:** Advocacy (Individual), Innovative Idea (Individual), Lifetime Animal Service (Individual), along with two awards for **Animal Welfare Organizations** and for **Corporate, PSUs, Government Bodies, or Co-operatives.**
  - **The Jeev Daya Award** will be presented in **three sub-categories:** Individual, Animal Welfare Organization, and for either Schools, Institutions, Teachers, or Children.

Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)

- The Animal Welfare Board of India is a **statutory advisory body** promoting animal welfare in the country.
- **Establishment:** It was established in **1962** under the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.**
  - AWBI was started under the stewardship of **Rukmini Devi Arundale,** well known humanitarian.
- **Responsibilities:** Ensures that animal welfare laws in India are diligently followed.
  - **Provides grants** to Animal Welfare Organizations.
  - **Advises the Government of India** on animal welfare issues.
- **Governance:** The Board consists of **28 Members**.
- **The term** of office of Members is for a period of **3 years.**

Source: PIB

SVALBARD GLOBAL SEED VAULT

In News

- The **Svalbard Global Seed Vault**, often called the **"Arctic Doomsday Seed Vault,"** has recently received over 14,000 new seed samples, further strengthening its mission of preserving global agricultural biodiversity.

About the Svalbard Global Seed Vault

- World's Largest **Secure Seed Bank**
- **Objective:** To safeguard a wide variety of crop seeds in case of global disasters, climate change, or national emergencies
- **Location:** Norwegian island of Spitsbergen in the Arctic Svalbard archipelago
- **Preservation Mechanism**: Maintains ultra-low temperatures (−18°C), with permafrost and thick rock ensuring seed viability even without power

India's Own Seed Bank

- India has its own **high-altitude seed conservation facility**, established in 2010 at **Chang La, Ladakh.**
- It was built jointly by the Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) and the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), operating under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The seed bank plays a crucial role in preserving India's plant genetic diversity, ensuring food security, and safeguarding crop varieties against climate change and other potential threats.

Source: TH

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