Union Cabinet Approved Simultaneous Elections

Source: HT

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Cabinet** approved a proposal for **simultaneous elections** across the country, aligning polls for the **Lok Sabha, state Assemblies, and local bodies** across India.
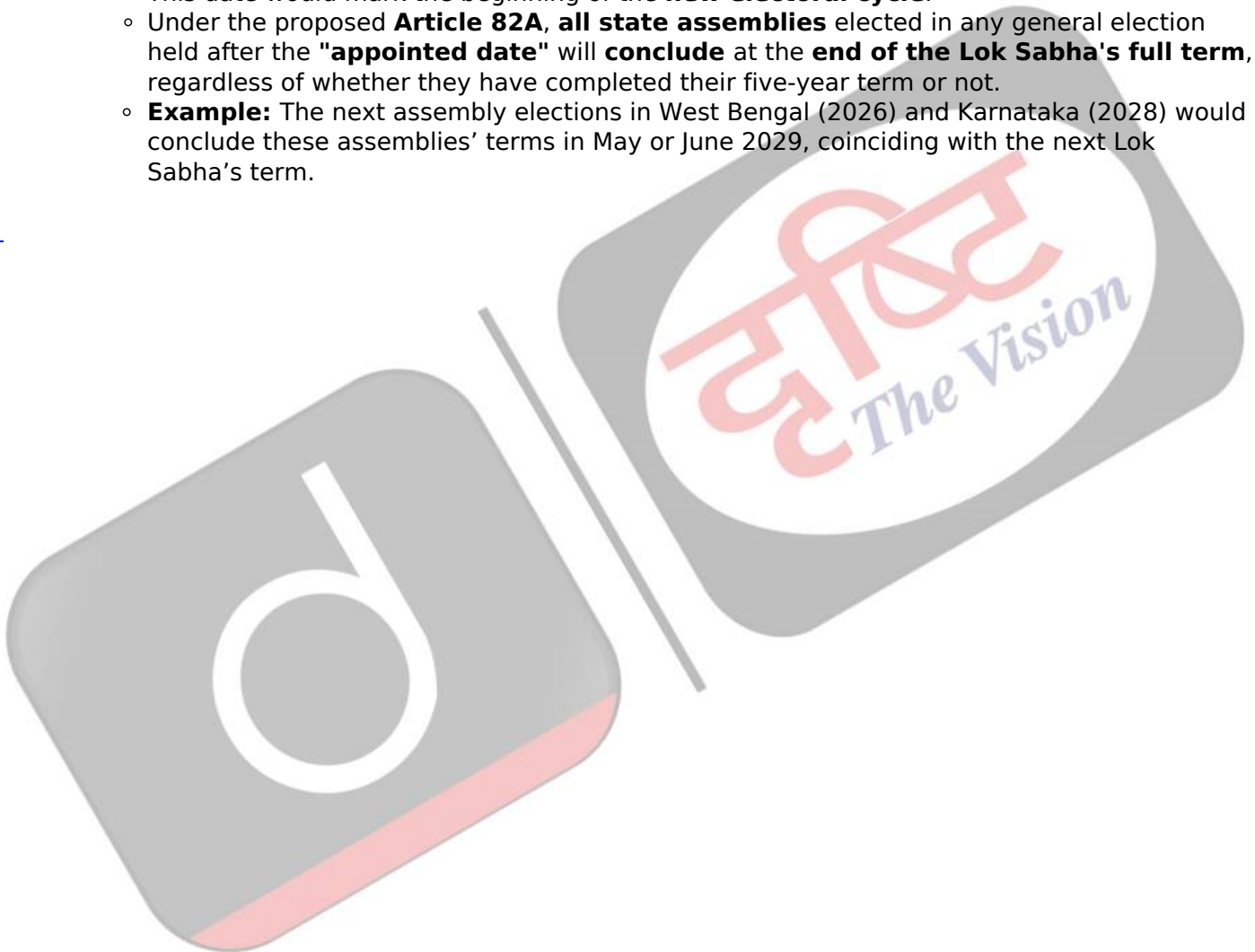
- The decision came after a **high-level committee**, chaired by former **President Ram Nath Kovind**, submitted its report on the **'one nation, one election'** plan.

What are Key Recommendations of the Committee on Simultaneous Elections?

- **Amending the Constitution:** The Constitution should be amended to enable simultaneous elections in **two bills**.
    - **Bill 1:** Simultaneous elections will be held to **Lok Sabha and State Assemblies**. For this, **no ratification by the states** will be required for the constitutional amendment.
    - **Bill 2:** Elections to **municipalities and the panchayats** will be synchronised with elections to Lok Sabha and state Assemblies in such a way that **local body elections** are held **within 100 days** of the elections to Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.
        - This will require **ratification** by not less than **one-half of the states**.
- **Required Amendments:** For holding simultaneous elections, the committee had recommended **15 amendments to the Constitution of India.** Important amendments include:
    - **Article 82A:** The first Bill recommended by the Kovind committee would begin by inserting a **new Article 82A** into the Constitution.
        - **Article 82A** will establish the **process** by which the country will move to a system of **simultaneous elections** for **Lok Sabha and state Assemblies**.
        - It has recommended that the power of Parliament under **Article 327** should be expanded to include **"conduct of simultaneous elections"**.
    - **Article 83 and Article 172:** It recommended that under **Articles 83(4)** and **172(4)**, the **Lok Sabha or state Assembly** that replaces the previous one will serve only for the remaining **"unexpired term"** before being dissolved again once simultaneous elections are conducted as scheduled.
    - **Article 324A**: The committee has suggested the inclusion of a new **Article 324A** in the Constitution.
        - This new article would empower Parliament to make laws to ensure that **municipality and panchayat elections** are held **simultaneously** with the **Lok Sabha and state Assemblies**.

- **Single Electoral Role and Election ID:** The **Election Commission of India** (ECI) can prepare a **single electoral roll and election ID** in consultation with the **State Election Commissions** (SEC) for all the **three tiers of election**.
    - A constitutional amendment will require **ratification** by not less than **one-half of the states** to **shift the power of SECs to ECI** regrading electoral roll and election ID at state level.
- **Hung Assembly or Premature Dissolution :** In the event of a **hung House**, a **no-confidence motion**, or any such event, **fresh elections** should be held to constitute the **new Lok Sabha or state Assembly** for the **unexpired term** of the House.
- **Meeting logistics requirements:** The Election Commission of India will **plan and estimate in advance**, in consultation with the State Election Commissions, and take steps for the deployment of manpower, polling personnel, security forces, **EVMs/VVPATs**, etc.
- **Synchronisation of Elections:** To synchronise the elections, the committee has suggested that the **President,** through a notification issued on the **first sitting of the Lok Sabha** post **general elections,** set an **'Appointed Date'**.
    - This date would mark the beginning of the **new electoral cycle**.
    - Under the proposed **Article 82A**, **all state assemblies** elected in any general election held after the **"appointed date"** will **conclude** at the **end of the Lok Sabha's full term**, regardless of whether they have completed their five-year term or not.
    - **Example:** The next assembly elections in West Bengal (2026) and Karnataka (2028) would conclude these assemblies' terms in May or June 2029, coinciding with the next Lok Sabha's term.

[//](#)

Upcoming State/UT elections

as of September 16, 2024
State Assembly tenures end in different years for each State

● 2029 ● 2026 ● 2025 ● 2028 ● 2027 ● Sep-Oct. 2024 ● Nov-Dec. 2024

Ladakh
Jammu & Kashmir
Himachal Pradesh
Punjab
Uttarakhand
Delhi
Rajasthan
Uttar Pradesh
Sikkim
Arunachal Pradesh
Assam
Bihar
Manipur
Gujarat
Madhya Pradesh
West Bengal
Mizoram
Maharashtra
Odisha
Telangana
Goa
Andhra Pradesh
Karnataka
Tamil Nadu

What are Previous Recommendations on Simultaneous Elections?

- **Law Commission:** The **21st Law Commission** set up in 2018 proposed that simultaneous elections would yield **several benefits**, including cost savings for the public, **alleviation of strain on administrative structures** and security forces etc.
    - In the year **1999,** the Law Commission of India recommended simultaneous elections to **Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies** while examining measures for improving the electoral system in the country.

- **Department related Parliamentary Standing committee on Personnel, Public grievances, Law and justice:** In its **79th report**, it had recommended an **alternative and practicable method** of holding simultaneous elections.
- **NITI Aayog:** A NITI Aayog's 2017 Paper advocated the idea of conducting simultaneous elections for effective governance by reducing the frequent election cycle.

What are Simultaneous Elections?

- **About:** Simultaneous Elections means holding elections to the **House of the People, all the State Legislative Assemblies, and local bodies** i.e., Municipalities and Panchayats, together.
  - It effectively means that a **voter casts his vote** for electing members for all tiers of the Government on a **single day and at the same time**.
  - **Currently**, all these elections are **held independently** of one another, following timelines dictated by the terms of every **individual elected body.**
  - It **does not mean** that voting across the country for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies needs to happen on a **single day**. This can be conducted in a **phase-wise manner.**
  - It is popularly known as **One Nation, One Election.**
- **History:** Simultaneous Elections were, by and large, in **vogue** till the **fourth general elections of 1967.**
  - However, as successive central governments used **constitutional provisions** to dismiss state governments before the end of their term, and as **coalition governments** in the states and the Centre kept **collapsing**, it led to the end of simultaneous elections.
  - With the disruption of the **cycle of Simultaneous Elections,** thereafter, the country now faces **five to six elections in a year**.
    - If **Municipalities** and **Panchayat** elections are also included, the number of elections will **increase manifold**.
- **Need for Simultaneous Elections:** The desirability of simultaneous elections can be discussed from the perspectives of **cost, governance, administrative convenience and social cohesion**.
  - **Cost Reduction:** Holding general elections for the Lok Sabha costs approximately **Rs 4,000 crore** for the Central government. **State assembly** elections also incur **significant costs** based on the size of the State.
    - Simultaneous elections could lead to a **reduction** in these overall costs.
  - **Campaign Mode:** Political parties, including Ministers, often remain in a **'permanent campaign' mode** due to frequent state elections, hindering effective policy-making and governance.
  - **Model Code of Conduct:** During election periods, which last **45-60 days,** new schemes or projects cannot be announced by the Central or State governments, due to imposition of **Model Code of Conduct**, further impacting governance.
  - **Impact on Efficiency:** Administrative machinery slows down during elections as the focus shifts to conducting the elections. This includes the withdrawal of **paramilitary forces** from their regular duties to oversee elections.
  - **Social Cohesion:** High-stake elections annually lead to **polarising campaigns,** exacerbated by social media, which can **deepen societal divides** in a multi-religious and multilingual country.
  - **Uncertainty in Economy:** Asynchronous elections cause **uncertainty** and instability, thwarting supply chains, business investments, economic growth and other outcomes.
  - **Impact on Voters:** Frequent elections induce **'voters' fatigue'** and present a significant challenge in ensuring their participation. Simultaneous elections present an opportunity to cast votes in one go.

What Concerns are Associated with Simultaneous Elections?

- **Undermine Federal Spirit:** National political parties may gain an advantage over regional parties, which could undermine the **federal spirit.**
  - It could marginalise regional parties that rely on **local issues and grassroots campaigning,** whereas national parties benefit from larger resources and media influence
  - Former Chief Election Commissioner **S.Y. Quraishi** criticised simultaneous elections for **blurring distinctions** between national and local issues, thereby weakening

federalism.

- **Electoral Feedback:** Elections serve as a **feedback mechanism** for governments. Conducting elections only once every five years could disrupt the timely feedback loop necessary for **effective governance**.
- **Premature Dissolutions:** If simultaneous elections are conducted and the government loses its majority in the Lok Sabha, it raises the question of whether **new elections** would be required in all the states, even if the ruling party holds an absolute majority in those states.
- **Lengthy Constitutional Amendments:** Simultaneous elections would require amendments to **Articles 83, 85, 172, and 174** of the Constitution, which deal with the **duration and dissolution** of Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
  - Changes would also need to be made to **Article 356,** which allows for the dissolution of State assemblies under President's rule.
- **Voter Engagement:** Regional parties rely on personal methods of voter engagement such as **door-to-door campaigning, local meetings, and small rallies**. In simultaneous elections, voters may be swayed by corporate media influence and large organised rallies.
  - A study found a **77% chance that voters would vote for the same party** in both elections when they are held simultaneously.

How to Address Concerns Associated with Simultaneous Elections?

- **Democratic Nature of Indian Governance:** Politicians must seek **re-election** at the end of their term, preventing them from becoming **"permanent members"** of the legislature.
  - This democratic structure of Indian governance ensures that politicians remain **answerable** to their electorate.
- **Accountability Mechanisms in Place:** The **Council of Ministers is accountable to the legislature**, and **judicial oversight** plays a role in maintaining political accountability.
  - Therefore, frequent elections are not the only or the most effective means to hold politicians accountable.
- **Check on Corruption:** Elections require significant expenditure, and politicians often seek to recover these costs after being elected. This fuels corruption and the growth of the **parallel black economy**.
  - **Simultaneous elections can help in checking corruption to a large extent.**
- **International Examples:** Parliamentary democracies like **South Africa, Sweden, and Germany** have fixed tenures for their legislatures.
  - South Africa holds simultaneous **national and provincial elections** every five years.
  - Sweden and Germany elect their **Prime Minister and Chancellor**, respectively, every four years, with mechanisms to handle lack of confidence without early elections.

Conclusion

Simultaneous elections offer potential benefits like reduced costs, administrative efficiency, and less disruption to governance. However, they also pose challenges, including constitutional amendments, logistical complexities, and concerns over federalism. **Transformative measures** often come with short-term difficulties, making them **politically risky** to implement. A balanced approach, involving stakeholder consultations and phased implementation, could address these concerns while realising the advantages of conducting elections concurrently across India.

> *__Drishti Mains Question:__*
>
> What are the potential benefits and challenges associated with implementing simultaneous elections in India.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

__Prelims__

Q.Which one of the following factors constitutes the best safeguard of liberty in a liberal

democracy? (2021)

(a) A committed judiciary

(b) Centralization of powers

(c) Elected government

(d) Separation of powers

Ans: (d)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2021)

1. In India, there is no law restricting the candidates from contesting in one Lok Sabha election from three constituencies.
2. In the 1991 Lok Sabha Election, Shri Devi Lal contested from three Lok Sabha constituencies.
3. As per the existing rules, if a candidate contests in one Lok Sabha election from many constituencies, his/her party should bear the cost of bye-elections to the constituencies vacated by him/her winning in all the constituencies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) 1 and 3

(d) 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. Individual Parliamentarian's role as the national law maker is on a decline, which in turn, has adversely impacted the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss. **(2019)**

Q. "The local self-government system in India has not proved to be effective instrument of governance". Critically examine the statement and give your views to improve the situation. **(2017)**

Need of Reforms in Tea Industry

For Prelims: Tea Industry, Extreme Weather Events, Pesticide, Dooars, Terai, **Nilgiris, Tea Board of India, Landslides, E-Commerce Technologies, Palm Oil, Farmer Field Schools (FFSs).**

For Mains: Challenges in tea industry, impact of climate change on tea production.

Source: ET

Why in News?

Recently, the **tea industry** has seen a **rise in price of around 13%** for the Assam and West Bengal teas due to a **drop in tea production** in 2024.

- **Extreme weather events** and **climate change** are being held **responsible** for causing production losses and **reforms** are needed for its **sustainable development**.

What is the Current State of the Tea Industry in India?
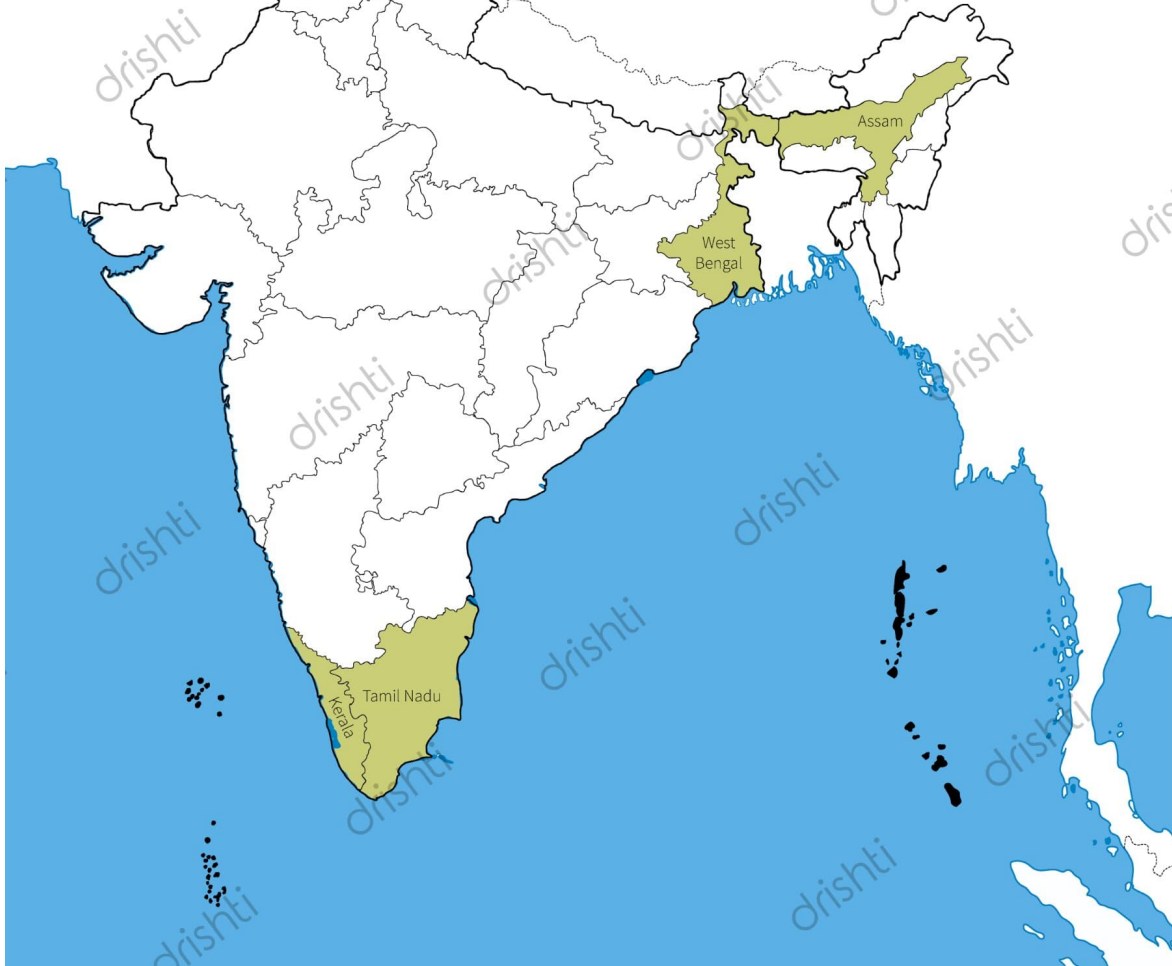
- **Recent Trends:**
  - **Drop in Tea Production:** Tea production has dropped in **West Bengal and Assam** by around **21% and 11%** respectively in 2024 which has led to a **13% increase in domestic prices**.
  - **Loss of Premium Products:** The lost crop primarily belongs to the **first and second shower** of monsoon, considered the **best quality teas** of the year, further affecting the industry's **profitability** and cash flows.
  - **Export Market Decline:** Export prices have fallen by **4%** this year, which is a discouraging trend.
  - **Pending Subsidies from the Tea Board:** The industry has been **waiting for due subsidies** from the **Tea Board** for developmental work carried out in recent years. The **non-receipt of subsidies** has added to the financial burden, especially during a year of reduced production.
- **Other Facts Related to Tea Industry:**
  - **Global Standing:** India is the **second-largest producer** of tea globally after China. India ranks among the **top 5 tea exporters** globally, contributing approximately **10%** of the total global tea exports.
    - From April 2023-February 2024, the total value of tea exports from India stood at **USD 752.85 million.**
  - **Tea Consumption in India:** India accounted for **19%** of global tea consumption.
    - India consumes approximately **81%** of its total tea production domestically, in contrast to countries like **Kenya and Sri Lanka** which export the majority of their production.
  - **Producer States:** Major tea growing states are **Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala** that account for **97%** of India's total tea production.
  - **Major Export Types:** Majority of the tea exported out of India is **black tea** which makes up about **96% of the total exports**. **Assam, Darjeeling, and Nilgiri** tea are considered one of the **finest** in the world.
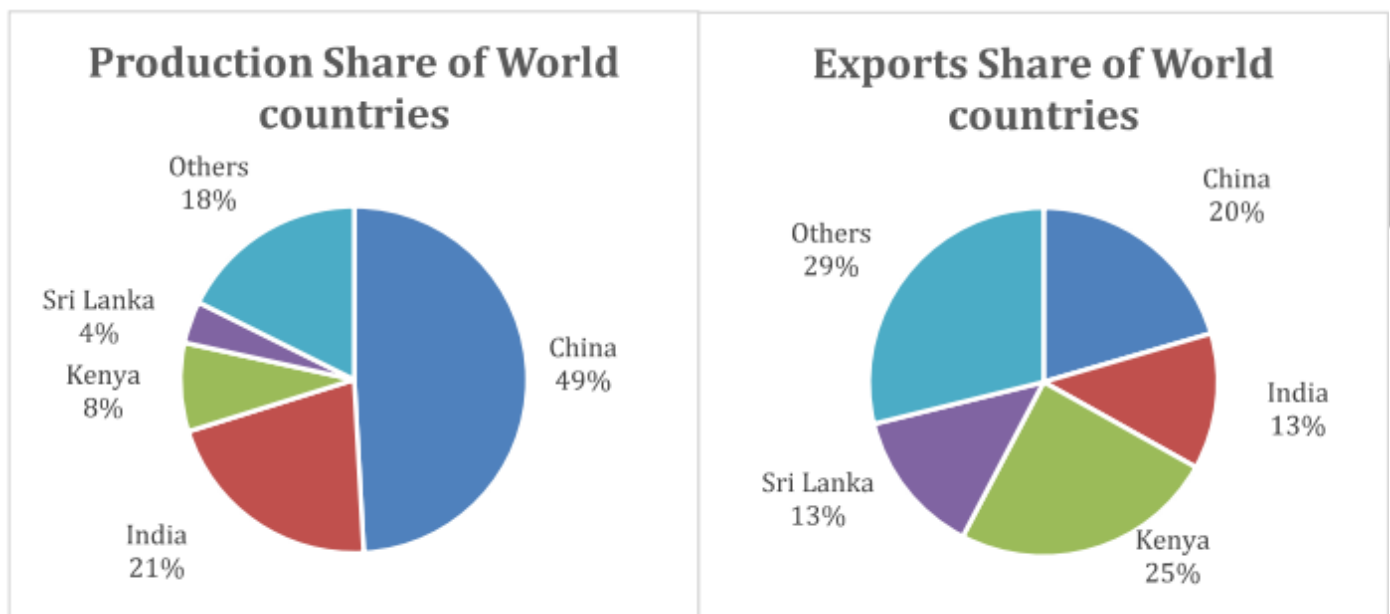
Major Tea
Producing States

What are the Key Challenges in the Tea Industry in India?

- **Weather-Driven Decline:** India's tea production has been significantly impacted by extreme weather events, particularly **excessive heat** in **May 2024** followed by **flooding** in **Assam**.
  - In May 2024, Indian tea production dropped to **90.92 million kgs** from **130.56 million kgs** in May 2023, marking the **lowest May output** in more than **10 years**.
- **Expected Rise in Tea Prices:** The average price of tea is expected to **rise by up to 20%** as a result of production disruptions.
  - In July 2024, the price of tea represented a **47% increase** since the start of 2024.
- **Ban on Pesticides:** The Indian government banned **20 pesticides** that have contributed to higher tea prices due to **costly alternatives** to pesticides.
  - However, after the pesticide ban, **demand for Indian tea has risen again**, particularly among **Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan**, which are key buyers of Indian tea.
  - Although the ban on pesticides has increased demand, it has also led to **production challenges**, as tea growers scramble to find **alternative pest management solutions**.
- **Stagnant Internal Consumption:** With **internal consumption** nearly **stagnant** and the **exports scenario depressed**, excess tea continues to flood the market, further straining price realisation.

- **Impact on Small Tea Growers (STGs):** STGs, which operate on holdings of **less than one hectare**, account for over **55% of India's total tea production** and **65% of West Bengal's tea** output.
  - Loss of production and decline in export price **disproportionately impact** them.
- **Negative Ripple Effect:** It would have a **negative impact** on the **bought leaf factories (BLFs)**, as STGs provide raw material for these factories.
  - BLFs are tea factories that buy tea leaves from other growers and process them into **finished tea**.
- **Garden Closures in North Bengal:** Approximately **13 to 14 tea gardens** in the **Dooars, Terai, and Darjeeling** regions have closed down, affecting more than **11,000 workers**.
  - North Bengal produces approximately **400 million kg** of tea annually from around **300 gardens**.

Global Tea Statistics

- **Global Production and Consumption:** In 2022, the total **global tea production** was **6,478 million kg**, while **global tea consumption** amounted to **6,209 million kg**.
- **Exports:** Total tea exports from producing countries in 2022 amounted to **1,831 million kg.**
- **Major Producers: China, India, Kenya, and Sri Lanka** are the leading tea producers and exporters. These countries account for **82%** of global tea production and **73%** of global tea exports.

Tea Board of India

- **Establishment:** It was established in **1953** and is headquartered in **Kolkata**. It has **17 offices** across India.
- **Statutory Body:** It was set up under **section 4 of the Tea Act, 1953**.
- **Regulatory Authority:** It **regulates** various entities including **tea producers, manufacturers, exporters, tea brokers**, auction organisers, and warehouse keepers.
- **Functions:** It conducts **market surveys**, analyses, identifies, tracks consumer behaviour, and provides relevant and accurate information to importers and exporters.

How Climate Change Affects the Tea Industry Globally?

- **Excessive Rainfall:** While tea plants depend on rainwater, **excessive rainfall** can cause **water logging, soil erosion** and **slope damage**, reducing available plantation area.

- **Drought Effects:** Droughts can lead to **dust accumulation** on tea plants and block sunlight, impacting production in countries like **India and China**.
- **Frost Damage: Frost** is particularly harmful in places like **Rwanda** and **China**, where frozen **leaves break** under weight, leading to **leaf loss**.
- **Melting of Glaciers**: **Permafrost regions** may experience **ground instability**, increasing risks of **rock avalanches** and **landslides**.
    - **Rock avalanches** and landslides may adversely impact tea plantations that requires **hill slopes** for its growth
- **Impact on Tea Production and Quality: Global warming** will make producing quality tea **harder and more expensive**.
    - Both **quality and quantity** of tea will decline, leading to **higher prices** for consumers.

What Steps Need to be Taken to Make the Tea Industry More Viable?

- **Minimum Benchmark Pricing: Regulated Tea Gardens (RTGs)** and **smallholder tea growers (STGs)** should collaborate with the government to establish **minimum benchmark prices** for different grades of tea.
    - The benchmark prices should be based on a **cost-plus model** to ensure that **production costs are covered** and to promote sector growth and export potential.
- **E-Commerce Integration:** Utilise **e-commerce technologies** and mobile applications to facilitate direct-to-consumer sales to increase **profit margin**.
- **Focus on Premium Teas:** The industry should shift focus towards **improving quality** which will fetch **more income** to the growers rather than just increasing quantity.
    - Demand for **premium teas** is likely to increase as the income of consumers rises.
- **Palm Oil as a Complementary Crop:** STGs and RTGs should explore **diversifying** into **palm oil production** as tea estates in northeastern India are **suitable** for this crop.
    - Palm oil cultivation requires **less intensive labour**, **minimal water**, and has **high returns**.
- **Learning from Other Countries:** Equipping farmers with knowledge to produce high-quality tea sustainably is critical.
    - **Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA)** has introduced the **Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) model** that offers hands-on learning on increasing productivity and quality through **planting, fine-plucking, preparing for certification**, etc.
- **Full Auction System:** Full auction system should be introduced for ensuring **100% of bought leaf tea** is sold through a public auction system.
    - Currently, only **40%** of tea leaves are auctioned, affecting **price realisation**.
- **Expanding Export Destinations:** The **ready-to-drink (RTD) tea market** in the Asia Pacific region is forecast to reach **USD 6.67 billion** by 2028, growing at an annual rate of **5.73%**.
    - India is well-positioned to capitalise on this market.
- **Need of Research and Development (R&D):** R&D is vital for enhancing tea quality, developing **climate-resilient varieties**, and finding **eco-friendly solutions,** such as **organic pesticides**, to address challenges occurring due to climate change.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q.Discuss the major challenges facing the tea industry in India. How can policy interventions and technological advancements help address these challenges?

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the "Tea Board" in India, consider the following statements: (2022)

1. The Tea Board is a statutory body.
2. It is a regulatory body attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
3. The Tea Board's Head Office is situated in Bengaluru.

4. The Board has overseas offices at Dubai and Moscow.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 3

(b) 2 and 4

(c) 3 and 4

(d) 1 and 4

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. Whereas The British planters had developed tea gardens all along the Shivaliks and LesserHimalayasfrom Assam to Himachal Pradesh, in effect they did not succeed beyond the Darjeeling area. Explain. **(2014)**

Widening Skills Gap in the Job Market

For Prelims: **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, **Economic Survey 2023-24**, **Global Innovation Index (GII)**, Initiatives Related to the Mnaufacturing Sector

For Mains: Growth Drivers of the Manufacturing Sector in India, Challenges Related to India's Manufacturing Sector

Source: IE

Why in News?

India's job market is **experiencing an increasing divide between low-skilled and high-skilled employment**. Over the past two decades, the **services sector**—particularly IT, banking, and finance—**has been a major driver of economic growth**. In contrast, **traditional industries** such as apparel and footwear, which provide low-skilled jobs, are **stagnating.**

What are the Current Trends of India's Manufacturing & Service Sector?

- **Service Sector:**
  - **Contribution to GDP and Employment**: India's services sector contributes over **50% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** and **employs approximately 30.7% of the population** while serving as a global hub for software services.
  - **Recovery & Growth:** The services sector made a remarkable recovery in FY 2022-23, posting a Year-Over-Year (YoY) growth rate of 8.4%.
    - The Indian **IT outsourcing market** is projected to **grow** by **6–8%** between 2021 and 2024.
  - **GII Ranking:** In September 2023, India maintained its **40th position in the Global**

Innovation Index (GII), driven by advancements in technologically dynamic, internationally tradable services.

- ○ **FDI:** The service sector also attracted the **highest Foreign Direct investment (FDI)**, receiving USD 109.5 billion from April 2000 to March 2024.
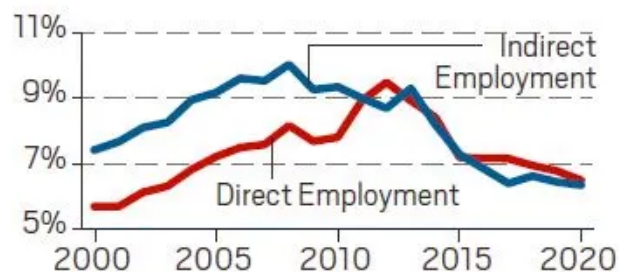- ▪ **Manufacturing Sector:**

  - ○ **Manufacturing Stagnation:** Manufacturing remains at **around 14% of GDP, below** the **targeted 25%**, widening the gap between high-skilled and low-skilled jobs.
  - ○ **Lagging in Manufacturing:** India's manufacturing sector lags behind competitors such as Bangladesh, Thailand, and Vietnam, affecting low-skilled job creation.
    - Economists stress that **India cannot rely solely on the services sector** due to its large population of 1.4 billion.
  - ○ **Job Creation Needs:** The **Economic Survey 2023-24's estimate of needing 7.85 million non-farm jobs** annually highlights the broader requirement for creating jobs across various sectors to accommodate the growing workforce.
    - The national unemployment rate increased from **7% to 9% in June 2024** as per the **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)**.

What are the Factors Contributing in the Decline in Employment in the Manufacturing Sector?

- ▪ **Manufacturing Stagnation:** Stagnation in manufacturing (contributing mere **14% of GDP)** has hindered job creation in labour-intensive sectors.
  - ○ India's **services exports make up 4.3%** of global commercial services exports, while its **goods exports account for only 1.8% of the global goods market.** This imbalance contributes to **low job creation in India's manufacturing sector**.
- ▪ **Shift Towards High-Skill Industries:** The rise of **Global Capability Centres (GCCs)** bypassing the manufacturing sector has led to **increased job opportunities for high-skilled IT professionals**, but this shift has not translated into sufficient low-skilled job creation.
  - ○ GCCs have proliferated in India, with nearly 1,600 established by multinational companies, focusing on **data analytics** and **software development.**
- ▪ **Declining Export-Related Jobs:** A World Bank report noted that export-related jobs in India have decreased from 9.5% of total domestic employment in 2012 to 6.5% in 2020.
  - ○ This decline is attributed to the **dominance of India's service sector and high-skill manufacturing** in its export basket, which are **less effective at creating jobs for the broader workforce**, leading to reduced job creation through trade.

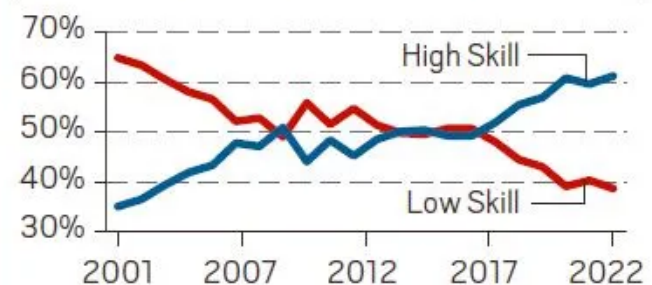**JOBS CREATED BY EXPORTS-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN INDIA, 2000-2020**
(% of domestic employment)

The World Bank indicates that while high-skilled jobs generated through manufacturing exports are rising, trade-related low-skilled job opportunities are rapidly moving to Vietnam and Bangladesh

INDIA'S HIGH & LOW SKILL-INTENSIVE MANUFACTURING
(% of total manufacturing exports)

Employment generation in trade has declined despite a decrease in China's participation in low-skill manufacturing due to rising wages, according to the World Bank

- **Limited Participation in Global Value Chains (GVCs):** India's declining participation in **GVCs** has limited job creation, despite GVCs driving 70% of global trade.
    - Challenges like raw material shortages and high transport costs have reduced India's trade involvement, according to the World Bank.
- **High Tariff:** High tariffs on intermediate goods have **increased production costs for Indian manufacturers,** reducing their global competitiveness.
    - India's **average tariff rose to 18.1% in 2022, up from 13% in 2014,** making it harder to compete with countries like Vietnam and Thailand and worsening the decline in low-skilled job opportunities.
- **India's Missed Opportunity in Low-Skill Manufacturing:** India has struggled to seize the opportunity presented by **China's exit from low-skill manufacturing between 2015 and 2022**.
    - Despite China's reduced presence in industries like apparel, leather, textiles, and footwear, countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam, and even advanced economies like Germany and the Netherlands have benefited from China's shrinking market share.
- **Lack of Skill Development:** Only **16% of India's labour force has received skill training**, resulting in low employability due to insufficient vocational skills and education. The **India Skills Report** indicates that **only 45% of graduates** are considered employable.

What Initiatives Have Been Taken to Boost the Manufacturing Sector in India?

- **PM MITRA Parks:** In 2023, the government approved the establishment of 7 **PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks** with an investment of Rs 4,445 crores to **develop world-class infrastructure in the textile sector**.
- **National Industrial Corridor Development Programme:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved setting up **12 industrial smart cities** with an estimated investment of Rs 28,602 crores, aimed at **enhancing manufacturing capabilities**.
- **Tariff Reductions:** The **Union Budget 2024-25** announced **tariff cuts on various items**, including medical equipment and textiles, aiming to reduce production costs and enhance competitiveness.
- **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP):** This scheme **supports entrepreneurs in establishing non-farm units,** aiming to create jobs for traditional artisans and unemployed youth in rural and urban areas.
    - From 2018-19 to January 30, 2024, the program has generated an estimated 37.46 lakh jobs.
- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY):** It provides collateral-free loans up to Rs 10 lakh to individuals and micro/small businesses to promote self-employment.
    - As of March 29, 2024, approximately 47.7 crore loans have been sanctioned under the scheme.

Way Forward

- **Decentralised Community Action for Skills Identification:** This approach helps in identifying potential workers and matching them with industries in need of specific skills, thus providing a targeted workforce to the manufacturing sector.
- **Integrated Human Development:** By converging education, health, skills, and employment at the local level, and leveraging women's collectives, you can build a healthier, more skilled workforce, which is crucial for both the productivity and inclusivity of the manufacturing sector.
- **Promote GVC (Global Value Chains) Participation:** By improving integration into GVCs through reduced tariffs and simplified trade, Indian manufacturers can access larger markets, modern technologies, and global networks, making manufacturing more competitive.
    - The **Union Budget 2024-25** announced tariff reductions on several key items, but the World Bank suggests that further reductions are necessary to eliminate cost disparities and improve competitiveness.
- **Invest in Skill Development:** Training workers in both high-skilled and low-skilled job sectors is essential to meet the evolving demands of modern manufacturing, particularly as it becomes more technologically driven.

Drishti Mains Question

Q. How has stagnation in India's manufacturing sector affected the job market and what strategies can address this imbalance for more balanced growth?

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)

Q. Recently, India's first 'National Investment and Manufacturing Zone' was proposed to be set up in (2016)

(a) Andhra Pradesh

(b) Gujarat

(c) Maharashtra

(d) Uttar Pradesh

Ans: (a)

Q. What is/are the recent policy initiative(s)of Government of India to promote the growth of manufacturing sector? (2012)

1. Setting up of National Investment and Manufacturing Zones
2. Providing the benefit of 'single window clearance'
3. Establishing the Technology Acquisition and Development Fund

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q1. "Industrial growth rate has lagged behind in the overall growth of Gross-Domestic-Product (GDP) in the post-reform period" Give reasons. How far are the recent changes in Industrial Policy capable of increasing the industrial growth rate? **(2017)**

Q2. Normally countries shift from agriculture to industry and then later to services, but India shifted directly from agriculture to services. What are the reasons for the huge growth of services vis-a-vis the industry in the country? Can India become a developed country without a strong industrial base? **(2014)**

Food Banks in GHG Reduction

Source: DTE

Why in News?

According to recent estimates based on a new methodology termed **Food Recovery to Avoid Methane Emissions (FRAME), food banks** play a crucial role in mitigating **climate change** by significantly reducing **greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions**.

- Each food bank can prevent emissions equivalent to taking 900 gasoline-powered cars off the road for a year.

Note:

- **FRAME** is a tool designed to **quantify and mitigate the environmental impact of food loss and waste (FLW)** through **food recovery and redistribution**.
    - The FRAME pilot project in Mexico and Ecuador analysed six community-led food banks, finding that they **collectively prevented 816 metric tonnes of methane emissions** in a year, averaging 136 MT per food bank.
    - This methodology helps food banks **track emissions from food recovery** reducing **greenhouse gases** while **improving food security** addressing both **environmental and social challenges.**

How Effective are Food Banks in Addressing Food Waste?

- **Food Banks:**
    - A food bank is a **non-profit organisation** that **provides food to people** who struggle to afford enough food to avoid hunger.
    - It usually **works through other organisations** like **food pantries and soup kitchens**, though some food banks directly distribute food themselves.
    - They also **recover surplus food** from across the food supply chain and distribute it to people facing hunger through community organisations.
- **Global Impact of Food Banks:**
    - **Emissions Reduction:** Each food bank is estimated to avoid **emissions equivalent to 906 gasoline-powered cars** annually, or the **carbon storage** equivalent of nearly **63,000 tree seedlings** grown for a decade.
        - In 2019, food banks collectively **avoided over 12 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent emissions** and saved 75 million tonnes of nutritious food from

landfills.
- **Food Security:** The food banks **served over 66 million people** facing hunger within their networks.
  - By recovering and redistributing food, these organisations not only reduce environmental impacts but also enhance food security for vulnerable populations.
- **Alignment with UN Goals:** FRAME supports the **UN's Target 12.3**, which aims to halve global food waste at retail and consumer levels by 2030.

What is the Current State of Food Waste?

- The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** estimates that **31% of food is lost globally,** with **14% lost post-harvest** and an additional **17% wasted at retail and consumer levels**.
- According to UN report estimates, **Indian households waste 40% of their food**, amounting to **78.2 million tonnes annually**, with a financial loss of nearly **Rs 92,000 crore per year.**
  - India's **per capita food waste is 55 kg/year,** with **rural areas wasting less** than urban areas.
  - In South Asia, **Bhutan has the lowest per capita food waste at 19 kg/year**, while Pakistan has the highest at 130 kg/year.
- **Implications of Food Wastage:**
  - This leads to **exacerbated hunger** and **greenhouse gas emissions**.
    - **Food waste in landfills generates methane**, a potent **greenhouse gas** that traps over **80 times more heat than CO_2** in the first 20 years.
  - In 2017, emissions from food loss and waste reached up to **9.3 gigatonnes of CO_2 equivalent (GtCO2e)**.
    - Food systems are responsible for about **one-third of global GHG emissions,** with food loss and waste accounting for half of this figure.

Note

- The **Food Waste Index Report** is tracking country-level progress to **halve food waste by 2030 (SDG 12.3). SDG 12** aims to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Way Forward

- **Setting Reduction Targets:** The government should **prioritise reducing food wastage** by setting measurable and **time-bound reduction targets** at both national and global levels, in line with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- **Promoting Sustainable Practices:** Encourage **sustainable food production** and consumption by incorporating food waste education in school curriculums, launching awareness campaigns, and incentivising businesses to adopt sustainable practices.
- **Strengthening Food Recovery Networks:** Support the **development of food recovery programs** that redistribute surplus food to vulnerable populations, leveraging technology and local initiatives.
- **Improving Waste Management Systems:** Implement **effective food waste management systems**, including large-scale composting, biogas plants, and waste-to-energy projects to repurpose organic waste and reduce landfill pressure.

Conclusion

To maximise the impact of **food banks in combating climate change and food insecurity**, it is essential to support policies that promote food recovery initiatives. Increased awareness, funding, and collaboration among stakeholders in the food system can enhance the effectiveness of food banks. By addressing food waste, we can make significant strides toward achieving both climate goals and food security targets globally.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the provisions made under the National Food Security Act, 2013, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The families coming under the category of 'below poverty line (BPL)' only are eligible to receive subsidised food grains.
2. The eldest woman in a household, of age 18 years or above, shall be the head of the household for the purpose of issuance of a ration card.
3. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a 'take-home ration' of 1600 calories per day during pregnancy and for six months thereafter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. What are the salient features of the National Food Security Act, 2013? How hasthe Food Security Bill helped in eliminating hunger and malnutrition in India? **(2021)**

Engineers Day 2024

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Recently, on the occasion of **Engineers Day**, the Prime Minister paid tribute to **Sir M. Visvesvaraya** and extended his greetings to engineers for their contributions to innovation and progress across various fields.

What are the Key Facts About Sir M. Visvesvaraya?

- **About Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya:** Born on 15th September 1861 in Karnataka, he was an eminent engineer, scholar, and statesman.
  - A graduate of the College of Engineering, Pune, he went on to become one of India's most respected engineers.
- **Engineering Contributions:**
  - **Flood Control and Irrigation:** He is best known for his pioneering work in flood control and irrigation projects. His design of the **Krishna Raja Sagara (KRS) Dam** in Mysuru revolutionized water storage and irrigation.
  - **Automatic Water Floodgates:** In 1903, he developed an innovative system of automatic water floodgates, which were installed at the **Khadakwasla Dam** in Pune.
  - **Urban Planning:** Visvesvaraya played a critical role in the planning of the **city of Hyderabad**, improving its drainage and water supply systems.
- **Role in Public Service:**
  - He served as the **Diwan of Mysore** (1912–1918) and implemented major industrial and economic reforms.
  - His emphasis on education, public health, and industrialization laid the foundation for economic development in the region.
  - He is widely recognized as an early advocate and practitioner of **Economic Planning in India**, called the **Visvesvaraya Plan**, which he presented in a book titled **"Planned Economy in India"**.
- **Honors and Recognition:**
  - In 1955, he was awarded India's highest civilian honor, the **Bharat Ratna,** for his exceptional service to the nation.
  - Sir M. Visvesvaraya was appointed in 1911 as a **"Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire (CIE)"** by **King Edward VII.**
  - In 1915, he was conferred the title of **"Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire (KCIE)"** for his contributions to the public good.
  - He received an honorary membership from the Institution of Civil Engineers, London, a fellowship from the **Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore**, and several honorary

degrees, including D.Sc., LL.D., and D.Litt., from eight universities in India.
  - He presided over the **Indian Science Congress** in 1923.
- **Engineers Day:** His birth anniversary, **15th September,** is celebrated annually as **Engineers Day** in India to honor his legacy and contributions to the field of engineering.

Read More: Engineer's Day, Birth Anniversary of M.Visvesvaraya, 108th Indian Science Congress, Bharat Ratna Awardees 2024

Joint Doctrine for Amphibious and Cyberspace Operations

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Recently, **Chief of Defence Staff** (CDS) General Anil Chauhan released the **Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations** during the **Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) meeting**.

- Earlier CDS also released **the Joint Doctrine for Cyberspace Operations.**

What are Joint Doctrines for Amphibious and Cyberspace Operations?

- **Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations: The Doctrine is a keystone publication providing guidance to Commanders for Amphibious Operations in a complex military environment.**
  - The **amphibious capability enhances the Armed Forces' ability** to undertake a wide range of operations within the **Indian Ocean Region**, in both wartime and peacetime scenarios.
  - These operations constitute a **vital aspect of multi-domain military engagements** and exemplify the highest level of coordination and integration among the **Armed Forces.**
- **Joint Doctrine for Cyberspace Operations:** Cyberspace **is the global network of entities, including** Information and Communication Technology (ICT) **systems, that process, store, and transmit digital information and code, whether connected or independent.**
  - In addition to the conventional domains of warfare—land, sea, and air—**cyberspace has emerged as a critical and complex domain in modern warfare**, requiring dedicated focus and strategy.
  - The doctrine highlights the **military dimensions of cyberspace operations, providing strategic guidance for commanders,** staff, and practitioners in planning and executing cyberspace operations, while also raising awareness among military personnel at all levels.

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

- **Background:**
  - Its creation was recommended in 2001 by a **Group of Ministers (GoM)** that was tasked with studying the **Kargil Review Committee (1999) report.**
  - After the GoM recommendations, in preparation for the post of CDS, the government created the **Integrated Defence Staff** in 2002, which was to eventually serve as the CDS's Secretariat.
  - In 2012, the **Naresh Chandra Committee** recommended the appointment of a Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee as a midway to eliminate apprehensions over the CDS.
  - Finally, the post of **CDS was created in 2019** on the recommendations of a committee of defence experts headed by Lt General **DB Shekatkar.**

- **General Bipin Rawat** was the first CDS in the country and was appointed on 31st December 2019.
  - **Roles and Responsibilities:**
    - He also **heads the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** in the Ministry of Defence.
    - The CDS will be the **single-point military adviser to the Defence Minister on matters involving all three services and the service** chiefs will be obliged to confine their counsel to issues pertaining to their respective services.
    - As the head of DMA, CDS is vested with the authority in prioritising inter-service procurement decisions as **Permanent Chairman-Chiefs of Staff Committee.**
    - The CDS is also **vested with the authority to provide directives to the three chiefs**. However, he does not enjoy any command authority over any of the forces.
    - CDS is **first among equals, he enjoys the rank of Secretary within the DoD** (Department of Defence) and his powers will be confined to only the revenue budget.
    - He will also perform an advisory role in the **Nuclear Command Authority (NCA).**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. In the context of Indian defence, consider the following statements: (2009)

1. The Shourya missile flies with a speed of more than 8 Mach.
2. The range of Shourya missile is more than 1600 km.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

Q. In the context of the Indian defence, what is 'Dhruv'? (2008)

(a) Aircraft-carrying warship

(b) Missile-carrying submarine

(c) Advanced light helicopter

(d) Intercontinental ballistic missile

Ans: (c)

Navika Sagar Parikrama II

Recently, the **Indian Navy** announced the **second women circumnavigation expedition** and unveiled the expedition **logo.**

- Two Indian Navy women officers, **Lt Cdr Roopa A and Lt Cdr Dilna K,** will embark on a globe-circumnavigating expedition known as **Navika Sagar Parikrama II**, onboard **INSV Tarini.**
- Women Navy officers are being guided by **Cdr Abhilash Tomy (Retd.)**, a renowned circumnavigator and **Golden Globe Race** hero.
    - Golden Globe Race is a prestigious **solo sailing competition** to circumnavigate the globe **without stopping** and using only **traditional navigation methods**.
- In the **Navika Sagar Parikrama** logo, the **octagonal shape** in the center depicts the **Indian Navy**, while the **sun** signifies a **celestial body** and the **compass**, guiding the sailors through the challenging seas.
- **Previous Expeditions of Indian Navy:**
    - A trans-oceanic voyage from **Goa to Rio de Janeiro via Cape Town** and back.
    - A sailing expedition from **Goa to Sri Vijaya Puram** (formerly Port Blair) and back.
    - A sortie from **Goa to Port Louis, Mauritius**.

Read More: Women Navy Officers on Transoceanic Expeditions

Swabhav Swachhata Sanskaar Swachhata (4S)

Recently, **Swabhav Swachhata Sanskaar Swachhata (4S) 2024** campaign was initiated in New Delhi as the theme of **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 2024.**

- Under this, the Central Government is aiming for the time-bound and **targeted transformation of highly challenging and unsanitary locations**.
    - A key highlight of the campaign is the **introduction of Cleanliness Target Units (CTUs)** which entails the identification and mapping of these units through a dedicated portal.

- ○ **Three Pillars of 4S 2024 Campaign:**
    - **Swachhata Ki Bhaagidari:** Public participation, awareness, and advocacy for Swachh Bharat.
    - **Sampoorna Swachhata:** Mega cleanliness drives targeting difficult and dirty spots (Cleanliness Target Units).
    - **SafaiMitra Suraksha Shivir:** Single-window service, safety, and recognition camps for sanitation workers' welfare and health.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM): The initiative aspires to engender a transformative shift towards fostering sustainable behavioral change, embedding cleanliness into daily routines, and promoting widespread public participation in upholding a clean and healthy environment.**

Read More: [Swachh Bharat Mission](#)

Onam and Milad-Un-Nabi

[Source: PIB](#)

Recently, the [**Prime Minister**](#) and [**President**](#) of India extended their greetings and wishes for **Onam** and **Milad-Un-Nabi (Eid-e-Milad)**.

- This year both Onam and Milad-Un-Nabi were celebrated on **same day** across India.
- **Onam:**
    - ○ Onam is a prominent **harvest festival in Kerala,** celebrated to commemorate the **homecoming of the Asura king Mahabali**, who is believed to have ushered in peace and prosperity to the region.
    - ○ It takes place **during Chingam, the first month of the Malayalam calendar,** Kollavarsham.
    - ○ The 10-day festival begins on **Atham (first day of Onam)** and culminates on **Thiruvonam (last day)**.
    - ○ Key celebrations include the creation of **Pookkalam (flower rangolis)**, along with various traditional rituals such as **Vallam Kali (boat races)**, **Pulikali (tiger dances)**, **Kummattikali (mask dances)**, and **Onathallu (martial arts)**.
- **Milad-Un-Nabi (Eid-e-Milad):** It commemorates the **birth of the Prophet**. According to tradition, the Prophet was born on the 12th of Rabee-ul-Awwal (third month of the Islamic calendar) in Mecca in **570 CE**.
    - ○ Notably, the **Prophet also passed away on this same day.**

Read More: [Onam Festival](#)

India Wins 5th Asian Champions Trophy

[Source: IE](#)

Recently, the **Indian men's hockey team** won the **5th Asian Champions Trophy 2024** in China by defeating China 1-0 in the final.

- **India has won the most Asian Men's Hockey Champions Trophy titles with**

5, while **Pakistan has won 3**, including one shared with India.

- India's **Harmanpreet Sing**h is the **second-highest goal scorer** in the Asian Champions Trophy with 7 goals, trailing behind Korea's Jihun Yang, who has scored 8 goals.
- **Asian Men's Hockey Champions Trophy:**
  - The **Men's Asian Champions Trophy** is an event **held annually** by the **Asian Hockey Federation** since 2011 with **India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea,** and **China** participating in the inaugural tournament.
    - The **Asian Hockey Federation** is the **governing body for hockey in Asia**.
    - It has **33 member associations** and it is **affiliated to the International Hockey Federation (FIH).**
  - **India won** the **first edition in 2011**, defeating Pakistan in the final with a penalty shoot-out.
  - Pakistan won the next edition in 2012 and the tournament saw a back and forth between India and Pakistan until **South Korea broke the trend by winning the title in 2021.**

Asian Men's Hockey Champions Trophy winners and runner-ups list

Year	Winner	Runner-up
2024	India	China
2023	India	Malaysia
2021	South Korea	Japan
2018	India and Pakistan (joint winners)	-
2016	India	Pakistan
2013	Pakistan	Japan
2012	Pakistan	India
2011	India	Pakistan

Read More: Hockey World Cup