



Granting Habitat Rights and Implications

For Prelims: Granting Tribal Rights and Implications, [Baiga Tribe, PVTG \(Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group\)](#), Bharia and Kamar Tribe, [Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers \(Recognition of Forest Rights\) Act, 2006](#).

For Mains: Granting Tribal Rights and Implications, Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Chhattisgarh Government has granted habitat rights to its [Baiga PVTG \(Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group\)](#) right after the Kamar PVTG received habitat rights in August 2023.

- The Baiga PVTG became the second group to be granted these rights in Chhattisgarh.
- Chhattisgarh has **seven PVTGs** (Kamar, Baiga, Pahadi Korba, Abujmadiya, Birhor, Pando and Bhujia).

What is the Baiga Tribe?



- The Baiga (means sorcerers) tribe mainly lives in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- Traditionally, the Baiga lived a semi-nomadic life and practised slash and burn cultivation. Now,

they are mainly dependent on [minor forest produce](#) for their livelihood.

- Bamboo is the primary resource.
- Tattooing is an integral part of Baiga culture, every age and body part has a specific tattoo reserved for the occasion.

What are Habitat Rights?

▪ About:

- Habitat rights recognition provides the community concerned **rights over their customary territory of habitation**, socio-cultural practices, economic and livelihood means, intellectual knowledge of biodiversity and ecology, traditional knowledge of use of natural resources, as well as **protection and conservation of their natural and cultural heritage**.
- Habitat rights **safeguard and promote traditional livelihood** and ecological knowledge passed down through generations. They also help **converge different government schemes and initiatives from various departments** to empower PVTG communities to develop their habitats.
 - According to the FRA, "habitat" includes customary habitats and those in reserved and protected forests of PVTGs and other forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes.
- Out of 75 PVTG in India, **only three have habitat rights- the Bheria PVTG in Madhya Pradesh was the first**, followed by the Kamar tribe and now the Baiga tribe in Chhattisgarh.

▪ Procedure of Declaring Habitat:

- The procedure is based on a detailed guideline given for this purpose in 2014 by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- The process **involves consultation with traditional tribal leaders** to determine the extent of culture, traditions, and occupation.
- Coordination between state-level departments, including Forest, Revenue, Tribal, and Panchayati Raj, and with the UNDP team is essential for defining and declaring habitats.

▪ Legality:

- Habitat rights are granted to PVTGs under Section 3(1)(e) of the [Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers \(Recognition of Forest Rights\) Act, 2006](#) (also known as FRA).
- The recognition of Habitat rights grants PVTGs possession over their customary territory, encompassing habitation, economic and livelihood means, biodiversity knowledge.

Identification of PVTGs

- PVTGs are identified based on criteria such as **technological backwardness**, stagnant or declining population growth, **low literacy levels**, subsistence economy, and challenging living conditions.
- They face vulnerability in **health, education, nutrition, and livelihood**.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has identified **75 PVTGs in 18 states and one Union Territory**.
- In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)** as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups. In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as PVTGs.

What is the Significance of Granting Habitat Rights?

▪ Preservation of Culture and Heritage:

- Granting tribal rights helps in preserving the unique cultural, social, and traditional heritage of tribal communities. It allows them to **maintain their distinct languages, rituals, customs, and traditional knowledge systems**.

▪ **Empowerment and Social Justice:**

- Tribal rights empower these communities by providing them with legal recognition, ensuring their participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives, and rectifying historical injustices. This empowerment contributes to a more just and equal society.

▪ **Protection of Livelihoods:**

- Many tribal communities depend on their natural surroundings for their livelihoods. Granting rights over lands and resources ensures that **they can sustain their traditional occupations like hunting, gathering, fishing, and farming, supporting their economic well-being.**

▪ **Sustainable Development:**

- By granting rights to tribal communities, governments can **promote sustainable development.** Indigenous practices often prioritize sustainability and conservation, which is crucial for the environment and the overall well-being of society.

▪ **Conservation of Biodiversity:**

- Tribal communities often possess unique knowledge about their local ecosystems, flora, fauna, and sustainable resource management. Recognizing their rights **allows for the preservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources.**

Conclusion

Granting tribal rights is fundamental to fostering a more inclusive, just, and harmonious society where the rights, cultures, and traditions of all citizens, including tribal communities, are respected and protected.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q.1 Consider the following pairs: (2013)

	Tribe	State
1.	Limboo (Limbu)	Sikkim
2.	Karbi	Himachal Pradesh
3.	Dongaria Kondh	Odisha
4.	Bonda	Tamil Nadu

Which of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (a)

Q.2 Consider the following statements about Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India: (2019)

1. PVTGs reside in 18 States and one Union Territory.
2. A stagnant or declining population is one of the criteria for determining PVTG status.
3. There are 95 PVTGs officially notified in the country so far.
4. Irular and Konda Reddi tribes are included in the list of PVTGs.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 2, 3 and 4
- (c) 1, 2 and 4
- (d) 1, 3 and 4

Ans: (c)

Remote Voting for Migrants

For Prelims: [Remote Voting for Migrants](#), [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#), Remote EVM (R-EVM), [Electronic Voting Machines \(EVMs\)](#).

For Mains: Remote Voting for Migrants, significance and challenges. Salient features of the Representation of People's Act, Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Source: [TH](#)

Why in the News?

In late 2022, the [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) proposed a [Remote EVM \(R-EVM\)](#) to address issues related to domestic migrant voting. The goal was to improve the 67.4% voter turnout in the 2019 general election.

- A survey by Lokniti-CSDS was conducted in September 2023, involving 1,017 migrants living in Delhi's slums, with 63% men and 37% women, aiming to understand whether the proposed **R-EVM system would gain a viable level of trust** among its intended users, setting aside legal and logistical concerns raised by political parties.

What is Remote EVM (R-EVM)?

- **About:**
 - The term "**R-EVM**" stands for "**Remote Electronic Voting Machine.**" It is a proposed system by the [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) aimed at facilitating **voting for domestic migrants** who are unable to vote in their home constituencies due to their current location away from their registered constituencies.
 - The R-EVM is designed to address the issue of domestic migrant voting, allowing registered voters who have moved away from their home constituencies to cast their votes remotely.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Registration Process:** Voters interested in using the remote voting facility must **register (online or offline)** within a pre-notified timeframe with the concerned Returning Officer (RO) of their home constituency.
 - **Remote Polling Station:** A multi-constituency remote polling station will be set up in the area of the **voter's current residence**, allowing for remote voting from that location.
 - **Handling Multiple Constituencies:** The RVM can handle **multiple constituencies (up to 72)** from a single remote polling booth, making it efficient for voters from different constituencies to cast their votes at the same location.
 - **Voting Process:** When the voter scans their constituency card in the presence of the **Presiding Officer at the remote polling station**, the respective constituency and candidate list will appear on the RVM display.
 - The RVMs have the same security system and voting experience as the existing [EVMs](#) and use **electronic ballot display** to present candidates and their symbols instead of a fixed paper ballot sheet.

- Voters can select their preferred candidate on the RVM display. The system will count and store the votes for each candidate in a constituency.

- **Countries Practice Remote Voting:**

- There are some countries such as **Estonia, France, Panama, Pakistan, Armenia** etc, which practice remote voting for the citizens living abroad or away from their respective constituencies.

How Significant is the Migrant Vote?

- **Migration Patterns and Reasons:**

- Migrants in Delhi primarily come from neighboring states such as **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Rajasthan**.
- Employment opportunities are the major reason for relocation (58%), followed by family-related reasons (18%) and relocation due to marriage (13%).

- **Migrant Demographics and Residence Duration:**

- A majority of migrants (61%) have lived in Delhi for more than five years, suggesting a significant presence of long-term migrants.
- However, a **considerable number of short-term migrants**, especially from Bihar, come to Delhi for seasonal work.

- **Voter Registration and Electoral Participation:**

- Approximately 53% of migrants have registered as voters in Delhi, while 27% are registered in their home states. Migrants participate more in national and **state-level elections compared to local/panchayat elections**.

- **Return to Home States for Voting:**

- Migrants, particularly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, **maintain connections to their home states** by going back to vote, especially in local and state assembly elections.
- The reasons for returning to vote include exercising their fundamental right to vote (40%) and using the election season as an **opportunity to visit family (25%)**.

- **Trust in Remote Voting System:**

- **47% of respondents tend to trust the proposed remote voting system**, while 31% express distrust.
- There's a notable gender difference, with **men (50%) showing higher trust compared to women (40%)**. Trust in the system is higher among better-educated individuals.

What are the Concerns and Challenges Ahead?

- **Similar Challenges as With the EVMs:**

- The Multi-Constituency RVM for migrant voting will have the same security system and voting experience as the EVM. This essentially means that the **challenges with regard to the current EVMs will persist when it comes to the RVMs**.

- **Amendments to Electoral Laws:**

- Remote voting requires amendments to existing laws such as The **Representation of People's Act of 1950 and 1951**, The Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, and The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 to **accommodate the new voting method**.
- The legal framework needs to **redefine "migrant voter"** and determine whether they retain registration at their original place of residence.

- **Voter Portability and Residency:**

- Determining how to manage voter portability while respecting the legal constructs of "ordinary residence" and "temporary absence" is a social challenge.
- Also, the territorial constituency concept of remote voting and defining remoteness itself that is an outside constituency, outside district or **outside state will need to be dealt with**.

- **Secrecy of Voting and Administrative Challenges:**

- Ensuring the secrecy of voting in remote locations **can be challenging**, as it is important for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the voting process.
- Implementing methods to identify voters accurately and prevent impersonation is crucial for a fair and secure remote voting system.
- Arranging for polling agents and effective supervision of remote voting stations **pose logistical and administrative challenges**.

▪ **Technological Challenges:**

- Ensuring that voters are familiar with the technology and interfaces used for remote voting is **essential to prevent voter confusion** and errors.
- Establishing efficient mechanisms for accurately counting votes cast through remote voting is a **technological challenge that must be addressed**.

Way Forward

▪ **Machine-Independent:**

- For the voting process to be verifiable and correct, **it should be machine-independent**, or software and hardware independent, meaning, the establishment of its veracity should not depend solely on the assumption that the EVM is correct.

▪ **Right to Cancel if Not Satisfied:**

- The **“voter should have full agency to cancel a vote if not satisfied;** and that the process to cancel must be simple and should not require the voter to interact with anybody”.

▪ **Confidence and Acceptability:**

- It is important to **take into account the confidence and acceptability** of all the stakeholders of the electoral system – voters, political parties and election machinery.

Invisible E-Waste

For Prelims: Invisible **E-Waste**, [Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment \(WEEE\)](#), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), [E-waste \(Management\) Rules, 2016](#), [Extended producer's responsibility \(EPR\)](#).

For Mains: Concerns Regarding Invisible E-Waste, Environmental pollution and degradation, Environmental impact assessment.

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Brussels-based [Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment \(WEEE\) Forum on the Occasion of International E-Waste Day \(14th October\)](#), commissioned the **United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)** to calculate the annual quantities of **Invisible E-Waste items**.

- **Invisible e-waste** refers to electronic waste that often goes unnoticed due to its nature or appearance, causing consumers to overlook its recyclable potential.
- There are Numerous electronic items falling under this category, such as **cables, e-toys, e-cigarettes, e-bikes, power tools, smoke detectors**, USB sticks, wearable health devices, and smart home gadgets.

What is the WEEE Forum?

- It is the world's **largest multinational centre of competence** as regards operational know-how concerning the management of 'waste electrical and electronic equipment' (or 'WEEE', for short).
- It is a **not-for-profit association of 46 WEEE producer responsibility organisations** across the world and was founded in April 2002.

- Through exchange of best practice and access to its reputable knowledge base toolbox, the WEEE Forum **enables its members to improve their operations** and be known as promoters of the circular economy.

What are the Key Highlights of the Study?

- **Invisible E-Waste Volume:**
 - Consumers fail to recognize almost **one-sixth of global Electronic Waste**, totaling nearly 9 billion kilograms annually.
 - Around **35% of invisible e-waste (approximately 3.2 billion kilograms)** comes from the e-toy category, including race car sets, electric trains, drones, and biking computers.
 - An estimated **844 million vaping devices are discarded** annually, contributing significantly to the invisible e-waste mountain.
- **Value of Invisible E-Waste:**
 - The material value of invisible e-waste amounts to about **USD 9.5 billion** each year, showcasing its **economic importance primarily due to components** like iron, copper, and gold.
- **Global E-Waste Management and Recycling Challenges:**
 - Globally, only a **small fraction of e-waste is properly collected, treated, and recycled**.
 - In Europe, 55 % of e-waste generated is now officially collected and reported. Still, in other parts of the world the reported **average collection rate is just over 17%**.
 - The majority **ends up in landfills, burned, illegally traded**, improperly treated, or hoarded in households.
 - **Lack of public awareness** hampers efforts to develop circular economies for electronic equipment in various parts of the world, necessitating a global approach to e-waste management.
- **Environmental Concerns:**
 - **Improper disposal** of invisible e-waste poses a substantial environmental risk, as hazardous components in these items, **such as lead, mercury, and cadmium**, can contaminate soil and water if not appropriately managed.
- **Recommendations:**
 - Invisible e-waste represents an **untapped resource**, highlighting the potential for economic recovery and the urgent **need to raise awareness about recycling these valuable materials**.
 - The **value of raw materials** in the global e-waste generated amounted to an **estimated USD57 billion in 2019**. Of the total, a sixth or **USD9.5 billion** in material value each year is in the **invisible e-waste category**.
 - Raising awareness is **crucial to unlock the recycling potential** and meet the growing demand for materials in various strategic sectors like renewable energy, electric mobility, industry, communications, aerospace, and defense.

What are the Provisions regarding E-waste in India?

- **E-waste (Management) Rules, 2016** was enacted in 2017, with over 21 products (Schedule-I) included under the purview of the rule. It included Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) and other mercury containing lamps, as well as other such equipment.
- In 2011, a significant notice pertaining to the E-waste (Management and Handling) Regulations of 2010, governed by the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986, was issued.
 - **Extended producer's responsibility (EPR)** was its main feature.
- Government of India notified **E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022** with a major aim to digitize the e-waste management process and enhance visibility.
 - It also restricts the use of hazardous substances (such as lead, mercury, and cadmium) in manufacturing electrical and electronic equipment that have an adverse impact on human

health and the environment.

- **Deposit Refund Scheme** has been introduced as an additional economic instrument wherein the producer charges an additional amount as a deposit at the time of sale of the electrical and electronic equipment and returns it to the consumer along with interest when the end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment is returned.

Conclusion

- Addressing the issue of "invisible e-waste" is imperative to achieve sustainable waste management and environmental preservation.
- Raising awareness about the recyclable potential of these often overlooked electronic items is crucial to minimize their environmental impact, promote [circular economy](#) and unlock their economic value through responsible recycling initiatives.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. What are the impediments in disposing of the huge quantities of discarded solid waste which are continuously being generated? How do we safely remove the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment? **(2018)**

Periodic Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2022-2023

For Prelims: [National Statistical Office \(NSO\)](#), Periodic Labour Force Survey, Terms Related to Employment.

For Mains: Government's Initiatives Related to Employment, Issues relating to Growth, Development and Employment.

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [National Statistical Office \(NSO\)](#) released the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report 2022-2023** on the basis of [Periodic Labour Force Survey](#) conducted during July 2022-June 2023.

What are the Key Findings of the Report?

- **Estimates of Key Labor Market Indicators in Usual Status:**

Indicator	2017-18	2022-23	Trend
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)			
- Total LFPR	49.8%	57.9%	Increased
- LFPR in Rural Areas	50.7%	60.8%	Increased
- LFPR in Urban Areas	47.6%	50.4%	Increased
- Male LFPR	75.8%	78.5%	Increased
- Female LFPR	23.3%	37.0%	Increased
Worker Population Ratio (WPR)			
- Total WPR	46.8%	56.0%	Increased
- WPR in Rural Areas	48.1%	59.4%	Increased
- WPR in Urban Areas	43.9%	47.7%	Increased
- Male WPR	71.2%	76.0%	Increased
- Female WPR	22.0%	35.9%	Increased
Unemployment Rate (UR)			
- Total UR	6.0%	3.2%	Decreased
- UR in Rural Areas	5.3%	2.4%	Decreased
- UR in Urban Areas	7.7%	5.4%	Decreased
- Male UR	6.1%	3.3%	Decreased
- Female UR	5.6%	2.9%	Decreased

▪ **Estimates of Key Labor Market Indicators Current Weekly Status (CWS):**

Indicator	2017-18	2022-23	Trend
Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR)			
- Rural Areas	48.9%	56.7%	Increasing
- Urban Areas	47.1%	49.4%	Increasing
- Male	75.1%	77.4%	Increasing
- Female	21.1%	31.6%	Increasing
Total LFPR	48.4%	54.6%	Increasing
Workforce Participation Rate (WPR)			
- Rural Areas	44.8%	54.2%	Increasing
- Urban Areas	42.6%	46.0%	Increasing
- Male	68.6%	73.5%	Increasing
- Female	19.2%	30.0%	Increasing
Total WPR	44.1%	51.8%	Increasing
Unemployment Rate (UR)			
- Rural Areas	8.4%	4.4%	Decreasing
- Urban Areas	9.5%	7.0%	Decreasing
- Male	8.7%	5.1%	Decreasing
- Female	9.0%	5.1%	Decreasing
Total UR	8.7%	5.1%	Decreasing

Key Terms

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):**
 - LFPR is the percentage of the working-age population (**aged 15 years and above**) that is either employed or unemployed, but willing and looking for employment.
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR):**
 - WPR is defined as the **percentage of employed persons in the population.**
- **Unemployment Rate (UR):**
 - UR is defined as the **percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.**
- **Activity Status**
 - The activity status of a person is determined on the basis of the activities pursued by the person during the specified reference period. When the activity status is determined on the basis of the reference period of the last 365 days preceding the date of the survey, it is known as the usual activity status of the person.
 - **Types of Activity Status:**
 - **Principal Activity Status (PS):**
 - The activity status on which a person spent a relatively long time (major time criterion) during 365 days preceding the date of the survey, was considered the usual principal activity status of the person.
 - **Subsidiary Economic Activity Status (SS):**
 - The activity status in which a person in addition to his/her usual principal status, performs some economic activity for 30 days or more for the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey, was considered the subsidiary economic activity status of the person.
 - **Current Weekly Status (CWS):**
 - The activity status determined on the basis of a reference period of the last 7 days preceding the date of the survey is known as the current weekly

status (CWS) of the person.

What is the Periodic Labour Force Survey?

- **About:**
 - It is a survey conducted by the **NSO** under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** to measure the **employment and unemployment situation in India**.
 - The **NSO** launched the PLFS in April 2017.
- **Objective of PLFS:**
 - To estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators (viz. Worker Population Ratio, Labour Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate) in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the 'Current Weekly Status' (CWS).
 - To estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both 'Usual Status' and CWS in both rural and urban areas annually.

What are the Government's Initiatives Related to Employment?

- [Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise \(SMILE\)](#)
- [PM-DAKSH \(Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi\)](#)
- [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act \(MGNREGA\)](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana \(PMKVY\)](#)
- [Start Up India Scheme](#)
- [Rozgar Mela](#)

What are the Types of Unemployment?

Type of Unemployment	Description
Disguised Unemployment	More people are employed than needed, primarily found in the agricultural and unorganized sectors.
Seasonal Unemployment	Occurs during specific seasons of the year, often affecting agricultural laborers who do not work year-round.
Structural Unemployment	Arises from a mismatch between available jobs and the skills of workers.
Cyclical Unemployment	Linked to economic cycles, with unemployment rising during recessions and declining in periods of growth.
Technological Unemployment	Job losses due to technological changes. India has seen a significant impact from automation.
Frictional Unemployment	Involves a time lag when individuals search for or switch between jobs, often voluntary and not due to job shortages.
Vulnerable Employment	Informal, contract-less work without legal protection, often leading to unrecorded employment.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Disguised unemployment generally means (2013)

- (a) large number of people remain unemployed
- (b) alternative employment is not available
- (c) marginal productivity of labour is zero
- (d) productivity of workers is low

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q. Most of the unemployment in India is structural in nature. Examine the methodology adopted to compute unemployment in the country and suggest improvements. (2023)

World Economic Outlook: IMF

For Prelims: World Economic Outlook, [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#), [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#), Inflation, [World Bank \(WB\)](#).

For Mains: World Economic Outlook, Important International Institutions, Agencies and Further Structure, Mandate etc.

[Source: ET](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) has released its World Economic Outlook 2023 titled- Navigating Global Divergence, which stated that the **Indian Economy** will grow **faster than previously estimated**.

What are the Key Highlights of the World Economic Outlook?

- **Global Growth Forecasts:**
 - The IMF expects **global GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth to be 3%** in 2023, which is the same as its July 2023 forecast.
 - Global GDP growth for 2024, however, has seen a reduction of **10 basis points from the July forecast to 2.9%**.
- **Forecast for China:**
 - The Chinese economy is expected to grow at 5% in 2023, which is higher than the 3% it grew at in 2022.
 - The IMF's October forecast for China's 2023 and 2024 growth is 20 and 30 basis points lower than its July projections, which suggests that the world's second largest economy might be losing momentum.
- **Inflation and Monetary Policy:**
 - The IMF expects Global inflation in **2024 to rise at 5.8%**, faster than the 5.2% estimated three months and these projections do not reflect events of the weekend and their fallout.
- **Concerns and Risks:**
 - Growth has lagged on account of **Tight Monetary Policies** as central banks have kept money supply tight to fight [Inflation](#) which rose to 8.7% in 2022.

- And it has logged on account of an uneven recovery from the pandemic and supply chain disruptions caused by [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#).
- **Uncertainties and Downside Risks:**
 - Investment is lower than pre-pandemic levels, influenced by **higher interest rates and stricter lending conditions**.
 - The IMF advises countries to rebuild fiscal buffers against future shocks.
 - The chance of growth falling below 2% is seen at 15%, with more downside than upside risks for 2024.

What are the Findings Related to India?

- India's GDP for 2023-24 will be 6.3%, a 20-basis point increase from the July 2023 numbers.
 - The IMF's 2023-24 growth forecast for India is **now the same as what the [World Bank \(WB\)](#)** had projected in its India Development Update.
- India's 2024-25 GDP growth forecast has been left unchanged at **6.3%**.
- While the IMF's upward revision of India's 2023-24 GDP growth comes **in the wake of a strong 7.8% growth** in the quarter ending June 2023, the annual growth number is still lower than the 6.5% projection by RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

What are the Key Recommendations?

- **Encourage business investment to boost economic growth**, as seen in the US, where stronger business investment has contributed to the upgraded growth forecast.
- Economic divergence across major economies, particularly in the eurozone, should be closely monitored, and the **factors causing contraction or slower growth in certain regions need to be addressed**.
- Exercise caution in managing inflation and monetary policy. The IMF emphasized that **globally synchronized central bank tightening is essential to control inflation** and maintain economic stability.

What is the IMF?

- The IMF is an **international organization** that promotes global economic growth and financial stability, encourages international trade, and reduces poverty.
 - It was set up in **1945 out of the Bretton Woods conference**.
- Originally, the primary goal of the IMF was to bring about international economic coordination to prevent competing currency devaluation by countries trying to promote their own exports.
 - Eventually, it evolved to be a lender of last resort to governments of countries that had to deal **with severe currency crises**.
- **Reports by IMF:**
 - Global Financial Stability Report.
 - World Economic Outlook.
 - It is usually published twice a year in the months of April and October.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. "Rapid Financing Instrument" and "Rapid Credit Facility" are related to the provisions of lending by which one of the following? (2022)

- (a) Asian Development Bank
- (b) International Monetary Fund
- (c) United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative

(d) World Bank

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) provides quick financial assistance, which is available to all member countries facing urgent balance of payments requirements. The RFI was created as part of a broader reform to make IMF financial support more flexible to meet the diverse needs of member states. The RFI replaces the IMF's previous emergency assistance policy and can be used in a wide variety of circumstances.
- The Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) provides immediate balance of payments (BoP) requirements to low-income countries (LICs) with no ex-post condition, where a full economic program is neither necessary nor feasible. RCF was set up as part of a comprehensive reform to make the fund's financial support more flexible and better suited to suit the diverse needs of LIC including times of crisis.
- There are three areas under the RCF: (i) a "regular window" for immediate BoP needs due to a wide range of sources such as household instability, emergencies and fragility (ii) for immediate BoP needs due to sudden, exogenous shocks. an "exogenous shock window" and (iii) a "large natural disaster window" for immediate BoP needs due to natural disasters where the damage is estimated to be equal to or greater than 20% of the member's GDP.

Q2. "Gold Tranche" (Reserve Tranche) refers to (2020)

- (a)** a loan system of the World Bank
- (b)** one of the operations of a Central Bank
- (c)** a credit system granted by WTO to its members
- (d)** a credit system granted by IMF to its members

Ans: (d)

Q3. 'Global Financial Stability Report' is prepared by the (2016)

- (a)** European Central Bank
- (b)** International Monetary Fund
- (c)** International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- (d)** Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. The World Bank and the IMF, collectively known as the Bretton Woods Institutions, are the two inter-governmental pillars supporting the structure of the world's economic and financial order. Superficially, the World Bank and the IMF exhibit many common characteristics, yet their role, functions and mandate are distinctly different. Elucidate. **(2013)**

Quantum-Technology Backed Green Hydrogen Production

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Recently, a new High Throughput **Quantum** Backed **Green Hydrogen** Production Technology that could promote green hydrogen production in bulk has been developed by Green Keplerate Team from Banaras Hindu University, which will help achieve the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

- What is the Technology Developed ?
- About:
 - The technology developed showcases the uses of Green Hydrogen as eco-friendly energy alternatives. They introduced next-generation quantum-powered photo-catalyst with a charge transfer system coupled with high proton availability and mobility, and delivered quantum catalytic applications for energy generation.
- Features:
 - The state-of-the-art photochemical-reactor design features built-in illumination assembly and external concave reflective panels to maximize the capture of solar energy.
 - The team has engineered a continuous electron coupled proton supply system, propelled with an electron injector mechanism utilizing industrial metal-waste, which ensures the peak rate of Green Hydrogen production at lab scale.
- Significance:
 - Due to the high purity of the hydrogen gas produced, the fuel can be used without additional purification, thus enhancing the cost-effectiveness of the technology.
 - This transformative innovation would offer wide ranging application possibilities across various sectors ranging from energy production to applications in transportation and agriculture.
- National Green Hydrogen Mission
- Quantum Technology
 - Quantum Technology is based on the principles of Quantum mechanics that was developed in the early 20th century to describe nature at the scale of atoms and elementary particles.
 - The first phase of this revolutionary technology has provided the foundations of our understanding of the physical world, including the interaction of light and matter, and led to ubiquitous inventions such as lasers and semiconductor transistors.
 - A second revolution is currently underway with the goal of putting properties of quantum mechanics in the realms of computing.
- Properties of Quantum Computing:
 - Superposition: One of the fundamental properties of quantum computing is superposition. In classical computing, a bit can be in one of two states, 0 or 1. In quantum computing, a qubit can exist in a superposition of these states, meaning it can represent both 0 and 1 simultaneously. This property allows quantum computers to process a vast amount of information in parallel, making them highly efficient for certain types of calculations.
 - Entanglement: Quantum entanglement is a phenomenon where the quantum states of two or more qubits become correlated in such a way that the state of one qubit instantly affects the state of another, even when they are separated by vast distances. Entanglement allows for the creation of quantum gates and algorithms that exploit this unique connection to perform complex operations and computations.
 - Quantum Interference: Quantum interference is a property that arises from the superposition of qubits. It allows quantum computers to combine and manipulate the probability amplitudes associated with different states to enhance the likelihood of obtaining the correct answer to a problem while reducing the likelihood of incorrect results.
- What is National Green Hydrogen Mission? - IN FOCUS | Drishti IAS English
- UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)
- Q 1. Hydrogen fuel cell vehicles produce one of the following as “exhaust” (2010)
 - (a) NH₃
 - (b) CH₄
 - (c) H₂O
 - (d) H₂O₂
- Ans: (c)
- Q 2. Consider the following heavy industries: (2023)
 - Fertilizer plants
 - Oil refineries
 - Steel plants
- Green hydrogen is expected to play a significant role in decarbonizing how many of the above industries?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None
- Ans: (c)
-

Setu Bandhan Scheme: CRIF

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has disclosed the approval of seven crucial bridge projects in **Arunachal Pradesh under the Setu Bandhan Scheme under [Central Road and Infrastructure Fund \(CRIF\)](#)**.

- These projects, with a combined cost of Rs 118.50 Crores, are slated for implementation during the **fiscal year 2023-24**.

What is the Central Road Infrastructure Fund (CRIF)?

- **About:**
 - The Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (**earlier known as Central Road Fund**) was established in 2000 under **Central Road Fund Act, 2000**.
 - The fund comprises **a cess imposed along with excise duty** on petrol and diesel.
 - The administrative control of the CRIF falls under the Ministry of Finance.
 - Earlier it was under the domain of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- **Central Road Fund Act (Amendment), 2018:**
 - The amendment renamed the **Central Road Fund as Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF)**.
 - It allowed using the **proceeds of the road cess under CRIF** to finance other infrastructure projects including waterways, some portion of the railway infrastructure and even social infrastructure including educational institutions, medical colleges etc.
- **Setu Bandhan Scheme:**
 - The "Setu Bandhan Scheme" is a program initiated by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, aimed at facilitating the construction of **Rail Over Bridges (ROBs), Rail Under Bridges (RUBs), and Bridges on State Roads**.
 - This program is designed to enhance **road safety by replacing existing level crossings with bridges**, ultimately reducing accidents at these locations.

Gaza Strip

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

The recent escalation of conflict between **Israel and Hamas militants** has thrust the [Gaza Strip](#) into

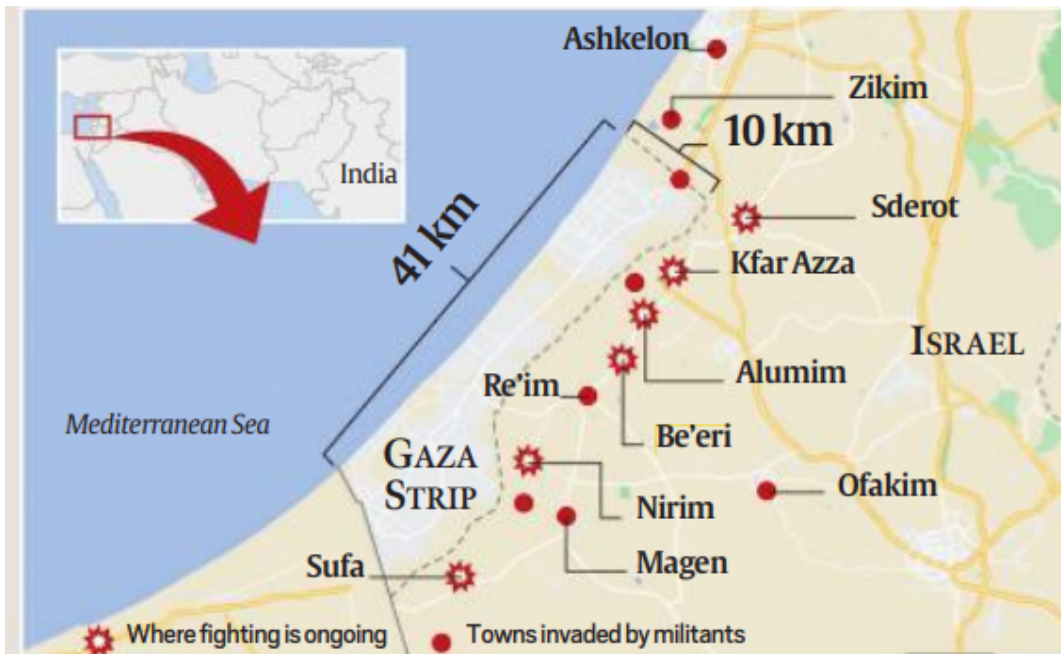
the global spotlight.

- Amidst this turmoil, Israel's defense minister, declared a "**complete siege**" of the **Gaza Strip**, cutting off essential resources. This move has highlighted the long-standing and contentious issue of the **Gaza blockade**, which has been in place **since 2007**.



What are the Significant Aspects Regarding the Gaza Strip?

- **About:** The **Gaza Strip** is situated in the **eastern Mediterranean basin**, sharing borders with **Egypt in the southwest** and Israel to the north and east. To the west, it is bounded by the [Mediterranean Sea](#).
 - It is one of the **most densely populated areas globally**, with over 2 million residents living in a tiny area.
 - The term "**open air prison**" has been widely used by academics, activists, and journalists to characterize the conditions in Gaza.
- **Historical Significance:**
 - The [Six-Day War of 1967](#) resulted in **Israel capturing Gaza from Egypt** and initiating its military occupation of the region.
 - Israel withdrew its settlements from Gaza in 2005, but this period also saw **intermittent blockades on the movement of people and goods**.
 - In 2007, after **Hamas assumed power in Gaza**, **Israel and Egypt** enforced a permanent blockade, justifying it as necessary for security.
 - The [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#) reported that the blockade has severely impacted Gaza's economy, resulting in high unemployment, food insecurity, and aid dependency.
- **Related Border Areas:**
 - **Gaza is encircled by walls on three sides**, and its western border is controlled by Israel, restricting access by sea.
 - Three functional border crossings exist - **Karem Abu Salem Crossing** and **Erez Crossing controlled by Israel**, and **Rafah Crossing controlled by Egypt**.
 - These crossings have been sealed in response to recent hostilities.
- **Associated Places in Spotlight:**



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. Yom Kippur War was fought between which sides/ countries? (2008)

- (a) Turkey and Greece
- (b) Serbs and Croats
- (c) Israel, and Arab countries led by Egypt and Syria
- (d) Iran and Iraq

Ans: (c)

Q2. Mediterranean Sea is a border of which of the following countries? (2017)

1. Jordan
2. Iraq
3. Lebanon
4. Syria

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 3 and 4 only

Ans: (c)

- The following countries have a coastline on the Mediterranean Sea:
- Northern shore (from west to east): Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Turkey.
- Eastern shore (from north to south): Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt.
- **Hence, 3 and 4 are correct.**
- Southern shore (from west to east): Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt.
- Island nations: Malta, Cyprus.

▪ Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q3. Which one of the following countries of South-West Asia does not open out to the Mediterranean Sea? (2015)

- (a) Syria
- (b) Jordan
- (c) Lebanon
- (d) Israel

Ans: (b)

Q4. The area known as 'Golan Heights' sometimes appears in the news in the context of the events related to (2015)

- (a) Central Asia
- (b) Middle East
- (c) South-East Asia
- (d) Central Africa

Ans: (b)

Q5. The term "two-state solution" is sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of (2018)

- (a) China
- (b) Israel
- (c) Iraq
- (d) Yemen

Ans: (b)