



News Analysis (23 Aug, 2021)

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Ubharte Sitaare Alternative Investment Fund

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Finance** has launched '**Ubharte Sitaare**' **Alternative Investment Fund** to facilitate debt and equity funding to **export-oriented MSMEs** (Micro Small and medium Enterprises).

The fund is **expected to identify Indian enterprises with potential advantages**, but **which are currently underperforming** or unable to tap their latent potential to grow.

Alternative Investment Fund

- Anything alternative to traditional forms of investments **gets categorized as alternative investments**.
- In India, AIFs are defined in **Regulation 2(1)(b) of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Alternative Investment Funds) Regulations, 2012**.
- It refers to **any privately pooled investment fund, (whether from Indian or foreign sources), in the form of a trust or a company or a body corporate or a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)**, which are not presently covered by any Regulation of SEBI governing fund management nor coming under the direct regulation of any other sectoral regulators in India.
- Thus, the definition of AIFs includes venture **Capital Fund, hedge funds, private equity funds, commodity funds, Debt Funds, infrastructure funds, etc.**

Key Points

- **About:**

- Under the scheme, an identified company is supported **even if it is currently underperforming or may be unable to tap its latent potential to grow.**
- The scheme diagnoses such challenges and provides support through **a mix of structured support covering equity, debt and technical assistance.** It will also have a **Greenshoe Option of Rs 250 crore.**

A **greenshoe option** is an **over-allotment option**, which is a term that is commonly used to describe a special arrangement in a share offering for example an **IPO (Initial Public Offering)** that will enable the investment bank to support the share price after the offering **without putting their own capital at risk.**

- The fund has been set up jointly by **Exim Bank and SIDBI** (Small Industries Development Bank of India) which will invest in the fund by way of equity and equity-like products in export-oriented units, in both manufacturing and services sectors.

- **Criteria for Selecting Companies:**

- **Unique value:**

Companies will be selected for support based on their **unique value proposition in technology, products or processes that match global requirements;**

- **Financial Strength:**

Fundamentally strong companies **with acceptable financials, and outward orientation; small and mid-sized companies with ability to penetrate global markets,** with an annual turnover of up to approx. Rs 500 crore.

- **Business Model:**

Companies with **a good business model, strong management capabilities, and focus on product quality.**

- **Support:**

Eligible companies can be supported by both **financial and advisory** services by way of **equity**/equity-like instruments, term loans for modernisation, **technology** or capacity **upgradation;** and technical assistance for product adaptation, market development activities and viability studies.

- **Objectives:**
 - To enhance India's competitiveness in **select sectors through finance and extensive handholding support.**
 - Identify and nurture companies having **differentiated technology, products or processes**, and enhance their export business; assist units with export potential, which are unable to scale up their operations for want of finance.
 - Identify and mitigate challenges faced by **successful companies which hinder their exports.**
 - Assist existing exporters in **widening their basket of products and target new markets** through a strategic and structured export market development initiative.

Other Initiatives to Promote MSME Sector

- **Prime Minister's Employment Generation programme (PMEGP):**
It is a **credit linked subsidy scheme, for setting up of new micro-enterprises** and to generate employment opportunities in rural as well as urban areas of the country.
- **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI):**
It aims to properly organize the artisans and the traditional industries into clusters and thus provide financial assistance to make them competitive in today's market scenario.
- **A Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry & Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE):**
The scheme promotes innovation & rural entrepreneurship through rural **Livelihood Business Incubator (LBI), Technology Business Incubator (TBI)** and Fund of Funds for start-up creation in the agro-based industry.
- **Interest Subvention Scheme for Incremental Credit to MSMEs:**
It was introduced by the **Reserve Bank of India** wherein relief is provided upto 2% of interest to all the legal MSMEs on their outstanding fresh/incremental term loan/working capital during the period of its validity.
- **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises:**
Launched to facilitate easy flow of credit, guarantee cover is provided for collateral free credit extended to MSMEs.
- **Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP):**
It aims to enhance the productivity and competitiveness as well as capacity building of MSEs.
- **Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Upgradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS):**
CLCSS aims at **facilitating technology upgradation** of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) by providing 15% capital subsidy for purchase of plant & machinery.

- **CHAMPIONS portal:**

It aims **to assist Indian MSMEs march into the big league as National and Global CHAMPIONS** by solving their grievances and encouraging, supporting, helping and hand holding them.

Source: TH

Jan Shikshan Sansthan

Why in News

Recently, the **Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)** has brought **high-speed internet** to some of the remotest tribal hamlets deep inside the Nilambur jungle in Kerala.

Key Points

- **About:**

- The Scheme of JSS formerly known as Shramik Vidyapeeth was a unique creation of the Government of India and has been implemented through **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)** in the country since 1967.
 - The scheme was **renamed as JSS in 2000.**
- It was **transferred from the Ministry of Education** (erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development) **to the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship in July, 2018.**
- The JSSs are **imparting vocational skill training programmes at the door step** of the beneficiaries with a minimum cost and infrastructure.
- JSSs are unique in the sense that they do not provide only vocational skills but **also include an element of life skills which can help the beneficiary in day to day life.**
- They are not working in isolation but also conduct **convergence programmes with different departments.**
 - At present, **233 JSSs in 25 States and 3 Union Territories are functional.**
 - The **annual coverage of the beneficiaries is around 4 lakh**, out of which **85% are women.**

- **Mandate:**

- To **provide vocational skills in non-formal mode** to non-literate, neo-literates, persons with rudimentary level of education upto 8th and school drop-outs upto 12th standard in the **age group of 15-45 years.**
- The **priority groups are women, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, minorities** and other **backward sections of the society.**

- **Implementation:**
 - It is implemented through NGOs with **100% grants from the Government of India**. JSSs are registered under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
 - The affairs of Jan Shikshan Sansthan are managed by the **respective Board of Management approved by the Government of India**.
- **Scope of Work of JSS:**
 - Develop/Source **appropriate curriculum and training modules** covering vocational elements, general awareness and life enrichment components.
 - JSSs are encouraged to **undertake training equivalent to courses** designed by the Directorate of Adult Education, National Institute of Open Schooling and Director General, Employment & Training.
 - **Provide training to a pool of resource persons and master trainers** for conducting training.
 - Administer **simple tests and award certificates**.
 - **Network with employers and industries** for trainees to get suitable placement.

Source: TH

Linguistic Culture of Indus Valley

Why in News

A new research paper has provided some new insight on the **linguistic culture of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)**.

- Earlier, a study found that the **diet of the people of IVC had a dominance of meat**, including extensive eating of beef.
- In July 2021, **UNESCO** announced the Harappan city of **Dholavira in Gujarat as India's 40th world heritage site**.

Key Points

- **IVC & Dravidian Language:**

- IVCs have their language roots in **Proto-Dravidian**, which is the ancestral language of all the modern Dravidian languages.

The **basic vocabulary items of a significant population of the IVC** must have been proto-Dravidian, or that ancestral Dravidian languages must have been spoken in the Indus Valley region.

- The speakers of **ancestral Dravidian languages had a greater historic presence in northern India** including the Indus Valley region from where they migrated.
- Proto-Dravidian was **one among several languages** being spoken in the Indus Valley region.

The research claims that there were **more than one or one group of languages spoken** across the one-million square kilometre area of IVC.

- **IVC & Other Civilizations:**

- Few words in **Akkadian (language spoken in ancient Mesopotamia)** had roots in the Indus Valley.

- The study took into account the thriving **trade relations between the IVC and the Persian Gulf as well as Mesopotamia.**

- **Mesopotamian civilizations** formed on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in what is today Iraq and Kuwait.

- **Elephant-ivory was one of the luxury goods coveted in the Near East, and archaeological**, and zoological evidence confirms that Indus Valley was the sole supplier of ancient Near East's ivory in the middle-third to early-second millennium BC.

Near East, usually the lands around the eastern shores of the **Mediterranean Sea, including northeastern Africa, southwestern Asia, and, occasionally, the Balkan Peninsula.**

- Since people of ancient Persia had functioned as **intermediaries between Mesopotamia and IVC traders**, while exporting IVC's ivory, they had arguably **spread the Indic words to Mesopotamia as well.**

Indus Valley Civilisation

- **About:**

- Indus civilization, also called Indus valley civilization is the **earliest known urban culture of the Indian subcontinent.**

It is also called **Harappan Civilization** after the **first city to be excavated, Harappa (Punjab, Pakistan).**

- Among the **world's three earliest civilizations**—the other two are those of **Mesopotamia and Egypt**—the **Indus civilization was the most extensive.**

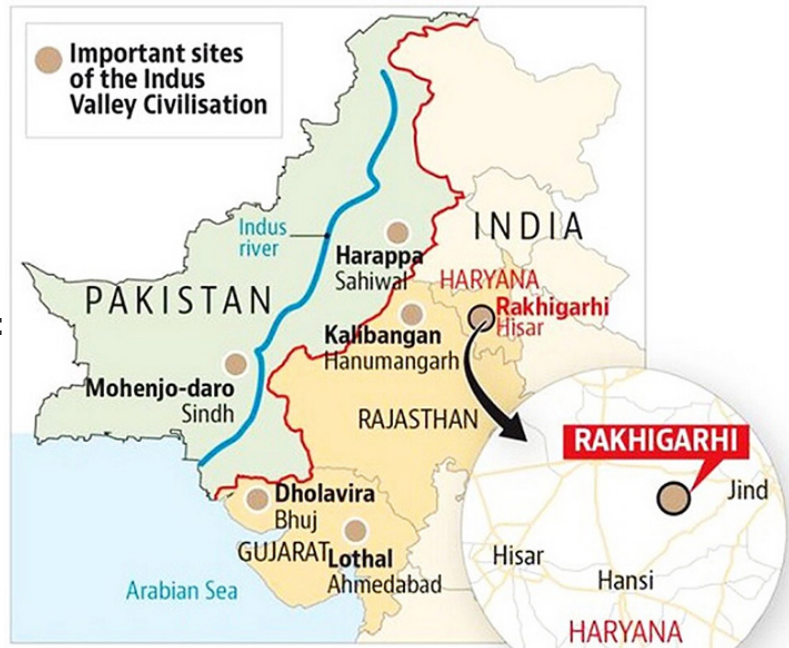
- **Time Period:**

It was **established** around **3300 BC**. It **flourished** between **2600 BC** and **1900 BC**. It started declining around 1900 BC and **disappeared** around **1400 BC**.

- **Geographical Extent:**

- Covered Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Western Uttar Pradesh.
- It extended from **Sutkagendor** (in Balochistan) in the West to **Alamgirpur** (Western UP) in the East; and from **Mandu** (Jammu) in the North to **Daimabad** (Ahmednagar, Maharashtra) in the South. Some Indus Valley sites have also been found as far away as Afghanistan.

- **Important Sites:**



- **Kalibangan** (Rajasthan), **Lothal**, **Dholavira**, **Rangpur**, **Surkotda** (Gujarat), **Banawali** (Haryana), **Ropar** (Punjab).
- **In Pakistan:** **Harappa** (on river Ravi), **Mohenjodaro** (on Indus River in Sindh), Chanhudaro (in Sindh).

- **Some Important Features:**

- The Indus Valley cities show a **level of sophistication and advancement** not seen in other contemporary civilizations.
- Most cities had similar patterns. There were two parts: a **citadel** and the **lower town** showing the presence of hierarchy in society.
- Most cities had a **Great Bath**.
- There were also **granaries**, 2-storied houses made of burnt bricks, closed drainage lines, excellent stormwater, and wastewater management system, weights for measurements, toys, pots, etc.
- A large number of seals have been discovered.

- **Agriculture:**

- The **first civilization to cultivate cotton**.
- Animals were **domesticated like sheep, goats, and pigs**.
- Crops were **wheat, barley, cotton, ragi, dates, and peas**.
- Trade was conducted with the Sumerians (Mesopotamia).

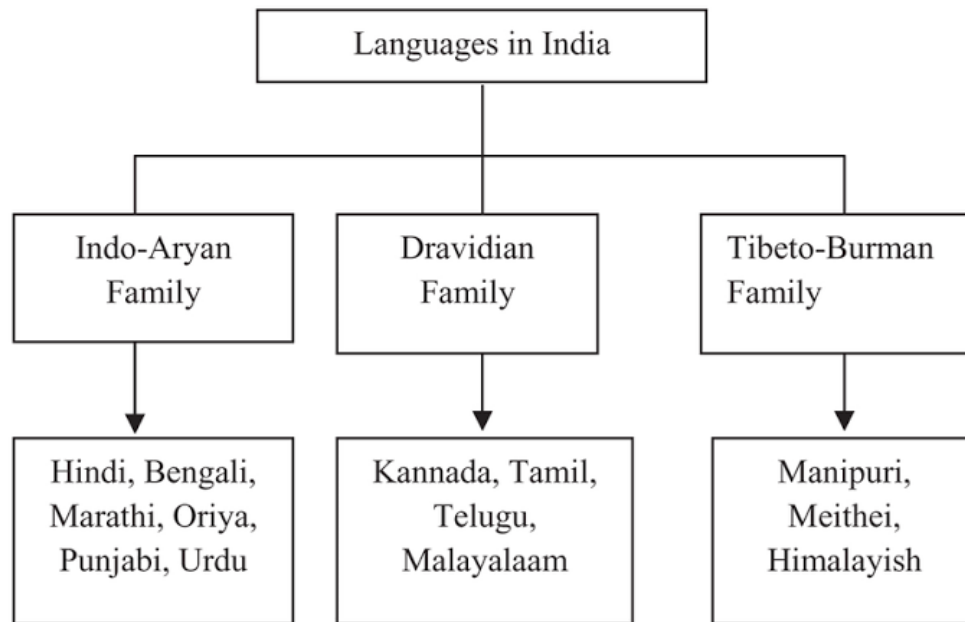
- **Metal Products :**
 - These were produced including those with **copper, bronze, tin, and lead. Gold and silver** were also known.
 - **Iron** was **not known** to them.
- **Religious Beliefs:**
 - No structures like temples or palaces have been found.
 - The people **worshipped male and female deities.**
 - A seal which was named '**Pashupati Seal**' has been excavated and it shows an image of a three-eyed figure.
- **Pottery:**
 - Excellent pieces of **red pottery designed in black** have been excavated.
 - Faience was used to make beads, bangles, earrings, and vessels.
- **Art Forms:**
 - A statuette named '**Dancing Girl**' has been found from Mohenjodaro and is believed to be 4000 years old.
 - A figure of a **bearded Priest-King** has also been found from Mohenjodaro.
- **Other Facts:**
 - **Lothal was a dockyard.**
 - Disposal of the dead was by burial in wooden coffins.
 - The Indus Valley script has not yet been deciphered.

Proto-Dravidian Language

It is the **linguistic reconstruction of the common ancestor of the Dravidian languages.** Proto-Dravidian **gave rise to 21 Dravidian Languages.**

Dravidian languages

- Dravidian languages, a family of some **70 languages spoken primarily in South Asia.** They are spoken by more than 215 million people in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
- The Dravidian languages with the most speakers are (in descending order of number of speakers) **Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam,** all of which have long literary traditions. Smaller literary languages are **Tulu and Kodava.**
- There are also a number of Dravidian-speaking **Scheduled Tribes,** such as the **Kurukh in Eastern India** and **Gondi in Central India.**
- Dravidian place names along the Arabian Sea coasts and Dravidian grammatical influence such as clusivity in the **Indo-Aryan languages,** namely, Marathi, Gujarati, Marwari, and Sindhi, suggest that **Dravidian languages were once spoken more widely across the Indian subcontinent.**



Source: IE

Geo-Tourism in Northeast

Why in News

Recently, the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** has **identified certain geological sites across the Northeast** for promotion of geo-tourism.

12 locations in the Northeast **have been included in the 32 approved geo-tourism or geo-heritage sites** in the country.

Key Points

- **Geo-heritage Sites:**
 - Geo-heritage refers to the **geological features** which are **inherently or culturally significant** offering insight to earth's evolution or history to earth science or that can be utilized for education.
 - **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** is the **parent body** which is making efforts towards identification and **protection of geo-heritage sites/national geological monuments** in the country.
 - **Some of these sites are:** Marine Gondwana fossil park in Chhattisgarh; Siwalik vertebrate fossil park in Himachal Pradesh; Stromatolite park in Rajasthan; Pillow lava in Karnataka, Eparchaeon unconformity and Tirumala hills in Andhra Pradesh, **Lonar Lake** in Maharashtra, etc.

- **Geo Tourism:**
 - Geotourism is defined as "tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place - its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents."
 - It will **foster community involvement, improve the local economy and create respect for local culture and tradition.**
 - India is a country with diverse physical attributes, rich cultural heritage and eventful ancient history and its subcontinent exhibits imprints of varied geological processes through ages and is a storehouse of interesting geological features.
- **Geo-heritage sites in Northeast:**
 - **Majuli (Assam):**
 - A river "island", among the world's largest, in **Brahmaputra river**.
 - The island is also the **hub of spiritualism in Assam** because of a number of 'satras' or **Vaishnav monasteries** established by the **15th-16th century saint-reformer Srimanta Sankaradeva** and his disciples.
 - **Sangetsar Tso (Arunachal Pradesh):**
 - It is popularly known as **Madhuri Lake**.
 - It is close to the border with Tibet and was formed due to the damming of a river during a major earthquake in 1950.
 - **Loktak Lake (Manipur):**
 - It is the **largest freshwater lake in the Northeast**.
 - The attractions of this lake are the 'phumdis' or **floating biomass** and the 'phumsangs' or huts of fishermen on them.
 - The **Keibul Lamjao National Park**, the **only floating wildlife habitat** on earth, is on the southwestern part of the lake and is the **last natural habitat of the sangai or brow-antlered dancing deer**.
 - **Others:**
Mawmluh Cave, Mawblei or God's Rock, Therriaghat (**Meghalaya**); Umananda (**Assam**), Chabimura, Unakoti (**Tripura**); Sangetsar Tso (**Arunachal Pradesh**); Reiek Tlang (**Mizoram**); Naga Hill Ophiolite (**Nagaland**); Stromatolite Park (**Sikkim**).
- **Related Global Concept:**
UNESCO Global Geoparks:
 - These are **single, unified geographical areas** where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.
 - While there are **169 UNESCO Global geoparks** spread across 44 countries, **India is yet to have one of its own.**

Geological Survey of India

- It was set up in **1851 primarily to find coal deposits for the Railways**. Presently, GSI is an attached office to the **Ministry of Mines**.

- The **main functions** of the GSI relate to creation and updation of national geo-scientific information and mineral resource assessment.
- It is **headquartered in Kolkata**.

Source: TH

Rise in Heat Waves

Why in News

According to a recent study, **more than 3,56,000 people died in 2019** as a result of extreme heat and that number is likely to grow in the future.

Recent heat waves across the world have been alarming in terms of **global warming** and have been **attributed to climate change**.

Key Points

- **Heat Waves:**
 - Heat wave is **a condition of air temperature which becomes fatal to the human body** when exposed.
 - **In India**, heat waves typically occur **between March and June**, and in some rare cases even extend till July.

A heat wave is **a period of abnormally high temperatures**, more than the normal maximum temperature that occurs during the summer season in the North-Western and South Central parts of India.
 - The **India Meteorological Department** requires that temperatures should reach at least 40°C in the plains and at least 30°C in the hilly regions, and should reflect an increase of at least 5°C-6°C above the normal temperature to be classified as a heatwave.

- **Impact of Heat Waves:**

- **Heat Strokes:** The very high temperatures or humid conditions pose an elevated risk of heat stroke or heat exhaustion.
Older people and people with chronic illness such as heart disease, respiratory disease, and diabetes are more susceptible to heatstroke, as the body's ability to regulate heat deteriorates with age.
- **Increased Healthcare Costs:** Effects from extreme heat are also associated with increased hospitalisations and emergency room visits, increased deaths from cardio-respiratory and other diseases, mental health issues, adverse pregnancy and birth outcomes, etc.
- **Lessens Workers' Productivity:** Extreme heat also lessens worker productivity, especially among the more than 1 billion workers who are exposed to high heat on a regular basis. These workers often report reduced work output due to heat stress.
- **Risk of Wildfires:** The heat domes act as fuel to wildfires, which destroys a lot of land area every year in countries like the US.
- **Prevents Cloud Formation:** The condition also prevents clouds from forming, **allowing for more radiation from the sun to hit the ground.**
- **Effect on Vegetation:** The trapping of heat can also damage crops, dry out vegetation and result in droughts.
- **Increased Energy Demands:** The sweltering heat wave also **leads to rise in energy demand**, especially electricity, leading to pushing up rates.
- **Power Related Issues:** Heat waves are often **high mortality disasters**.
 - Avoiding heat-related disasters depends on the resilience of the electrical grid, which can fail if electricity demand due to air conditioning use exceeds supply.
 - As a result, there is the **double risk of infrastructure failure and health impacts**.

- **Recommendations:**

- **Cooling Measures:**
 - Effective and environmentally sustainable cooling measures can protect from the worst health impacts of heat.
 - These range from increasing green space in cities, wall coatings that reflect heat from buildings, and widespread use of electric fans and other widely available personal cooling techniques.
- **Climate Change Mitigation:**
Climate change mitigation **to reduce carbon emissions** and alter the further warming of the planet can also help.
- **Effective Prevention Measures:**
Identifying timely and effective prevention and response measures, particularly for low-resource settings can help in mitigating the problem.

- **Initiatives Taken:**

- **Global:**

Global forums dealing with climate change issues—such as the **World Health Organization**, **World Economic Forum**, **First Global Forum on Heat and Health**, and **the Global Forum for Environment-OECD**—also focus on heat waves by investing in research on health risks of extreme heat, climate and weather information, advice on surviving heat waves, partnerships and capacity building, and communications and outreach.

- **Indian:**

The **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** has issued **guidelines** on dealing with heatwaves.

However, India **does not recognise heatwaves as a disaster** under its Disaster Management Act (2005).

Way Forward

In alignment with the **Paris Agreement**, the study calls for global warming to be limited to 1.5°C to avoid substantial heat-related mortality in the future. Reducing the health impacts of extreme heat is an urgent priority and should include immediate changes to infrastructure, urban environment, and individual behaviour to prevent heat-related deaths.

Source: IE

Moral Policing

Why in News

Recently, five teenagers were arrested by the police in connection to an attack on a 23-year-old man in Kerala. This attack is one of the **growing examples of moral policing** in India.

Key Points

- **Definition:** Moral Policing in its broadest sense could mean **a system where a strict vigil and restriction is imposed on those who violate the basic standards of our society.**
 - The basic standard of our society could be found in its cultures, age-old customs and religious doctrines.
 - It is a situation where the moral character of an individual is questioned by those who advocate this phenomenon.

- **Manifestations of Moral Policing:**

- **Mob Lynching: Lynching**, a form of violence in which a mob, under the pretext of **administering justice without trial**, executes a presumed offender, often after inflicting torture and corporal mutilation.
- **Cow Vigilantism:** Cow vigilantism or lynching in the name of **Cow Protection** poses a serious threat to the **secular fabric of the nation**.
Killing of people just on the suspicion of beef depicts the intolerance among the vigilantes.
- **Cultural terrorism:** Various extra constitutional actors like **Anti Romeo Squads** imposes their subjective belief through use of physical violence.
- **Honor Killing:** Honor killings are one of the extreme cases of moral policing which supposedly curtail western influences by encroaching on Individual freedom.
- **Affecting Fundamental Rights:** There are many times when moral policing hinders the basic fundamental rights of the citizen enshrined in the constitution such as the **right to freedom of speech & expression, right to privacy, right to live with dignity etc.**
For example, due to moral policing, the LGBT community faces extreme consequences and their basic right to life and liberty has been threatened.

- **Factors Promoting Moral Policing:**

- **Religious Values:** In a Hindu religion, cows are worshipped and they are seen as a symbol of life and thus they are revered and worshipped.

This sometimes leads to Cow vigilantism, which is perpetrated by the majority towards the minority on the presumption that the minorities are in regular consumption of bovine meat.
- **Social Networking Platform:** Platforms like Whatsapp' and Facebook act as a **catalyst towards moral policing**, as it can amplify the spread of **fake news**.

Fake news can lead to events like Lynching, Communal clashes, etc.
- **Patriarchy:** People with a patriarchal mindset views the security of women as their duty, for they are perceived as weaker sex and gullible.

Due to this, they would impose restrictions on women in terms of speech, attitude, clothing, public behaviour etc.
- **Overreach by Police:** Police is a public organisation that is **given extraordinary powers to use force**. This leaves Police sometimes overreaching their powers. For example:
 - Section 292 of the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** criminalized materials like books and paintings if it is deemed to be obscene. However, the term **obscenity has not been defined**.

However, the police personnel use Section 292 to file cases against film posters and advertisement hoardings that are deemed to be obscene. This **undermines artistic creativity and curtails the artists' freedom of expression**.
 - The **Immoral traffic (prevention) act (PITA)** was originally passed to prevent **human trafficking**.

However, it has been used by police to raid hotels if they suspect a sex racket being run there even without proper evidence, thus embarrassing legal couples and young people.

Way Forward

- **Reforming Criminal Justice System:** There is a need to carry out reforms in the criminal justice system, so that sensitivity and awareness about constitutional values can be imbibed in the administration.

Criminal justice system reforms broadly comprises three sets of reforms viz. **Judicial reforms, Prison reforms, Police reforms**.
- **Public Discussions:** Public discussion and debates should be promoted in schools and colleges to create awareness and sensitization towards different moral policing.

Source: TH

Polio

Why in News

Recently, India has decided to vaccinate Afghanistan returnees against **Polio** for free as a preventive measure against the **Wild Polio Virus**.

Afghanistan and **Pakistan** are the only two countries in the world where polio is still **Endemic**.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - Polio is a crippling and potentially **deadly viral infectious disease** that affects the nervous system.
 - There are three individual and immunologically **distinct wild poliovirus strains**:
 - **Wild Poliovirus type 1 (WPV1)**
 - **Wild Poliovirus type 2 (WPV2)**
 - **Wild Poliovirus type 3 (WPV3)**
 - Symptomatically, all three strains are identical, in that **they cause irreversible paralysis or even death**. However, there are **genetic and virological differences, which make these three strains separate viruses** which must each be eradicated individually.
- **Spread:**
 - The virus is transmitted by **person-to-person mainly through the faecal-oral route** or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (for example, through contaminated water or food).
 - It largely **affects children under 5 years of age**. The virus **multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis**.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Most people with polio do not feel sick. Some people have only minor symptoms, such as fever, tiredness, nausea, headache, pain in the arms and legs, etc.
 - In rare cases, polio infection **causes permanent loss of muscle function (paralysis)**.
 - Polio can be fatal **if the muscles used for breathing are paralysed or if there is an infection of the brain**.
- **Prevention and Cure:**

There is no cure, but it can be prevented through **Immunisation**.
- **Vaccines:**
 - **Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV)**: It is given orally as a birth dose for institutional deliveries, then primary three doses at 6, 10 and 14 weeks and one booster dose at 16-24 months of age.
 - **Injectable Polio Vaccine (IPV)**: It is introduced as an additional dose along with the 3rd dose of **DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus)** under the **Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)**.

- **Recent Outbreaks:**

In 2019, polio outbreaks were recorded in the **Philippines, Malaysia, Ghana, Myanmar, China, Cameroon, Indonesia and Iran**, which were mostly vaccine-derived in which a rare strain of the virus genetically mutated from the strain in the vaccine.

According to the **WHO (World Health Organisation)**, if the **oral vaccine-virus** is excreted and allowed to circulate in an unimmunised or under-immunised population for at least 12 months, it can **mutate to cause infections**.

- **India & Polio:**

India received **polio-free certification by the WHO in 2014**, after three years of zero cases.

- This achievement has been spurred by the successful **Pulse Polio Campaign** in which all children were administered polio drops.
- The last case due to wild poliovirus in the country was detected on 13th January 2011.

Polio Eradication Measures

- **Global:**

- **Global Polio Eradication Initiative:**

It was launched in 1988 by the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)**, by national governments and WHO. Presently, 80% of the world's population is now living in certified polio-free regions.

An estimated 1.5 million childhood deaths have been prevented, through the systemic administration of vitamin A during polio immunization activities.

- **World Polio Day:**

It is observed every year on **24th October** in order to call on countries to stay vigilant in their fight against the disease.

- **Indian:**

- **Pulse Polio Programme:**

- It was started with an objective of achieving hundred percent coverage under Oral Polio Vaccine.

- **Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0:**

- It was a nationwide immunisation drive to mark the 25 years of **Pulse polio programme** (2019-20).

- **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP):**

- It was launched in 1985 with the modification to ‘**Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI)**’.
 - The **objectives of the Programme include:** Rapidly increasing immunization coverage, Improving the quality of services, Establishing a reliable cold chain system to the health facility level, Introducing a district-wise system for monitoring of performance, Achieving self-sufficiency in vaccine production.

Source: IE

Hindustan-228 Civil Aircraft

Why in News

Recently, **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** carried out a successful ground run and low speed taxi trials of a commercial aircraft “**Hindustan-228**” (Do-228).

- HAL is building civil aircrafts **to promote the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) Scheme**. The central government aims to set up 1,000 new air routes and establish 100 new airports, under the UDAN scheme.
- HAL is a **public sector aircraft manufacturing company**. It has also produced the **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)** for the Indian Air Force (IAF).



Key Points

- **About Hindustan-228 (Do-228):**

- The 19-seater Do-228 is the **first major attempt in India to develop a small civil transport aircraft** after the 14-seater Saras Aircraft development program at the National Aeronautics Laboratory (NAL) was shelved in 2009 on account of multiple problems in its development.

However, the NAL has been pitching **SARAS Mk-2** (19-seater aircraft) for the government's UDAN, since it has the capacity to operate in "ill-equipped", "semi-prepared" and "unpaved airstrips".

- It is **built on the existing frame of the German Dornier 228 defence transport aircraft** used by the defence forces.
- Two civil Do-228 produced by HAL for launch under UDAN scheme have a maximum take off weight of 6200 kgs.
- It is **equipped with a digital cockpit** which will ensure more accurate readings, precise information and required data displays with feedback loops and capability for self-check to alert pilots in emergencies.
- It is conceived to be a **multirole utility aircraft** capable of being used for **VIP transport, passenger transport, air ambulance, flight inspection roles, cloud seeding, recreational activities** like para jumping, aerial surveillance, photography, remote sensing and cargo transport.
- With a maximum cruise speed of 428 kmph and a range of 700 kmph the aircraft is capable of night flying.
- HAL is looking forward to **exporting the aircraft** as well to countries like Nepal.

- **UDAN Scheme:**

- Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) was launched as a **regional connectivity scheme under the Ministry of Civil Aviation** in 2016. It is an innovative scheme to develop the regional Aviation market.

Small civilian aircrafts are considered to be an **essential element** of the UDAN.

- The objective of the scheme is **to create affordable yet economically viable and profitable flights on regional routes** so that flying becomes affordable to the common man even in small towns.
- The scheme envisages **providing connectivity to un-served and underserved airports of the country** through the revival of existing air-strips and airports. The scheme is **operational for a period of 10 years**.

Under-served airports are those which do not have more than one flight a day, while unserved airports are those where there are no operations.

- **Financial incentives** from the Centre, state governments and airport operators are extended **to selected airlines** to encourage operations from unserved and under-served airports, and keep airfares affordable.
- About 325 routes and 56 airports including 5 heliports and 2 water aerodromes have been operationalised under the scheme.
- On the commencement of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav ()', the Ministry of Civil Aviation proposed **about 392 routes under UDAN 4.1 bidding process**.

The **UDAN 4.1** focuses on connecting smaller airports, along with special helicopter and seaplane routes. Some new routes have been proposed under the **Sagarmala Seaplane services**.

Sagarmala Seaplane Services is **an ambitious project under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways** with potential airline operators.

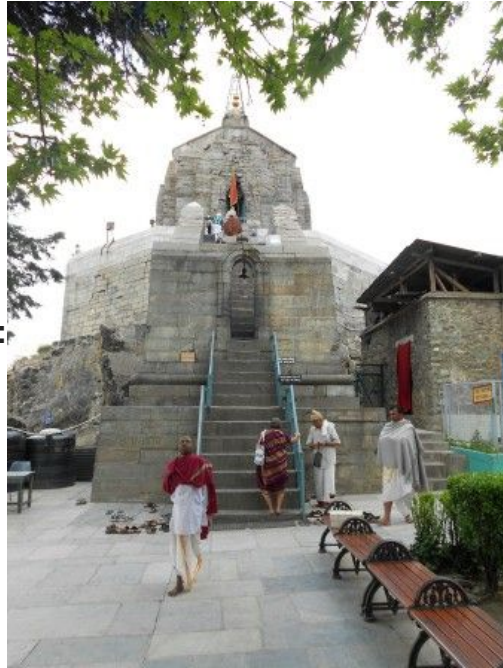
Source: IE

Shankaracharya Temple

Why in News

Recently, as per the age-old tradition related to the annual Amarnath pilgrimage, the holy mace (**Chhari Mubarak**) of **Lord Shiva** was brought to the ancient **Shankaracharya Temple**.

Key Points



- **About:**

- It is also known as the **Jyesteshwara temple** or **Pas-Pahar** by **Buddhists**. Persians and Jews call it **Bagh-i-sulaiman** or the **Garden of King Solomon**. Persian inscriptions are also found inside the temple.
- It is on **top of the Shankaracharya Hill (also called Hill of Solomon)** on the **Zabarwan Mountain in Srinagar, Kashmir**.

The temple is considered as the **oldest temple of the valley of Kashmir**.

- It is **dedicated to Lord Shiva** The temple is **at a height of 1,000 feet** above the plain and overlooks the city of Srinagar.
- The temple **dates to 200 BC, although the present structure probably dates to the 9th century AD**.
- It was **visited by Adi Shankara** and has ever since been associated with him; this is how the temple got the name Shankaracharya.

- **Structure:**

- This ancient temple is built in the **indigenous early Kashmiri style of architecture** and embraces the techniques prevailing in those days.
- The early **Shihara style** is prominently evident in the building design and is indicative of a **horseshoe arch type of pattern**.
- It is a **massive stone structure built on a high octagonal plinth** about thirty feet high.
- The **plinth is surmounted by a low parapet wall**. The shrine consists of a cell, circular inside, with a diameter of thirteen feet.
- The **square building of the temple is supported by the basement**.

Shankaracharya

- **About:**
 - He was also known as **Adi Shankara**. Born in **Kaladi, Kerala in 788 CE**.
 - Propounded the **Doctrine of Advaita (Monism)** and **wrote many commentaries** on the Vedic canon (Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and Bhagavad Gita) in Sanskrit.
- **Major Work:**
 - Brahmasutrabhasya (Bhashya or commentary on the Brahma Sutra).
 - Bhajagovinda Stotra.
 - Nirvana Shatakam.
- **Other Contributions:**
 - Was responsible for **reviving Hinduism in India** to a great extent when Buddhism was gaining popularity.
 - Established four Mathas in the four corners of India and the tradition continues to this day.

Exercise Konkan 2021

Why in News

Indo-UK Naval Exercise, 'Konkan 2021' was recently held **between INS Tabar and HMS Westminster** in the **English Channel**.

The English Channel is located between the **Isle of Great Britain's southern coast** and **France's northern coast** and **separated from the North Sea** on the north by the **Strait of Dover**.



Key Points

- **About:**
 - The **Bilateral Konkan exercise** is a **naval exercise** conducted between **India and the United Kingdom**.
 - The Konkan series of exercises was **started in 2004**. Since then, the exercise is **hosted in rotation by both the Navies** and has grown in complexity, scale, and intensity.
- **Other Exercises between India and UK:**
- **INS Tabar:**
 - It is the **third Talwar-class frigate in the Indian Navy**, which was commissioned in 2004 in Kaliningrad, Russia.
 - This warship can handle **air or surface or subsurface missions and defend herself**.
 - The Talwar class of frigates of the Indian Navy **have been built in Russia under an Indo-Russian joint production**. The Talwar class guided missile frigates **are modified Krivak III class frigates from Russia**. **Other Frigates are:** INS Teg, Tarkash, Trikand, Talwar, Trishul.
 - In **October 2016**, India and Russia **signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)** for four Krivak or Talwar stealth frigates.
 - The first two frigates will be built in Yantar Shipyard, in Kaliningrad, Russia.
 - The following two will be built in Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL).

Major Indian Maritime Exercises

| Name of the Exercise | Name of the Country |
|---|---------------------|
| <u>SLINEX</u> | Sri Lanka |
| <u>Bongosagar and IN-BN CORPAT</u> | Bangladesh |
| <u>JIMEX</u> | Japan |
| Naseem-Al-Bahr | Oman |
| <u>Indra</u> | Russia |
| <u>Za'ir-Al-Bahr</u> | Qatar |
| <u>Samudra Shakti</u> | Indonesia |
| <u>Indo-Thai CORPAT</u> | Thailand |
| IMCOR | Malaysia |
| <u>SIMBEX</u> | Singapore |
| AUSINDEX | Australia |

Source: PIB
