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## News Analysis (18 Sep, 2020)

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### World Bank's Human Capital Index 2020

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#### Why in News

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Recently, the **World Bank** released the **Human Capital Index (HCI)** report for 2020. The index **benchmarks key components of human capital** across countries.

India has been ranked at the **116<sup>th</sup> position** in the HCI 2020.

#### Key Points

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- **Human Capital:** It consists of the **knowledge, skills, and health** that people accumulate over their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society.
- **Parameters Used in HCI:** The HCI 2020 includes **health and education data of children for 174 countries** up to March 2020. Thus providing a pre-pandemic baseline.

It covers 98% of the world's population.

- **Outcome:** The HCI 2020 shows that **pre-pandemic**, most countries had made **steady progress** in building human capital of children, with the **biggest strides made in low-income countries**.

However, despite this progress, a child born in a typical country could expect to achieve just 56% of their potential human capital, relative to a benchmark of complete education and full health.

- **Pandemic Effect:** The pandemic puts at **risk the decade's progress in building human capital**, including the improvements in health, survival rates, school enrollment, and reduced stunting.
  - More than **1 billion children have been out of school** and could lose out, on average, half a year of schooling.
  - It has created significant **disruptions to essential health services for women and children**, with many children missing out on crucial vaccinations.
  - It has **increased income inequality**, its economic impact has been particularly deep for women and for the most disadvantaged families, leaving many vulnerable to food insecurity and poverty.

## Way Forward

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- The HCI provides a basis on which the government of India can prioritize and a dimension to support human capital.
- The World Bank is working with India on supporting livelihood for the poor. Given the progress that has been made in recent times, it seems more significant for now due to Covid-19.
- Protecting and investing in people is vital as countries work to lay the foundation for sustainable, inclusive recoveries and future growth.

**Source: HT**

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## Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement: USA

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### Why in News

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The USA is looking forward to India signing the **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial cooperation (BECA)**, at the next **India-USA 2+2 ministerial dialogue** likely to be held in October, 2020.

### Key Points

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- **2+2 talks:**
  - They are a **dialogue between two appointed ministers from each country**. This meeting aims to discuss issues of strategic and security interests between the two countries.
  - Defense and foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country.
  - India **holds such talks with Japan and Australia**, at the foreign secretary and defense secretary level.
  - India **holds ministerial-level talks only with the USA**. Apart from India, the United States holds such ministerial dialogues with Australia and Japan also.
  - The talks were announced in June 2017. The 2+2 dialogue has replaced the Strategic and Commercial Dialogue between the foreign and commerce ministers of the two countries that were held previously.
- **BECA:**
  - BECA will allow India to use the **geospatial maps of the USA** to get pinpoint military accuracy of automated hardware systems and weapons such as cruise and ballistic missiles.
  - BECA is an important precursor to India **acquiring armed unmanned aerial vehicles such as the Predator-B** from the USA. Predator-B uses spatial data for accurate strikes on enemy targets.
  - BECA is **one of the four foundational military communication agreements** between the two countries. The other three being GSOMIA, LEMOA, CISMOA.
  - Initially, India had reservations to **geospatial mapping on the grounds of national security**, but they were later addressed by mutual dialogue and discussion between the two countries.

### **General Security Of Military Information Agreement**

- GSOMIA allows **militaries to share the intelligence** gathered by them.
- Signed by India in 2002.
- An extension to the GSOMIA, the **Industrial Security Annex** (ISA), was signed at the 2+2 dialogue in 2019.
- ISA provides a framework for exchange and protection of classified military information **between the USA and Indian defence industries**.

### **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement**

- LEMOA allows both countries to **have access to each other's designated military facilities** for refueling and replenishment.
- Signed by India in 2016.

## Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement

- COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) is the India specific version of CISMOA.
- Valid for 10 years, COMCASA aims to provide a legal framework for the **transfer of highly sensitive communication security equipment from the USA to India** that will streamline and facilitate interoperability between their armed forces.
- Signed by India in 2018.

## Other Maritime Developments Between India and the USA

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- A **maritime information agreement** is also under active deliberation between India and the USA. Once concluded, India will have such arrangements with all Quad countries.
  - **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)** is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a **free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific region**.
- In increasing military to military interactions, the USA has also posted a liaison officer at the Navy's **Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** meant to promote **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**.
  - The Information Fusion Centre serves countries that have **White Shipping Information Exchange** (White-shipping refers to commercial shipping information about the movement of cargo ships) agreements with India.
  - **MDA** is defined by the **International Maritime Organization** as the effective understanding of anything associated with the maritime domain that could impact the security, safety, economy, or environment of a country.
- Recently, India posted a liaison officer at the USA Navy Central Command in Bahrain.

## Way Forward

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- Signing BECA is crucial for India in order to neutralise the Russia-China-Pakistan axis in the maritime domain and for the stability of the Indo-Pacific region. The acquisition of aerial platforms like the USA naval helicopters and multi-role fighters is a key priority for India in the current scenario of increasing **Indo-China conflict**.
- The increase in India's maritime interactions with the Quad countries centred around information sharing for improved MDA in the Indian Ocean Region and **Indo-Pacific** will strengthen India's position internationally.
- **Strategic hedging** is the key to move forward in relationships with powerful countries like the USA. India and the USA must now strive to complete the unfinished agreements and set the course for a **Comprehensive Strategic Global Partnership**.

**Source: TH**

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## **Gilgit-Baltistan to Become a Pakistani Province**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, **Pakistan has decided to elevate Gilgit-Baltistan's status** to that of a full-fledged province.

Gilgit-Baltistan is one of the **disputed territories** of India.



### **Key Points**

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- **Current Status of Gilgit-Baltistan:**
  - It is an **autonomous region** now and with this elevation, it will **become the 5<sup>th</sup> province** of the country.
 

Currently, **Pakistan has four provinces** namely **Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh.**
  - **Chronology:**
    - **1999:** Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan are Pakistani citizens and directed the federal government to start appropriate administrative and legislative measures.
    - **2009:** The **Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order** was introduced, whereby the **Northern Areas were renamed as Gilgit-Baltistan** and the region was given **province-like status but without representation in Parliament.**
    - **2015:** A committee constituted by the federal government **proposed** giving Gilgit-Baltistan the status of a province.
    - **2018:** A new order was introduced which **transferred all powers of the Gilgit-Baltistan council to its assembly.**
- This elevation will **lead to adequate representation from the province on all constitutional bodies**, including the National Assembly and the Senate.
- The Government will also start working on the **Moqpondass Special Economic Zone (SEZ)** under the **China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**.
 

SEZs work as an engine for economic growth supported by quality infrastructure complemented by an attractive fiscal package, both at the Centre and the State level, with the minimum possible regulations.
- **Other Developments by China in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir under CPEC:**
  - **Diamer-Bhasha Dam.**
  - **Kohala hydropower Project.**
  - **Azad Pattan Hydel Power Project.**
- **India's Stand:**
  - India has held that the **Government of Pakistan or its judiciary has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied** by it.
  - India completely **rejects such actions** and continued attempts to bring material changes in Pakistan occupied areas of the Indian territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
  - While protesting Islamabad's efforts to bring material change in Pakistan occupied territories, India held that **Pakistan should immediately vacate all areas under its illegal occupation.**

## China Pakistan Economic Corridor

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- It is the flagship project of China's ambitious **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.

- The **bilateral project between Pakistan and China** intends to promote connectivity across Pakistan with a network of highways, railways, and pipelines accompanied by energy, industrial and other infrastructure development projects. Originally valued at USD 46 billion, the projects were **worth over USD 60 billion as of 2017**.
- It links the **Western part of China (Xinjiang) to the Gwadar Port in Balochistan, Pakistan via Khunjerab Pass in Northern Pakistan**.
- **India has protested to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir**.



**Source: TH**

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## Reversing Global Wildlife Decline

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### Why in News

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Wildlife populations have fallen by **more than two-thirds** over the **last 50 years**, according to a **Living Planet Report 2020** of the **World Wildlife Fund**.

## Key Points

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- **Findings:**
  - **Related to Biodiversity:**
    - There has been a **reduction of 68% in the global wildlife population between 1970 and 2016**.
    - **The highest biodiversity loss due to land use change:** (1) Europe and Central Asia at 57.9 %; (2) North America at 52.5 %; (3) Latin America and Caribbean at 51.2 %; (4) Africa at 45.9 %; (5) Asia at 43%.
    - The **sharpest declines** have occurred throughout the world's **rivers and lakes**, where **freshwater wildlife** has **plummeted by 84%** since 1970 — about **4% per year**.
  - **Related to Land and Oceans:**
    - **75% of the Earth's ice-free land surface** has already been significantly **altered**.
    - Most of the **oceans are polluted**.
    - More than **85% of the area of wetlands has been lost** during 1970-2016.
- **India's scenario:**
  - India has 2.4% global land share, about 8% global biodiversity and around 16% global population
  - However, it has lost 12% of its wild mammals, 19% amphibians and 3% birds over the last five decades.
  - India's **ecological footprint per person is less than 1.6 global hectares (gha)/person** (smaller than that of many large countries). But, its high population size has made the gross footprint significantly high.
    - **Ecological Footprint:** It is the amount of the environment necessary to produce the goods and services necessary to support a particular lifestyle.
- **Factors responsible for this decline:**
  - Changes in how land is used – from pristine forest to cropland or pasture – rank among the greatest threats to biodiversity on land worldwide.
  - Use and trade of wildlife.
  - Natural habitat loss.
  - Degradation and deforestation driven by food production processes.



- **Need for Conservation Efforts:**

- Because the **health of nature is intimately linked to the health of humans**.
- The **emergence of new infectious diseases like Covid-19** tend to be related to the destruction of forests and wilderness.
- Healthy ecosystems are the foundation of today's global economies and societies, and the ones we aspire to build.

As more and more species are drawn towards extinction, the very life support systems on which civilisation depends are eroded.

- As per the World Economic Forum, biodiversity loss is a disturbing threat with few parallels like extreme weather events, climate change, severe income inequality etc.

## **Biodiversity**

- It refers to **all the varieties of life that can be found on Earth** (plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms) as well as to the **communities that they form and the habitats in which they live**.
- **As per the Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 2):** Biological Diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.
- It can be understood at three levels:
  - **Species diversity** refers to the variety of different species (plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms) such as palm trees, elephants or bacteria.
  - **Genetic diversity** corresponds to the variety of genes contained in plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms. It occurs within a species as well as between species.
  - **Ecosystem diversity** refers to all the different habitats - or places - that exist, like tropical or temperate forests, hot and cold deserts, wetlands, rivers, mountains, coral reefs, etc.

## **Convention on Biological Diversity**

- The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, a legally binding treaty to conserve biodiversity has been in force **since 1993**. It has **3 main objectives**:
  - The **conservation** of biological diversity.
  - The **sustainable use** of the components of biological diversity.
  - The **fair and equitable sharing** of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

- The targets of the Convention calls for global trends of terrestrial wildlife to stop declining and start recovering by 2050 or earlier.
- **India** became a **party to the Convention** in **1994**.

## Major Indian Government Initiatives

- **Wildlife protection Act 1972.**
- Water (prevention and control of pollution) Act 1974.
- Air (prevention and control of pollution) Act 1981.
- **Environment Protection Act 1986.**
- **Biological Diversity Act 2002.**
- **Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers (recognition of rights) Act 2006.**

## Areas of Action

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- **Conservation Reserves:** There must be **renewed ambition** from the world's governments to establish large-scale conservation areas, placed in the most valuable hotspots for biodiversity worldwide, such as small islands with species found nowhere else.
  - These reserves, in which wildlife will live and roam freely, will need to cover **at least 40%** of the world's land surface to help bend the curve from decline to recovery for species and entire ecosystems.
  - Management is more important than the size of reserves.
- **Habitat restoration** and conservation efforts need to be targeted where they are needed most – for species and habitats on the verge of extinction.
- **Food Production:** Need is to transform **our food systems** to produce more on less land.
  - If every farmer on Earth used the best available farming practices, only half of the total area of cropland would be needed to feed the world. There are lots of other inefficiencies that could be ironed out too.
  - Reducing waste and favouring healthier and more environmentally friendly diets.
- **Restoring Land:** Efforts to restore degraded land are also required. Such as farmland that's becoming unproductive as a result of soil erosion.
  - This could return 8% of the world's land to nature by 2050.
- **Afforestation:** This can help not only in arresting soil erosion but also expansion of desertification along with avenues for biodiversity replenishment.

## Way Forward

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- While giving back to nature, the conservation measures would simultaneously slow climate change, reduce pressure on water, limit nitrogen pollution in the world's waterways and boost human health.
- Only a comprehensive set of policy measures that transform our relationship with the land and rapidly scale down pollution can build the necessary momentum.

**Source:DTE**

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## **Wetlands Conservation**

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### **Why in News**

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Rajasthan Government is acting proactively to protect the wetland ecosystem of the state with 52 wetlands earmarked for time-bound development.

In Rajasthan, **Sambhar Lake and Keoladeo Ghana National Park** have the prestigious tag of '**Wetland of International Importance**', by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

### **Key Points**

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- **Wetlands are defined as:** "lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water".

- **Importance:**

- **Ecosystem and biodiversity support:**

- Wetlands are highly productive ecosystems that provide the world with nearly **two-thirds of its fish harvest**.
- Wetlands play an integral role in the **ecology of the watershed**. The combination of shallow water, high levels of nutrients is ideal for the development of organisms that form the base of the food web and feed many species of fish, amphibians, shellfish and insects.
- Wetlands' microbes, plants and wildlife are **part of global cycles for water, nitrogen and sulphur**. Wetlands **store carbon within their plant communities and soil (carbon sequestration)** instead of releasing it to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide.
- They provide habitat for animals and plants and many contain a wide diversity of life, supporting plants and animals that are found nowhere else.
- They are also an important source of **ground water recharge**.

- **Human Dependence:** More than **one billion people** depend on them for a living.

- Wetlands are a **vital source** for food, raw materials, genetic resources for medicines, and hydropower.
- Many wetlands are areas of natural beauty and promote **tourism** and many are **important to Aboriginal people**.
- Also, they help in **controlling the floods**.

- **Threats to Wetlands:**

- **Urbanization:** Wetlands near urban centres are under increasing developmental pressure for residential, industrial and commercial facilities. Urban wetlands are essential for preserving public water supplies.
- **Agriculture:** Vast stretches of wetlands have been converted to paddy fields. Construction of a large number of reservoirs, canals and dams to provide for irrigation significantly altered the hydrology of the associated wetlands.
- **Pollution:** Wetlands act as natural water filters. However, they can only clean up the fertilizers and pesticides from agricultural runoff but not mercury from industrial sources and other types of pollution.

There is growing concern about the effect of industrial pollution on drinking water supplies and the biological diversity of wetlands.

- **Climate Change:** Increased air temperature; shifts in precipitation; increased frequency of storms, droughts, and floods; increased atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration; and sea level rise could also affect wetlands.
- **Dredging and sand mining:** That is the removal of material from a wetland or river bed. Dredging of streams lowers the surrounding water table and dries up adjacent wetlands.
- **Introduced Species:** Indian wetlands are threatened by exotic introduced plant species such as water hyacinth and salvinia. They clog waterways and compete with native vegetation.

- **Global Conservation Efforts:**

- **Ramsar Convention**

- The Convention came into force in **1975** and is **one of the oldest inter-governmental accord** for preserving the ecological character of wetlands.
- The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".
- **India has 37 Ramsar Sites** which are the Wetlands of International importance.

- **Montreux Record**

- Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.
- Wetlands of India that are in Montreux Record: **Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur).**  
**Chilka lake (Odisha)** was placed in the record but was later removed from it.

- **Conservation Efforts by India:**

- **National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA):**

- NPCA is a single conservation programme for both wetlands and lakes.
- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme**, currently being implemented by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change.  
It was formulated in 2015 by merging of the National Lake Conservation Plan and the National Wetlands Conservation Programme.
- NPCA seeks to promote better synergy and avoid overlap of administrative functions.

- **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017:**

- **Nodal authority:** As per the Wetlands Rules, the **Wetlands Authority** within a state is the nodal authority for all wetland-specific authorities in a state/UT for the enforcement of the rules.
- **Prohibited activities:**
  - Setting up any industry and expansion of existing industries,
  - Dumping solid waste or discharge of untreated wastes and effluents from industries and any human settlements, and
  - Encroachment or conversion for non-wetlands uses.
- **Integrated Management Plan:** The guidelines recommend that the state/UT administration prepare a plan for the management of each notified wetland by the respective governments.
- **Penalties:** Undertaking any prohibited or regulated activities beyond the thresholds (defined by the state/UT administration) in the wetlands or its zone of influence, will be deemed violations under the Wetlands Rules. Violation of the Rules will attract penalties as per the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.

## Source TH

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## **BRICS National Security Advisers Meet**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, Russia hosted virtual National Security Advisers (NSAs) meet of the **Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS)** grouping.

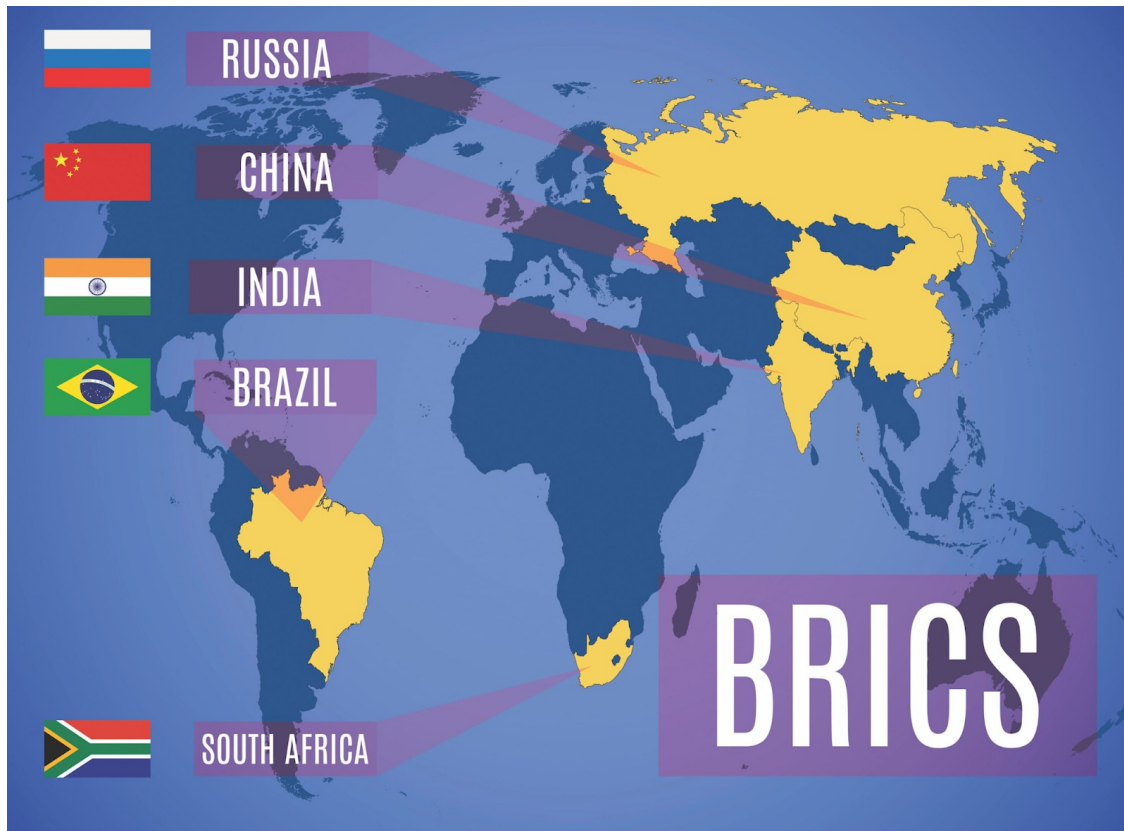
### **Key Points**

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- **Draft Anti-terrorism Plan:**
  - The group discussed a **draft anti-terrorism strategy** that is expected to be approved at an upcoming summit.
  - **The anti-terrorism plan** reflects fundamental aspects of the BRICS states, such as respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, adherence to international law and recognition of the **United Nation** (UN)'s central role in security matters.
- **Other Discussed Issues:**
  - **Challenges and threats** to global, regional and national security.
  - Called for **biological security cooperation** and **information and communications technology security**.
    - There was also a proposal to continue work on a system for **countering security threats in the sphere of information**.
  - The Russian side criticised the **deployment of weapons in space by the USA** and the use of outer space for military operations.
    - It also expressed **concern** over the escalation of tensions with the USA in Iran, Venezuela and Syria.
    - It also proposed the creation of new mechanisms in the field of countering epidemiological threats and to conduct expert consultations on biosafety in the BRICS format.
  - The five countries are cooperating within the framework of building a **multi-polar system** based on justice and equality.
  - They have also agreed to work on **deepening coordination** at key international organisations and forums, especially the United Nations (UN).

## BRICS

- BRICS is an **acronym** for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**.
  - In 2001, the British Economist **Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC** to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
  - The grouping was **formalised** during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers' in **2006**.
  - **South Africa** was invited to join BRIC in December **2010**, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
- The **chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members**, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- During the **Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza** (Brazil) in **2014**, the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the **New Development Bank** (NDB - Shanghai, China). They also signed the **BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement** to provide short-term liquidity support to the members.



## Way Forward

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- Terrorism is a big threat to India. If the draft anti-terrorism strategy is adopted by the BRICS members, it will help India to counter the terrorism. It will also expose the terror sponsored countries.
- Although the **India-China standoff at Ladakh** was not discussed at the NSAs meet, BRICS is an important platform where India can engage with China diplomatically.

**Source: HT**

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## Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks

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### Why in News

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Recently, the **Union Minister of Textiles** provided information on implementation of **Scheme for Integrated Textile Park (SITP)**, in Rajya Sabha.

### Key Points

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- **Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks:**
  - SITP was launched in **2005**.
  - **Objectives:** To provide the industry with world-class state of the art infrastructure facilities for setting up their textile units.  
To attract foreign investors to the domestic textile sector.
  - **Key features:**
    - Under the SITP, infrastructure facilities for setting up of textile units are developed in a **Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model**.
    - The Government of India **grants upto 40%** of the project cost.  
However, it grants **upto 90% of the project cost** for the first **two projects** (each) in the North Eastern States, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh.
    - The government's support is limited to **Rs. 40 crores** for each textile park.
    - Each **Integrated Textile Park (ITP)** under the scheme would normally have **50 units**. The number of entrepreneurs and the resultant investments in each ITP could vary from project to project.
- **Status:**
  - A total of 59 textile parks have been sanctioned under SITP by the textiles ministry out of which 22 textile parks have been completed.
  - Further, the proposal to set up **Mega Textile Parks** by the Ministry of Textiles is at the advanced stage of discussion.  
The government is considering a plan to set up 1,000-acre mega textile parks.
  - The **slow progress of SITP** is attributed to:
    - Delay in obtaining land.
    - Other statutory clearances from state governments.
    - Slow fund mobilisation by the textile parks.

## Significance of Textile Sector

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- The sector accounts for 7% of India's manufacturing output, 2% of GDP, 12% of exports and employs directly and indirectly about 10 crore people.
- Owing to the abundant supply of raw material and labour, India is-
  - The **largest producer of cotton**, accounting for 25% of the global output.
  - The **world's second-largest producer of textiles and garments** after China.
  - The **second-largest producer of man-made fibres** — polyester and viscose.

- As per India Brand Equity Foundation, the sector has demonstrated encouraging growth trends in India with a **compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8%** for the last few years wherein it has reached a size of \$13 billion.

## Challenges

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- **Highly fragmentation and domination by the unorganized sector.**
- The **introduction of new tax structure** under **GST** (Goods and Service Tax) makes the garments expensive.
- Increasing **interest rates** and **labor wages and workers' salaries.**
- Faces a **lack of access to the latest technology** and fails to meet the global standards in the highly competitive export market.
- The **fierce competition** from China, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in the low price garment market.
- The **environmental and social issues** like child labor and personal safety.

## Major Government Initiatives

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- **Comprehensive Scheme for Development of Knitting and Knitwear Sector:** The Government has launched a separate scheme for development of Knitting and Knitwear Sector to boost production in the knitting and knitwear cluster at **Ludhiana, Kolkata and Tirupur.**  
The scheme is launched under Power-Tex India.
- **North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS)** for promoting textiles industry in the NER by providing infrastructure, capacity building and marketing support to all segments of textile industry.
- A skill development scheme titled **SAMARTH (Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector)** covers the entire value chain of the textile sector, excluding Spinning and Weaving in the organized sector, on pan India basis.
- **Power-Tex India**
- **Silk Samagra Scheme**
- **Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS)**
- **National Handloom Day**
- **Jute ICARE**
- **National Technical Textile Mission**

## Way Forward

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- **Toward an organised sector:** India can make the sector organised by setting up mega apparel parks and common infrastructure for the textile industry.  
This will increase the scale of production and help Indian players to produce faster and at a lower cost with maximum efficiency in operation.

- **Facilitate modernisation of the industry:** Focus should be on the modernisation of the obsolete machinery and technology. This can help increase the production and productivity of the textile industry and thereby increase the export also.

**Source: PIB**

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## **Support to Self-Employment Schemes: MSME**

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### **Why in News**

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The **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** has announced expansion of and doubling of support to beneficiary oriented Self-Employment schemes aimed at contributing to **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.

### **Key Points**

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- The government will provide assistance to artisans engaged in **Pottery Activity and Beekeeping Activity**.
- Previously, the Ministry of MSME approved a programme for the benefit of artisans involved in **manufacturing of Agarbatti under the Gramodyog Vikas Yojana**.
- **Pottery Activity:**
  - The assistance includes **technical knowhow, quality standardization of products, skill-development to Self Help Groups (SHGs), encouragement to the successful traditional potter to set up units under Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) scheme, necessary market linkages by tying up with exports and large buying houses etc.**

PMEGP is a **credit-linked subsidy scheme** which promotes self-employment through setting up of micro-enterprises.
  - It also includes setting up of clusters in **Terracotta, Red clay pottery**, with new innovative value added products to build pottery to crockery/tile making capabilities under the **SFURTI scheme**.

The **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)** aims to make traditional industries more productive and competitive by organizing the traditional industries and artisans into **clusters**.

### **Terracotta**

- Terracotta is a type of ceramic pottery, made by baking terracotta clay.

- The word “terracotta” comes from the Italian words for “baked earth.”
- It is often used for making pipes, bricks, and sculptures.
- Recently, a **Terracotta Grinder** was launched at Varanasi by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.
- The **Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh) terracotta** has been given the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- **Terracotta Figurines** were also made during the **Indus Valley Civilization**. They were either used as toys or objects of worship and represented birds, dogs, sheep, cattle and monkeys.

The famous terracotta figure of the Mother Goddess was discovered in Mohenjodaro which shows the Mother Goddess as the symbol of fertility and prosperity.

- **Beekeeping Activity:**

- It aims to **create sustainable employment for the beekeepers/farmers**, help artisans adopt **scientific Beekeeping & Management** practices, utilize available natural resources; and **create awareness about the benefits** of beekeeping in cross pollination.
- It involves distributing tools and equipment to migrant labourers in the **Prime Minister Gareeb Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyaan** (PMGKRA) districts and providing training to the beneficiaries, setting up clusters under the SFURTI Scheme.

PMGKRA empowers and provides livelihood opportunities to the **returnee migrant workers and rural citizens** who have returned to their home states due to the **Covid-19** induced **lockdown**.

- Recently, the Ministry of MSME flagged off **‘Apiary on Wheels’**. ‘Apiary on Wheels’ is a unique concept designed by the KVIC for the easy upkeep and migration of Bee Boxes having live Bee colonies.
- A **Beekeeping Development Committee** was also constituted in 2019 under the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister** (EAC-PM) to give recommendations to enhance the contribution of the beekeeping sector for achieving the target of **doubling farmers’ incomes by 2022**.
- KVIC also launched a **Honey Mission** in 2017 under which it provides awareness, training and **‘Bee Boxes’ along with Bee Colonies** to the farmers.

The Honey mission was in line with the ‘Sweet Revolution’, launched in 2016 to promote beekeeping and associated activities.

- **Benefit:**
  - The program will immediately benefit about 1500 artisans, in providing sustainable employment with increased earnings.
  - Artisans living in **rural areas, Self Help Groups and Migrant workers** will particularly benefit from the program.
  - In addition to enhancing employment opportunities locally, the programme will also help in **capturing the export market** in such products.

## Way Forward

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The MSME sector has been badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially the rural enterprise owners. In addition to these self-employment schemes, the government can provide tax relief (GST and **corporate tax**), give swift refunds, and provide liquidity to rural India (may be through **PM-Kisan**) to boost demand for MSME products.

**Source: PIB**

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## Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center

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### Why in News

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Recently, the Government of India has created the **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center** (IN-SPACE), an independent nodal agency under the Department of Space.

This move is a **part of the reforms announced under the economic stimulus packages.**

### Key Points

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- IN-SPACE is to be established as a **single-window nodal agency**, with its own cadre, which will **permit and oversee the activities of private companies.** This is part of **reforms aimed at giving a boost to the private sector** participating in space-related activities or using India's space resources.

- **Functions:**
  - **Encourage, promote and handhold the private sector** for their participation in the Space Sector.
    - Currently, there are **more than 500 private companies** which partner with the **Indian Space Research Organisation** (ISRO) in carrying out various space activities.
    - They provide materials used in manufacturing, mechanical fabrication, **electronic fabrication, system development, integration, etc.**
  - **Draw up an integrated launch manifest** considering the requirements for ISRO, **New Space India Limited** (NSIL) and private companies based on priorities and readiness level.

After these reforms are implemented fully, the **role of NSIL** would be to build launch vehicles, provide launch services, build satellites, provide space-based services, technology transfers, etc.
  - **Work out a suitable mechanism to offer sharing of technology, expertise and facilities on free of cost** wherever feasible or **at reasonable cost** basis to promote private companies.

The government will **allow utilising those infrastructures of ISRO which are otherwise not available elsewhere** in India.
  - **Permit establishment of facilities**, within ISRO premises, based on safety norms and feasibility assessment.
- The decision of IN-SPACE shall be **final and binding on all stakeholders including ISRO** and private players will not be required to seek separate permission from ISRO.

**Source: PIB**

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