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Centre's Power for Land Acquisition for Highway: SC

Why in News

Recently, the **Supreme Court (SC)** has upheld notifications issued under the **National Highways Act, 1956**, for acquisition of land for construction of the **Chennai-Krishnagiri-Salem national highway**.

The verdict came on a batch of appeals filed by the Centre and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and few landowners and others. These **pleas were filed against the Madras High Court's judgement**, holding as “**illegal and bad in law**” the notifications issued.

Key Points

- **Chennai-Krishnagiri-Salem National Highway:**
 - It is a **part of the first phase of the 'Bharatmala Pariyojna' project**. **Bharatmala Pariyojna Project** stretches across 24,800 km and has an estimated outlay of Rs. 5.35 lakh crore. It seeks to **improve the efficiency of freight and passenger movement** across the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps.
 - It is a **277.3-km-long eight-lane greenfield project** which aims to **cut travel time** between the two cities Chennai and Salem by half to about two hours and 15 minutes.

A **greenfield project** is one which is not constrained by prior work. It is **constructed on unused land** where there is no need to remodel or demolish an existing structure.
 - The Project **has faced opposition** from locals, including farmers, over **fears of losing their land**, besides environmentalists, who are **against felling of trees**. **It runs through reserve forest and water bodies**.
- **Supreme Court's Judgement:**

- **Centre's Powers:**
 - There is **nothing in the Constitution which constricts the power of Parliament** to make a law for declaring any stretch/section within the State (not being a road or an existing highway) to be a national highway.
 - Provisions in the Constitution unambiguously indicate that the **legislative as well as executive power** regarding all matters concerning and connected with a highway to be designated as a national highway, **vests in Parliament**, and the laws to be made by it in that regard.
 - The **Central government is free** to construct/build a new national highway keeping in mind the obligations it has to discharge under **Part IV of the Constitution** (Directive Principles of State Policy) for securing a social order and promotion of welfare of the people in the concerned region.
- **Importance of National Highways:**
 - National highways are the **arteries of India's economy**. By its very nomenclature, a national highway is to **link the entire country and provide access to all** in every remote corner of the country for interaction and to promote commerce and trade, employment and education, including health related services.

This approach **enhances and furthers the federal structure**.
 - The availability of a highway in any part of the State paves way for **sustainable development** and for overall enhancement of **human well-being**.

- **Other Aspects Related to the Project:**

- **The Madras High Court had been wrong to quash the acquisition proceedings** on the ground that **no prior environmental clearance** was taken.
 - The SC said that the **notification is only an expression of interest to acquire the designated land**, and no prior environmental clearance was needed before issuing it.
 - **Prior environmental clearance** under the **Environment (Protection) Act** and Rules of 1986 is **required to be taken before commencement of the “actual construction or building work” of the national highway** by the executing agency (NHAI).
- On complaints about “alterations” in the highway route, the court said **changes to the extent of 15% was permissible in a project of such a macro scale.**

Unforeseen concerns like land availability factors related to congestion, reduction of distance, operational efficiency attract such alteration.

National Highways

- The **major roads** in India are the **national and state highways**. **National Highways (NH)** are built, financed and maintained by the **Central government** whereas **State Highways (SH)** are developed by the **respective States’ public works department**.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - Highways declared by or under law made by Parliament to be national highways - **Union List under Seventh Schedule**.
 - **Article 257 (2):** The **executive power of the Union** shall also extend to the giving of directions to a State as to the construction and maintenance of means of communication declared in the direction to be of national or military importance.

Provided that nothing in this clause shall be taken as restricting the **power of Parliament to declare highways or waterways to be national highways or national waterways** or the power of the Union with respect to the highways or waterways so declared.

- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** is primarily responsible for development and maintenance of NHs.
The Ministry has taken up detailed review of NHs network with a view to develop the road connectivity to **Border areas**, development of **Coastal roads** including road connectivity for Non-Major ports, improvement in the efficiency of **National Corridors**, development of **Economic Corridors**, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes along with integration with **Sagarmala**, etc., under **Bharatmala Pariyojana**.
- NHs in the country **are notified under the National Highways Act, 1956**.
- **National Highways Authority of India** (NHAI) was set up by an act of the Parliament, **NHAI Act, 1988**, for the development, maintenance and management of national highways and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- **Land for development of National Highways** and associated purposes is acquired under **Section 3 of the NHs Act, 1956** and **compensation** is determined in accordance with the First Schedule of the **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RFCTLARR) Act, 2013**.
- **BhoomiRashi portal** was launched in **2018**, to fully **digitize and automate the entire process of land acquisition**.
- The aim of the **Green Highways (Plantation, Transplantation, Beautification & Maintenance) Policy, 2015** is to **promote greening of Highway corridors** with participation of the community, farmers, private sector, NGOs, and government institutions.

Source: IE

Countries of Particular Concern: US

Why in News

Recently, the **US State Department** has designated **Pakistan and China** among eight other countries that are of **particular concern for violation of religious freedom**.

Earlier, the **US State Department** had released its annual **International Religious Freedom (IRF) Report in 2019**, which is a survey of the state of religious freedom across the world.

Key Points

- **Country of Particular Concern (CPC):**
 - Designation of the CPC is the top tier recommendation by the **US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)** when it comes to violation of **international religious freedom**. It is **followed by Special Watch List Countries for severe violations**.
 - This is in line with the **International Religious Freedom Act of 1998** which was passed to promote religious freedom as a foreign policy of the United States.
 - The Act aims to **promote greater religious freedom** in countries which engage in or tolerate violations of religious freedom, and to advocate on the behalf of individuals persecuted for their religious beliefs and activities in foreign countries.
 - **Nations on the CPC list** for engaging in or tolerating **systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom** are Pakistan, China, Myanmar, Eritrea, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. **Nigeria** is the **first secular democracy** that has been named a **CPC**.
 - Notably, the State Department **did not accept the USCIRF recommendation** that **India, Russia, Syria and Vietnam be also designated as CPCs**.
 - Earlier, the **US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF report)** had downgraded India's religious freedom to the lowest grade in the '**Country of Particular Concern (CPC)**' category.
 - **India's Stand:**

The Indian government had **rejected the report** by asserting that there is **no locus standi for a foreign government** to comment on the state of its **citizens' constitutionally protected rights**.
- **Special Watch List:** Governments that have engaged in or tolerated "**severe violations of religious freedom**" are included in this list.
 - **Comoros, Cuba, Nicaragua and Russia** are on the list.
 - **Sudan and Uzbekistan** have been **removed from the list** based on significant, concrete progress undertaken by their respective governments over the past year.
- **Entities of Particular Concern:** This list includes **al-Qaida, Boko Haram** (based in Nigeria), **the Houthis** (of Yemen), **ISIS** (Islamic State), ISIS-Greater Sahara, ISIS-West Africa, and the **Taliban**, etc.

Freedom of Religion in India

- Freedom of religion in India is a **fundamental right guaranteed by Article 25-28 of the Constitution of India.**
 - **Article 25** (Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion).
 - **Article 26** (Freedom to manage religious affairs).
 - **Article 27** (Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion).
 - **Article 28** (Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions)
- Further **Article 29 and 30** of the Constitution deal with the **protection of interest of minorities.**

Source:IE

SAARC Charter Day

Why in News

In a message to the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** on its **36th Charter Day** anniversary, the Prime Minister said that SAARC can only be fully effective in the absence of “terror and violence”.

SAARC Charter Day is **observed annually on 8th December.** This day marks the **signing of the SAARC Charter in 1985** by the leaders of SAARC Countries at the **First SAARC Summit** held in **Dhaka (Bangladesh).**

Key Points

- **India's Stand:**

- The full potential of SAARC can only be realised in an atmosphere free of terror and violence.
 - This indicates that **India's concerns over cross-border terrorism from Pakistan remain a primary obstacle** in India's participation in the summit.
 - In their messages, both Pakistan and Nepal called for the SAARC summit to be held soon.
- India also called for SAARC countries to **“recommit to defeating the forces that support and nurture terrorism.”**
- India is also **committed to** an “integrated, connected, secure and prosperous South Asia”, and will support the economic, technological, cultural and social development of the region.
- Highlighting the importance of **greater collaboration**, India referred to the **example of the early coordination between SAARC countries for dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.**

An **emergency Covid-19 fund** was created with an initial contribution of USD 10 million from India.

- **Stalled SAARC Process:**

- SAARC's functioning and activities have virtually stalled **because of the strained relations between India and Pakistan.**
- Besides **a virtual meeting in March** on the Covid-19 situation, SAARC **hasn't had any significant engagements since India pulled out of the summit** that was to be held in Pakistan in 2016 in the aftermath of the Uri terror attack.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

- **Eight Member States:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- **Secretariat:** Kathmandu (Nepal).
- **Objective:** To promote the welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life, and to accelerate economic growth, among other things.
- **SAARC Summits:**
 - These are **usually held biennially** and **hosted by** member states in **alphabetical order.**
 - The **last SAARC Summit in 2014** was held in Kathmandu (Nepal), which was attended by India.



Maldives



Nepal



Pakistan



Sri Lanka



Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Bhutan



India

Way Forward

- SAARC Charter reflects the region’s “shared vision, collective resolve and mutual pursuit to promote peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia through eradication of poverty, accelerated economic growth and advancement in socio-cultural development”.
- There is a need for greater regional cooperation today than ever before. To collectively emerge from the pandemic, the situation underlines the importance of more concerted efforts, collaboration and cooperation among the member states of SAARC.

Source: TH

India Switzerland Relations

Why in News

A **virtual meeting took place** recently between an Indian Minister and his Swiss Counterpart.

Key Points

- **Trade:**

- Both the Ministers reiterated the desire to move forward on the **India-EFTA Trade & Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) negotiations.**
 - The **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)** is the intergovernmental organisation of **Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.**
 - These countries are **not part of the European Union (EU)** with which India is negotiating a separate trade agreement called the **India-EU Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement.**
- The proposed agreement covers trade in **goods and services, investments, trade facilitation, customs cooperation, protection of intellectual property and public procurement.**
- India-Switzerland **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)** which is under negotiation was also discussed.
 - BITs are treaties between two countries aimed at protecting investments made by investors of both countries.

- **Multilateral Forums:**

The Indian Minister sought support of Switzerland for the **joint proposal of India and South Africa in World Trade Organization (WTO) for TRIPS waiver.**

South Africa and India have called for the (WTO) to **suspend intellectual property (IP) rights** related to Covid-19 to ensure equitable sharing of vaccines and new technology to control the pandemic.

A temporary ban would allow multiple actors to start production, instead of having manufacturing concentrated in the hands of a **small number of patent holders.**

India Switzerland Relations



- **Background:**

India and Switzerland have had cordial and friendly relations since India's Independence, based on **shared values of democracy and rule of law**. A Treaty of Friendship between India and Switzerland was signed at New Delhi in 1948.

- **Economic Relation:**

- **Trade:**

As per EXIM Bank, Switzerland was the **11th largest trading partner** for India in 2018-19.

- **Investment:**

Switzerland invested FDI equity worth approximately USD 4.781 billion in India from April 2000 to September 2019 thus becoming the **12th largest investor and accounting for about 1.07% of total FDI** in India during this period

- **Science and Technology:**

During the visit of Swiss President to India in 2003, an **inter-Governmental framework Agreement on Technical and Scientific Cooperation** was signed under which an **Indo-Swiss Joint Research Programme (ISJRP)** was launched in 2005.

- **Skill Training:**

Several Institutes from both the countries have **collaborated** to impart the highest standards of skill training in India. **E.g.:**

- Bharatiya Skill Development Campus and University.
- Indo-Swiss Centre of Excellence, Pune.
- Vocational Training Center, Andhra Pradesh.

Source:PIB

Medicine Supplies and Make in India

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Railways** has written to the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade** (DPIIT) seeking **exemption for procuring certain medical items** manufactured outside India, particularly medicines used in the treatment of **Covid-19**, **cancer**, etc.

DPIIT is a **central government department** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

Key Points

- **Background:**

- In **August 2020**, Northern Railway formally wrote to the Railway Board, expressing **difficulty in procuring drugs and surgical items in the light of the Make in India policy.**

Indian Railways is **one of the largest employers in the country** with over 12 lakh employees and **has its own network of healthcare infrastructure**, including super speciality hospitals in all Zonal Headquarters.

- It highlighted that certain **drugs used in cancer treatment** and the **supplies of antiviral medicines and the vaccines for Covid-19** are manufactured outside India but available in the Indian market through agents or dealers, who **may not fall under the Class-I or Class-II categories**, which is required for purchases under the new Make in India guidelines.
 - The revised **Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India), Order 2017** introduced a concept of Class-I, II and non-local suppliers, based on which they will get preference in government purchases of goods and services.
 - In **June 2020**, the **government modified public procurement norms** to give **maximum preference to companies whose goods and services have 50% or more local content**, a move aimed at promoting 'Make in India' and making the country self-reliant.

- **Issue:**
 - In the existing **Make in India policy**, there is no window available to procure such items from the suppliers who may not meet the **Local Content Criteria required for Class-I and Class-II Local Supplier category**.
 - **Class-I** is a local supplier or service provider whose goods, services or works offered for procurement have **local content equal to or more than 50%**.
 - **Class-II** is a supplier or service provider whose goods, services or works offered for procurement have a **local content of more than 20% but less than 50%**.
 - **Only these two categories of suppliers shall be eligible to bid in the procurement** of all goods, services or works and with an estimated value of purchases of **less than Rs. 200 crores**.
 - It is therefore **proposed to seek an exemption to procure** such medicines and medical items **from Indian Market from ‘non-local suppliers’** (suppliers who supply **local content of less than 20%**).
 - However, the DPIIT informed that **procurement of imported items through Indian agents/traders amounted to an indirect violation of the General Finance Rules, 2017** and hence, it was **not recommended and advised to get specific relaxation** for procurement of such medicines/medical equipment.
 - **Rule 161 (iv) of GFR 2017** was amended by the **Department of Expenditure** in May 2020 order to **restrict global tender enquiry for contracts worth more than Rs. 200 crore**.
 - This was intended to enable floating of local tenders by procuring entities of the government to benefit local entities.
 - The purpose of seeking relaxation was to **achieve indigenisation of the items** that are **presently not being manufactured in the country** and the **objective is defeated** in case the subject relaxation is granted.
- The DPIIT has forwarded the issue to the **Department of Pharmaceuticals and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, which are the **nodal agencies for Pharmaceuticals, Medical Devices and Equipment**.
- The Ministry of Railways was **advised to exercise the powers conferred under Para 14 of the Make in India policy guidelines** with the approval of the Minister-in-charge to **seek relaxation in any particular procurement**, if required.

Para 14 empowers Ministries and various Departments to **grant an exemption and to reduce minimum local content**.

Source: TH

Lakshadweep Declared an Organic Union Territory

Why in News

Entire Lakshadweep group of islands has been declared as an **organic agricultural area** under the **Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) of India**.

Participatory Guarantee System

- PGS is a process of **certifying organic products**, which ensures that their production takes place in accordance with **laid-down quality standards**.
The certification is in the form of a **documented logo or a statement**.
- It is implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare**.
- It is **only for farmers or communities** that can **organise and perform as a group within a village or a cluster of contiguous villages**, and is applicable only to farm activities such as crop production, processing, and livestock rearing, and off-farm processing “by PGS farmers of their direct products”.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - Lakshadweep is the **first Union Territory** to become **100%** organic as all farming is carried out **without the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, providing access to safer food choices** and making agriculture a more environmentally-friendly activity.
Earlier in 2016, **Sikkim** became India's first “**100 percent organic**” State.
 - The entire 32 square kilometre geographical land area of the UT was declared as organic after receiving required certifications and declarations under Centre's **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (organic farming improvement programme)**.
- **Background:**

Earlier, the UT administration had imposed a formal **uniform ban on sale, use and entry of synthetic chemicals for agriculture purposes** from October 2017 onwards to make the islands a **chemical-free zone**.

- **Benefits:**
 - Better marketing of **organic products** such as desiccated coconut and coconut milk.
 - The organic tag will allow farmers to realize a premium for the farm produce.
 - The island's coconut farmers are also expected to benefit from the Union government's '**One District One Product**' programme of food processing. Under it the entire island is being considered as a **single district** and coconut oil has been identified as the **product**.
- **Cropping Pattern:**

Coconut is the **only major crop** on the islands and remains **idle for six months**.

 - The coconut processing industry works only for about six months. The period between **May and December sees the industry come to a standstill**.
 - The island administration plans to **introduce dryers and other machinery to utilise the nuts** even during this standstill period.

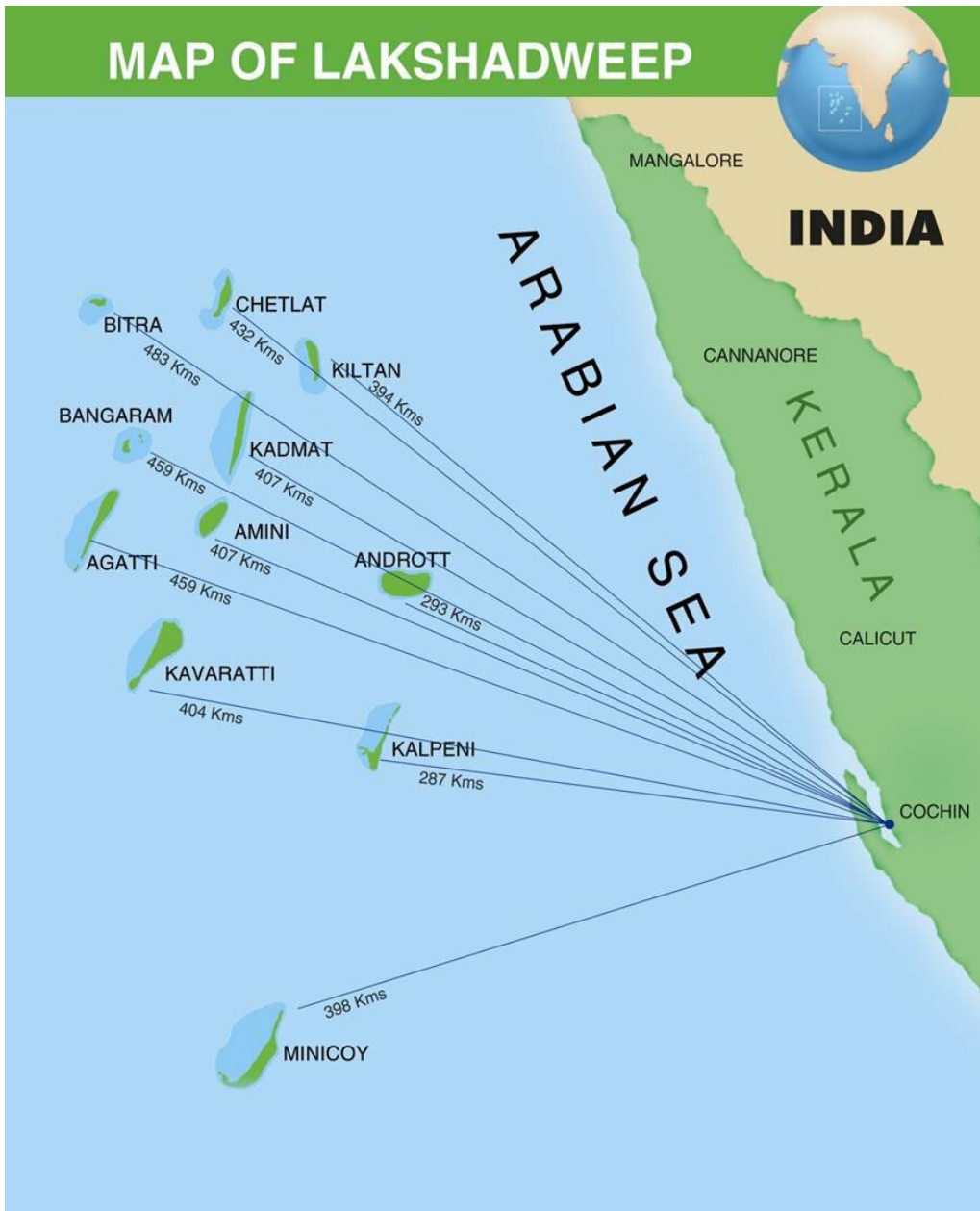
Organic Farming

- According to FSSAI, '**organic farming**' is a **system of farm design** and management to create an ecosystem of agriculture production **without the use of synthetic external inputs such as chemical fertilisers, pesticides and synthetic hormones or genetically modified organisms**.

- **Various Government Initiatives to promote Organic Farming:**
 - **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY):**
The scheme promotes cluster based organic farming with certification. Cluster formation, training, certification and marketing are supported under the scheme.
 - **Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER):**
The scheme promotes **3rd party certified organic farming** of niche crops of the north east region **through Farmers Producer organizations (FPOs)** with focus on exports.
 - **Capital investment Subsidy Scheme (CISS) under Soil Health Management Scheme:**
100% assistance is provided to State Government/Government agencies for setting up of mechanized fruit/vegetable market waste/agro waste compost production unit.
 - **National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP):**
Financial assistance@ 50% subsidy to the tune of Rs. 300/ha is being provided for different components including **bio-fertilizers**.
 - **National Food Security Mission (NFSM):**
Financial assistance is provided **for promotion of Bio-Fertilizer**.

Lakshadweep

- India's **smallest Union Territory**, Lakshadweep is an archipelago consisting of **36 islands with an area of 32 sq km**.
- **There are three main group of islands:**
 - Amindivi Islands
 - Laccadive Islands
 - Minicoy Island.
 - Amindivi Islands are the northernmost while the Minicoy island is the southernmost.
- All are tiny islands of **coral origin (Atoll)** and are surrounded by fringing reefs. The Capital is **Kavaratti** and it is also the principal town of the UT.



Source:TH

Emergency Use Approval: Covid-19 Vaccines

Why in News

Recently, three vaccine developers have made applications to the **Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)**, seeking **emergency use approval** for their candidate **Covid-19 vaccines**.

The vaccine for which the developers are seeking approval are still **under trial**.

Key Points

- **Candidates for Covid-19 vaccines:**
 - **COVISHIELD:** By a Pune-based Serum Institute of India.
Phase-III trials going on.
 - **COVAXIN:** By Bharat Biotech, a Hyderabad-based company.
Phase-III trials going on.
 - **BNT162b2:** By US pharmaceutical major Pfizer in collaboration with BioNTech.
No trials in India so far.
- **Regulatory Provisions for Approval of Vaccines in India:**
Clinical trials of new drugs and vaccines, and their approvals, are governed by the **Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019**.
- **Emergency Provisions:**
 - There is nothing such as **emergency use approval** in Indian rules, however the **2019 rules** provide for “**Accelerated Approval Process**” in several situations that would include the one like the current **pandemic**.
 - In such situations, there is a **provision** for granting approval to a drug that is still in **clinical trials** provided the product is of **meaningful therapeutic benefit**.
 - **Accelerated approval** may also be granted to a new drug if it is intended for the treatment of a **serious, or life-threatening condition, or disease of special relevance to the country, and addresses unmet medical needs**.
 - A new drug, or a vaccine, can be considered for approval if **remarkable effectiveness** is reported even from **phase-II trials**.
 - In such cases, **additional post licensure studies** may be required.
 - The approval granted to drugs or vaccines that are still in **clinical trials** is temporary, and valid only for **one year**.

Clinical Trial

- A clinical trial is **a systematic study to generate data for discovering or verifying the clinical and pharmacological profile** (including pharmacodynamic and pharmacokinetic) or **adverse effects** of a new drug on humans.

- **Phases of Clinical Trials:**

- Clinical trials are carried out in **four phases**.
- **Phase I or clinical pharmacology trials or “first in man” study:** This is the first time where the new drug is administered to a small number, a minimum of **2 healthy, informed volunteers** for each dose under the close supervision of a doctor.
 - The purpose is to determine **whether the new compound is tolerated by the patient's body and behaves in the predicted way.**
- **Phase II or exploratory trials:** During this phase, the medicine is administered to a group of approximately **10-12 informed patients in 3 to 4 centers to determine its effect and also to check for any unacceptable side effects.**
- **Phase III or confirmatory trials:** Purpose is to **obtain sufficient evidence about the efficacy and safety of the drug in a larger number of patients**, generally in comparison with a standard drug and/or a placebo as appropriate. In this phase, the group is between **1000-3000 subjects**.
- **Phase IV trials or post-marketing phase:** Phase of surveillance after the medicine is made available to doctors, who start prescribing it. The effects are monitored on thousands of patients to help identify any unforeseen side effects.
- **Regulatory Mechanism in India:**
 - Clinical trials in India are governed by the **following acts: Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, Medical Council of India Act, 1956 and Central Council for Indian Medicine Act, 1970.**
 - Prerequisites of conducting a clinical trial in India are:
 - Permission from the **Drugs Controller General, India (DCGI).**
 - Approval from the respective **Ethics Committee** where the study is planned.
 - Mandatory registration on the **The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** maintained website.

Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)

- **CDSCO** is under Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the **National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of India.**
- The **Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940** and **Rules 1945** have entrusted various responsibilities to central & state regulators for regulation of drugs & cosmetics.
- Under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act**, **CDSCO** is responsible for approval of Drugs, **Conduct of Clinical Trials.**

- Further CDSCO along with state regulators, is jointly **responsible for grant of licenses of certain specialized categories of critical Drugs such as blood and blood products, I. V. Fluids, Vaccine etc.**

Source:IE

New Height for Mount Everest

Why in News

Nepal and China have announced the **revised height of Mount Everest as 8,848.86 metres**. The new height is **86 cm more** than the previous measurement.

Key Points

- The new height of **8,848.86 meters** replaced the long-associated **8,848 metre-height**, which was, as per a measurement carried out by the **Survey of India in 1954**.
- The common declaration meant that the **two countries have shed their long-standing difference** in opinion about the mountain's height — 8,844 m claimed by China and 8,847 m by Nepal.
Resolving the **three-metre difference**, attributed to China calculating the **“rock height” underneath the snow** and **Nepal using the “snow height” which included the snowcap**, was the aim of a joint project.
- Everest is also known as **Sagarmatha** in **Nepal** and **Mount Qomolangma** in **China**.
- The mountain lies on the border between **Nepal and Tibet** and the summit can be accessed from both sides.

- **Related Information:**

- It gets its English name from **Sir George Everest**, a colonial-era geographer who served as the **Surveyor General of India** in the mid-19th century.
- It **was first scaled in 1953** by the Indian-Nepalese **Tenzing Norgay** and New Zealander **Edmund Hillary**.
- **First Survey of Everest:**
 - The first effort was carried out in **1847** by a team led by **Andrew Waugh, Surveyor General of India**.

The survey was based on trigonometric calculations and is known as the **Great Trigonometric Survey of India**.
 - The team discovered that '**Peak 15**' (as Mount Everest was referred to then) was the highest mountain, contrary to the then-prevailing belief that **Mount Kanchenjunga** (8,582 m and the 3rd highest peak in the world now) was the highest peak in the world.

Mount K2, at **8,611 metres** above sea level, is the **second highest mountain** in the world.

Source:TH
