

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 18-10-2025

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SC FORMS PANEL ON TRANSGENDER PERSONS

In News

- The Supreme Court set up a committee under former **Justice Asha Menon** to formulate an equal opportunity policy for **transgender individuals** and to suggest measures for inclusive medical care and protection for gender non-conforming and gender-diverse persons.

Supreme Court's Recent Observations

- SC highlighted systemic barriers** in employment, healthcare, education, and public institutions, including the lack of a 'third gender' option and the expectation for transgender individuals to conceal their identity, **violating their dignity under Article 21**.
- Exercising powers under Article 142**, the Court mandated the designation of appellate authorities under Rule 9, creation of welfare boards in all states and UTs, and establishment of Transgender Protection Cells under district magistrates and DGPs.
- It also called for a **nationwide toll-free helpline** and recommended safeguards such as ensuring no transwoman is arrested without a female officer present.
- It also urged all **public and private institutions** to foster **gender-inclusive environments** and suggested gender-diverse screening points at public venues to ensure dignity and safety for transgender individuals.

Challenges Transgender Facing

- Institutional gaps** in implementing the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and Rules.
- Lack of data and representation in policymaking.
- Healthcare discrimination**, including denial of gender-affirming treatment.
- Workplace barriers** and lack of sensitivity training.
- Social stigma** and violence against trans persons, especially in rural areas.

Steps Taken To Improve the Lives of Transgender Persons

- The **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** affirms the right to self-perceived gender identity and mandates inclusive, non-stigmatizing welfare schemes to ensure dignity, non-discrimination in education

and employment, and access to healthcare for transgender individuals.

- To implement the Act, the 2020 Rules were enacted, and a **National Council for Transgender Persons** was established to advise the government, monitor policy impact, and coordinate efforts across departments and NGOs.
- NALSA (2014)**: Recognized transgender persons as a third gender and affirmed self-identification, forming the jurisprudential basis for reservations and affirmative measures.
- National Portal for Transgender Persons**: Enables online applications for identity certificates and cards to reduce friction and physical interface in accessing rights.
- SMILE scheme**: Government program aimed at comprehensive welfare and rehabilitation support for transgender persons, including livelihood and social security components.

Way forward

- Replace gatekeeping with self-identification pathways** and streamline ID processes to prevent exclusion from benefits and services.
- Appoint complaint officers, implement reasonable accommodation, and operationalize Protection Cells with measurable timelines and accountability.
- Adopt the Equal Opportunity Policy nationwide**, embed anti-discrimination and accommodation norms in education and employment, and ensure effective grievance redress with penalties for non-compliance.

Source: TH

RESOLUTION OF PALESTINIAN QUESTION NECESSARY FOR IMEC

Context

- The **first India–Egypt Strategic Dialogue** was held in New Delhi co-chaired by EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and Egyptian FM.
 - Both leaders discussed the progress of **India–Middle East EU Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.

About

- Egypt's Position**: Egypt supports regional connectivity projects like India-Middle East EU Economic Corridor (IMEC) but believes progress is impossible without addressing the Palestinian question.

- ♦ It proposed that India join the Egyptian Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZONE) — where Russia, China, and others already have industrial complexes — to strengthen connectivity and trade cooperation.
- **India's Support to Palestine:** EAM reiterated India's consistent support for the two-state solution, i.e. peaceful coexistence of Israel and Palestine as independent states.
- **Egypt's Geostategic Role:** Egypt aims to act as a bridge between Asia, Africa, and Europe, leveraging its Suez Canal Economic Zone for industrial and trade cooperation.
 - ♦ Egypt's mediation in Gaza and participation in the Gaza Peace Agreement (2025) reinforce its centrality in Middle East peace efforts and connectivity diplomacy.

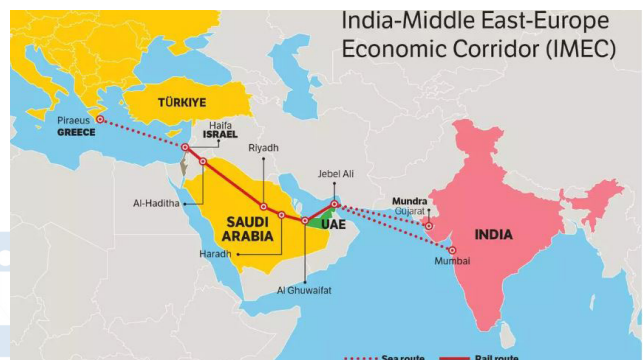
Brief on India-Egypt Relations

- **Diplomatic relations** at Ambassadorial level were established in **1947**.
 - ♦ Both countries were founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961.
- **Bilateral Relations:** The India-Egypt Bilateral Trade Agreement (based on MFN clause) has been in place since **1978**.
 - ♦ Trade reached a high of **US\$ 7.26 billion in FY 2021-22**.
 - ♦ In FY 2024-25, bilateral trade was about **US\$ 5.2 billion** (India exports to Egypt ~ US\$3.84 billion; imports ~ US\$1.3 billion).
- **Defence & security cooperation:** MoU on Defence Cooperation signed during an Indian Defence Minister's visit in 2022.
 - ♦ First ever IAF-EAF joint tactical air exercise "Desert Warrior" in 2021.
 - ♦ The 3rd edition of Exercise "Cyclone", involving special forces of both countries, held in 2025.
- **Indian community:** Over 6,000 Indians live in Egypt, ~2,000 Indian students study in Egypt.
- **Mechanisms:** Joint Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), Joint Trade Commission (JTC), Joint Defence Committee (JDC), Joint Working Groups (JWGs) on varied issues such as new & renewable energy, animal husbandry, health & medicine.

India-Middle East EU Economic Corridor (IMEC)

- **Background:** The IMEC, a proposed 4,800 km long route was announced in 2023 on the sidelines of the G20 Summit.

- ♦ This followed a meeting between the leaders of India, the US, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Italy, France, Germany, and the European Commission.
- **Members:** **India, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE and US** announced the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).
- **Aim:** Integration of Asia, Europe and the Middle East.
- **The IMEC will comprise of two separate corridors:**
 - ♦ The east corridor connecting India to the West Asia/Middle East and
 - ♦ The northern corridor connecting West Asia/ Middle East to Europe.



Ports Which are Part of IMEC

- **India:** Ports in Mundra (Gujarat), Kandla (Gujarat), and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (Navi Mumbai).
- **Europe:** Piraeus in Greece, Messina in Southern Italy, and Marseille in France.
- **Middle East:** Ports include Fujairah, Jebel Ali, and Abu Dhabi in the UAE, as well as Dammam and Ras Al Khair ports in Saudi Arabia.
- **Israel:** Haifa port.
- **Railway Line:** The railway line will link Fujairah port in the UAE to Haifa port in Israel, passing through Saudi Arabia (Ghuwaifat and Haradh) and Jordan.

Significance of IMEC

- **Economic Development:** By linking Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe through enhanced connectivity and economic integration, the corridor aims to give a boost to economic development in the regions.
- **Enhances India's Connectivity and Trade Access:** IMEC provides India with a direct, faster, and safer trade route connecting Indian ports to Europe via the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean.

- ♦ Reduces dependence on the Suez Canal route, cutting shipping time by up to 40% and costs by 20–30%.
- **Strengthens India's Strategic Partnerships:** Deepens India's ties with the U.S., EU, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Israel, all core IMEC participants.
 - ♦ Aligns with India's broader "Act West Policy" and encourages cooperation among traditional partners and new regional players.
- **Boost to Energy Security:** The corridor can integrate energy pipelines and green hydrogen networks linking India with Gulf producers and European consumers.
 - ♦ Facilitates diversification of India's energy imports and enhances collaboration in renewable and clean energy sectors.
- **Eco-friendly Infrastructure:** It places emphasis on developing environmentally friendly infrastructure.

Concerns

- **The security challenges** in the region have made other partners reluctant to invest in the project.
 - ♦ The instability in the Middle East has given a fatal blow to the project, the delay in the project could negatively impact the aspirations of India in the region.
- **Lack of Political Consensus:** Although signed during the G20 Summit 2023, the IMEC memorandum is not legally binding, relying on voluntary participation.
 - ♦ Divergent priorities among members slow coordination and execution.
- **Economic and Financial Viability:** Estimated project costs are high, involving ports, railways, pipelines, and digital infrastructure across multiple jurisdictions.
 - ♦ There is a lack of clarity on financing mechanisms—whether it will be multilateral, public-private, or state-funded.
- **Infrastructure Gaps and Technical Challenges:** Significant infrastructure deficits in West Asian countries—especially in cross-border railway connectivity.
 - ♦ Integration of different railway gauges, standards, and customs procedures remains unresolved.

Way Forward

- The geopolitical concerns need to be managed by striking a delicate balance in accommodating the

geopolitical interests of the participating nations and addressing potential political sensitivities.

- There is also a need to maintain the required security apparatus as the project passes through certain unstable regions of the world.

Source: TH

SRI LANKAN PM'S STATE VISIT TO INDIA

Context

- The Sri Lankan Prime Minister is on a **state visit to India**.
 - ♦ Both leaders discussed **education, women's empowerment, innovation, development cooperation and welfare of fishermen**.

India and Sri Lanka Relations

- **Diplomatic Ties:** Diplomatic relations established in 1948 after Sri Lanka's independence.
- **Trade Relations:** India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA) in 2000 contributed significantly towards the expansion of trade between the two countries.
 - ♦ India has traditionally been among **Sri Lanka's largest trade partners** and Sri Lanka remains among the largest trade partners of India in the SAARC.
 - ♦ India is also one of the **largest contributors to Foreign Direct Investment** in Sri Lanka.
- **Cultural relations:** The Cultural Cooperation Agreement signed in 1977 forms the basis for periodic Cultural Exchange Programmes between the two countries.
- **Tourism:** India has traditionally been Sri Lanka's **top inbound tourism market**, followed by China.
 - ♦ As per latest data from the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, **India is the largest source for tourists** in 2023.
- **Maritime Security and Defence Cooperation:** In 2011, a decision was taken to establish the **Colombo Security Conclave which aims to further promote maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region**.
 - ♦ India and Sri Lanka conduct a joint Military exercise named '**Mitra Shakti**', Trilateral Maritime Exercise "**Dosti**", and a Naval exercise named **SLINEX**.
- **Connectivity Projects:** Recently, the two sides adopted a **vision document to enhance**

maritime, energy and people to people connectivity.

- ♦ There are plans to develop a **land bridge between the two countries** to provide India with land access to the ports of Trincomalee and Colombo to boost economic growth.
- **Multilateral Forum Collaboration:** India and Sri Lanka are member nations of several regional and multilateral organizations such as the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)**, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme, South Asian Economic Union and BIMSTEC, working to enhance cultural and commercial ties.

Areas of Concern

- **The Fishermen Issue:** Sri Lanka's proximity to Indian territorial waters has often blurred the line for fishermen on both sides in pursuit of fish stock.
 - ♦ Since 2016, a **Joint Working Group on Fisheries (JWG) mechanism** has been in place to address the immediate concerns of fishermen of both sides and to find a permanent solution to the issue.
- **Rise of China:** China's increasing strategic investments in vital maritime ports in the IOR has been an area of concern.
 - ♦ There is a lack of transparency in implementation of projects and possible military use of ports by China.
- **Maritime Security Concerns:** Piracy, illegal fishing, and smuggling in the Palk Strait and surrounding waters.
 - ♦ Need for constant coordination on maritime borders to prevent incidents.
- **Domestic Instability in Sri Lanka:** Political unrest or changes in government affect continuity of agreements and development projects.
 - ♦ Delays in infrastructure or economic projects due to internal instability.

Way Ahead

- India and Sri Lanka share deep historical, cultural, and strategic ties, reinforced by trade, defence, and development cooperation.
- While challenges such as Chinese influence, and economic instability persist.
- Enhanced economic and maritime collaboration, and strong people-to-people ties can ensure a resilient, mutually beneficial, and strategically vital partnership in the Indian Ocean.

Source: IE

STRENGTHENING RURAL GROWTH WITH ENHANCED AGRICULTURAL CREDIT

Context

- The Union Finance Minister urged rural banks to enhance agricultural credit disbursement to meet the evolving financial needs of New Rural India, while reviewing the performance of Karnataka Grameena Bank (KaGB) in Ballari.

Agriculture Credit in India

- **Sources of Agricultural Credit:** Public sector banks (like the State Bank of India), regional rural banks (RRBs), cooperatives, and NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) provide most formal agricultural credit.
- **Types of Agricultural Credit:**
 - ♦ **Short-term Credit:** Used for financing working capital needs like seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides.
 - ♦ **Medium and Long-term Credit:** Used for purchasing equipment, irrigation systems, and land development.

Need for a Push in Agricultural Credit

- **Rising Input Costs:** The cost of seeds, fertilisers, machinery, and irrigation has increased significantly, creating a need for enhanced and timely access to affordable credit for farmers.
- **Diversification of Rural Economy:** Modern rural India is moving beyond traditional farming to allied sectors like dairy, fisheries, food processing, and agri-tech startups — all requiring greater financial support.
- **Inadequate Access for Small and Marginal Farmers:** Nearly 85% of Indian farmers are small and marginal, and many depend on informal lenders charging high interest rates, highlighting the need to expand formal credit penetration.
- **Support for FPOs and MSMEs:** Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and rural MSMEs require working capital to strengthen supply chains and enhance value addition, demanding active participation from rural banks.
- **Climate and Technological Shifts:** Climate-resilient agriculture, mechanisation, and adoption of digital agri-solutions necessitate financial backing, making credit accessibility a vital enabler of transformation.

Government Measures to Boost Agricultural Credit

- **The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme** is designed to provide farmers with adequate and timely credit to meet their diverse financial needs.
- **Priority Sector Lending (PSL):** Banks are mandated to lend **18% of Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC)** to agriculture, ensuring steady credit flow to the sector.
- **Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS):** Offers concessional loans to farmers, especially during calamities or delayed crop seasons, improving liquidity in rural areas.
- **NABARD Refinance Support:** The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) provides low-cost refinance to rural financial institutions for agricultural and rural development projects.
- **Formation of FPOs:** The government has targeted the formation of **10,000 FPOs**, supported by **NABARD and Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)**, to enhance farmers' collective bargaining power and improve access to credit.
- **Digital Initiatives:** Schemes like **Digital KCC, Agristack, and Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) integration** are simplifying loan disbursement and reducing leakages.

Challenges in Agricultural Credit

- **Regional Disparities:** Credit distribution remains uneven — Southern and Western States receive a major share, while Eastern and Northeastern regions remain under-served.
- **Dependence on Short-Term Loans:** The majority of agricultural credit is short-term, limiting investment in long-term infrastructure like irrigation, storage, and mechanisation.
- **Exclusion of Tenant Farmers and Landless Labourers:** Lack of formal land titles prevents millions from accessing institutional credit.
- **Rising NPAs in Rural Banks:** Loan defaults and poor recovery rates strain the financial health of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and cooperative institutions.
- **Inefficient Credit Delivery:** Bureaucratic procedures, delayed disbursement, and inadequate credit assessment restrict the effectiveness of schemes.

Way Ahead

- **Strengthen Rural Financial Institutions:** Empower Regional Rural Banks and cooperative

banks with capital support, digital infrastructure, and risk management frameworks.

- **Promote Credit for Allied Activities:** Expand lending to sectors like dairy, fisheries, food processing, and renewable energy in rural areas to diversify income.
- **Inclusion of Tenant and Women Farmers:** Facilitate access through Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to bring excluded segments under formal credit.
- **Integrate Technology:** Use AI-based credit scoring, satellite data, and digital records to improve loan targeting and reduce fraud.
- **Policy Synchronisation:** Coordinate efforts of the Finance Ministry, NABARD, and state governments to ensure effective credit outreach and reduce regional disparities.

Source: BS

MASS SURRENDER OF MAOISTS

Context

- 210 Maoists surrendered in **Dandakaranya region of Chhattisgarh**, following a similar event in Maharashtra, as a part of a broader strategy by the Union and state governments to **abandon violence and embrace rehabilitation**.

About Maoism, or Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)

- It was rooted in radical communist ideology, advocating **armed struggle to overthrow the state and establish a classless society**.
- **LWE in India** traces its roots to the **Naxalbari uprising of 1967 in West Bengal**, inspired by **Mao Zedong's revolutionary tactics**.
- The movement gained momentum through the formation of groups like the **Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)** and later the **CPI (Maoist)**, which rejected electoral politics and embraced violent revolution.

Reasons for Maoism, or Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) in India

- **Socio-Economic Inequality:** LWE has historically thrived in regions marked by poverty, illiteracy, and lack of basic services. Many tribal communities have faced:
 - ♦ Land alienation due to mining and industrial projects;
 - ♦ Displacement without adequate rehabilitation;
 - ♦ Limited access to education, healthcare, and employment;

- **Governance Deficit:** Remote districts often suffer from weak administrative presence and poor delivery of public services. This vacuum allowed Maoist groups to:
 - ♦ Establish parallel governance structures;
 - ♦ Exploit local grievances;
 - ♦ Gain legitimacy among disenfranchised populations;
- **Tribal Discontent:** Tribal populations, especially in forested regions have long felt excluded from mainstream development.
 - ♦ Maoists have capitalized on this alienation by aligning with local struggles and offering protection from perceived state exploitation.

Decline in Influence

- Once widespread across the '**Red Corridor**', Maoist influence has significantly declined due to sustained government action.
- According to the MHA, the number of **LWE-affected districts** has dropped from **126 in 2010 to just 11 in 2025**, with **only three districts—Bijapur, Sukma, and Narayanpur in Chhattisgarh**—marked as 'most affected'.
 - ♦ 81% reduction in violent incidents and an 85% drop in fatalities between 2010 and 2024.

Government Strategy To Tackle LWE

- The **National Policy and Action Plan (2015)** to address **LWE** outlines a holistic approach:
 - ♦ Enhancing security infrastructure and personnel;
 - ♦ Promoting road connectivity and telecom access;
 - ♦ Ensuring rights and entitlements of tribal communities;
 - ♦ Coordinating development schemes across ministries.
- MHA has reaffirmed the government's resolve **to eliminate LWE by March 31, 2026**, urging Maoists **to abandon violence and join the mainstream**.
 - ♦ Recent mass surrenders reflect growing disillusionment within the movement. Rehabilitation programs offer financial aid, vocational training, and housing to help former insurgents reintegrate into society.
- **Security Measures:**
 - ♦ Deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and specialized **anti-Naxal units**.

- ♦ Use of technology and intelligence, including drones and surveillance systems.
- ♦ Establishment of **Forward Operating Bases (FOBs)** to maintain presence in remote areas.
- **Development Initiatives:**
 - ♦ Road connectivity projects in remote tribal areas to improve access and mobility.
 - ♦ Expansion of telecom networks, electricity, and banking services.
 - ♦ Focus on education, healthcare, and livelihood programs to address socio-economic grievances.
 - ♦ Transformation of '**Red Zones**' into **Growth Corridors** through targeted investment.
- **Ideological Countermeasures:** The government is actively confronting Maoist propaganda through community engagement and awareness campaigns.
 - ♦ Seminars like '**Bharat Manthan 2025 – Naxal Mukt Bharat**' aim to build consensus and share best practices across states.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

BATHOU RELIGION

In News

- The Bathou religion of the Bodo community in Assam has been officially granted a separate code in the upcoming national census.

About

- Bathouism is the indigenous religion of the Bodo community, primarily concentrated in Assam and parts of North Bengal, where it serves as a core marker of cultural identity and community life.
- The term "Bathou" denotes "Five Principles," a cosmology wherein the universe is constituted by five elements—Ha (Earth), Dwi (Water), Or (Fire), Bar (Air), and Okhrang (Sky)—a framework often explained as five deep principles or thoughts in Bodo tradition.
- Rooted in nature-veneration, Bathouism emphasizes reverence for the environment and maintaining equilibrium in human-nature relations through household and community rituals centered on sacred plants (Sijou plant) and elemental symbolism.

Source: ET

WE RISE INITIATIVES

In News

- 'We Rise (Women Entrepreneurs Reimagining Inclusive and Sustainable Enterprises) initiative was launched recently.

About

- The 'We Rise' initiative has been launched to empower women entrepreneurs to expand globally through trade facilitation, mentorship, and strategic partnerships.
- It is a joint programme by NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) under its Award to Reward (ATR) initiative and DP World, aligning with the government's focus on women-led development.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)

- WEP incubated in NITI Aayog in 2018 as an aggregator platform, transitioned into a public-private partnership in 2022. It serves as a national aggregator to strengthen India's women entrepreneurship ecosystem and make women-led development a reality.
- With over 47 partners from the public and private sectors, WEP functions as an enabler, addressing six key ecosystem needs — access to finance, market linkages, training and skilling, mentoring and networking, compliance and legal assistance, and business development services.

Award to Reward (ATR) initiative

- It was launched in 2023 to institutionalize WEP's partnership framework by bringing together ecosystem stakeholders to address specific needs of women entrepreneurs while celebrating their success stories.
- It serves as a plug-and-play model fostering scalable collaborations and measurable impact.

Source: TH

UPOV CONVENTION

Context

- A new report by GRAIN warns of **growing corporate control over seeds via free trade agreements**.

About

- Powerful economies — including the US, EU, Japan and the UAE — **are pushing harsh IP rules on plant varieties**.

- The UAE emerged as a new player promoting **UPOV 1991 standards** in trade deals with Asia and Africa.
- Farmers' rights to save, exchange and reuse seeds are being undermined globally.

The UPOV 1991 Convention:

- **The 1991 Act of the Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV)** grants seed corporations monopoly rights over new crop varieties for **20–25 years**.
- It was first signed in **1961**.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- It **provides and promotes** an effective system of plant variety protection to encourage the development of new plant varieties
- **Farmers are prohibited** from saving, sharing, or reusing these seeds, undermining traditional agricultural practices, indigenous knowledge, and food sovereignty.
- Originally designed to support industrial agriculture in Europe, it is now being **exported globally via FTAs**.

Source: DTE

ROTAVIRUS VACCINE EFFECTIVE AGAINST GASTROENTERITIS IN CHILDREN

Context

- According to a recent study India's indigenous rotavirus vaccine, Rotavac, has significantly reduced rotavirus-related gastroenteritis cases among children since its introduction in the **Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)**.

About Rotavac

- **Introduction:** India introduced Rotavac, an **indigenous oral rotavirus vaccine**, in 2016 under the **Universal Immunisation Programme**, administered at 6, 10, and 14 weeks of age.
- **Accessibility:** As part of UIP, the vaccine is provided free of cost to all eligible beneficiaries.

What is Rotavirus?

- Rotavirus is a highly contagious virus that **infects and damages the cells lining the small intestine**.
- It is a **leading cause of severe diarrhoea (gastroenteritis)** in infants and young children worldwide.

- **Transmission:** Primarily through the fecal–oral route (contaminated food, water, or surfaces).

Source: TH

STATE MINING READINESS INDEX

Context

- The Ministry of Mines has released the State Mining Readiness Index (SMRI) and corresponding State rankings.

About the State Mining Readiness Index (SMRI)

- The SMRI is designed to **benchmark State performance in facilitating and reforming the mining sector**, particularly focusing on non-coal minerals.
 - ♦ The index aims to promote **transparency, efficiency, and sustainable mining** by encouraging competition among States.
- **The structure of the index** comprises indicators like **auction performance, early mine operationalization, thrust on exploration and sustainable mining** pertaining to non-coal minerals.

Categorisation of States

- States have been divided into three categories based on their mineral endowment;
 - ♦ **The top three ranked States in Category A (Mineral-rich States):** Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat.
 - ♦ **The top three ranked States in Category B (Moderately endowed States):** Uttar Pradesh, and Assam.
 - ♦ **The top three ranked States in Category C (Lesser-endowed States):** Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Tripura.

Source: PIB

STATE OF FINANCE FOR FORESTS (SFF) REPORT

In News

- The first State of Finance for Forests (SFF) report was recently released by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.

State of Finance for Forests (SFF)

- It provides a global overview of public and private forest finance in 2023, comparing current flows with the investments needed to realize forests' potential to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation.

- It integrates key private finance channels and nature-related asset classes such as certified commodity supply chains, impact investing, carbon and biodiversity markets, philanthropic funding, and private capital mobilized through public finance

Key Findings

- It highlights a critical underinvestment in forests, which are essential for combating climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation.
- In 2023, global forest finance stood at US\$84 billion, far below the US\$300 billion needed annually by 2030 and US\$498 billion by 2050, leaving a US\$216 billion yearly gap.
- Private forest finance was just US\$7.5 billion, mostly targeting low-risk markets rather than tropical commodities linked to deforestation.
- Meanwhile, environmentally harmful subsidies totaled US\$406 billion, and private institutions had US\$8.9 trillion in active financing tied to high deforestation-risk companies, underscoring the urgent need to redirect capital toward sustainable forest investments.

Source: DTE

REDD+ PROGRAMME

Context

- According to a study, only a small number of tropical forests carbon offset projects have achieved significant cuts in deforestation, with just **19% meeting their reported targets**.
 - ♦ These offset projects are a part of the **REDD+ programme**, standing for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation Plus.

What is REDD+?

- **REDD+** is a **climate change mitigation solution** developed by **Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.
 - ♦ The Paris Climate Agreement recognizes REDD+ and the **central role of forests**.
- It was first introduced in 2005 during the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP 11) in Montreal.
 - ♦ The **“+”** was added later at **COP 13 in Bali, 2007** to include broader forest-related activities.
- **It offers economic incentives** to developing countries to preserve forests, enhance carbon stocks and promote human well-being.

- **REDD+ reduces deforestation** through the conservation and sustainable management of forests and supporting developing countries in turning their political commitments, as represented in their **Nationally Determined Contributions**.
- **REDD+ projects** pay governments, organisations, communities, and individuals in forest landscapes for activities that preserve forests and avoid forest-related greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).

Source: DTE

BRAHMOS

Context

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath flagged off the first batch of BrahMos missiles manufactured at the BrahMos Aerospace unit in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

About BrahMos Missile

- **Joint Venture:** Between **DRDO (India)** and **NPO Mashinostroyeniya (Russia)**.
- **Name Origin:** Derived from the **Brahmaputra (India)** and **Moskva (Russia)** rivers.
- **First Test:** Conducted on **June 12, 2001**.
 - ♦ **Induction Timeline:** Navy (2005), Army (2007) and IAF (2017).
- **Type:** “*Fire and forget*” supersonic cruise missile — can be launched from **land, sea, or air** in all-weather conditions, and is nearly **impossible to intercept**.
- **Combat Use:** Reportedly used for the first time during **Operation Sindoor**.
- **Speed:**
 - ♦ Current: Mach 2.8 (Supersonic)
 - ♦ Future: Mach 5+ (Hypersonic version under development)
- **Range:**
 - ♦ Initially 290 km (under MTCR limit)
 - ♦ Extended to **400 km**, with a **600+ km** variant under development.
- **Stages:** BrahMos is a **two-stage missile** with a solid propellant booster engine.

- ♦ Its first stage brings the missile to supersonic speed and then gets separated.
- ♦ The liquid ramjet or the second stage then takes the missile closer to three times the speed of sound in the cruise phase.

Do you Know?

- The **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)** is a **voluntary multilateral grouping** that aims to limit the spread of missile technologies that may be used for chemical, biological and nuclear attacks.
- To achieve its objectives, the MTCR restricts the transfer of missiles and certain technologies to non-MTCR members. **India** became a member in **2016**.

Source: AIR

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Context

- Gujarat's largest city Ahmedabad has been recommended as the “proposed host” by the executive board of Commonwealth Sport.
- ♦ India last hosted the CWG in Delhi in 2010.

About the CWG

- Started in **1930** (inaugural event in Hamilton, Canada) as the British Empire Games, the present-day Commonwealth Games is a **multi-sport international event, modeled on the Olympics**, involving athletes from the Commonwealth of Nations and their associated territories.
- The Commonwealth of Nations, or simply the Commonwealth, is a voluntary association of **54 sovereign countries**, most of which were former colonies of the British Empire.
- The membership has evolved over time due to political changes and voluntary withdrawals or additions.
- Today, the Commonwealth Games is the world's second-largest multi-sport event and the fourth most-watched global broadcast sports event, featuring athletes from **71 nations and territories**.

Source: TH