



GIFT City and Bullion Exchange

For Prelims: IFSCA, IIBX, SEZ, RBI SEBI

For Mains: GIFT city and its Significance

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone of the headquarters building of the [International Financial Services Centers Authority \(IFSCA\)](#) in **GIFT City, Gandhinagar**.

- The building has been conceptualized as an iconic structure, reflective of the growing prominence and stature of GIFT-IFSC as a leading International Financial Centre.
- He also launched the **India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX)**, India's first International Bullion Exchange in GIFT-IFSC the NSE IFSC-SGX Connect.

What is a Bullion Exchange?

- **Bullion**
 - Bullion refers to **physical gold and silver of high purity that is often kept in the form of bars, ingots, or coins.**
 - Bullion can sometimes be considered **legal tender and is often held as reserves by central banks** or held by institutional investors.
 - The Government had notified in August 2020 about the Bullion Spot Delivery Contract and Bullion Depository Receipt (BDR) with **underlying Bullion as Financial Product and related services as Financial Services.**
- **Bullion Exchange:**
 - A bullion Exchange is a market through which **buyers and sellers trade gold and silver as well as associated derivatives.**
 - There are various bullion markets around the world with the **London Bullion Market known as the primary global market** trading platform for gold and silver.

What is IIBX?

- **About:**
 - India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX) was first announced in the Union Budget 2020 for easing the Gold Import by Jewellers in India.
 - It is a **platform that not only enrolls jewellers to trade on the exchange, but has also set up necessary infrastructure** to store physical gold and silver.
 - IIBX will facilitate efficient price discovery with the assurance of responsible sourcing and quality, apart from giving impetus to the financialisation of gold in India.
 - IFSCA is entrusted with notifying the eligible qualified jewellers in India for directly importing gold through IIBX.
- **Significance**

- It will empower **India to gain its rightful place in the global bullion market and serve the global value chain** with integrity and quality.
- IIBX also re-enforces the commitment of the Government of India towards enabling India to be able to influence global bullion prices as a principal consumer.

What is GIFT City?

- **GIFT (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City) City** is located in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- It consists of a **multi-service [Special Economic Zone \(SEZ\)](#)**, which houses India's first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) and an exclusive **[Domestic Tariff Area \(DTA\)](#)**.
- GIFT city (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City) is envisaged as an **integrated hub for financial and technology services not just for India but for the world.**
 - IFSCA is the **unified regulator for the development and regulation of financial products**, financial services and financial institutions in International Financial Services Centers (IFSCs) in India.
- The social infrastructure in the city includes a school, medical facilities, a proposed hospital, GIFT City business club with indoor and outdoor sports facilities. It also includes integrated well-planned residential housing projects making GIFT City a truly "Walk to Work" City.

What is NSE IFSC-SGX Connect?

- It is a **framework between NSE's subsidiary in the GIFT International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)** and Singapore Exchange Limited (SGX).
- Under Connect, all orders on NIFTY derivatives placed by members of Singapore Exchange will be **routed to and matched on the NSE-IFSC order** matching and trading platform.
- Broker-Dealers from India and across international jurisdictions are expected to participate in large numbers for trading derivatives through Connect.
- It will **deepen liquidity in derivative markets at GIFT-IFSC**, bringing in more international participants and creating a positive impact on the financial ecosystem in the GIFT-IFSC.

What is the International Financial Services Centres Authority?

- **Establishment:**
 - It was established in April 2020 under the International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019.
 - It is headquartered at GIFT City, Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- **Functions:**
 - The Authority shall regulate all such financial services, financial products and Financial Institutions in an IFSC. It may also recommend to the Central Government such other financial products, financial services and financial institutions which may be permitted in the IFSCs.
- **Powers:**
 - All powers exercisable by the respective financial sector regulatory (**viz. [Reserve Bank of India](#), [Securities and Exchange Board of India](#), IRDAI, and [Pension Fund and Regulatory Development Authority](#) etc.) under the respective Acts shall be solely exercised by the Authority in the IFSCs in so far as the regulation of financial products, financial services and FIs that are permitted in the IFSC are concerned.**
- **Processes and Procedures:**
 - The processes and procedures to be followed by the Authority shall be governed in accordance with the provisions of the respective Acts of Parliament of India applicable to such financial products, services or institutions, as the case may be.
- **Grants by the Central Govt:**
 - The Central Govt. may, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law on this behalf, make to the Authority grants of such sums of money as the Central Government may think fit for being utilized for the purposes of the Authority.
- **Transactions in Foreign Currency:**
 - The transactions of financial services in the IFSCs shall be done in the foreign currency as specified by the Authority in consultation with the Central Govt.

Rules regarding Suspension of MPs

For Prelims: Suspension of Members of Parliament, Provisions related to the Houses of Parliament

For Mains: Rules for the Suspension of MPs

Why in News?

Recently, [Lok Sabha](#) has suspended four (Member of Parliament) MPs and [Rajya Sabha](#) also suspended 23 MPs as they were disrupting the proceedings of the house.

Why is the Disruption Done by the MPs?

- As per the analysis done by political leaders, and presiding officers there is **four main causes that lead to disruption:**
 - MPs do not have enough time to raise crucial issues.
 - The government's unresponsiveness and the Treasury benches their retaliatory posture.
 - Parties intentionally cause disturbance for political or publicity reasons.
 - The failure to take immediate action against MPs who interrupt parliamentary proceedings.

Who can suspend MPs?

- **General Principle:**
 - The general principle is that it is the role and duty of the **Presiding Officer — Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairman of Rajya Sabha** — to maintain order so that the House can function smoothly.
 - In order to ensure that proceedings are conducted in the proper manner, **the Speaker/Chairman is empowered** to force a member to withdraw from the House.
- **Rules of Procedure and Conduct:**
 - **Rule 373:** The Speaker can direct a member **to withdraw immediately from the House** if he finds the member's conduct disorderly.
 - Members so ordered to withdraw shall do so forthwith and shall remain absent during the remainder of the day's sitting.
 - **Rule 374:** The Speaker can name a member **who disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the House** by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business thereof.
 - And the member so named will be suspended from the House for a period not exceeding the remainder of the session.
 - A member suspended under this rule shall forthwith withdraw from the precincts of the House."
 - **Rule 374A:** Rule 374A was incorporated in the Rule Book in December 2001.
 - In case of gross violation or severe charges, on being named by the Speaker, the member stands automatically suspended from the service of the House for five consecutive sittings or the remainder of the session, whichever is less.
 - **Rule 255 (Rajya Sabha):** Under Rule 255 of the General Rules of Procedure of the Rajya

Sabha, the presiding **officer of the House can invoke suspension of the Member of Parliament.**

- The Chairman as per this rule can direct any member whose conduct in his opinion was not right or was disorderly.
- **Rule 256 (Rajya Sabha):** It provides **for suspension of members.**
 - The Chairman can suspend a member from the service of the Council for a period not exceeding the remainder of the Session.

What are the terms of Suspension?

- The maximum period of suspension is for the remainder of the session.
- Suspended members cannot enter the chamber or attend the meetings of the committees.
- He will not be eligible to give notice for discussion or submission.
- He loses the right to get a reply to his questions.

What are Interventions by the Court?

- **Article 122 of the Constitution** says parliamentary proceedings cannot be questioned before a court.
- Although courts have intervened in the procedural functioning of the legislature like,
 - Maharashtra Legislative Assembly passed a **resolution in its 2021 Monsoon Session suspending 12 BJP MLAs for a year.**
 - The matter came before the **Supreme Court**, which held that the resolution was **ineffective in law beyond the remainder of the Monsoon Session.**

Way Forward

- It is difficult to deal with planned parliamentary offenses and deliberate disturbances for publicity or political reasons.
 - So, **opposition members should play a constructive role in Parliament** and they should be allowed to put forward their views and express themselves in a dignified manner.
- There is a need to strike balance between deliberate disruption and raising the important issue.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Regarding the office of the Lok Sabha speaker, consider the following statements: (2012)

1. He/She holds the office during the pleasure of the President.
2. He/She need not be a member of the House at the time of his/her election but has to become a member of the House within six months from the date of his/her election.
3. If he/she intends to resign, the letter of his/her resignation has to be addressed to the Deputy Speaker.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The Speaker is elected by the members of Lok Sabha from amongst its members (as soon as may

be, after its first sitting). Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

- Whenever the office of the Speaker falls vacant, the Lok Sabha elects another member to fill the vacancy. The date of election of the Speaker is fixed by the President. Usually, the Speaker remains in office during the life of the Lok Sabha. However, he has to vacate his office earlier in any of the following three cases:
- If he ceases to be a member of the Lok Sabha. if he resigns by writing to the Deputy Speaker; Hence, statement 3 is correct.
- If he is removed by a resolution passed by a majority of all the members of the Lok Sabha. Such a resolution can be moved only after giving 14 days advance notice. Hence, statement 1 is not correct. **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding joint session of the two houses of the Parliament. Enumerate the occasions when this would normally happen and also the occasions when it cannot, with reasons thereof. (2017)

Source: IE

Depletion in Groundwater Levels

For Prelims: Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal), Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA), Ground Water Depletion

For Mains: Ground Water Depletion, Government Policies and Interventions

Why in News?

As per the recent analysis done by [Central Ground Water Board \(CGWB\)](#), Ground water levels in some parts of the Country are declining.

- The data collected by CGWB during November 2021 when compared with the decadal mean of November 2011 to Nov 2020 indicates that about 70% wells have registered rise in water level whereas, **about 30% of the wells monitored have registered decline in ground water level mostly in the range of 0-2 m.**

What is the Present Status of Groundwater Depletion in India?

- **Status of Groundwater Depletion:**
 - According to the CGWB, with **230 billion metre cubes of groundwater drawn out each year** for irrigating agriculture lands in India, many parts of the country are experiencing rapid depletion of groundwater.
 - The total estimated groundwater depletion in India is in the range of 122-199 billion metre cubes.
 - **89% of ground water extracted** is used in the **irrigation sector**, making it the highest category user in the country.
 - This is followed by ground water for domestic use which is 9% of the extracted

groundwater. Industrial use of ground water is 2%. **50% of urban water requirements** and **85% of rural domestic water requirements** are also fulfilled by ground water.

▪ **Causes:**

- **Green Revolution: Green Revolution** enabled water intensive crops to be grown in drought prone/ water deficit regions, leading to over extraction of groundwater.
 - Frequent pumping of water from the ground without waiting for its replenishment leads to quick depletion.
 - Further, Subsidies on electricity and high **MSP (Minimum Support Price)** for water intensive crops.
- **Industries Requirement:** Water contamination as in the case of pollution by landfills, septic tanks, leaky underground gas tanks, and from overuse of fertilizers and pesticides leading to damage and depletion of groundwater resources.
- **Inadequate Regulation:** Inadequate regulation of groundwater encourages the exhaustion of groundwater resources without any penalty.
- **Federal Issue:** Water being a **State subject**, initiatives on water management including water conservation and water harvesting and making available adequate drinkable water to citizens in the Country is primarily States' responsibility.

What is Central Ground Water Board?

- It is a subordinate office of the **Ministry of Water Resources and is the National Apex Agency** entrusted with the responsibilities of providing scientific inputs for management, exploration, monitoring, assessment, augmentation and regulation of groundwater resources of the country.
- It was established in 1970 by renaming the **Exploratory Tubewells Organization under the Ministry of Agriculture** and later on merged with the Groundwater Wing of the Geological Survey of India during 1972.
- It has its headquarters at Bhujal Bhawal, Faridabad, Haryana.
- Various activities related to regulation of ground water development in the country are being looked after by the **Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA), constituted under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986.**

What are the Initiatives Taken by the Government?

▪ **Central Government:**

- It is promoting the concept of **conjunctive use of surface and groundwater based on the village/gram panchayat level water security plan** prepared in a scientific manner through participation of communities/stakeholders.
- **Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal):** It is a Rs. 6000 crore Central Sector Scheme with World Bank assistance, for **sustainable management of ground water resources** with community participation.
- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA):** It was launched in 2019 in **256 water stressed districts in the country to improve water availability including ground water conditions in these areas.**
 - It has special emphasis on creation of recharge structures, rejuvenation of traditional water bodies, intensive afforestation etc.
- **Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme:** The CGWB has taken up **Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme.**
 - The program is aimed to delineate aquifer disposition and their characterization for preparation of aquifer/ area specific groundwater management plans with community participation.
- **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT):** The Mission focuses on development of basic urban infrastructure in the **AMRUT** cities, such as water supply, sewerage & septage management, storm water drainage, green spaces & parks, and non-motorized urban transport.

▪ **State Government:**

- There are many states government initiative like,
 - Mukhyamantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan' in Rajasthan,
 - 'Jalyukt Shibar' in Maharashtra,
 - 'Sujalam Sufalam Abhiyan' in Gujarat,
 - 'Mission Kakatiya' in Telangana,
 - Neeru Chettu' in Andhra Pradesh,
 - Jal Jeevan Hariyali in Bihar,
 - 'Jal Hi Jeevan' in Haryana,
 - Kudimaramath scheme in Tamil Nadu.

Way Forward

- **Artificial Recharge of Groundwater:** It is the process of spreading or impounding water on the land to increase the infiltration through the soil and percolation to the aquifer or of injecting water by wells directly into the aquifer.
- **Groundwater Management Plants:** Installing groundwater management plants at local levels will help the people know the groundwater availability in their area, making them use it wisely.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2014)

1. Animal Welfare Board of India is established under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
2. National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body.
3. National Ganga River Basin Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The Animal Welfare Board of India was established in 1962 under Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) was established in 2009 under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, which declared Ganges as the "National River" of India. It is a financing, planning, implementing, monitoring and coordinating authority for the river Ganges. **It functions under the erstwhile Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (now Ministry of Jal Shakti). It is chaired by the Prime Minister of India. Hence, statement 3 is correct. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. What is water stress? How and why does it differ regionally in India? (2019)

Q. What are the salient features of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan launched by the Government of India for water conservation and water security? (2020)

Source: PIB

State Assembly Sittings

For Prelims: State Legislature, Parliament, Ordinance, Private Member Bill, National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution

For Mains: Significance of House Sittings on the country, Suggestion on Idle Sittings, Benefits of Increase Sittings

Why in News?

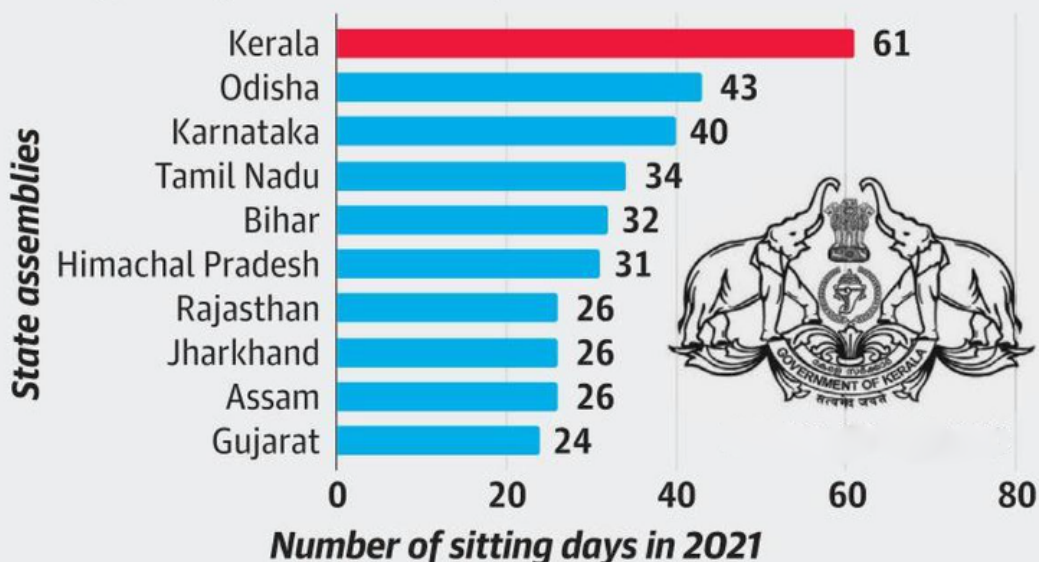
Recently, a report titled "**The Annual Review of State Laws, 2021**" was released by PRS Legislative Research.

- As per the report, Kerala got first place in 2021, with its House sitting for 61 days, the highest for any State.
- Kerala had also [promulgated 144 ordinances](#), the highest in the country last year.

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Counting the sittings

The chart shows the State Assemblies which sat for more than 20 sessions in 2021. Kerala recorded the most such sittings last year followed by Odisha and Karnataka



What are the Highlights of the Report?

- **Sittings:**
 - States such as Manipur, Odisha, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh have laid down a **minimum number of sitting days through the Rules of Procedure**, varying from 40 days in Punjab to 90 days in Uttar Pradesh.
 - In 2005, Karnataka even came out with a law — the **Karnataka Conduct of Government Business in the State Legislature Act** — with the stipulation of a minimum of 60 days
- **Ordinance:**
 - **Andhra Pradesh** with 20 ordinances and **Maharashtra** with 15 followed **Kerala**, wherein Bills replacing 33 ordinances became Acts.
 - Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh also **promulgated ordinances** to give effect to budget proposals.
- **Passage of Bill:**
 - 44% of the **Bills** adopted by 28 State Assemblies were passed within a day of their introduction.
 - Gujarat, West Bengal, Punjab and Bihar were among the eight States which **passed all Bills on the day of introduction**.
 - Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya, Odisha and Rajasthan **took more than five days** to pass a majority of their Bills.
 - In **Kerala**, 94% of the Bills were passed after at least five days of their introduction in the legislature.
 - In respect of **Meghalaya**, it was 80% and in the case of **Karnataka**, 70%.
- **Focus Areas of Sittings:**
 - **Education** was the top priority with 21% of all laws passed in 2021 related to this subject.
 - After Education, **Taxation and Urban Governance** accounted for the largest share of state laws passed in 2021.
 - Several of the other sectors saw crucial legislations, including ones relating to **online gaming, reservation** of jobs for local candidates from the state, and the **safety of women and children**

How often should an Idle State Assembly Meet?

- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution:**
 - **The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2000-02)**, headed by former Chief Justice of India M.N. Venkatachaliah, had prescribed that:
 - The Houses of State (/Union Territory) legislatures with:
 - **Less than 70 members** (Example: Puducherry) should meet for at least 50 days a year.
 - **Other Houses (Tamil Nadu), at least 90 days a year.**
- **The Presiding Officers Conference:**
 - **The Presiding Officers' conference**, held in Gandhinagar during January 2016, suggested:
 - State legislatures hold a **minimum of 60 days of sittings in a year**.
 - Between 2016 and 2021, **the PRS points out, 23 State Assemblies met for an average of 25 days.**

What are the Benefits of Increased House Sittings?

- **Healthy Discussion:**
 - Increased sitting in Houses (State or Parliament) would provide **more time to the members for discussion on the bills**, have a **healthy debate** by providing facts and arguments which would eventually lead to **healthy functioning of the house**.
- **Ease in Passing of Bills:**
 - As the number of sitting in a house increases, **more bills could be tabled** as passed in a particular session.
 - Increased number of bills passed on various spheres would enable the government to bring out **efficient and effective governance**.
- **Guillotine Closure:**
 - It is one when the **undiscussed clauses of a bill or a resolution** are also put to vote along with the discussed ones **due to wanting of time** (as the time allotted for the

discussion is over).

- Increased sittings would provide more time for the discussion and reduce the cases of **guillotine closure**.

▪ **Private Member Bills:**

- Only 14 **private member bills** out of thousands became laws since 1952.
- Increased sittings would **provide more time to the private members** to not only prepare and present the bill in the house, but also have a detailed and healthy discussion for its passage.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. When a bill is referred to a joint sitting of both the Houses of the Parliament, it has to be passed by: (2015)

- (a) a simple majority of members present and voting
- (b) three-fourths majority of members present and voting
- (c) two-thirds majority of the Houses
- (d) absolute majority of the Houses

Ans: (a)

Explanation:

- Article 108 of Indian Constitution deals with the joint sitting of both Houses of the Parliament. A joint sitting of Parliament is called by the President if a bill (ordinary) passed by one House has been rejected by the other, or both the Houses finally disagree on the amendments to be made in the bill, or if more than 6 months have passed without the receiving House taking any action on the bill.
- The joint sitting of Parliament is chaired by the Speaker of Lok Sabha and the bill is deemed to be passed with a simple majority of the members present and voting.
- Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.

Mains

Q. The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding joint sessions of the two houses of the Parliament. Enumerate the occasions when this would normally happen and also the occasions when it cannot, with reasons thereof. (2017)

Source: TH

Chabahar Port

For Prelims: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Chabahar Port, Gulf of Oman, International North-South Transport Corridor, Belt, and Road Initiative (BRI)

For Mains: Significance of Chabahar Port in Enhancing Regional Connectivity

Why in News?

Recently, during the foreign ministerial meeting of the [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\)](#) meeting, India pushes for a greater role for [Chabahar Port](#) in increasing the connectivity in the region.

- India will be taking over the SCO presidency next year.

What other points Highlighted by India?

- On Afghanistan, highlighted that India extended humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan to help it fight **hunger and food insecurity**.
- Raised the problems of the [energy crisis](#) and [food crisis](#) arising from the [Ukraine conflict](#).
- Highlighted the need to adopt zero tolerance policy towards [terrorism](#).
- He also appreciated the entry of **Iran into the organization**.
 - Iran's inclusion will strengthen the SCO forum as now all the member nations will have the opportunity to use the facilities of the Chabahar Port in Iran.

What is Chabahar Port?

- **About:**
 - The port of Chabahar is **located in southeastern Iran in the Gulf of Oman**.
 - It is the only Iranian port with direct access to the ocean.
 - It's located in the Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich Iran's southern coast.
 - The Chabahar port is considered a gateway to golden opportunities for trade by India, Iran and Afghanistan with central Asian countries.



- **Significance:**
 - No other international port has seen the level of involvement and enthusiasm from Chabahar as India.
 - It will make way for **India to bypass Pakistan in transporting goods to Afghanistan using a sea-land route**.

- At present, Pakistan does not allow India to transport its territory to Afghanistan.
- It would give momentum to the [International North-South Transport Corridor](#) of which both are initial signatories along with Russia.
 - Iran is the key gateway to this project.
 - It would counter the Chinese presence in the Arabian.



What is INSTC?

▪ About:

- The **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** project was originally decided between India, Iran, and Russia in 2000 in St Petersburg, and subsequently included 10 other central Asian and west Asian countries:
 - Azerbaijan Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Oman, Syria, and Bulgaria are observers.
 - Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan are not party to the INSTC agreement but are interested in using the transport corridor.
- It envisions a **7,200-km-long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road routes for transporting freight**, aimed at reducing the carriage cost between India and Russia by about 30% and bringing down the transit time from 40 days by more than half.
- The route primarily involves moving freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia.

▪ Objective:

- The objective of the corridor is to **increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Astrakhan, etc.**

▪ Significance:

- It would be provided as a viable and fairer alternative to China's [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#).
- Further, it will enhance regional connectivity.

Way Forward

- This project would give a boost to trade as India will get access to Afghanistan and beyond Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Europe.
- This project is also important in Countering the Chinese presence in the Arabian sea.
- Further it would enhance people to people contact in this region and also boost trade and investments, in future it could be shaped into one common market like European Union or ASEAN.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questionv (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. What is the importance of developing Chabahar Port by India? (2017)

- (a) India's trade with African countries will enormously increase.
- (b) India's relations with oil-producing Arab countries will be strengthened.
- (c) India will not depend on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- (d) Pakistan will facilitate and protect the installation of a gas pipeline between Iraq and India.

Ans: (c)

- A commercial contract for the development and operations of Chabahar Port was signed between India and Iran in 2016. The contract is for a period of 10 years.
- **Chabahar Port will provide India with an alternative and reliable access route into Afghanistan and also a reliable and more direct sea-route access into the Central Asian region.**
- It will eliminate dependency on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. What do you understand by 'The String of Pearls'? How does it impact India? Briefly outline the steps taken by India to counter this.(2013)

[Source: TH](#)

Google Street View: National Geospatial Policy

For Prelims: Geospatial sector of India, Remote Sensing, GIS (Geographic Information System), GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System), 3D modelling, New guidelines for the Geo-Spatial Sector in India

For Mains: Geospatial sector of India - Challenges and Opportunities, Significance of Liberalisation in the Geospatial Sector

Why in News?

Google Street View is launched in ten cities of India under the Guidelines of the **National Geospatial Policy (NGP), 2021**.

- NGP 2021 lets Indian companies collect map data and license it to others.

What is Google Street View?

- **About:**

- Google Street View is **an immersive 360-degree view of a location captured using special cameras mounted on vehicles or on backpacks** by data collectors moving around the city streets.
- The images are then **patched together to create 360-degree view which users** can swipe through to get a detailed view of the location.
 - It is available to view on Android and iOS using the app, or as a web viewer.
- **Restrictions:**
 - Street View in India is **not allowed for restricted areas like government properties, defence establishments and military areas.**
 - This means in a place like Delhi, the cantonment area will be out of bounds for Street View.
- **Issues with Street View:**
 - Over the years a lot of privacy and **other issues have been raised regarding Street View.**
 - A lot of these stem from people's faces and other identifiable aspects, like car **number plates and house numbers, being captured by the camera and being misused** in different ways.
 - There have also been **security concerns about this kind of view being available, especially for sensitive locations.**
 - Along with India, **Google has had issues with the local authorities** in countries like Austria, Australia and Germany, though it has come back in most of these locations.

What is National Geospatial Policy 2021?

- **About:**
 - The National Geospatial Policy, 2021 liberalises the geospatial sector and democratises the **datasets generated by use of public funds.**
 - The Policy seeks **to empower citizens and enterprises to create, access and use [geospatial data](#) and information for addressing developmental needs** of the country while also **safeguarding its security interests.**
 - It provides for **augmenting the [geospatial ecosystem](#) in the country,** as well as globally, by encouraging **geospatial knowledge generation,** skill sets and expertise etc.
- **Key Features:**
 - The Survey of India topographic data **will be made widely and easily accessible.**
 - **[Geospatial data](#) and information produced using public funds will be shared as per the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (2012).**
 - Efforts will be made to **standardise the storage formats of geospatial data** so that it becomes available in an interoperable machine-readable form.
 - A standardised **curriculum will be developed for geospatial data education.**
 - A **certifying body will be constituted to review the practices of professionals** such as surveyors, and certify individuals on the completion of courses in geospatial education.
- **Need:**
 - Different government agencies often digitise and store geospatial data. There is **often a duplication of efforts when multiple agencies store** such data leading to a wastage of resources.
 - There is a need to reduce this wastage by standardising the formats of geospatial data storage and dissemination
 - Although geospatial education is provided in around 200 universities/institutions, there is **no standardisation in its curriculum.**
 - Access to geospatial data by non-governmental entities including both businesses and individuals is restricted.
 - The data shared by the government is often not machine-readable.

What is the State of Geospatial Ecosystem in India?

- **Statistics:**
 - The Indian geospatial economy is currently valued at **Rs 38,972 crore and employs approximately 4.7 lakh people.**
 - In 2021, the geospatial market **was dominated by defence and intelligence (14.05 %), urban development (12.93 %) and utilities (11 %) segments,** cumulatively

accounting for 37.98% of the total geospatial market.

▪ **Significance of the Sector:**

- **A Potential Sector:** The sector has potential to grow to Rs 63,100 crore at 12.8% by the end of 2025 as per India Geospatial Artha Report 2021.
- **Employment:** Private Companies like Amazon, Zomato etc. use this technology to smoothly conduct their delivery operations which supports livelihood generation.
- **Implementation of Schemes:** The schemes like the [Gati Shakti program](#) can be smoothly implemented using geospatial technology.
- **Make in India:** Focusing on the sector allows Indian companies to develop indigenous apps like an Indian version of google maps.
- **Management of Land records:** Using the technology, the data related to a large number of landholdings can be appropriately tagged and digitised.
 - It will not only help better targeting but also reduce the quantum of land disputes in courts.
- **Crisis Management:** Technology and logistics were perfectly supported through the use of geospatial technology during the Covid-19 vaccination drive.
- **Intelligent Maps and Models:** Geospatial technology may be used to create intelligent maps and models that may be interactively queried to get the desired results in a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) application or may be used to advocate social investigations and policy-based research.

[Source: IE](#)

Core Sectors Output

Why in News?

India's [eight core sectors'](#) output growth moderated to **12.7% in June, 2022** from **18.1% in May, 2022** with all sectors **except crude oil registering an uptick in production**.

Expanding core | The output of eight core sectors expanded by 12.7% in June 2022, better than 9.4% recorded in the year-earlier period



What are Core Sectors?

- **Eight Core Sectors:**
 - Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertiliser, Steel, Cement, Electricity
- **About:**
 - These comprise **40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.
 - **The eight core sector industries in decreasing order of their weightage:**
 - Refinery Products> Electricity> Steel> Coal> Crude Oil> Natural Gas> Cement> Fertilizers.
- **Index of Industrial Production:**
 - IIP is an indicator that measures the **changes in the volume of production of industrial products during a given period**.
 - It is compiled and published monthly by the **Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**.
 - It is a composite indicator that **measures the growth rate of industry groups classified under:**
 - **Broad sectors:**
 - Mining, Manufacturing, and Electricity.
 - **Use-based sectors:**
 - Basic Goods, Capital Goods, and Intermediate Goods.
 - Base Year for IIP is **2011-2012**.
 - **Significance of IIP:**
 - It is used by **government agencies** including the Ministry of Finance, the **Reserve Bank of India**, etc, for policy-making purposes.
 - IIP remains extremely relevant for the calculation of the quarterly and advance **GDP (Gross Domestic Product)** estimates.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. In the 'Index of Eight Core Industries', which one of the following is given the highest weight? (2015)

- (a) Coal production
- (b) Electricity generation
- (c) Fertilizer production
- (d) Steel production

Ans: (b)

Explanation:

- In 2015, Electricity was having the highest weightage in the index of 8 core industries.
- The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- The current weight (April 2021), of eight core industries is given below:
 - Petroleum Refinery production (28.04%), Electricity (19.85%), Steel (17.92%), Coal production (10.33%), Crude Oil (8.98%), Natural Gas production (6.88%), Cement production (5.37%), Fertilizer production (2.63%).
- Index of Industrial Production
 - The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index which details out the growth of various sectors in an economy such as mineral mining, electricity, manufacturing, etc.
- It is compiled and published monthly by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation six weeks after the reference month ends, i.e., a lag of six weeks.
 - The Base Year of the Index of Eight Core Industries has been revised from the year 2004-05 to 2011-12 from April, 2017.

- Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

Mains

Q. Account for the change in the spatial pattern of the Iron and Steel industry in the world. **(2014).**

Source: TH

Kali Bein

Why in News?

Recently, Punjab's Chief Minister fell sick and was admitted to a hospital after drinking a glass of water directly from the **Kali Bein rivulet**.

What is Kali Bein?

- **About:**
 - Its 165 km rivulet starts from Hoshiarpur, runs across four districts, and meets the **confluence of the rivers [Beas and Sutlej](#) in Kapurthala.**
 - On its banks there are around 80 villages and half a dozen small and large towns.
 - Wastewater from there as well as industrial waste used to flow into the rivulet via a drain, turning its waters black, hence the name Kali Bein (black rivulet).
 - Dense grass and weeds grew on the water until a cleaning project started.
- **Significance:**
 - It has great significance in the **Sikh religion and history.**
 - The first **[Guru Nanak Dev](#), is said to have got enlightenment here.**
 - When Guru Nanak Dev was staying at Sultanpur Lodhi, he **would bathe in the Kali Bein.**
 - He is said to have disappeared into the waters one day, before emerging on the third day.
 - The first thing he recited was the Mool Mantra of the Sikh religion.

Source: IE

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/30-07-2022/print>