India Japan 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting

Source: TH

Why in News?

India and Japan recently held their **third 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting** in **New Delhi.**

- The discussions, which took place against the backdrop of growing geopolitical tensions and **China's assertiveness in the** Indo-Pacific region, focused on deepening the bilateral cooperation across various sectors.

What are the Key Highlights of the India and Japan 2+2 Meet?

- **Free and Open Indo-Pacific:** Both countries emphasised their commitment to a **free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.**
- The strategic alignment is driven by **China's growing military presence** in the region.
- The ministers supported **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)'s** **unity and centrality**, endorsing the **ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).**
- The AOIP emphasises **ASEAN's central role in fostering cooperation, stability, and peace across** the **Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.**
- It also reflects ASEAN's commitment to promoting a **rules-based regional order** founded on the principles of the **United Nations Charter.**
- They reaffirmed their commitment to **advancing cooperation within the** Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), following the discussions at the **Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting** in July 2024.
- Japan and India expressed intentions to collaborate in security assistance to third countries for regional peace and stability.
- **Defence and Security Cooperation:** The ministers recognized defence cooperation as a pillar of their **Special Strategic and Global Partnership.**
- **Japan's National Security Strategy,** issued in 2022, further bolstered the bilateral defence relationship.
- Progress made in multilateral exercises such as **Veer Guardian (2023), Dharma Guardian (Military), JIMEX (naval), SHINYUU Maitri (air force)** and **Malabar (along with Australia and the US)** were emphasised.
- They appreciated advancements in **unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs)** and **robotics cooperation.**
- Both countries agreed to revise and update the **2008 Joint Declaration** to address contemporary security challenges. This update will reflect current priorities and align with the evolving global

security landscape.

- **Terrorism and Extremism:** Both sides condemned terrorism and violent **extremism,** with particular emphasis on **cross-border terrorism.**
- They called for bringing perpetrators of the **26/11 Mumbai attacks and other incidents to justice.**
- Efforts to eliminate terrorist **safe havens**, cut off financing channels, and halt the movement of terrorists were supported, with specific mention of groups such as **Al Qaeda, ISIS/Daesh, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).**
- Technology: Discussions highlighted the transfer of Japan's Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN) and related technologies.
- The Unicorn system is a **unified complex radio antenna** that integrates multiple antennas into a single horn-shaped structure. It aims to **minimise radar signatures, making warships less detectable** by enemy forces.
- The system can also **detect missiles and drones**, enhancing situational awareness through its ability to sense radio waves over a wide area.
- Both sides agreed to explore **Japanese naval ship maintenance in India** and discussed future defence technology cooperation.
- **Women, Peace, and Security (WPS):** Japan and India emphasised the role of **women in peacekeeping operations** and supported the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda.
- The WPS Agenda is a global framework aimed at addressing the gendered impacts of conflict and **enhancing women's participation in peace processes.** This agenda was formalised with the **adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000,** which highlights the critical roles **women play in preventing and resolving conflicts, peacebuilding, and post-conflict recovery.**

What are 2+2 Meetings?

- **About: 2+2 meetings** are high-level diplomatic dialogues involving the **foreign and defence ministers** of two countries.
- This format facilitates in-depth discussions on **strategic, security, and defence issues, aiming to enhance bilateral relations** and address mutual concerns, which can help in resolving conflicts and building stronger partnerships.
- **India's 2+2 Partners:**
- **United States:** The **US is India's oldest and most prominent 2+2 partner.** The first 2+2 dialogue between India and the US occurred in 2018.
- This dialogue replaced the previous **Strategic and Commercial Dialogue** and was intended to deepen strategic cooperation and address shared concerns.
- **Russia:** The inaugural 2+2 meeting with Russia took place in 2021. Both countries share similar views on a **multipolar world order** and use this platform to discuss a broad range of regional and international issues.
- In addition to the US and Russia, India has engaged in 2+2 meetings with **Australia, Japan, Brazil** and the **United Kingdom** to bolster defence and security cooperation, enhance strategic depth, and align on a multipolar world order.

What is the Significance of ASEAN for India and Japan?

- ASEAN is crucial for both India and Japan due to its strategic, economic, and geopolitical significance.
- For India, **ASEAN represents a vital component of its** Act East policy, **enhancing trade, regional connectivity,** and diplomatic influence in the Indo-Pacific.
  - India engages in infrastructure projects and economic agreements to strengthen ties and ensure maritime security in crucial sea lanes.
- For Japan, ASEAN is a **major trade partner and investment destination,** with Japan leveraging its economic presence through development aid and infrastructure projects.
  - As a signatory to Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, Japan strengthens its economic ties with ASEAN through a larger framework of trade and economic cooperation.
- Both countries collaborate with ASEAN to uphold **regional stability, counterbalance regional threats, and promote a rules-based order and** a stable, open Indo-Pacific region.

How has the India-Japan Relationship Evolved?

- **Early Exchanges**: The historical connection between **Japan and India began in the 6th century with the introduction of** Buddhism **to Japan**, which carried significant Indian cultural and philosophical influences.
- **Post- World War II Relations**: In 1949, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's donation of an **elephant** to Ueno Zoo (Tokyo) symbolised the beginning of a renewed relationship after World War II.
    - The signing of the **peace treaty and the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1952,** marked one of Japan's first post-war treaties.
    - Post-World War II, Japan's recovery was supported by Indian iron ore, and Japan began providing **yen loans to India starting in 1958.**
- **Strategic Partnerships:** The relationship was further solidified in the 2000s with establishment of a "Global Partnership." Subsequent meetings between leaders, including the elevation to a **"Special Strategic and Global Partnership"** in 2014, highlighted the growing importance of their bilateral ties.
    - In 2015, the "Japan and India Vision 2025" was announced, outlining a framework for cooperation.
- **Key Areas of Cooperation:**
    - **Defence and Security Cooperation**: The "**Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation**" issued in 2008 set the foundation for ongoing security dialogues, including the "2+2" meetings and the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) signed in 2020.
        - ACSA was signed to facilitate reciprocal provision of supplies and services between the defence forces of both nations.
    - **Economic Relations:** Japan and India's economic ties have strengthened, with Japan being a significant investor in India. As of 2021, **Japan was India's 13th largest trading partner and 5th largest investor.**
        - Key initiatives include the "**India-Japan Industrial Competitiveness Partnership"** and the "**Clean Energy Partnership"** aimed at promoting mutual investment and energy cooperation.
        - During the **2019 G20 Osaka summit,** Japan and India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalize a **sister-city relationship between Ahmedabad and Kobe.**
            - This agreement builds on the 2016 MoU, which established a **sister-state relationship between Gujarat and Hyogo Prefecture.**
            - The sister-city concept developed **post-World War II, i**s designed to promote **peaceful relations, trade, tourism, and cultural exchange** between cities across different countries.
        - Japan has significantly increased its investments in India**, pledging 5 trillion yen (approximately USD 42 billion) in 202**3 to be invested over the next five years.
        - India has been the **largest recipient of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA)**, with notable projects including the Delhi Metro and the **High-Speed Railway initiative** using Japan's Shinkansen system.
        - In FY 2022, Japanese assistance included 567.5 billion yen in loans, alongside grants and technical cooperation.
    - **Cultural Exchanges**: The year 2017, was designated as the **Year of Japan-India Friendly Exchanges.**
        - The "Japan-Southwest Asia Exchange Year" in 2022 further underscores Japan's commitment to strengthening ties with India and other Southwest Asian countries.

Note: In 1942, **Captain Mohan Singh formed the first Indian National Army (INA)** with Indian **prisoners of war (POWs)** seeking independence from British rule with Japanese aid.

- Disputes with the Japanese Army led to its dissolution by December 1942.
- In **July 1943,** Subhas Chandra Bose **reorganized the INA into the Azad Hind Fauj,** uniting former INA soldiers with Indian volunteers.

Key Facts About Japan

- Japan is an island nation in East Asia. Located in the Pacific Ocean. It is an **archipelago of five main islands (Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, Kyushu, and Okinawa)** and nearly 4,000 smaller ones.
- Japan lies to the **east of the Sea of Japan, China, North Korea, South Korea, and Russia.** It stretches from the **Sea of Okhotsk in the nort**h to the **East China Sea and Taiwan in the south.**
  - The characters which make up Japan's name mean "**sun-origin**", which is why Japan is sometimes referred to as the "**Land of the Rising Sun**".
- It is mountainous, with the **Japanese Alps** running down Honshu and **Mount Fuji being the highest peak.**
  - The country experiences **frequent earthquakes** and has about 200 volcanoes. It lies along the western edge of the Ring of Fire.
- Japan has a **parliamentary government with a constitutional monarchy.** The Emperor head of the Imperial Family and the ceremonial head of state.

[//](//)

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the evolution of India-Japan relations and analyze the key factors that have shaped their bilateral ties. How do these relations impact the broader Indo-Pacific region?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q1. **In which one of the following groups are all four countries members of G20? (2020)**

(a) Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey

(b) Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand

(c) Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam

(d) Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- The G20 comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, EU, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, UK and USA. Hence Option(a) is correct.

Hema Committee Report on Malayalam Film Industry

For Prelims: Hema Committee Report, Employment, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act 2013, Cyberthreats, Privacy, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses (POCSO) Act, 2012, Internal Complaints Committee (ICC).

For Mains: Prevalence and Impact of Sexual Exploitation at Workplace and their Redressal.

Source: TH

Why in News?

- Recently, the **Hema committee report** on the **Malayalam film industry** was released. It has revealed alarming instances of sexual abuse, gender discrimination, **and inhuman treatment of women** in the Malayalam film industry.
- It was led by retired Kerala High Court judge **Justice K Hema,** with members including veteran actor **Sharada** and retired IAS officer **K B Valsala Kumari.**

What are the Key Issues Highlighted in the Report?

- **Sexual Abuse:** It include unwanted **physical advances** even before commencing work, **rape threats,** code names for women who would agree to **compromise** among other shameful acts.
- **Casting Couch:** The report highlights the prevalence of the casting couch, where women are often forced to **exchange sexual favours for job opportunities.**
    - Directors and producers often coerce female actors into making compromises, with those who comply being termed "cooperating artists."
    - Women were forced to work with abusers, resulting in significant **emotional trauma.**
    - The casting couch is a euphemism for the practice of **soliciting sexual favours** from a job applicant in exchange for employment in the entertainment industry, primarily **acting roles.**
- **Safety on Film Set:** Many female film workers frequently bring their **parents or close relatives** to the set due to fears of **sexual demands** and harassment.
- **Criminal Influence:** The report indicates that the Malayalam film industry is plagued by **criminal influence.**
    - Many industry men, sometimes under the influence of liquor or drugs, insistently knock the hotel doors of female artists, causing significant distress.
- **Fear of Consequences:** Although such crimes are covered by the Indian Penal Code and the

[Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act 2013,](#) women in the film industry are apprehensive about the consequences of lodging an official complaint.
  - The stigma surrounding **sexual harassment**, particularly for public figures, frequently deters actors from reporting such incidents.
- **Cyberthreats:** [Online harassment](#) poses a significant challenge for women in cinema, with both female and male artists facing **cyberbullying, public threats, and** [defamation.](#)
  - Social media platforms become avenues for vulgar comments, images, and videos, where female artists are especially targeted with explicit and threatening messages.
- **Inadequate Facilities**: Female artists often refrain from drinking water on set due to **inadequate toilet facilities,** especially in outdoor locations.
  - The situation worsens during **menstruation** when female artists struggle significantly with changing or disposing of their sanitary products.
- **Inhumane Working Conditions:** The junior artists lack a **minimum remuneration.** Junior artists are in some cases "**treated worse than slaves**" with work extending up to 19 hours. **Intermediaries misappropriate a good part of their payments,** which are not given on time.

What is the Legal Framework to Address Sexual Exploitation in the Film Industry?

- **Indian Penal Code, 1860 (now replaced as** [Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita](#)): **Sections 354** (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), **354A** (sexual harassment) and **509** (word, gesture, or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) deal with sexual offences.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**: This law mandates the establishment of [Internal Complaints Committees (ICC)](#) in workplaces to address complaints of sexual harassment.
- **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000:** [IT Act](#) addresses the publication and transmission of **obscene material** in electronic form, which can include digital content in films.
- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses (POCSO) Act, 2012:** This act specifically **protects children** from sexual exploitation and abuse, including in the context of films.
- **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA**): This act aims to prevent trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

Casting Couch

- The term "**casting couch**" refers to a practice in the entertainment industry where individuals, usually **women,** are expected to provide **sexual favours in exchange for job** opportunities, particularly **acting roles.**
- This **unethical and exploitative practice** involves a person in a position of power, such as a **director, producer, or casting agent,** using their authority to coerce or pressure aspiring actors into compromising situations.
- The term highlights the **abuse of power** and the **exploitation** that can occur in the casting process within the film, television, and broader entertainment industries.

What are Key Recommendations of the Report?

- **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC):** It proposed the mandatory establishment of the [Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)](#) under the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013.**
  - It should include members from **Film Employees Federation of Kerala (FEFKA) and Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA).**
- **Independent Tribunal Proposal:** Some members advocated for an **independent tribunal** to handle cases of **harassment** and **discrimination** in the **cinema industry.**
  - The report also advocated **in-camera proceedings** at the tribunal to ensure complete **privacy,** with names being withheld from media reports.

- **Written Contracts**: Signing **written contracts** to protect the interest of all those who work in cinema should be made **mandatory** for all categories of employees including coordinators of junior artists.
- **Gender Awareness Training Program:** It should be made mandatory that all cast and crew attend a basic gender awareness training program before starting the production work.
  - Training materials could be made in both **Malayalam** and **English** and can be made available online.
- **Women in Producer Role:** There should be adequate and timely budgetary support to incentivize movies that are predicated on gender justice both thematically and in the production process.
  - A **single-window system** should be established to provide **loans at nominal interest rates** for movies produced by **women** (not by proxies of men) and to **streamline permissions** for shooting. This will simplify production and encourage more women to enter the film industry.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the issue of sexual exploitation of women in India with particular reference to the entertainment industry. How can they be redressed given the rising cases of sexual exploitation at the workplace?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q. What are the continued challenges for Women in India against time and space? **(2019)**

Q.Is the National Commission for Women able to strategize and tackle the problems that women face at both public and private spheres? Give reasons in support of your answer. **(2017)**

Mental Health in India

For Prelims: National Medical Commission, Tobacco, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Human Immunodeficiency Virus, NIMHANS, Mental health, Kiran Helpline, Manodarpan

For Mains: Mental Healthcare in India, Issues Associated with Mental Health, Initiatives by Government of India Related to Mental Health.

Source: TH

Why in News?

- The recent report by the **National Task Force on Mental Health and Well-being of Medical Students-2024**, released by the National Medical Commission (NMC), highlights troubling statistics about the mental health of medical students in India.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report on Mental Health of Medical

Students?

- **High Levels of Stress:** 84% of postgraduate (PG) students experience moderate to very high levels of stress. 64% report that the workload significantly affects their mental health.
    - 27.8% of undergraduate medical students and 15.3% of postgraduate students have a **diagnosed mental health disorder,** indicating a widespread mental health crisis requiring immediate intervention.
    - 16.2% of undergraduate (UG) students and 31.2% of PG students have had suicidal thoughts, indicating severe mental health challenges.
- **Major Stressors:**
    - Medical students, particularly postgraduates, face **extended working hours daily**, often exceeding 60 hours a week. This leads to inadequate rest and exhaustion.
    - The **need for constant availability on duty,** often with insufficient breaks, significantly contributes to stress and burnout among medical students.
    - The **lack of adequate mental health support systems and infrastructure** within medical institutions leaves students without proper resources to manage their stress and mental well-being.
        - Around **19% of PG students expressed that they turn to substances such as** tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs to alleviate stress. This is indicative of the **lack of adequate mental health support systems** and the need for education on healthier coping mechanisms.
    - **High expenses of medical education** and insufficient stipends exacerbate financial stress for students, especially those with financially dependent families or student loans.
        - **33.9% of UG students face extreme financial stress,** with 27.2% holding educational loans and struggling with repayment pressures.
        - **72.2% of PG students find their stipend insufficient,** highlighting the need for a critical review of stipend policies.
    - The intense competition, **fear of failure, and high academic expectations i**n medical training place students under immense pressure, leading to procrastination, perfectionism, and, in extreme cases, suicidal thoughts.
    - Experiences of discrimination **based on gender, caste, ethnicity and geography**, along with instances of **ragging and harassment** by seniors and faculty, contribute to the psychological distress of students.

National Medical Commission

- It is the **apex regulatory body for medical education and practice in India**, established in 2020 to replace the **Medical Council of India (MCI).**
    - It consists of four autonomous boards and a **Medical Advisory Council,** responsible for overseeing major screening tests (such as NEET-UG) regulating **medical education and training,** registration and ethics of practitioners, and assessment and rating of institutions.
- NMC has achieved the prestigious World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) recognition, ensuring global recognition of its medical degrees.

What does India's Broader Mental Health Landscape Look Like?

- **High prevalence Rates:** According to the **National Mental Health Survey (NMHS) 2015-16,** 10.6% of adults in India suffer from mental health issues.
    - The treatment gap for mental disorders varies between **70% and 92%, depending on the disorder.**
    - Urban areas exhibit higher prevalence of mental health issues (13.5%) compared to rural areas (6.9%) and urban non-metro regions (4.3%).
    - The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Mental Health and Well-being of School Students Survey found that during the pandemic, **11% of students reported feeling anxious, 14% experienced extreme emotions, and 43% experienced mood swings.**

- **Economic Impact**: Mental health disorders contribute to significant productivity **losses due to absenteeism, reduced productivity, disability, and increased healthcare costs.**
  - [Poverty](#) is shown to exacerbate mental health risks, leading to heightened psychological distress due to stressful living conditions and financial instability.

What are the Policy Challenges in Addressing Mental Health?

- **Policy Neglect:** Mental health remains a **low priority for policymakers**, partly due to a lack of political will and knowledge gaps in interventions.
- **Lack of Core Indicators:** Mental health issues are often marginalized due to the absence or minimal inclusion of **visible core indicators in international/national health metrics.**
  - This absence prevents the effective allocation of resources and investment in mental health infrastructure, research, and services.
- **Budget Constraints:** Against an estimated need of over Rs 93,000 crore, the mental **health budget was only Rs 1,000 crore in 2023**, with most funds directed to tertiary institutions, leaving **little for community-based initiatives.**
- **Legislation Shortcomings**: Despite the **National Mental Health Policy of 2014** and the [Mental Health Act of 2017](#), there are significant challenges in implementation and resource allocation.
- **Human Resource Planning:** In India, there is a **critical shortage of mental health professionals.** The reliance on a few specialists, such as psychiatrists, reinforces the notion of **mental health services as a luxury** rather than an integral part of primary health care.
- **Strategic Intervention Needed:** Policymaking requires a nuanced understanding of mental health challenges, similar to the approach taken during **India's fight agains**t [Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)](#)- [Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).](#)

Lessons from India's HIV-AIDS Strategy

- India's **HIV-AIDS programme was based on real-time data and surveillance**. Strategies were tailored for different regions and groups based on local needs.
  - A **significant portion of the budget was allocated to engaging communities and addressing stigma**, a crucial step that mental health strategies must replicate.
- Involvement of parliamentarians, the media, judiciary, and other key sectors helped create widespread awareness and support.

What are the Initiatives Related to Mental Health in India?

- [National Mental Health Programme (NMHP)](#)
- [Mental Healthcare Act 2017](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS)](#)
- [National Tele Mental Health Programme](#)
- [NIMHANS and iGOT-Diksha Collaboration](#)
- [Ayushman Bharat – HWC Scheme](#)
- [Kiran Helpline](#)
- [Manodarpan](#)
- [MANAS Mobile App](#)

Note:

- [Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 3.4](#), set by the [United Nations](#), aims to reduce premature mortality from **non-communicable diseases** by one-third by 2030, with a particular focus on **promoting mental health and well-being.**

Way Forward

- **Community-Based models:** Evidence-based strategies like peer-led interventions and emergency care centres should be scaled up.
  - Emulate successful models like **Banyan's Home Again program in Tamil Nadu**, which combines treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration for mentally ill, homeless women.
- **Support Systems**: Establish dedicated **counselling centres in colleges,** implement mental health awareness programs, and **facilitate peer support groups** to support students, who are significantly affected by mental health issues.
- **Increasing Mental Health Professionals**: Expanding training programs and incentives to address the shortage of mental health professionals.
  - Provide professional development and culturally sensitive training for mental health professionals.
- **Establish an Autonomous Agency**: Like National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) **for HIV-AIDS**, an independent body for mental health could help coordinate resources, involve community stakeholders, and bridge the gaps in care and support for mental health patients.
- **Decentralizing Services:** Establish mental health facilities in rural and remote areas to improve accessibility. Leverage collaborations and technology to enhance resource allocation and service delivery

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Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Despite various initiatives to improve mental health in India, significant challenges persist. Identify the key policy challenges in addressing mental health issues and propose strategies to overcome these challenges.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Mains

Q. In order to enhance the prospects of social development, sound and adequate health care policies are needed particularly in the fields of geriatric and maternal health care.Discuss. **(2020)**

Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)

For Prelims: Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), GDP Per Capita, National Income, United Nations, International financial institutions (IFIs), Debt**, MVI Secretariat, MVI Advisory Review Panel.**

For Mains: Significance of Climate Financing for Building Resilience Against Climate Change Induced Disasters.
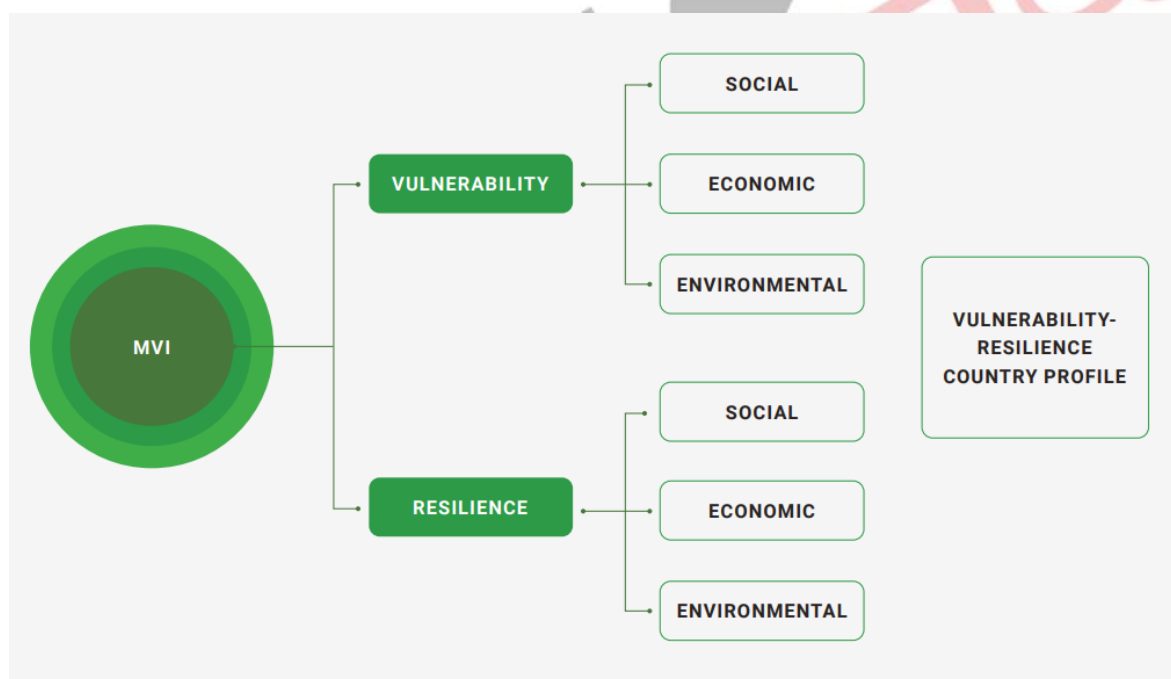
Source: TH

Why in News?

- The **UN General Assembl**y launched the **Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)** to assist small island developing states (SIDS) in securing low-interest financing.

- Since the 1990s, SIDS that don't qualify for **low-interest development loans** due to their **relatively higher** GDP per capita have been advocating for a measure that accounts for their **vulnerability** to external shocks like climate change.
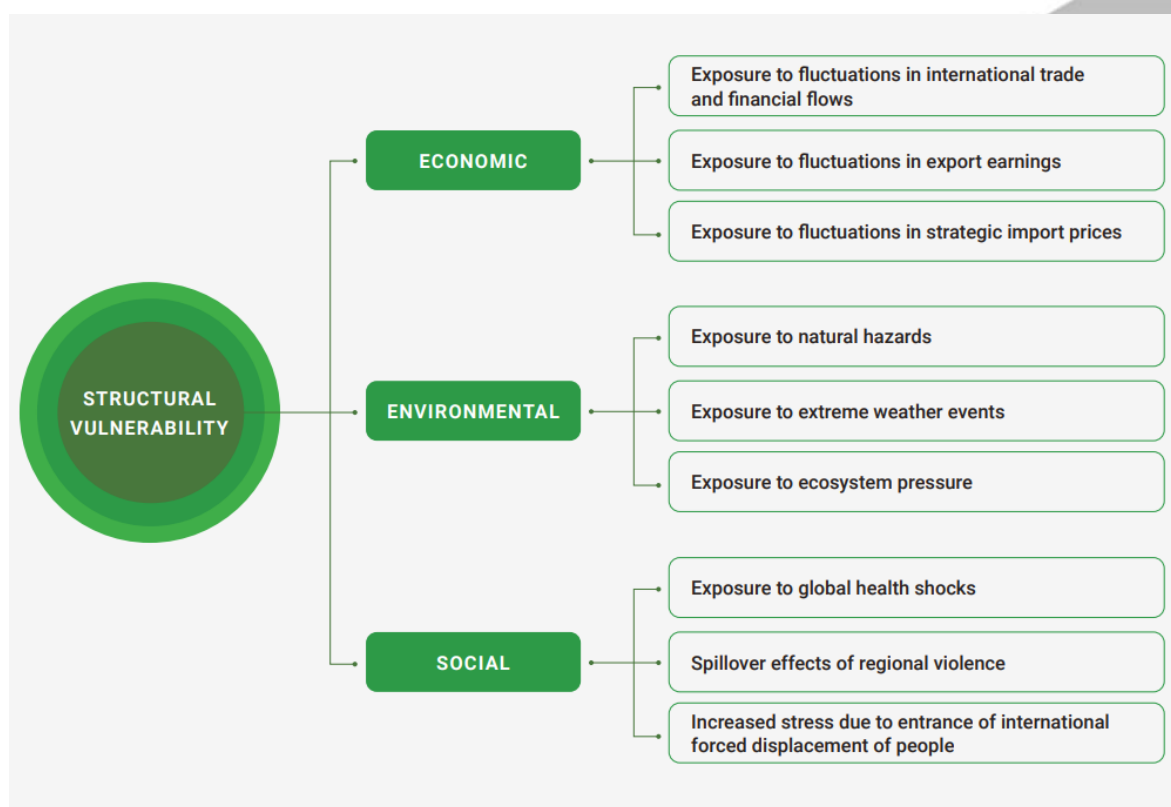
What is Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)?

- **About:** The MVI is a new **international quantitative benchmark** to measure **structural vulnerability** and the lack of structural resilience across multiple dimensions of sustainable development at the national level.
    - It can be used to complement Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.
- **Need of MVI:**
    - **Current Limitations**: National income, typically measured by Gross National Income per capita, is an **inadequate indicator** of development and well-being, especially for countries facing high risks of external shocks.
    - **Access to Concessional Financing:** Countries often struggle to access **affordable development support,** such as concessional assistance, because eligibility is based on **income thresholds** rather than **vulnerability.**
    - **Inclusive Aid Allocation:** A widely accepted MVI could better guide development policies, aid allocation, and provide early identification of nations requiring international assistance.
- **Structure of the MVI:** It incorporates **two** main components.
    - **Universal Level Quantitative Assessment:** A summary index ranks countries based on their **structural vulnerability and resilienc**e using a common methodology. This is presented as an **overall MVI score.**
    - **Vulnerability-Resilience Country Profiles (VRCP)**: It is a more detailed, tailored, and individualised characterisation of a country's vulnerability and resilience factors.

- **Key Principles Guiding MVI Index Construction:** It follows several guiding principles in construction of MVI.
    - **Multidimensionality:** Indicators used should cover all **three dimensions** of sustainable development, i.e. **economic, environmental, and social.**
    - **Universality**: The design of the index should capture the vulnerabilities of **all developing countries** to ensure **credibility** and comparability.
    - **Exogeneity:** The index must clearly differentiate between **policy-induced and exogenous (or inherited) factors** to reflect the structural and inherent challenges faced by countries, independent of the political will of their governments.
    - **Availability:** The index should use **available, recognized, comparable, and reliable data.**
    - **Readability:** The design of the index should be **clear and easily comprehensible.**

- **Conceptual Framework for the MVI:** The MVI is built on two main pillars.
    - **Structural Vulnerability:** It is linked to a country's exposure to **adverse external shocks and stressors.**
    - **Structural Resilience**: The capacity of a country to withstand and recover from such shocks.
    - The conceptual framework elaborates the **three dimensions** of sustainable development i.e., **economic, environmental, and social** as they apply to **each pillar**:
        - **Economic Vulnerability:** Risk from adverse external economic shocks.
        - **Environmental Vulnerability:** Risk from natural hazards, climate change, and anthropogenic shocks.
        - **Social Vulnerability**: Risk from social shocks.
        - **Structural Economic Resilience:** The inherent economic capabilities and capital that strengthen a country's ability to recover.
        - **Structural Environmental Resilience**: The inherent environmental capital, including ecological resources and infrastructure, that reduces vulnerability.
        - **Structural Social Resilience:** The inherent social capabilities, including social cohesion and human capital, that enhance adaptive capacity.

- **Indicator Selection and Index Construction:** The MVI Panel chose highest-quality indicators, using available United Nations data. They combined these indicators into a single vulnerability metric through rescaling, aggregation, and weighting.
    - **Key Observations by MVI Panel:**
        - **Correlation:** Countries with high structural vulnerability tend to have low structural resilience.
        - **Income Independence:** MVI scores are not correlated with income, making it a valuable complement to GNI.
        - **Small Island Developing States (SIDS):** The MVI does not discriminate against small countries, 70% of SIDS score above the median.
        - **Ranking and Thresholds:** The majority of countries are **moderately vulnerable**. As a result, it is difficult to establish a vulnerability threshold or cutoff similar to the income cutoffs commonly used to allocate development aid.
- **Recommended Use of MVI:**
    - **Incorporation by Donors:** Donors, including international financial institutions (IFIs), should be encouraged to explore how the MVI could be incorporated into existing policies

and practices, pursuing a common approach to the extent possible.

- **Debt Assessment:** Assessment of country external debt sustainability and the need for concessional debt restructuring could use the MVI, in addition to current, mostly income-based, assessments.

Conclusion

The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index represents **a critical step forward in addressing the complex challenges faced by vulnerable countries.** By providing a comprehensive, multidimensional assessment of vulnerability and resilience, the MVI has the potential to reshape global development policies and ensure that assistance is directed to where it is most needed.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Financing climate change induced disasters has become imperative for low income countries (LICs) and small island developing states (SIDS). In this context discuss how the recently launched Multidimensional Vulnerability Index can help LICs and SIDS.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Mains:

Q.Describe various measures taken in India for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) before and after signing 'Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-30)'. How is this framework different from 'Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005'? **(2018)**

Q.How important are vulnerability and risk assessment for pre-disaster management? As an administrator, what are the key areas that you would focus on in a Disaster Management System? **(2013)**

Blue Moon

Source: TH
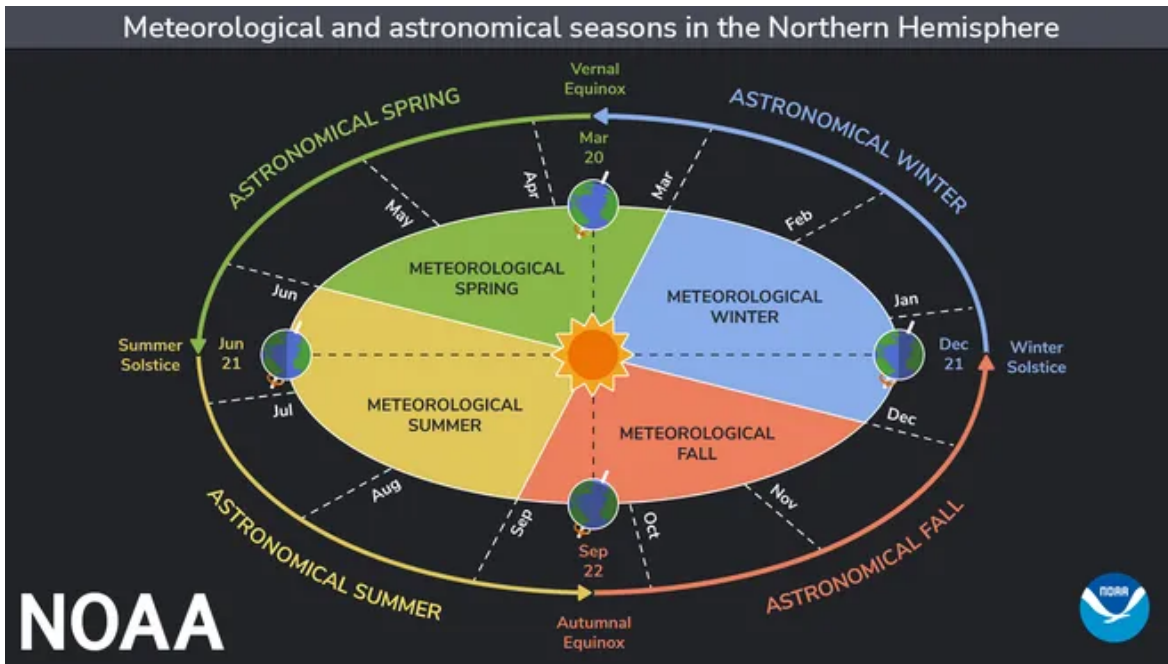
Why in News?

Recently, the phenomenon of the "blue moon" occurred in August 2024. This has prompted discussions regarding its origins, significance, and the diverse interpretations associated with it.

What is the Blue Moon?

- **About:** A blue moon is the **second full moon** that **occurs within a single calendar month.**
  - The next Blue Moon will occur on 31st May 2026.
- **Types:** There are 2 types of Blue Moons, neither of which involve the moon's colour.
  - **Seasonal Blue Moon**: A Seasonal Blue Moon happens when there are **4 full moons** in a single astronomical season- **spring, summer, autumn (fall), or winter,** rather than the usual 3. The **third full moon** in this series is referred to as a "**Blue Moon.**"
    - Typically, each season spans about 3 months, allowing for 3 full moons. However, due to the lunar cycle's duration (about 29.5 days), occasionally, 4 full moons can occur within one season.
      - When this happens, the **third of these four full moons is called a**

- **Monthly Blue Moon:** It is the **second full moon in a single calendar month.**
  - Since **full moons typically happen once a month**, having two in the same month is rare, making the **second one a "Blue Moon".**
- The upcoming Blue Moon on 31st May 2026, will be a monthly Blue Moon.

- **Formation:**
  - The moon phases complete a cycle in 29.5 days, resulting in **12 lunar cycles** over 354 days.
    - Consequently, approximately **every 2.5 to 3 years,** a 13th full moon occurs within a calendar year, known as a **Blue Moon**, which **does not follow the standard naming** conventions.
  - Since **February** has only 28 days in a regular year and 29 days in a leap year, **it can never have a Blue Moon.**

Instances When Moon Actually Appeared Blue Due to Atmospheric Conditions

- **Eruption of Mt. Tambora in Indonesia (1815):** It was the most powerful eruption following the prior eruption of **Mayon** volcano in the Philippines.
  - This, **along with other climatic factors,** resulted in a significant **global temperature drop of 0.4-0.7º C** in 1816, leading to the phenomenon known as the '**year without summer.'**
  - The **volcanic ash and particles** in the atmosphere during this time may have also **caused the moon to appear blue.**
- **Eruption of the** Indonesian volcano Krakatoa **(1883):** It produced ash that reached an altitude of 80 kilometers. The minute ash particles, approximately one micron in size, **filtered the light and caused the moon to appear in a noticeable blue-green hue.**
- **1983 El Chichon eruption** in Mexico and those of Mt. St. Helens **in 1980** and **Mount Pinatubo in 1991,** have also been associated with the phenomenon of blue moons.

THE RAREST FULL MOONS

Supermoon
Supermoons look ~30% larger than regular full moons. They happen when the moon is both full and is also orbiting within 90% of perigee (the part of the Moon's orbit closest to Earth).

Blood Moon
Occurs during a total lunar eclipse when the Earth is between moon and sun. During this time, the Moon is lit only by the edges of the Earth's atmosphere which scatters blue but not red light.

Super Flower Blood Moon
The Flower Moon is the second full moon of spring and May's full moon. When it also meets both "supermoon" and "blood moon" criteria, it becomes the Super Flower Blood Moon.

Ring of Fire Eclipse
Occurs during a solar eclipse when the moon is between Earth and Sun and when the Moon is also further away in its orbit so that it only partially blocks the Sun, leaving a "ring of fire."

Micro Moon
A full Moon that happens at the same time that the Moon is furthest from Earth in its orbit. This makes the Moon look smaller and dimmer than usual.

Blue Moon
The second full moon in a month. Full moons are 29 days apart, but most months are 30-31 days, so sometimes two full moons will happen within the same month.

Harvest Moon
The full, bright Moon that happens closest to the start of autumn. It got its name because the extra light was used by farmers to harvest crops for fall.

Cold Moon
Also called "The Long Night Moon," this is the full moon that occurs in December closest to the winter solstice - the longest night of the year.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Recently, scientists observed the merger of giant 'blackholes' billions of light-years away from the Earth. What is the significance of this observation? (2019)

(a) 'Higgs boson particles' were detected.
(b) 'Gravitational waves' were detected.
(c) Possibility of inter-galactic space travel through 'wormhole' was confirmed.
(d) It enabled the scientists to understand 'singularity'.

Ans: (b)

130th Anniversary of Natal Indian Congress

Source: DL

Why in News?

Recently, 22nd August 2024 marked the 130th foundation year of **Natal Indian Congress (NIC)** which was established in **August 1894,** based on a proposal by **Mahatma Gandhi** on 22nd May 1894.

- It was was formed to fight discrimination faced by Indians in South Africa.

What was the Natal Indian Congress?

- The **Natal Indian Congress (NIC)** was the **first Indian Congress** established, founded by **Mahatma Gandhi** in 1894 to **fight against discrimination** faced by Indian in Natal (province of South Africa).
- From the 1920s, the NIC operated under the **South African Indian Congress (SAIC).**
- The organisation underwent a shift towards more **radical leadership** in the **1930s-1940s** with the emergence of **Dr. G.M. Naicker,** who became its leader in 1945.
- The NIC's increased militancy led to the **imprisonment of several leaders** by the 1950s and 1960s.
- Despite **not being officially banned**, repression and harassment led the NIC to halt activities until its **revival in 1971** with a focus on civic work.
- In the mid-1980s, the NIC was key in forming the **United Democratic Front (UDF)**.
  - The UDF's goal was to establish a "**non-racial, united South Africa.**

What was the Role of Mahatma Gandhi in Satyagraha in South Africa?

- **Mobilisation of Indian Community and Satyagraha:**
  - **Natal Satyagraha:** On 7th June 1893, Mahatma Gandhi faced racial discrimination when he was forced off a first-class train compartment at Pietermaritzburg railway station in South Africa. This incident ignited his spirit of civil disobedience through his **first non-violent protest** in the **Natal Satyagraha.**
    - Gandhi established the **Natal Indian Congress (NIC)** to unite the Indian community and address issues like voting rights and discriminatory laws.
  - **Transvaal British Indian Association:** In 1903, Gandhi founded this association to continue **advocating for rights of Indian,** particularly against increasing restrictions in the Transvaal region.
  - **Launching Satyagraha**: In 1906, **Gandhiji initiated his first satyagraha** (nonviolent resistance) campaign in Johannesburg against the Asiatic **Registration Act**, leading to mass protests and civil disobedience.
    - The **Asiatic Registration Act of 1906** in Transaval required male Asians, particularly Indians and Chinese, to **register, provide fingerprints, carry a registration certificate**, and submit to physical examinations. It aimed to **control and restrict the entry and movement of Asians** in the region.
    - Indians in South Africa resisted a discriminatory law by forming the **Passive Resistance Association**. They publicly burned their registration certificates, which brought negative attention to the South African government. Ultimately, the conflict ended with a compromise settlement.
- **Organising the Ambulance Corps:**
  - During the [Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)](#), Gandhi formed an Ambulance Corps of **Indian volunteers to support the British**, hoping for improved treatment of Indians, though this hope was not realised.
- **Establishment of Communal Living:**
  - Gandhi founded the **Phoenix Settlement in Durban in 1904** as a community living experiment.
    - He had set up this farm after being inspired by a reading of **John Ruskin's Unto This Last**, a critique of capitalism.
  - He established the **Tolstoy Farm near Johannesburg in 1910** to prepare Satyagrahis (followers of nonviolence).
  - These initiatives aimed to foster self-reliance, promote communal harmony, and provide training in practical skills.
- **1913 Satyagraha Campaign:**
  - Gandhi led a major satyagraha against the **poll tax, Registration of Marriages Act,** and passed laws, with significant participation from Indian women, including his wife, Kasturba.
    - Also, the Supreme Court had **invalidated all marriages not conducted according to Christian rites,** drawing the anger of the Indians and others who were not Christians.

- **Legal Reforms and Recognition of Indian Rights:**
  - The sustained pressure from Gandhi's protests forced the South African government to pass the **Indian Relief Act, 1914** addressing several of the Indian community's grievances.
- **Impact of Gandhian Movements:**
  - **Development of Satyagraha**: Gandhi's experiences in South Africa were crucial in developing his **philosophy of nonviolent resistance,** which he later applied in India's struggle for independence.
  - **Global Impact:** Gandhi's methods in South Africa laid the foundation for **future civil rights movements** worldwide and significantly influenced global efforts against **racial and colonial oppression.**
    - Both Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King were greatly influenced by Gandhiji and his satyagraha.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

Brief Description

Birth: 2nd October 1869, Porbandar (Gujarat).
2nd October is observed as **International Day of Non-Violence.**
Profile: Lawyer, Politician, Social activist, Writer and led Nationalist Movement.
Father of the Nation (first called by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose).
Ideology: Believed in the ideas of non-violence, Truth, Honesty, Care for Mother Nature, Compassion, Welfare of Downtrodden etc.
Political Mentor: Gopal Krishna Gokhale
Death: Shot dead by Nathuram Godse (30th January, 1948).
30th January is observed as **Martyrs' Day**
Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize five times.

Gandhi in South Africa (1893-1915)
Used satyagraha against racist regime (Native Africans and Indians were discriminated).
Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated every year on 9th January, to commemorate his return from South Africa.
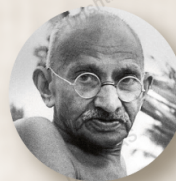
Contribution in India's Freedom Struggle
Small-scale movements like Champaran Satyagraha (1917)—First Civil Disobedience, Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918)— First Hunger Strike, and Kheda Satyagraha (1918)—First Non-Cooperation.
Nationwide Mass Movements: Against Rowlatt Act (1919), Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34), Quit India Movement (1942).
Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931): Between Gandhi and Lord Irwin that marked the end of a period of civil disobedience.
Poona Pact (1932): Between Gandhi and **B.R. Ambedkar;** this abandoned the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes (Communal Award).

Books Written
Hind Swaraj, My Experiments with Truth (Autobiography)

Weeklies
Harijan, Navjivan, Young India, Indian Opinion.

Gandhi Peace Prize
is given by India for social, economic, and political transformation through Gandhian methods.

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony."

"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty"

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. Who among the following is associated with 'Songs from Prison', a translation of ancient Indian religious lyrics in English? (2021)

(a) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
(b) Jawaharlal Nehru
(c) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
(d) Sarojini Naidu

Ans: (c)

Q2. **With reference to the British colonial rule in India, consider the following statements: (2019)**

1. Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in the abolition of the system of 'indentured labour'.
2. In Lord Chelmsford's 'War Conference', Mahatma Gandhi did not support the resolution on recruiting Indians for World War.
3. Consequent upon the breaking of Salt Law by Indian people, the Indian National Congress was declared illegal by the colonial rulers.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

National Geoscience Awards 2023

Source: PIB

Recently, the President of India conferred the National Geoscience Awards (NGA) **2023** to 21 geoscientists.

- **Prof. Dhiraj Mohan Banerjee** received the **Lifetime Achievement Award** for his pioneering work in **phosphorites and Precambrian geology.**
- **Dr Ashutosh Pandey** was honoured as the **National Young Geoscientist** for his research on the **Eastern Dharwar Craton.**

National Geoscience Awards:

- **About**: It is one of the **oldest and most prestigious honours** in the field, established by the **Ministry of Mines** in **1966.**
    - Prior to **2009,** these awards were known as the **National Mineral Awards.**
- Objective: The purpose of these awards is to **recognise individuals and teams** for **exceptional achievements and significant contributions in various geoscience** fields, including mineral discovery and exploration, mining technology and mineral beneficiation, and both fundamental and applied geosciences.
- **Eligibility**: Any Indian citizen who has made notable contributions to these areas is eligible for the award.
- **Categories:** It is given under 3 categories:
    - **Lifetime Achievement**
    - **National Geoscience Awards**
    - **National Young Geoscientist Award.**
- **Geoscience**, also known as Earth science, is the **study of the Earth,** including its processes,

surface, natural resources, and water and ecosystems. It includes disciplines like **Geology** (examines the **Earth's composition**, structure, and history) and **Geophysics** (applied mathematics and physics to study the Earth's internal structure).

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Decline in Outward Remittances Under LRS

[Source: IE](#)

The recent data from the [Reserve Bank of India (RBI)](#) highlights a significant **drop in outward** remittances under the [Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS),](#) reflecting the impact of global economic uncertainties and domestic policy changes.

- Outward remittances decreased by 43.93% to USD 2.181 billion in June 2024 from USD 3.890 billion in June 2023.
- The introduction of [Tax Collection at Source (TCS) at 20%](#) on overseas tour packages has disincentivized remittances, except for education and medical treatment.
  - Travel accounted for over 50% of total outflows, with amounts falling from USD 1.482 billion in June 2023 to USD 1.275 billion in June 2024.
- Global and domestic economic fluctuations and [inflation](#) have led individuals to reduce non-essential transfers, causing a decline in outward remittances.
- Outward remittance means the transfer of money from India to another country or region. LRS is governed by **the** [Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999](#) and regulated by RBI.
  - LRS allows resident individuals, including minors, to remit up to USD 250,000 **per financial year** for permissible current or capital account transactions such as travel, medical treatment, education, gifts, donations, maintenance of relatives, and investment in shares, debt instruments, and immovable properties overseas.
- **TCS is an tax collected by sellers on specific transactions,** including foreign remittances under the LRS. When individuals send money abroad, travel, TCS is collected by the authorised dealer, typically a bank, and deposited with the government. This ensures **tax compliance on overseas financial activities.**
  - TCS is not applicable on international credit card spending.

[Read more...](#)

Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur

[Source: PIB](#)

Recently, the [Prime Minister (PM)](#) paid homage to **Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur** on his **birth anniversary.**
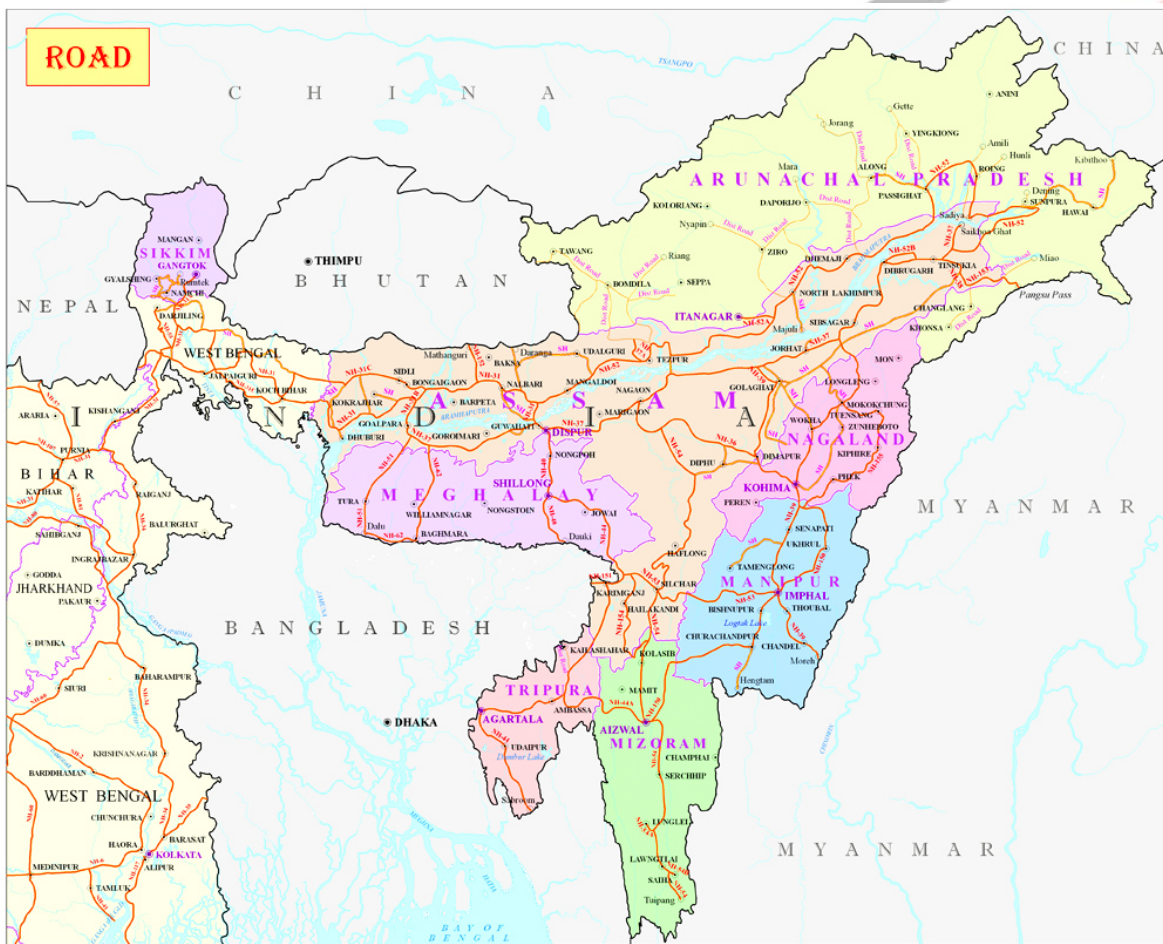
- PM highlighted his significant contributions to **Tripura's development** and his dedication to empowering the poor and tribal communities.

Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur:

- He was born on **19th August 1908** in Tripura, also known as the **"Modern Architect of Tripura".**
- He established the **first higher educational institution,** advocated for **land reforms,** and **reserved land for the indigenous** people, leading to the formation of the [Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).](#)
- He was the **first ruler of Tripura to visit Europe and America** (1931-1939).
- He passed away at the young age of 39 in 1947 untimely death impacted the development of Tripura.
- **Agartala airport**, earlier known as **Singerbhil Airport**, was renamed after **Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur** in July 2018.
    - The land for this was donated by him and was used as a technical base for the Royal Air Force during [World War II.](#)

Tripura:

- Tripura is the **2nd most populous in the northeast region (after Assam),** sharing borders with **Bangladesh, Mizoram and Assam.**
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries: Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary, Rowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary** and **Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary**
- **National Parks: Bison (Rajbari) NP and Clouded Leopard NP.**

Read More: [Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport: Tripura.](#) [Greater Tipraland, Demand of Tripura.](#)

Shiveluch Volcano of Russia

Recently, the Shiveluch volcano in Russia erupted after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the eastern coast of the country.

- Additionally, the **Ebeko volcano** on the Kuril Islands also released ash in the atmosphere.
- Shiveluch volcano is a large and **active volcano** in Kamchatka peninsula, Russia.
  - The summit has a broad **caldera** (a large crater) that was formed during a past eruption.
- In **November 1952**, a devastating 9.0 magnitude earthquake in **Kamchatka** caused significant damage and triggered a tsunami in Hawaii.
- **Kamchatka Peninsula:**
- It is located in the **Russian Far East** and extends into the **Pacific Ocean**, separating the **Sea of Okhotsk** from the **Bering Sea** portion of the ocean.
- It is a part of the Pacific Ring of Fire and contains both active and dormant volcanoes.
- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Tata Power** won a contract in **2017** to mine coal from Krutogorovskoye Coal Deposit in Kamchatka peninsula.

Read more...

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