



India Appeals at WTO

For Prelims: WTO, Sugarcane, WTO's Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, WTO's Agreement on Agriculture, General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT).

For mains: WTO and its role, Issue of sugar subsidy in WTO, Significance of subsidy in sugar industry.

Why in News

Recently, India has appealed against a ruling of the [World Trade Organisation's \(WTO\)](#) trade dispute settlement panel which ruled that the country's domestic support measures for [sugar and sugarcane](#) are inconsistent with global trade norms.

- Earlier, [China got the 'developing country' status at the WTO](#) which became a contentious issue with a number of countries raising concerns against the decision.

Key Points

- **India's Appeal:**
 - The appeal was filed by India in the **WTO's Appellate Body**, which is the final authority on such trade disputes.
 - India has **appealed and requested the body to "reverse, modify, or declare moot and of no legal effect, the findings, conclusions, rulings and recommendations of the Panel"**, with respect to certain "errors of law or legal interpretation contained in the panel report.
 - India has **sought review of the panel's finding that the scheme for providing assistance to sugar mills** for expenses on marketing costs, including handling, upgrading and other processing costs and costs of international and internal transport and freight charges on the export of sugar for the 2019-20 sugar season (Maximum Admissible Export Quantity (MAEQ) Scheme), is within its terms of reference.
- **Complaint Against India:**
 - **Australia, Brazil, and Guatemala** said **India's domestic support and export subsidy measures appeared to be inconsistent** with various articles of the [WTO's Agreement on Agriculture](#) and the [Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures \(SCM\)](#), and Article XVI (which concerns subsidies) of the [General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs \(GATT\)](#).
 - All three countries complained that **India provides domestic support to sugarcane producers that exceeds the de minimis level** of 10% of the total value of sugarcane production, which they said was inconsistent with the Agreement on Agriculture.
 - They also raised the issue of **India's alleged export subsidies**, subsidies under the production assistance and buffer stock schemes, and the marketing and transportation scheme.
 - Australia **accused India of "failing" to notify its annual domestic support for sugarcane and sugar subsequent to 1995-96**, and its export subsidies since 2009-10, which it said were inconsistent with the provisions of the SCM Agreement.
 - A **panel was set up by the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB)** of the WTO to look into

the case and come up with its report.

WTO's Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures

- The WTO Agreement on SCM **disciplines the use of subsidies, and it regulates the actions countries can take** to counter the effects of subsidies.
- Under the agreement, **a country can use the WTO's dispute-settlement procedure to seek the withdrawal of the subsidy or the removal of its adverse effects.** Or the country can launch its own investigation and ultimately charge extra duty ("countervailing duty") on subsidised imports that are found to be hurting domestic producers.

WTO's Agreement on Agriculture

- It is **aimed to remove trade barriers and to promote transparent market access** and integration of global markets.
- The **WTO's Agriculture Committee oversees implementation of the Agreement** and provides a forum for members to address related concerns.

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

- GATT traces **its origins to the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference**, which laid the foundations for the post-World War II financial system and established two key institutions, the [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) and the [World Bank](#).
- GATT **signed by 23 countries in Geneva in 1947** came into force on Jan 1, 1948 with the following purposes:
 - to phase out the use of import quotas
 - to reduce tariffs on merchandise trade,
- GATT became the **only multilateral instrument governing international trade** from 1948 until the WTO was established in 1995.
 - The provisions of GATT 1947 were incorporated into the GATT of 1994. The GATT 1994 is itself part of the WTO formation agreement.
 - The Uruguay Round of GATT, conducted from 1987 to 1994 culminated in the Marrakesh agreement, which established the WTO.
- **India's Stand:**
 - India said that the **"complainants have failed** to meet their burden of showing" that India's market price support for sugarcane, and its various schemes violate the Agreement on Agriculture.
 - It also argued that **"the requirements of Article 3 of the SCM Agreement are not yet applicable to India** and that India has a phase-out period of 8 years to eliminate export subsidies, if any, pursuant to Article 27 of the SCM Agreement.
- **Panels Findings:**
 - The dispute settlement panel has found India's domestic support and export subsidy measures in the sugar sector to be in **violation of international trade rules.**
 - It found that for **five consecutive sugar seasons from 2014-15 to 2018-19, India provided non-exempt product-specific domestic support** to sugarcane producers in excess of the permitted level of 10% of the total value of sugarcane production.
 - India argued that its **"mandatory minimum prices are not paid by the central or state governments but by sugar mills,** and hence do not constitute market price support", the panel rejected this argument — saying "market price support does not require governments to purchase or procure the relevant agricultural product".
- **Panels Recommendation:**
 - India brings its **WTO-inconsistent measures into conformity** with its obligations under the Agreement on Agriculture and the SCM Agreement.
 - India should **withdraw its alleged prohibited subsidies** under the Production Assistance, Buffer Stock, and Marketing and Transportation Schemes within 120 days.

Dispute Redressal at WTO

- According to WTO rules, a **WTO member or members can file a case in the Geneva-based multilateral body** if they feel that a particular trade measure is against the norms of the WTO.
- **Bilateral consultation is the first step to resolve a dispute.** If both the sides are not able to resolve the matter through consultation, either can approach for the establishment of a dispute settlement panel.
- The panel's ruling or report can be challenged at the **WTO's Appellate Body.**
 - Interestingly, **the appellate body of the WTO is not functioning because of differences among member countries** to appoint members in this body. Over 20 disputes are already pending with the appellate body. The **US has been blocking the appointment of the members.**

[Source: BS](#)

India-China-Sri Lanka Triangle

For Prelims: Rubber-Rice Pact 1952, BIMSTEC, SAARC, SAGAR and the IORA

For Mains: Chinese Foreign Minister Visit to Sri Lanka. China-Sri Lanka Ties

Why in News

Recently, the **Chinese Foreign Minister (CFM) visited Sri Lanka.**

- At a meeting, CFM **proposed a forum for Indian Ocean island nations** and also asserted that **no “third party” should interfere in China-Sri Lanka ties.**
- While the **name of the third party was not revealed,** it was a clear reference to India.



Key Points

▪ Highlights of CFM Visit to Sri Lanka

- The CFM visit envisaged launching celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the historic **Rubber-Rice Pact 1952** and the **65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Sri Lanka**.
 - Under the **Rubber-Rice Pact**, China needed to import rubber and other supplies and Sri Lanka, for whom rubber was a key export, was facing a rise in the price of rice and a slump in the price of rubber.
- CFM asserted that the two sides should make good use of **“the two engines”**, referring to the **Colombo Port City in Colombo and the Hambantota Port** (also in Sri Lanka).
- He urged Sri Lanka to consider the prospects of the [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership \(RCEP\)](#) and restart talks on a free-trade agreement.
- A **“forum on the development of Indian Ocean island countries”** to build consensus and synergy and promote common development, was also proposed.

▪ About China-Sri Lanka Ties:

- **Largest Creditor to Sri Lanka:** China is the largest bilateral creditor to the country.
 - Its loans to the Sri Lankan public sector amount to 15% of the central government's external debt.
 - Sri Lanka heavily relies on Chinese credit to address its foreign debt burden.
- **Investment in Infrastructure Projects:** China has invested about USD 12 billion in Sri Lanka's infrastructure projects between 2006-19.
- **Shifting Interests of Smaller Nations:** Sri Lanka's economic crisis may further push it to align its policies with China's interests.
- **China's Pursuit in the Indian Ocean:** China enjoys friendlier waters in South Asia and the Indian Ocean than it does in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.
 - China faces opposition from Taiwan, territorial disputes in the [South China Sea](#) and East Asia, and myriad frictions with the US and Australia.

▪ India's Concerns:

- **Opposition to SAGAR Initiative:** The proposed Indian Ocean island countries forum sounded in opposition to Prime Minister of India's [SAGAR \(Security and Growth for All in the Region\) initiative](#).
 - SAGAR is India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- **Issues Emanating from Two Engines of Growth:** China has formal control over Sri Lanka's Hambantota port as a part of a **99-year lease**.
 - Sri Lanka has decided to establish a Special Economic Zone around the Colombo port city and a new economic commission, to be funded by China.
 - The Colombo port handles 60% of India's trans-shipment cargo.
 - Leasing of Hambantota and the Colombo Port City project makes it almost certain for the Chinese navy to have a permanent presence in the Indian Ocean which will be worrisome for India's national security.
 - This Chinese strategy to encircle India is referred to as the **Strings of Pearls Strategy**.
- **Influencing India's Neighbours:** Other South Asian nations like Bangladesh, Nepal and the Maldives have also been turning to China to finance large-scale infrastructure projects.

Way Forward

- **Preserving Strategic Interests:** Nurturing the Neighbourhood First policy with Sri Lanka is important for India to preserve its strategic interests in the Indian Ocean region.
- **Taking Advantage of Regional Platforms:** Platforms like the [BIMSTEC](#), [SAARC](#), [SAGAR](#) and the [IORA](#) could be leveraged to foster cooperation in fields like technology-driven agriculture, marine sector development, IT & communication infrastructure etc.
- **Restraining Chinese Expansion:** India will **need to continue to work on the Kankasanturai port in Jaffna and the oil tank farm project in Trincomalee** to ensure that China does not make any further inroads in Sri Lanka.
 - Both countries can also cooperate on enhancing private sector investments to create economic resilience.
- **Leveraging India's Soft Power:** In the technology sector, India can create job opportunities in Sri Lanka by expanding the presence of its IT companies.
 - These organizations can create thousands of direct and indirect jobs and boost the island

nation's service economy.

[Source: TH](#)

India- South Korea Trade Talks

For Prelims: Location of South Korea, Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), Free Trade Agreements, FTAs of India with other countries.

For Mains: Significance of India- South Korea CECA, India-South Korea Relations

Why in News

Recently, the Trade Minister of South Korea held discussions with the Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles.



Key Points

- **CEPA Up-gradation:**
 - Both countries agreed to impart fresh momentum to the discussions on [Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement \(CEPA\) up-gradation](#) negotiations and also promote extensive B2B (business-to-business) interactions on trade and investment between the Industry leaders of the two countries.
- **Bilateral Trade Target:**
 - India and South Korea set a **bilateral trade target of USD50 billion before 2030**, which was agreed at the summit meeting in 2018.
 - This regular negotiations shall be a forum to discuss the difficulties of the business

community from both countries and emerging trade-related issues including [supply chain resilience](#).

- Agreed to **boost bilateral trade between India and Korea** to achieve growth in a fair and balanced manner to the mutual advantage of both sides.
 - Indian players have been facing difficulties in exporting their products in Korea in sectors such as steel, engineering, and agri products due to stringent regulatory issues in Korea.
 - The **trade deficit** has increased from USD5 billion in 2008-09 to USD8 billion in 2020-21.

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

▪ About:

- It is a kind of **free trade pact** which covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment, and other areas of economic partnership. It may even consider negotiation on areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and [Intellectual Property Rights](#).
- Partnership agreements or cooperation agreements are more comprehensive than [Free Trade Agreements](#).
- CEPA also looks into the regulatory aspect of trade and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues.

▪ India's CEPAs:

- India has **signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan**.
- In 2021, India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) formally launched negotiations on the India-UAE [CEPA](#).
- India is also looking to advance a CEPA with Bangladesh.

India-South Korea Relations

▪ Political:

- During the Korean War (1950- 53), **India played a major role in a cease-fire agreement** signed between both the warring sides (North Korea and South Korea) and the ceasefire was declared on 27th July 1953.
- In May 2015, the bilateral relationship was upgraded to '**special strategic partnership**'.
- India has a major role to play in **South Korea's Southern Policy** under which Korea is looking at expanding relations beyond its immediate region.
- Similarly, South Korea is a major player in India's [Act East Policy](#) under which India aims to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in the Asia-Pacific.

▪ Trade Relations:

- The trade and economic relations between India and South Korea have gathered momentum in recent years with **annual bilateral trade reaching USD21.5 billion in 2018**, crossing the USD20 billion mark for the first time.
- Bilateral trade in January-December 2020 was recorded at **USD16.9 billion**.
- The bilateral **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CEPA)**, set in place since 2010, has spurred trade and investments both ways.
- To facilitate investment from Korea, India has launched a "**Korea Plus**" **facilitation cell** under '**Invest India**' to guide, assist and handhold investors.
- South Korea's total [foreign direct investment](#) to India up to September 2020 was about USD6.94 billion and is one of the key investors in India.

▪ Defence:

- In 2005, the two sides signed an **agreement to cooperate in defence and logistics** and another Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation between the two Coast Guards in 2006 .
- So far, the Indian and South Korean Coast Guards have conducted five exercises with an aim to enhance interoperability.

- The most recent of these exercises was held off the coast of Chennai, named **Sahyog-Hyeoblyeog** 2018 .
 - Sahyog - Hyeoblyeog is part of a proposed establishment of a MoU between the two **Coast Guards** to improve [maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region](#).
- In May 2021, the Indian Defence Minister and his South Korean counterpart inaugurated the [India-Korea Friendship Park](#) in a ceremony at the Delhi Cantonment.
 - The park was **built to commemorate the contribution of the Indian peacekeeping force** during the Korean war of 1950-53.
- **Cultural:**
 - Korean Buddhist Monk Hyecho or Hong Jiao visited India from 723 to 729 AD and wrote the travelogue "**Pilgrimage to the five kingdoms of India**" which gives a vivid account of Indian culture, politics & society.
 - Nobel Laureate [Rabindranath Tagore](#) had composed a short but evocative poem - 'Lamp of the East' - in 1929 about Korea's glorious past and its promising bright future.
 - To further enhance cultural exchanges between India and Korea, **Indian Cultural Centres (ICC)** were established in Seoul in April 2011 and in Busan in December 2013.
 - Earlier, on the banks of the Sarayu in Ayodhya, the **Ram Katha Park** has been renovated which will be renamed as [Queen Heo Hwang-ok memorial park](#). The Korean queen is believed to have had Indian roots.
- **Multilateral Platforms Shared by Both the Countries:**
 - [United Nations](#)
 - [World Trade Organisation](#)
 - [ASEAN Plus](#)
 - [East Asia Summit \(EAS\)](#)
 - [G-20](#)

Way Forward

- India and South Korea relations have **made great strides in recent years** and have become truly multidimensional, spurred by a significant convergence of interests, mutual goodwill and high-level exchanges.
- However, there is **massive scope to expand ties between India and South Korea** and make it a unique relationship in Asia.
- **Political will and new imagination in diverse areas** such as cultural relations, building on people-to-people contacts, harnessing democracy and liberal values, and cementing civilisational connections is the need of the hour to nurture the relations between these two nations.

[Source: PIB](#)

Protecting Vulnerable Witnesses: SC

For Prelims: Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centre (VWDC) scheme, Article 21 (Right to Life), Article 141/142 of the Constitution of India.

For Mains: Witness Protection in India, Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR), Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centre, section 377 IPC, Mental Healthcare Act, 2017

Why in News

Recently, the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) expanded the meaning of **vulnerable witnesses** to also include among others sexual assault victims, those with [mental illness](#) and people with speech or hearing

impairment.

- The SC referred to a verdict of **1996** in which it had **passed similar directions**, then in **2004 and in 2017**, when it had asked all the High Courts of the country to adopt the guidelines prepared by the Delhi High Court in 2017 for vulnerable witnesses.

Key Points

- **Vulnerable Witnesses:** Vulnerable witnesses **will not be limited to mean only child witnesses**. It will also include
 - Age-neutral victims of sexual assault.
 - Gender-neutral victims of sexual assault, under [section 377 IPC](#) (unnatural offences).
 - Witnesses suffering from mental illness as defined in [Mental Healthcare Act, 2017](#).
 - Witnesses with threat perception and any speech or hearing impaired individual or person suffering from any other disability.
- **Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centre (VWDC):** The SC directed that all High Court's (HC) adopt and notify a **Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centre (VWDC) scheme** within a period of two months.
 - VWDC will provide a safe and barrier-free environment for recording the evidence of vulnerable witnesses.
 - The SC asked HC's to ensure that there is one VWDC in each district.
 - These VWDC should be established in close proximity to **Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) centres**.
- **Sensitising Stakeholders:** The SC also **pointed to the importance of conducting training programs** to manage VWDC and sensitising all stakeholders including members of the bar, bench and staff.
 - The SC urged former **Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir HC** Justice Gita Mittal to act as Chairperson of a committee for designing and implementing an **All India VWDC training program**.
 - The SC also directed the Chairperson of the committee to engage with [National and State Legal Services Authorities](#) to provide an effective interface for schemes of training.
 - It also asked the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development to designate a **nodal officer** for coordinating logistical support to the Chairperson.

Witness Protection in India

- In 2018, the SC approved the [Witness Protection Scheme 2018](#) which aimed at enabling a witness to depose fearlessly and truthfully. Under the Judgement, SC held that:
 - Right of witnesses to testify freely in courts is part of [Article 21 \(Right to Life\)](#).
 - The scheme will be the law under [Article 141/142 of the Constitution of India](#).
 - The bench has also asked all States and UTs to set up vulnerable witness deposition complexes.
- While the **scheme is pending in the Parliament**, the SC had ordered to implement the scheme immediately in all the states and the scheme would be the law of the land.
- The need to protect witnesses has been emphasised by [Law Commission](#) reports and court judgments for years.
 - The **State of Gujarat v. Anirudh Singh (1997)**, 14th Law Commission Report and [Malimath Committee Report](#) has recommended a witness protection scheme.

Way Forward

- The witnesses are **"eyes and ears of justice"**, and this scheme is a step in the right direction towards the effective justice delivery system of the nation.
- However, until now, **there have been ad hoc steps** such as few dedicated courtrooms for vulnerable witnesses mostly child victims and concealing the identity of witnesses (in cases like anti-terrorism etc) have been unsuccessful to prevent witnesses.
- Hence, legislative measures to **emphasise prohibition against tampering of witnesses** have

become the imminent and inevitable need of the day.

[Source: IE](#)

Recognition of Transgender Persons in Indian Prisons

For Prelims: Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and its provisions

For Mains: Safeguarding rights of Transgender Persons in Indian Prisons, Issues, related steps taken and needs to be done

Why in News

Recently, the Union Home Ministry sent an **advisory to Heads of Prisons in the States/UTs** to ensure privacy, dignity of the third gender inmates.

- According to a [National Crime Records Bureau](#), there were 70 transgender prisoners in jails across the country in 2020.
- The advisory was issued in light of the [Transgender Persons \(Protection of Rights\) Act, 2019](#), which came into effect from January 2020.

Key Points

- **Infrastructure in Prisons:**
 - Separate enclosures or wards and separate toilets and shower facilities for transmen and transwomen to preserve the right to privacy and dignity of the inmates.
- **Respect Self-identity:**
 - The self-identity of transgender persons must be respected at all times while conducting admission procedures, medical examination, frisking, clothing, requisitioning of a police escort, treatment and care inside prisons.
 - **Prisons to facilitate the process of acquiring the transgender identity certificate** under the transgender persons law if such a request is made.
- **Search Protocol:**
 - Searches should be carried out by a **person of their preferred gender** or by a trained medical professional or a paramedic trained in conducting searches.
 - The person **conducting the search must ensure the safety**, privacy and dignity of the person being searched.
- **Admission in Prison:**
 - The prison admission register may be suitably revised to include **“transgender” as a category other than male and female gender**.
 - A similar provision may be made in the **Prison Management System in maintaining electronic records**.
- **Access to Healthcare:**
 - Transgender inmates **should have equal right to healthcare**, without any discrimination on grounds of their gender identity.
- **Communication with outside World:**
 - They must be **allowed an opportunity to interact with their family members, relatives, friends and legal advisers** and after-care planning by probation, welfare or rehabilitation officers.
- **Training and Sensitisation of Prison Personnel:**
 - It should be done for developing an understanding of gender identity, human rights, sexual

- orientation and legal frameworks for transgender persons.
- Similar awareness must also be spread among other prisoners.

Major Initiatives Related to Transgender

- **Transgender Persons Act, 2019:**
 - The Act defines a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth. It includes transmen and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra.
- **Judgements of the Supreme Court:**
 - [National Legal Services Authority \(NALSA\) v. Union of India, 2014](#): The SC declared transgender people to be a 'third gender'.
 - [Read down the Provisions of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code \(2018\)](#): The SC decriminalised same-sex relationships.
- **[Transgender Persons \(Protection of Rights\) Rules, 2020](#):**
 - The Central Government made the rules under the powers conferred by the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
 - [National Portal for Transgender Persons](#) was launched under in consonance with the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020.
- Scheme of '**Shelter Home for Transgender Persons**:
- To provide safe and secure shelter to transgender persons in need, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is setting up 'Garima Greh' shelter homes for them.

Prisons Act and Transpersons

- In India, the Prisons Act, 1894, is the central legislation regulating the administration of prisons.
- The Act majorly differentiates prisoners convicted under civil law from those convicted under criminal law.
- Unfortunately, the Act **does not even recognise sexual minorities based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)** as a different class of prisoners.
- It only separates prisoners into the categories of women, young offenders, undertrials, convicts, civil prisoners, detenues and high-security prisoners.
- The **NALSA judgment**, while extending constitutional protection to trans persons under **Articles 14, 15, and 21**, directs states to make policies on their legal and socio-economic rights.
- This extends to trans prisoners as well, since **prisons and their administration is a state subject**.
- Even though the directions given in the NALSA judgment constitute the law of the land, there is still a requirement to bring forth changes in the present laws.
- The Prisons Act, however, **allows the prison authorities to follow procedures that are strictly gender-binary**.
- These procedures not only challenge the validity of the legislation but also result in a kind of torture and degrading treatment being inflicted upon trans people inside prisons.
- All of this is substantiated by a report titled '**Lost Identity: Transgender Persons Inside Indian Prisons**' by the **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)**.
 - This report sheds light on issues faced by Transgender persons confined in Indian prisons.

Way Forward

- The colonial Prisons Act has become obsolete and it fails to be the touchstone of constitutional morality which ushers for a pluralistic and inclusive society.
- Since **constitutional morality is something that has to be cultivated** keeping in mind the evolving nature of the law and the rights of the people, the present law falls short of any such progressive realisation of the rights of sexual minorities.
- **Awareness and documentation** are two important tools to address the reforms in reference to sexual minorities, especially trans prisoners.
- Thus, the CHRI is one step in that process which advocates for a gender-fluid approach for the

treatment of transgender prisoners.

- The **CHRI's recommendations should be considered by the Union government** to bring a 'model policy' on the special needs of trans prisoners, through a consultative process with the members of the trans community, to honour the mandate of the NALSA judgment.

[Source: TH](#)

Quarterly Employment Survey

For Prelims: All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey (AQEES), Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), International Labour Organization's (ILO) Employment Policy Convention.

For Mains: National Employment Policy (NEP)

Why in News

The **Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment** released the results of the [Quarterly Employment Survey \(QES\)](#) for the **Second Quarter of 2021 (July-September)**.

- Total employment generated by nine select sectors stood at 3.10 crore in the July-September 2021 quarter, which is 2 lakh more than that of the April-June period.

Key Points

- **About QES:**
 - **About:** The Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) is **part of the All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey (AQEES)**.
 - It **covers establishments employing 10 or more workers in the organised segment in 9 sectors**.
 - These **nine sectors** are Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, Transport, Education, Health, Accommodation and Restaurant, IT/ BPO and Financial Services.
 - These sectors account for a majority of the total employment in non-farm establishments.
 - **Objective:** To enable the government to frame a "sound national policy on employment."
 - **International Commitment:** The release of this survey emanates from India's ratification of the [International Labour Organization's \(ILO\) Employment Policy Convention, 1964](#).
 - This requires the ratifying countries to implement "an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment."
 - India does not have a [National Employment Policy \(NEP\)](#) yet.

Note

- **QES vs PLFS:** While the QES provides a demand-side picture, the [National Sample Survey or Periodic Labour Force Survey \(PLFS\)](#) gives the supply side picture of the labour market.
 - Also, PLFS is conducted by the National Statistical Organization (NSO), MoSPI (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation).
- **All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey (AQEES):**
 - The AQEES has been taken up by the Labour Bureau to **provide frequent (quarterly)**

updates about the employment and related variables of establishments, in both organised and unorganised segments of nine selected sectors.

- These sectors altogether account for a majority of the total employment in the non-farm establishments.
- There are two components under AQEES:
 - Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) and
 - Area Frame Establishment Survey (AFES).
- QES would provide the employment estimates for the establishments employing 10 or more workers.
- AFES covers the unorganised segment (with less than 10 workers) through a sample survey.

[Source: IE](#)

Vehicular Emissions in India

For Prelims: Vehicular Emissions and associated issues

For Mains: Vehicular Emissions and its impact, Steps taken in this direction

Why in News

The **annual car sales in India** are projected to increase from the **current 3.5 million to about 10.5 million** — a three times **increase** — **by 2030, which will increase exposure to vehicular exhaust emissions.**

- India is the **fifth-largest global car manufacturer** with one of the highest compound annual growth rates (10%) of vehicle registration as of 2019.

Key Points

▪ Vehicular Emissions in India:

- Vehicular emission is a **major cause of air pollution** in urban areas.
- Typically, vehicular emission **contributes 20-30% of Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5** at the breathing level of air quality.
 - PM2.5 refers to particles that have a diameter less than 2.5 micrometres (more than 100 times thinner than a human hair) and remain suspended for longer.
- According to studies, vehicles annually contribute about 290 gigagrams (Gg) of PM2.5.
- At the same time, around **8% of total Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions** in India are from the transport sector, and in Delhi, it exceeds 30%.

▪ Vehicular Emissions (World):

- The transport sector accounts for a quarter of total emissions, out of which road transport accounts for three-quarters of transport emissions (and 15% of total global CO2 emissions).
- Passenger vehicles are the largest chunk of this, releasing about 45% of CO2.
- If the conditions prevail, annual GHG emissions in 2050 will be 90% higher than those of 2020.

▪ Issues in India's Steps towards Reducing Emissions:

- In India, **vehicle technology is changing rapidly** with changes in fuel quality, exhaust treatment systems of the Internal Combustion Engines (ICE), electrification of vehicle segments and steps towards hydrogen-powered vehicles.
- But the current and future batches of ICE vehicles are likely to have a substantial share in

on-road fleet till 2040, if not beyond.

- This not only **requires substantial tightening of the emissions standards** but also **modification of technical parameters** for testing of vehicles to reduce the emissions in the real world.

▪ **Emissions Testing Methods:**

- Most countries have formulated regulations for testing vehicles at the manufacturing end and when in use.
- The vehicle certification procedures consist of testing engine performance and emission compliance on the engine chassis dynamometer in the laboratory.
- A **drive cycle** (a series of continuous data points of speed and time that approximates driving pattern in terms of acceleration, deceleration and idling) is followed to achieve acceptable test results.
 - This is expected to simulate realistic driving intended for the vehicle type that has a bearing on emissions.

▪ **Testing Methods Formulated by India:**

- The **Indian Drive Cycle (IDC)** was the first driving cycle formulated for vehicle testing and certification in India based on extensive road tests.
 - The IDC was a short cycle comprising six driving cycle modes of 108 seconds (reflecting a pattern of acceleration, deceleration and idling).
- But the **IDC did not cover all the complex driving conditions** that are normally observed on Indian roads.
- Subsequently, as an improvement over IDC, the **Modified Indian Drive Cycle (MIDC)** was adopted, which is equivalent to the **New European Driving Cycle (NEDC)**.
 - MIDC accounts for wider speed profiles and is a better-suited cycle than the IDC.
 - MIDC is also **significantly close to the idling conditions** observed in real-world driving.
- Despite the improvements, MIDC may **still represent vehicular emissions** during on-road conditions adequately because of variations in traffic density, land-use patterns, road infrastructure and poor traffic management.
- It has therefore become necessary to adopt the **Worldwide Harmonized Light Vehicle Test Procedures (WLTP)**, which is a global harmonised standard for determining the levels of pollutants from ICE and hybrid cars.

▪ **Measure Emissions in Real World:**

- For the **Real Driving Emissions (RDE) tests**, the European Commission, the United States and China suggest that the **driving cycles and laboratory tests do not reflect the likely emissions** during real driving conditions, which are more complex than laboratory driving cycles.
 - RDE is an independent test to overcome the limitations of WLTP and equivalent laboratory tests. A car is driven on public roads over a wide range of conditions.
- **The International Centre for Automotive Technology** in India is currently developing RDE procedures that are likely to come into force in 2023.
 - The RDE cycle **must account for conditions prevailing in the country**, such as low and high altitudes, year-round temperatures, additional vehicle payload, up and downhill driving, urban and rural roads and highways.

Initiatives to Reduce Emissions in India

▪ **Shift from [Bharat Stage-IV \(BS-IV\)](#) to [Bharat Stage-VI \(BS-VI\)](#) emission norms:**

- Bharat stage (BS) emission standards are laid down by the government to regulate the output of air pollutants from internal combustion engine and spark-ignition engine equipment, including motor vehicles.
- The central government has mandated that vehicle makers must manufacture, sell and register only BS-VI (BS6) vehicles from 1st April 2020.

▪ **Roadmap for [Ethanol Blending in India](#) by 2025:**

- The roadmap proposes a **gradual rollout of ethanol-blended fuel** to achieve E10 fuel supply by April 2022 and phased rollout of E20 from April 2023 to April 2025.

▪ **[Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric vehicle \(FAME\) Scheme:](#)**

- The FAME India Scheme is aimed at incentivising all vehicle segments.
- Two phases of the scheme:

- Phase I: started in 2015 and was completed on 31st March, 2019
- Phase II: started from April, 2019, will be completed by 31st March, 2024.

▪ **National Hydrogen Energy Mission:**

- It aims to cut down carbon emissions and increase the use of renewable sources of energy while aligning India's efforts with global best practices in technology, policy and regulation.

Source: DTE

African Swine Fever

Why in News

Recently, Thailand has detected [African Swine Fever](#) in a surface swab sample collected at a slaughterhouse.

African swine fever (ASF)

The infographic provides a comprehensive overview of African Swine Fever (ASF). It features a central image of a pig and a tick, which is a biological vector for the virus. A biohazard symbol is placed next to the text describing ASF as a highly contagious, transboundary viral disease. A map of China is shown with arrows indicating the spread of the disease to Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Hong Kong. A globe highlights outbreaks in Africa, Europe, and Asia. A warning sign with a pig silhouette and a skull and crossbones is used to denote the danger of the disease. A sick pig is shown at the bottom right, illustrating the symptoms of the disease.

The virus is highly resistant to low temperatures and can survive for extended periods of time in the blood, feces and tissue of infected animals.

African swine fever can be transmitted through **direct contact** between sick and healthy animals. It can also be transmitted **indirectly** through feed containing meat from infected animals (the virus can remain infectious for 3 to 6 months in uncooked pork products); **biological vectors** such as ticks of the genus *Ornithodoros*, and contaminated **inanimate objects** (fomites) that can transmit the virus.

ASF is a **highly contagious, transboundary viral disease** (*Asfarviridae* family; *Asfivirus* genus).

Global alarms went off in August 2018, when an ASF outbreak was first reported in **China**. The disease swept through the entire Asian country and spread to **Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Hong Kong**.

According to the OIE, **24%** of its member countries (48 out of 200) **have reported the disease** as present since 2016.

According to official data for this period, more than **2.5 million domestic pigs** have died or been killed—67.6% of them in Asia over the past 10 months.

Between 2016 and May 2019, there were a total of **10,211 outbreaks in Africa, Europe and Asia**.

It can affect both domestic and wild pigs (wild boars and peccaries). **It is harmless to humans.**

Typical clinical signs of ASF are similar to those of classical swine fever (which is endemic in several countries of the Americas); therefore, a **laboratory test** is required to distinguish them.

The **peracute** form of the virus causes sudden death with few signs.

Symptoms include **fever, loss of appetite**, low energy, abortion, internal hemorrhages, visible hemorrhages, and even death.

Key Points

▪ **About:**

- It is a **highly contagious and fatal animal disease** that infects and leads to an acute form of hemorrhagic fever in domestic and wild pigs.
- Other manifestations of the disease include high fever, depression, anorexia, loss of

- appetite, hemorrhages in the skin, vomiting and diarrhoea among others.
- It was first **detected in Africa in the 1920s**.
 - Historically, outbreaks have been reported in Africa and parts of Europe, South America, and the Caribbean.
 - However, more recently (since 2007), the disease has been reported in multiple countries across Africa, Asia and Europe, in both domestic and wild pigs.
 - In 2021, cases were also detected in India.
 - The mortality is **close to 100% and since the fever has no cure, the only way to stop its spread is by culling** the animals.
 - ASF is not a threat to human beings since it only spreads from animals to other animals.
 - ASF is a disease listed in the **World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)** Terrestrial Animal Health Code and thus, reported to the OIE.
- **Classical Swine Fever:**
- **CSF**, also known as hog cholera, is an important disease of pigs.
 - It is one of the most economically-damaging pandemic viral diseases of pigs in the world.
 - It is caused by a virus of **the genus Pestivirus of the family Flaviviridae**, which is closely related to the viruses that cause bovine viral diarrhoea in cattle.
 - **Mortality is 100%**.
 - Recently, the **ICAR-IVRI** developed a Cell Culture **CSF Vaccine** (live attenuated) using the Lapinized Vaccine Virus from foreign strain.
 - The new vaccine has been found to induce protective immunity from day 14 of the Vaccination till 18 Months.

World Organisation for Animal Health

- OIE is **an intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving animal health** worldwide.
- It has **182 Member Countries**. India is one of the member countries.
- OIE develops normative documents relating to rules that Member Countries can use to protect themselves from the introduction of diseases and pathogens. One of them is the Terrestrial Animal Health Code.
- OIE standards are recognised by the **World Trade Organization** as reference international sanitary rules.
- It is **headquartered in Paris, France**.

[Source: IE](#)

World Hindi Day

Why in News

World Hindi Day (WHD) is celebrated every year **on 10th January** to promote the Hindi language all around the world.

- This year (2022) on the occasion **UNESCO's World Heritage Centre (WHC)** has agreed to **publish Hindi descriptions of India's world heritage sites** on WHC website.
- WHC was established in 1992 to coordinate all matters related to World Heritage. The Centre

organises **the annual sessions of the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau**, and provides advice to States Parties in the preparation of site nominations.

Key Points

▪ About:

- It was **first celebrated in 2006** to commemorate the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference which was held in Nagpur on 10th January, 1975. It is different from **Hindi Divas** (National Hindi Day).
- It is also celebrated by **Indian embassies located in various parts of the world**.
- The World Hindi Secretariat building was **inaugurated in Mauritius in 2018**.

▪ National Hindi Day:

- Hindi, written in the Devanagari script, was adopted as **the official language of the Republic of India on 14th September, 1949**. Therefore Hindi Divas is celebrated on 14th September every year.
 - Kaka Kalelkar, Maithili Sharan Gupta, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Seth Govindadas **made important contributions to make Hindi the official language**.
- Hindi is also an **eighth schedule language**.
- Article 351 pertains to **'Directive for development of the Hindi language'**.

▪ Government Initiatives to Promote Hindi:

- The **Central Hindi Directorate was established in 1960** by the Government of India under the Ministry of Education.
- **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)** has established 'Hindi Chairs' in various foreign universities/institutions abroad.
- **LILA-Rajbhasha** (Learn Indian Languages through Artificial Intelligence) is a multimedia based intelligent **self-tutoring application for learning Hindi**.
- **E-Saral Hindi Vakya Kosh and E-MahashabdKosh Mobile App**, both initiatives of the Department of Official Language, aim to harness information technology for the growth of Hindi.
- **Rajbhasha Gaurav Puraskar** and **Rajbhasha Kirti Puraskar** recognise contributions to Hindi.

Hindi Language

- Hindi got its name from the **Persian word Hind, meaning 'land of the Indus River'**. Turk invaders in the early 11th century named the language of the region Hindi, 'language of the land of the Indus River'.
- It is the official language of India, English being the other **official language**.
- Hindi is **also spoken in some countries outside India**, such as in Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago and Nepal.
- Hindi in its present form emerged through different stages, during which it was known by other names. The earliest form of **old Hindi was Apabhramsa**. **In 400 AD Kalidas wrote a romantic play in Apabhramsa called Vikramorvashiyam**.
- The modern **Devanagari script came into existence in the 11th century**.

[Source: HT](#)

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