

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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EXTENSION OF PREVENTIVE DETENTION POWERS UNDER THE NATIONAL SECURITY ACT (NSA) IN DELHI

Context

- Recently, Delhi Government's Home Department authorized the **Delhi Police Commissioner** to exercise preventive detention powers under **Section 3(2) of the National Security Act (NSA), 1980**.

About National Security Act (NSA), 1980

- It is a **preventive detention law** enacted to **enable the Central and State Governments** to detain individuals to safeguard national security, defence of India, public order, and maintenance of essential supplies and services.
- It enables authorities to prevent expected threats, not punish past offences.

Preventive Detention under the NSA

- Preventive detention is the detention of a person **to prevent commission of future acts** deemed to be harmful to national security or public order.
- There is **no need to produce the detainee before a magistrate within 24 hours** as is the case with arrests under ordinary criminal law.

Features of the NSA

- Detention Period:** Initially up to 3 months, can be **extended up to 12 months** after review.
- Grounds of Detention:** Authorities may detain a person if satisfied that such detention is necessary to prevent activities prejudicial to defence of India, security of the State, public order, foreign relations, maintenance of essential supplies and services.
- Advisory Board:** Every detention order is reviewed by an **Advisory Board** headed by a person qualified to be a High Court Judge.
 - The Board examines whether sufficient cause exists for continued detention.
- Representation:** The detainee is entitled to make a representation against the detention.
 - But the government can withhold facts if they are not in the public interest to disclose.

Constitutional Basis

- Article 22:** Protection against arbitrary arrest . Preventive detention as an exception.
- The main safeguards are:

- Reasons for arrest communicated.
- Right to make a representation.
- Review by a Board of Advisors within the time specified.

Preventive Detention vs Punitive Detention

Preventive Detention	Punitive Detention
Prevents anticipated offences	Punishes offences already committed
No criminal trial required initially	Based on criminal investigation and trial
Objective is prevention	Objective is punishment
Governed by preventive detention laws	Governed by Code of Criminal Procedure (or the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, as applicable)

Issues & Concerns with the NSA

- Risk of Misuse:** Wide executive powers may result in arbitrary or politically motivated detention.
- Effect on Personal Liberty:** Detention without trial is a violation of the fundamental **right to life and personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21**.
- Limited Judicial Oversight:** Being a preventive detention, the detainee is not produced before a magistrate within 24 hours, limiting immediate judicial scrutiny.
- Possibility of detention:** A person may be detained for **up to 12 months**, subject to review by an Advisory Board.
- Lack of transparency:** Some authorities may cite public interest as a reason for withholding the reasons for detention, limiting the detainee's ability to effectively challenge the order.
- Security and Rights:** The challenge of protecting national security while safeguarding democratic freedoms and civil liberties remains a continuing constitutional challenge.

Way Forward

- Uphold constitutional safeguards** guaranteed under **Article 22** in letter and spirit.
- Regular review of laws of preventive detention** by legislature and judiciary.
- Use preventive detention only in exceptional circumstances** with sufficient oversight.
- Promote transparency, accountability and proportionality** while protecting national security and public order.

Source: IE

FAST-TRACK COURTS (FTCS)

In News

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India announced the **setting up of Fast-Track Courts (FTCs)** for speedy trial and stringent punishment of the culprits involved in paper leak cases.

Fast-Track Courts (FTCs)

- They are special courts established to **expedite the trial and disposal of long-pending cases**, especially heinous crimes and crimes against vulnerable groups.
- They are expected to help **clear the massive backlog** in the regular lower judiciary and ensure speedy delivery of justice.

Laws and Regulations of Fast-Track Courts

- India has **no single law** that **governs Fast-Track Courts (FTCs)**.
- The push to dedicate courts to specific demographics came from the **Fourteenth Finance Commission (2015–2020)**, which recommended **setting up 1,800 FTCs to expedite the trial** of heinous crimes such as murder, kidnapping, and extortion, as well as property disputes pending for over five years.
- It also recommended them for cases involving vulnerable demographics, including women, children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and individuals afflicted with terminal illnesses.

Amendments

- In 2019, following an amendment to the criminal laws and a directive from the Supreme Court, the Union government launched a centrally sponsored scheme to establish **fast-track special courts (FTSCs)**.
- Funded partially by the Nirbhaya Fund**, these special courts are exclusively dedicated to the time-bound trial of rape cases and offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

Deadline for Fast-Track Courts

- In India, litigants do not have a statutory right to trials within a stipulated time.
- However, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) says that criminal trials should ideally be **completed within two years** and sexual offence cases should be completed within two months.
- Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Fast-Track Special Courts (FTSCs) each court is

supposed to dispose of 41-42 cases in a quarter or at least 165 cases in a year.

Judicial Observations

- The Supreme Court has held that Fast Track or Special Courts have to comply with **Article 14 (Right to Equality)**.
- In **State of West Bengal v. Anwar Ali Sarkar (1952)**, it was held that cases cannot be transferred to special courts only because they will be tried faster, but there must be a reasonable and objective basis for classification, such as the nature of the offence or the vulnerability of the victims.
 - However, courts have later allowed special courts in exceptional cases of great public importance like the Satyam scam and 2G spectrum case for expeditious trials.
- In the case of **P. Ramachandra Rao v. State of Karnataka (2002)**, the Supreme Court in a seven-Judge Constitution Bench held that there can be no fixed time limit for completion of all criminal trials.
 - The Court held that the criminal proceedings cannot be stopped merely on the ground of delay.
 - The Court observed that mandatory time limits would amount to judicial legislation, which is not within the powers of the Court.

Progress

- As of January 2026, 862 regular FTCs were functioning across 21 states and union territories.
- Alongside them, 774 FTSCs — including 398 exclusive POCSO courts — were operational across 29 states and union territories.
- The disposal rate for the special courts is around **96%, meaning they were either heard or dismissed**.
- In 2024, 88,902 new cases were instituted in FTSCs, while 85,595 cases were resolved.
- On average, an FTSC disposes of about 9.5 cases per month, nearly three times the 3.3 cases cleared monthly by a regular trial court of similar jurisdiction.

Issues and Challenges

- Despite these high clearance rates, the volume of **litigation means pendency remains a persistent challenge**.
 - By the end of 2023, over 2.4 lakh cases were still pending in FTSCs.

- **Judicial delays** are due to many reasons such as lack of infrastructure, complicated cases, poor investigation, weak forensic support, shortage of judges, and procedural inefficiencies.
- Legal experts say that Fast-Track Courts (FTCs) are **not enough to solve the problem of judicial backlog** unless they are supported by adequate infrastructure and judicial capacity.
- Though FTCs have been successful in some areas like Prevention of Corruption Act cases, their efficiency in handling POCSO and other criminal cases has been limited by the large number of cases and unavailability of exclusive judges.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- Fast Track Courts (FTCs) are an important mechanism for providing speedy justice in priority cases and reducing judicial pendency thereby **upholding the principle that “justice delayed is justice denied”**.
- They **need adequate infrastructure, enough judicial manpower, quality investigations**, robust forensic support, technological integration and procedural efficiency for success.
- To ensure that speedy justice is not at the cost of fairness, a comprehensive programme of judicial and institutional reforms is necessary to fulfil the constitutional promise of timely and fair justice.

Source: IE

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

Context

- The Odisha Government has proposed ‘**Nutan Sakala**’ (**New Dawn**), a comprehensive State policy to combat trafficking of women and girls in the state.

About

- The framework is built on **four pillars** such as **prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership** to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated response.
- The policy proposes to **prevent trafficking at the source**, particularly in vulnerable communities, schools, panchayats, and digital spaces through life-skills education, demand-reduction initiatives and community-based tools such as village migration registers.
- **Integrated Victim Support Centres (IVSCs)** are to be established which will provide a single-

window platform for medical care, legal aid, psychosocial counselling, and referral services.

- **The Nutana Sakala Corpus Fund** will serve as a dedicated, non-lapsable financing mechanism to support anti-trafficking interventions and survivor rehabilitation.

Human trafficking in India

- India is a **source as well as a destination** country for human trafficking. India recorded 10,659 cases of human trafficking between 2018 and 2022.
- The main source countries are **Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar** from where women and girls are trafficked in the lure of a better life, jobs and good living conditions on this side.
- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data and notifications from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) indicate that **Odisha, Bihar, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan** register the highest volume of human trafficking cases in India.

Reasons for Human Trafficking

- **Poverty:** Individuals and families living in poverty are more susceptible to the false promises of traffickers who offer better opportunities and livelihoods.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Low literacy levels and limited awareness make people, especially in rural areas, more vulnerable to deception and exploitation.
- **Migration:** Unregulated migration, both domestic and international, creates opportunities for traffickers to target individuals who are disconnected from their support networks.
- **Inadequate training of law enforcement agencies**, and corruption exacerbate the challenges of effectively addressing trafficking.

Constitutional Safeguards in India

- **Article 23:** Prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labor.
- **Article 21:** Ensures the right to life and personal liberty, which has been interpreted to include the right to live with dignity.
- **Article 39(e):** The state should ensure that the health and strength of workers and children are not abused, and that citizens are not forced to take jobs that are not suitable for their age or strength.

Legal Safeguards in India

- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:** Protects children from sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015:** Provides a framework for the protection, treatment, and rehabilitation of children in need of care and protection.
- **The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act** was amended in 2019 to enlarge the mandate of the Central agency to include human trafficking.
- **The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA)** is the premier legislation for prevention of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
- **Criminal Law (amendment) Act 2013** provides for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking including trafficking of children for exploitation in any form.
- **Section 143 to 146 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023** provides penal provisions for various forms of trafficking in persons, habitual dealing in slaves and unlawful compulsory labour.
- **UN Convention:** India has ratified the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) which has as one of its Protocols Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons, particularly Women and Children.
- **SAARC Convention:** India has ratified the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

Judicial Intervention

- The Supreme Court of India in the **Prajwala vs. The Union of India** case framed a comprehensive **Victim Protection Plan** for survivors of trafficking for commercial and sexual exploitation (CSE).
- In the case of **Vishal Jeet v. Union of India (1990)**, the Supreme Court of India recognized child prostitution and human trafficking as severe socio-economic evils and emphasized a preventive and highly humanistic approach to protect vulnerable women and children.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

- It is a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime, in addition to being responsible for implementing the United Nations lead programme on terrorism.
- Established in **1997** and **headquartered in Vienna**.

- UNODC relies on **voluntary contributions**, mainly from governments, to carry out the majority of our work.
- The UNODC Strategy 2021-2025 is committed to promoting human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion, as well as protecting children and harnessing the transformative power of youth.

Source: TH

GOVT. EASES FDI RULES FOR E-COM FIRMS

Context

- The government **relaxed FDI rules** for the **e-commerce sector**, allowing **foreign-funded e-commerce entities** to operate **inventory-based models exclusively for exports of goods** manufactured or produced in India.

Major Highlights

- India has eased its **foreign direct investment (FDI) rules** to **allow foreign-funded e-commerce companies** to purchase products **directly from Indian sellers and export them to overseas customers**.
 - ♦ Earlier governments maintained a **strict distinction** between **foreign-funded marketplace platforms and inventory-based online retailers** to protect millions of small retailers and traders.
- **Under the existing rules**, foreign-funded e-commerce companies are permitted to operate **only as marketplaces**.
 - ♦ **Under the marketplace model**, online platforms act as **intermediaries**. **Independent sellers** own the products and sell them through the platform, while the e-commerce company earns commissions and other fees.
- **Under an inventory-based model**, the platform itself owns the products, manages inventory and sells directly to customers.
 - ♦ The new provision **will allow them to purchase, store and export** Indian products directly from their own inventory.

Significance

- **The move would facilitate greater exports** through easier and increased access to global markets.

- Amazon said the policy change would help **manufacturers, particularly those in smaller towns and cities, reach overseas buyers.**
- **With the ease in FDI norms for inventory-based models of e-commerce,** India is expected to have **more global e-commerce companies** as they will have more flexibility in sourcing, warehousing and shipping Indian-made products to overseas markets.

Net Foreign Direct Investment

- **Net FDI** is gross FDI, which is the total money coming in, minus the money being repatriated out by foreign companies doing business in India and the outward FDI by Indian companies.
 - ♦ **Net FDI** = Gross FDI Inflows – (Repatriation by foreign firms + Outward FDI by Indian firms).
- **Key Components:**
 - ♦ **Gross FDI Inflows:** Total new investments made by foreign entities into the country. It includes setting up factories, acquiring local companies, or expanding operations.
 - ♦ **Repatriation & Disinvestment:** Profits or capital that foreign companies send back to their home countries. Includes sale of assets or shares in domestic firms.
 - ♦ **Outward FDI:** Investments made by domestic companies in foreign countries (e.g., acquisitions, setting up subsidiaries).

Why Net FDI Matters?

- **Positive Net FDI:** Indicates more foreign investment is coming in than going out, often seen as a sign of economic attractiveness.
- **Low or Negative Net FDI:** May suggest capital is being withdrawn or domestic firms are investing more abroad than foreigners are investing locally.
 - ♦ Not always negative but it may reflect economic maturity or global ambition.

Source: TH

NEED A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR VIRTUAL DIGITAL ASSETS

Context

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, in its report on the **Securities Market Code (SMC)**, has called for an **“appropriate regulatory framework”** for **Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs)** such as cryptocurrencies.

Key Recommendations

- The committee noted that **VDAs and crypto-assets were presently unregulated in India**, except for the **limited purpose of taxation.**
- It recommended introducing an **interim regulatory mechanism** through recognised **Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs)** operating under the **oversight of the designated regulator.**
 - ♦ Such a framework should prescribe **minimum standards of governance**, transparency, disclosure, investor protection, grievance redressal, compliance with **prescribed codes of conduct and appropriate regulatory oversight.**
- It pushed for **specific definitions for VDAs under securities and derivatives and other categories** as not all crypto assets qualify under particular segments.

Digital and Virtual Digital Assets

- **The term ‘Asset’** is a resource having **economic value** and the same may be **owned by an individual, entity, or country.**
 - ♦ **Assets are classified based on:** convertibility, physical existence, and usage.
- **A ‘digital asset’** should be a digital file owned by an individual or company, be of value (economic benefit) to the individual or company, and be searchable, discoverable, and available for use.
- **Virtual Digital Assets (VDA)** are **subsets of all digital assets** transacted on a blockchain, such as non-fungible tokens (NFTs), cryptocurrencies and other virtual assets.

Taxation of VDAs

- In India, the term VDA is legally defined **under Section 2(47A) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 (inserted by the Finance Act, 2022).**
- The Union Budget for 2022-23 included **provision for taxation of VDAs.** It included **cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens (‘NFTs’).**
 - ♦ They are subject to a **30% income tax and 1% TDS** on transfers, with no set-off for losses.
- Expenses related to mining, transaction fees, and platform commissions cannot be deducted when calculating taxable income.

Way Ahead

- India’s decision to treat VDAs as **property and capital assets** is a step towards aligning with **international legal standards.**

- The United States SEC classifies many crypto assets as securities, bringing them under financial market regulations.
- This shift is critical **for ensuring that VDAs do not exist in a legal grey area.**
- By defining them as property, India gains the ability to tax, regulate, and seize crypto assets when necessary, preventing their misuse for illicit financial activities.
- This requires a **cohesive policy framework** that integrates financial regulations, consumer rights, and technological advancements to ensure a balanced and secure digital asset ecosystem.

Source: TH

STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD (SOFI) 2026

Context

- The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2026 report, highlights progress in reducing hunger in India while underscoring persistent challenges in ensuring access to affordable and nutritious diets.

Key Findings of the Report

- **Global Scenario:** An estimated **7.8 percent** of the global population faced hunger in 2025, down from 8.1 percent in 2024 and 8.6 percent in 2022.
- **Indian Scenario:**
 - ♦ **Undernourished Population:** Undernourishment fell to 142.5 million people (9.8% of the population) in 2023–2025, down from 243.9 million (21.1%) in 2004–2006.
 - ♦ **Healthy Diet Cost:** The cost of a healthy diet reached PPP \$4.11 per person per day in 2025, a nearly **48%** increase since 2017.
 - ♦ **Affordability Crisis:** Around 520.1 million people (35.5% of India's population) could not afford a healthy diet in 2025.
 - ♦ **Malnutrition Indicators:** Child stunting declined to 32.9% and wasting stood at 18.7%, while childhood overweight, adult obesity, and women's anaemia continued to rise.

Reasons Behind Nutritional Challenges

- **High Cost of Nutritious Food:** Rising prices of fruits, vegetables, pulses, milk and protein-rich foods.

- **Income Constraints:** Many households prioritize inexpensive calorie-rich staples over diverse diets.
- **Dietary Imbalance:** Excess dependence on cereals with inadequate intake of proteins and micronutrients.
- **Poor Maternal Nutrition:** High prevalence of anaemia contributes to intergenerational malnutrition.
- **Regional and Social Inequalities:** Tribal areas, remote regions and urban poor continue to face higher nutritional vulnerabilities.
- **Changing Food Consumption Patterns:** Increasing consumption of ultra-processed foods has contributed to rising obesity.

Government Initiatives

- **Mid Day Meal Programme:** The Programme aims to boost enrolment, retention, and attendance while improving the nutritional status of children in government, local body, and government-aided schools.
- **Food Fortification:** The government promotes fortified rice, wheat flour, and edible oils as part of the public distribution system.
- **The National Food Security Act, 2013:** The Act provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for receiving subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- **Poshan Tracker:** The Ministry of Women and Child Development developed the Poshan Tracker ICT application as a key governance tool.
 - ♦ It uses WHO's expanded tables with **day-based z-scores** to dynamically assess stunting, wasting, underweight, and obesity in children based on height, weight, gender, and age.
- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana** was launched to alleviate hardships faced by the poor due to economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0** includes key schemes such as the POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anganwadi Services and Scheme for Adolescent Girls as direct targeted interventions to address the problem of malnutrition in the country.

Way Ahead

- Promote production, supply and consumption of **fruits, vegetables, pulses, millets and dairy products** along with reducing post-harvest losses.

- Public policies should focus on **ensuring access to balanced, diverse and micronutrient-rich diets** rather than only calorie sufficiency.
- Expand iron-folic acid supplementation**, improve maternal healthcare and promote dietary diversification to reduce anaemia.
- Integrate **nutrition education, physical activity promotion** and regulation of unhealthy foods into public health policies.

State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)

- This report is the annual global monitoring report for Sustainable Development **Goal (SDG) 2 (targets 2.1 and 2.2)** – to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms.
- Jointly Released by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations agency for children (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Source: DTE

NEWS IN SHORT

LOKMANYA BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak on his birth anniversary.

Early Life

- Born on **23 July 1856** in **Ratnagiri, Maharashtra**, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a freedom fighter, social thinker, philosopher, teacher and one of the earliest and strongest advocates of **Swaraj (self-rule)**.
- He organised two important public festivals, **Ganeshotsav (1893)** and **Shiv Jayanti (1895)**, to promote national consciousness and political mobilisation.

Political career

- In **1890**, Tilak joined the **Indian National Congress**.
- Tilak opposed the moderate views of **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**, and was supported by fellow Indian nationalists Bipin Chandra Pal in Bengal

and Lala Lajpat Rai in Punjab. They were referred to as the “**Lal-Bal-Pal**”.

- The trio also mobilized Indians against the **Bengal partition** and proposed the **Swadeshi movement** and boycott of foreign goods.
- In **1908**, Tilak was arrested on charges of sedition and sentenced to **six years’ imprisonment** in **Mandalay (Burma)**.
- In **1916**, he founded the **Home Rule League** at **Belagavi** to promote political awareness and mobilise support for self-rule. In the same year, he concluded the **Lucknow Pact** with **Mohammed Ali Jinnah**, which sought to promote **Hindu-Muslim unity** in the nationalist movement.
- He was conferred with the title of “**Lokmanya**”, which means “accepted by the people (as their leader)” and Mahatma Gandhi called him “**The Maker of Modern India**”.

Literary Work

- He launched two weeklies, **Kesari (in Marathi)** and **Mahratta (in English)**, which criticized British policies of the time.
- His notable works include:
 - The Orion or Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas (1893)
 - The Arctic Home in the Vedas (1903).
- In the **Mandalay jail**, he wrote the **Srimad Bhagavadgita Rahasya (Secret of the Bhagavadgita)**, an original exposition of the most sacred book of the Hindus.

Source: PIB

CHANDRA SHEKHAR AZAD

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Chandra Shekhar Azad on his birth anniversary.

Chandra Shekhar Azad

- Born on **23 July 1906** in present-day **Madhya Pradesh**, Chandra Shekhar Azad grew up in poverty and joined the freedom struggle as a teenager during the **Non-Cooperation Movement**.
- He was Arrested for protest activities, he famously declared his name as “Azad” and vowed never to be captured alive.

Role in Freedom struggle

- He joined the Hindustan Republican Army (HRA), later transforming it with Bhagat Singh into the

more radical **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA)**.

- He was involved in the **1925 Kakori Train robbery**, an attempt to blow up the **India Viceroy's train**, and the shooting of **British police officer JP Saunders** in 1928 to avenge the killing of the great freedom fighter, Lala Lajpat Rai.
- After the Central Assembly bombing in 1929 and the subsequent British crackdown, Azad remained underground, trying to free Bhagat Singh.

Death and Legacy

- On February 27, 1931, surrounded by police in Allahabad's Alfred Park, he helped a comrade escape, killed three policemen, and, with only one bullet left, shot himself to avoid capture.
 - ♦ He died at just 24, staying true to his name and vow — Azad (free) until the end.
- His role in India's quest for freedom is deeply valued and motivates our youth to stand up for what is just, with courage and conviction.

Source: AIR

U.S. ANNOUNCES CIVILIAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH SAUDI ARABIA

Context

- **USA and Saudi Arabia** had signed a **peaceful nuclear cooperation agreement** — commonly known as a **123 agreement**.

About

- This agreement is named after **Section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act of 1954**.
 - ♦ It is a **legally binding agreement** that the USA requires **before engaging in significant nuclear cooperation with another country**.
- These agreements facilitate the **transfer of nuclear materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes**, while ensuring compliance with international nonproliferation standards.
 - ♦ They also provide a framework for **technical exchanges, scientific research, and safeguards discussions**.
- **India's 123 Agreement with USA:** It also known as the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement aims to facilitate **civilian nuclear cooperation between the two countries**.

Key Features:

- ♦ **Nuclear Trade:** It allows the U.S. to supply India with nuclear fuel, technology, and reactors for civilian energy purposes.
- ♦ **Non-Proliferation Commitment:** India, in exchange, agrees to separate its civilian and military nuclear programs and place its civilian reactors under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.
- ♦ **No Restrictions on Military Programs:** Unlike the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the agreement does not require India to forgo nuclear weapons development, as India is not a signatory to the NPT.
- ♦ **Energy and Economic Cooperation:** The agreement aims to enhance energy security, support India's growing energy demands, and promote economic cooperation between the two nations.

Source: IE

ROME DECLARATION FOR AN UNARMED AND DISARMING PEACE

Context

- A group of Nobel laureates, AI scientists, religious leaders, and global experts signed the **Rome Declaration for an Unarmed and Disarming Peace**.

What is the Rome Declaration for an Unarmed and Disarming Peace?

- It is a **global ethical declaration** calling for human control over nuclear weapons in the age of Artificial Intelligence.
- It warns against delegating life-and-death decisions, especially nuclear launch decisions, to autonomous AI systems.
- The Declaration was inspired by **Pope Leo XIV's encyclical Magnifica Humanitas**, which emphasizes protecting human dignity from technological overreach.
- Although non-binding, it seeks to build global consensus for an international treaty governing AI in military applications.
- **Principles of the Declaration:**
 - ♦ Disarming the next arms race
 - ♦ Responsible development
 - ♦ Responsible use of AI
 - ♦ Responsible governance

- ♦ Responsible leadership, and
- ♦ Nuclear disarmament.

Five Ethical and Operational Principles

- **Mandatory meaningful human control:** Absolutely prohibiting any automated, algorithmic or AI-driven system from making the final decision regarding the use or deployment of nuclear weapons.
- **The digital commons model:** Those who do not have access or control over technologies such as AI are likely to be affected more by its unintended consequences.
- **Responsible development:** A mandate for the developers of AI to publish the ethical frameworks guiding their models and explicitly forbidding the pursuit of fully autonomous and self-improving systems that cannot be monitored, audited or abruptly halted by human operators.
- **Internal arsenal vulnerability audits:** An urgent request to the world's nuclear states to conduct rigorous internal reviews to protect existing atomic command-and-control systems from AI-driven cyber-tampering or unauthorised algorithmic interference.
- **Time-bound, verifiable disarmament:** A renewal of good-faith international negotiations in pursuit of completely, irreversibly, and verifiably eliminating nuclear weapons.

Source: TH

MISSION GOLDEN SPICE

In News

- Union Minister for the Development of the North Eastern Region launched the Lakadong Turmeric Mission Golden Spice.

Do you know?

- Lakadong turmeric is grown in **Meghalaya's West Jaintia hills**.
- It is globally acclaimed for its exceptional quality, making it one of India's most distinctive agricultural treasures.
- It contains 7–10 per cent curcumin, nearly four times the global average, making it one of the world's finest turmeric varieties with significant nutraceutical and export potential.

Mission Golden Spice

- It is a project under the Ministry's Unlock the Economic Potential of India's Northeast (USP)

initiative and is worth over 175 crore rupees.

- It is designed as a **five-year roadmap to be implemented in two phases starting from 2025 till 2030**.
 - ♦ Phase One is Value Chain Strengthening, followed by Phase Two, which is Expansion and Scale-up, for promotion of Meghalaya's Unique Selling Proposition (USP), the **GI-tagged Lakadong Turmeric**.
- It is built on years of institutional groundwork laid by the state government, officials and farmers.

Source: Air

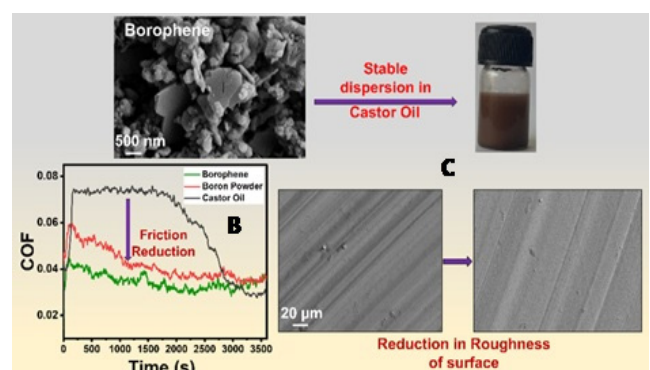
BOROPHENE-BASED GREEN LUBRICANT

Context

- Scientists have developed a borophene bio-lubricant that can reduce friction and wear in machines, a breakthrough that could lead to enhanced energy efficiency.

About

- Researchers used borophene as an additive in castor oil which is a **biodegradable and renewable lubricant**. Adding only **0.1% of borophene** to castor oil reduced friction by about **42%** compared to pure oil.
- In operation, borophene forms a **tribofilm** (a layer formed due to friction) on contact surfaces.
- This layer **reduces shear stress, minimizes friction and wear, and protects machinery surfaces from damage**.



What is Borophene?

- Borophene is a **two-dimensional (2D) nanomaterial** formed by a single layer of boron atoms.
- It is viewed as the **boron counterpart of graphene**, yet it exhibits different electrical and mechanical properties.

- It is **lightweight, highly conductive, mechanically strong, and chemically active.**

Source: PIB

KUTKI

Context

- Himachal farmers have pioneered the sustainable cultivation of endangered Himalayan herb '**Kutki**'.

About

- **Picrorhiza kurroa**, locally known as **Kutki** is a herb used in medicinal formulations.
- It is the **high-value medicinal herb** native to the **alpine and sub-alpine regions** (2,700-4,500 metres) of the **Himalayas**.
 - ♦ It is reported to be an ingredient in **more than 2,000 herbal formulations.**

- **Conservation Status:** Kutki is currently categorised as an **Endangered species on the IUCN Red List.**

- ♦ Recognising the threat posed by international trade, it was included in **Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).**
- ♦ This listing permits international trade **only under regulated conditions** and requires export permits.
- **A sustainable cultivation model adopted by farmers in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district** is showing **promising signs of conserving the species** while boosting the rural mountain economy.

Source: TH

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