Art & Culture

Chandragupta Maurya
Syllabus: GS 1/Art & Culture

In News
- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister recently said that Chandragupta Maurya, who founded the Mauryan empire in the 4th century BC, had defeated Alexander of Macedon in battle — and yet, it is the latter whom historians have chosen to call “great”.

Historical findings in this context
- Historically, there is little evidence of the Greek conqueror and the Mauryan emperor having crossed paths at all.
- In fact, Alexander died in 323 BC, and it is generally accepted that Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne in 321 BC.
- The only anecdotal rumours of their meeting refer to the historically-contested incident, where a very young Chandragupta met Alexander in the latter's barracks.
  - However, there is no solid historical corroboration for that incident.

The use of the suffix ‘great’ in history
- Alexander was referred to as “great” by early historians just as several other conquerors and prominent rulers have been called across empires and ages
  - Prominent examples are the Roman emperor Constantine; the Persians Cyrus and Darius; Herod, king of Judea; and in more modern times, Catherine and Peter of Russia, and Frederick of Prussia.
  - In Indian history, ‘great’ has been used for the emperors Ashoka, Rajaraja and Rajendra Chola, and Akbar, among others.
- The use of the suffix ‘great’ has become less common in modern history-writing however, as historians have moved their focus away from the political triumphs of individual rulers to the society, economy, art and architecture of their times.
They have also subjected the rulers’ apparent greatness to new perspectives and to more rigorous historical scrutiny through a re-evaluation of old sources and by referencing those that have been discovered more recently.

Chandragupta Maurya

- Chandragupta was the founder of the Mauryan dynasty and the first emperor to unify most of India under one administration.
- He is credited with saving the country from maladministration and freeing it from foreign domination.
- Early Life:
  - Chandragupta was born into a family left destitute by the death of his father, chief of the migrant Mauryas, in a border fray.
    - Buddhist texts say Chandragupta Maurya belonged to the Kshatriya Moriya clan associated with the Shakyas. Brahmanical texts, however, refer to the Mauryas as Shudras and heretics.
  - He was trained by a Brahman politician, Kautilya (also called Chanakya) in Taxila (now in Pakistan).
    - A major treatise on political economy in Sanskrit is the Artha-shastra of Kautilya.
- Ascending the throne:
  - After ascending the throne of the Magadha kingdom he destroyed the sources of Nanda power and eliminated opponents through well-planned administrative schemes that included an effective secret service.
    - Chandragupta overthrew the unpopular last king of the Nandas, Dhana Nanda, and occupied his capital, Pataliputra.
- Expansion of empire:
  - Chandragupta overthrew the Nanda power and then campaigned in central and northern India.
  - Greek sources report that he engaged in a conflict in 305 BCE in the trans-Indus region with Seleucus I Nicator, one of Alexander’s generals, who, following the death of Alexander, had founded the Seleucid dynasty in Iran.
    - The result was a treaty by which Seleucus ceded the trans-Indus provinces to the Maurya and the latter presented him with 500 elephants.
      - A marriage alliance is mentioned, but no details are recorded.
    - The treaty ushered in an era of friendly relations between the Mauryas and the Seleucids, with exchanges of envoys.
One among them, the Greek historian Megasthenes, left his observations in the form of a book, the *Indica*.

- Ranging from the Himalayas and the Kābul River valley (in present-day Afghanistan) in the north and west to the Vindhya Range in the south, Chandragupta’s Indian empire was one of history’s most extensive.
  - Chandragupta’s son, Bindusara, continued to expand the empire to the south.

**Acceptance of Jainism**

- Traditionally, Chandragupta was influenced to accept Jainism by the sage Bhadrabahu I, who predicted the onset of a 12-year famine.
  - When the famine came, Chandragupta made efforts to counter it, but, dejected by the tragic conditions prevailing, he left to spend his last days in the service of Bhadrabahu at Shravanabelagola, a famous religious site in southwestern India, where Chandragupta fasted to death.

**Legacy:**

- Chandragupta laid the foundations of an extensive and efficient system of centralised administration and tax-collection that formed the basis of his empire.
- Trade and agriculture were reformed and regulated with the building of infrastructure and standardisation of weights and measures, and provisions were made for a large standing army.

**Alexander**

- Alexander the Great was one of the greatest military strategists and leaders in world history.
  - He was also ruthless, dictatorial, and ambitious to the point of regarding himself as divine.
  - His conquests of the Mediterranean states, the Persian empire, and parts of India spread Hellenistic culture across these regions.

**Early Life:** Alexander was born in 356 BCE in Pella, Macedonia, the son of King Philip II and Queen Olympias.
- He was taught by Aristotle.

**Expansion of Empire**

- He showed military brilliance, helping win the Battle of Chaeroneia at age 18.
  - In 336 Philip was assassinated. Alexander was acclaimed by the army and succeeded to the throne without opposition.
- In 334 he crossed to Persia and defeated a Persian army at the Granicus River.
- The wealth of Persia attracted him and the Persian army was less disciplined and poorly led.
  - At the Battle of Issus in 333, he defeated another army, this one led by the Persian king Darius III, who managed to escape.
  - In 332 Alexander conquered Syria, Phoenicia, Tyre.
- Conquest of the Mediterranean coast and Egypt
  - In control of the eastern Mediterranean coast, in 331 he defeated Darius in a decisive battle at Gaugamela, though Darius again escaped.
  - He continued eastward, quashing real or imagined conspiracies among his men and taking control to the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers, founding cities (most named Alexandria) to hold the territory.
- Invasion of India: In the summer of 327 BC Alexander invaded India with a newly reinforced army.
  - His ultimate ambition was to reach the Indian Ocean. He impressed the local Indian rulers by storming the nearly impregnable pinnacle of Aornos, a few miles west of the Indus River.
  - On June 1, 326, Alexander fought his last great battle on the banks of the Hydaspes River.
    - He defeated a far larger army led by King Porus, who later became a strong ally.
- Alexander’s retreat
  - After the defeat of Porus, Alexander wished to march on into the heartland of the Gangetic basin — but upon reaching the Beas, the last of the five rivers of Punjab, his generals refused to go further.
  - Alexander was forced to turn back, and he followed the Indus southward to its delta, where he sent part of his army to Mesopotamia by the sea while leading the other part overland along the Makran coast.
  - He reached Susa in Persia in 324 BC, and in the following year, died in the ancient city of Babylon, to the south of today’s Baghdad.
- Legacy and ‘greatness’
  - Alexander came to be called ‘great’ because of his stupendous military conquests which dazzled European writers and chroniclers of the ancient world.
  - His reign marked a turning point in European and Asian history. Alexander’s expeditions brought advances in geography and natural sciences and helped shift the major centres of civilization eastward.
  - His greatest contribution was spreading Hellenistic culture from Gibraltar to Punjab.
Greek language and coinage served as common links across these vast trading and cultural networks.

In a real sense, Alexander’s achievements helped pave the way for the rise of the Roman Empire, the spread of Christianity, and centuries of Byzantine rule.

Source: IE

**Polity & Governance**

**A.P. to revoke 'three capitals' Acts**

Syllabus: GS2/ Government policies and interventions

**In News**

- Recently, the Andhra Pradesh Assembly unanimously passed a Bill to repeal two laws that were cleared to set up three different state capitals.

**About Three-capitals**

- On July 31 the state government notified the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020, and the AP Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal) Act, 2020.
- The government had earlier hinted A.P. could have **three capitals** —
  - Executive capital in Visakhapatnam,
  - Legislative capital in Amaravati and
  - Judiciary capital in Kurnool.
**Need for three capitals**

- Three capitals ensure equal development of different regions of the state.
- Decentralisation has been the central theme in recommendations of all major committees that were set up to suggest a suitable location for the capital of Andhra Pradesh. These include Justice B N Srikrishna Committee, K Sivaramakrishnan Committee, G N Rao Committee etc.

**Reasons for Repealment**

- Protest by people:
  - Over a hundred petitions challenging the government’s move have been filed before the Andhra Pradesh High Court.
  - Farmers of Amaravati, who let the government acquire their lands, wanted them to stick to the previous plan and build a world-class capital city in the same location.
- Plug loopholes:
  - A “better” and more “comprehensive” Bill should be introduced after plugging the loopholes in the previous one.
- Better resort available:
  - Choosing Amaravati as the capital was wrong, as it lacked basic infrastructures, such as roads and drainage systems.
- Huge Fund Required:
  - Rs 1 lakh crore was required to build just that, which may escalate to Rs 5 or 6 lakh crore in 10 years.

**Benefits**

- Promotes Decentralisation:
  - According to the government, decentralisation was the central theme in recommendations of all major committees that were set up to suggest a suitable location for the capital of Andhra Pradesh.
- Asymmetric Federalism:
  - It restores Asymmetric Federalism – accommodates diversity not only between states but also within states.
- Boost to growth:
  - Three new large cities would boost the growth of the state, having multiple capitals spreads the economic growth in diverse channels by building multiple growth poles.
- Prevents Migration:
  - This shall reduce the migration of the people towards one large capital city, instead it may provide three different destinations, making it a viable and sustainable urbanization.
Disadvantages with 3 Capitals of Andhra Pradesh

- **Huge Financial Costs:**
  - Large amount of funding will be required to develop multiple capitals and to ensure smooth functioning of these capitals.

- **Travel Inconvenience:**
  - The Amaravati-Kurnool distance is 370 km. The time and costs of travel will be significant.
  - Likewise, government officers who may have to appear in the High Court will have to travel 700 km to Kurnool, which does not have an airport.

- **Not Required:**
  - The Assembly meets only after gaps of several months, and government Ministers, officers, and staff can simply go to Amaravati when required.

- **Establishing Coordination:**
  - Coordinating between seats of legislature and executive in separate cities will be easier said than done, and with the government offering no specifics of a plan, officers and common people alike fear a logistics nightmare.

- **Disinterested World Agencies:**
  - The World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) pulled out of the project to fund Amaravati’s development is a lesson to learn from.
  - A single large capital may attract more investors than three small capital cities.

- **Other Problems:**
  - It involves issues like land acquisition, which is already a problem in the newly developed capital of Amaravati.
  - The district level imbalance would still exist. (Amaravati in the south coastal AP, Visakhapatnam in north coastal Andhra and Kurnool in Rayalaseema region.)

Examples of Multiple Capitals

- **India:**
  - **Maharashtra** has two capitals- Mumbai and Nagpur (which holds the winter session of the state assembly).
  - **Himachal Pradesh** has capitals at Shimla and Dharamshala (winter).
  - The former state of **Jammu & Kashmir** had Srinagar and Jammu (winter) as capitals.

- **Global:**
  - In Sri Lanka,
- Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte is the official capital and seat of the national legislature,
- Colombo is the de facto seat of national executive and judicial bodies.
  - Republic of South Africa has three capitals:
    - Pretoria, the administrative capital;
    - Cape Town, the legislative capital and
    - Bloemfontein, the judicial capital.
  - In Malaysia:
    - Kuala Lumpur is official and royal capital and seat of national legislature, and
    - Putrajaya is the administrative centre and seat of the national judiciary.

**Conclusion**
- It is still not clear if the government will stick to Amaravati as the sole capital.
- There is an urgent need for decentralization for equitable development of all regions.

**Sources**: IE + TH

### Polity and Governance

**All-India Survey on Domestic Workers**

**Syllabus**: GS 2/Government Policies & Interventions

**In News**
- Recently, the first-ever All-India Survey on Domestic Workers was flagged off by the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

**Objectives and needs of the survey**
- As per the latest data on the e-Shram portal, around 8.8 per cent of registered 8.56 crore informal sector workers fall in the Domestic Workers category.
  - DWs are the third-largest category of workers after agriculture and construction.
- Domestic workers are a significant part of the total informal sector employment, there was a lack of data on the employment conditions.
- This evidence-based study will help the government in policy-making for this segment of workers.
About All-India Survey on Domestic Workers

- The survey is being carried out by the Labour Bureau.
- It is aimed at estimating the proportion of domestic workers at the national level and in the States, the proportion of domestic workers who live-in/live-out, engaged in informal employment and migrant/non-migrant, wages of such workers, and other socio-economic factors.
- The survey would also include details of the number of households with live-in/live-out domestic workers and the average number of workers engaged by various kinds of households.
- The questionnaire would include details about the size of the household, religion, social group, monthly consumption expenditure and the nature of the dwelling unit.
  - Information about the domestic workers, including their age, social group, migrant status, duration of work and type of remuneration, would be collected as well.

About Unorganised sector

- It is characterised by small and scattered units which are largely outside the control of the government. There are rules and regulations but these are not followed. Jobs here are low-paid and often not regular.
- There is no provision for overtime, paid leave, holidays, leave due to sickness etc. Employment is not secure.
- People can be asked to leave without any reason.
- This sector includes a large number of people who are employed on their own doing small jobs such as selling on the street or doing repair work.
  - Similarly, farmers work on their own and hire labourers as and when they require

Unorganised sector in India

- Around 80% of India’s labour force is employed in the informal sector and the remaining 20% in the formal sector.
  - Of the 80% informal sector workforce, half work in agriculture and the remaining in non-agricultural sectors.

Challenges /Issues

- Lack of Social security benefits: Formal workers work in the public and private organised sectors and have adequate social security benefits.
  - But informal sector workers lack these benefits, making them very vulnerable to economic and political shocks.
- Susceptibility to economic shocks: The casual workers among the informal workers are most susceptible to economic shocks as most of them do unskilled,
low-paid occupational jobs.
  ○ A significantly high proportion of these workers belong to the marginalised groups and are migrant labourers.
  ○ The problems in the informal sector can be costly as it can lead to job and wage losses, higher inflation and even risk the livelihood of migrant workers.

- **Structural disadvantage**: The structural disadvantage in terms of literacy and skills make them more prone to exploitation.
  ○ The discrimination in the urban informal labour market against these people leaves them with no choice but to accept the offered wage.

- **Government failure**: There is a government failure to reduce wage inequality and ensure a bare minimum wage to a large chunk of the urban informal workers during normal times.
  ○ Therefore, the majority of urban informal workers remain highly vulnerable and live in precarious conditions even during normal times.
  ○ The existing government programmes cannot provide gainful employment opportunities to the migrants at their native places.

- **Implications of Lockdown**: Informal sector workers suffered far more from the national lockdown in 2020 than their formal sector counterparts.
  ○ With an inadequate safety net, there were painful accounts of displaced informal workers trying to get back to their rural homes.

**Government’s Initiatives**

- **Unorganised Workers’ Social Security Act, 2008**: The Act empowers the Central Government to provide Social Security benefits to unorganised sector workers by formulating suitable welfare schemes on matters relating to (i) life and disability cover, (ii) health and maternity benefits, (iii) old age protection and (iv) any other benefit as may be determined by the Central Government.

- **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)**: Life and disability cover is provided through Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY).

- **Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**
  ○ The universal health scheme administered by the National Health Authority.

- **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-DhanYojana (PM-SYM) and National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeeper and Self-Employed Persons (NPS-Traders)**.
  ○ The schemes launched for old age protection to unorganised sector workers including traders, shopkeepers and self-employed persons,
○ Under the schemes, beneficiaries are entitled to receive a minimum monthly assured pension of Rs.3000/- after attaining the age of 60 years.
○ Both the schemes are being implemented in all the States/UTs of India.

- **Aam Admi Bima Yojana (AABY):** It is a Government of India Social Security Scheme administered through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

- **MGNREGA**
  ○ It is a *poverty alleviation programme* of the Government of India, which provides the legal *Right to Work* in exchange for *money to the citizens of the country*.
  ○ It aims to *enhance livelihood security* in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to *every household* whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana / Package**
  ○ In 2020, the Government of India had announced the “**Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana**” (PM-GKAY) for all beneficiaries covered under the *National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)*.
  ○ It is a comprehensive relief package of Rs 1.70 Lakh Crore Yojana for the poor to help them fight the battle against the CoronaVirus.
  ○ It aims to reach *out to the poorest of the poor*, with food and money in hand, so that they *do not face difficulties* in *buying essential supplies* and *meeting essential needs*.

- **A draft National Policy on domestic workers** is under consideration by the Central Government. The *salient features* are as under:-
  ○ Inclusion of Domestic Workers in the existing legislation.
  ○ Domestic workers will have the right to register as workers. Such registration will facilitate their access to rights & benefits accruing to them as workers.
  ○ Right to form their own associations, trade unions
  ○ Right to have minimum wages, access to social security, protection from abuse, harassment, violence
  ○ Right to enhance their professional skills
  ○ Protection of Domestic Workers from abuse and exploitation
  ○ Domestic Workers have access to courts, tribunals, etc.
  ○ Establishment of a mechanism for regulation of concerned placement agencies

**Conclusion and Way Forward**
- There is a *need to give protection* to *informal sector* workers via *social welfare*
schemes so that the disruption they are facing does not lead to a permanent fall in demand.

- Agriculture cannot absorb more people. It is already overcrowded. Engaging returning migrants in building new agri-value chains has some potential to create productive employment and protect livelihoods.

- In the meantime, if the government can scale up its “one nation, one ration card” scheme, and make subsidised grains available at places of work in cities and industrial towns, migrants can hopefully hold on for some time before taking a call on moving back to their native places.

- Government godowns are overflowing with excess grain stocks, and it may be useful to distribute at least a part of this to benefit migrant workers rather than incur high costs of maintaining these stocks.

- Along with this, some financial assistance under the Garib Kalyan Yojana can also be extended to migrants to help them remain in the cities of their work.

Source: TH

Indian Economy

World Fisheries Day

Syllabus: GS3/ Economics of Animal-Rearing

In News

- World Fisheries Day Observed on the 21st November every year.

About World Fisheries Day

- Purpose: To highlight the importance of sustainable stocks of fisheries in the world.
  - It also focuses on other related factors such as the necessity of healthy oceans, balance in ecosystem and surroundings.

- It was started in the year 1997 when “World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers” met at New Delhi leading to formation of “World Fisheries Forum” with representatives from 18 countries and signed a declaration advocating for a global mandate of sustainable fishing practices and policies.

- Each year, it is celebrated with a unique theme that focuses on the overall development of the fishing industry, environment, and biodiversity.

- Theme:
  - 2021: The day is awaiting a creative theme that incorporates the fishing industry, nature and the environment, as well as a greater emphasis on biodiversity.
  - The theme for 2020 was 'Social Responsibility in the Fishing Value Chain.'
• **Awards Ceremony:**
  ○ The award ceremony was organised by the ministry of fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying, in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of WFD.
  ○ **Balasore district (Odisha)** has been awarded India’s “Best Marine District”.

**Significance of World Fisheries Day**

• **Critical Reminder:**
  ○ It is no surprise that fish forms an important part of people’s diet across different parts of the world.
  ○ Also, thus, this day serves as a critical reminder that we must take necessary steps to manage global fisheries for sustainable stocks.

• **Cultural aspects:**
  ○ Several societies and communities are associated with the occupation of fishing for several years.

• **Better development:**
  ○ It will provide a strong hope to develop the fishing industry in a better manner in the country.

• **Raising Awareness:**
  ○ Such events and celebrations help in spreading more awareness about the same theme and help in making people motivated to work on its promotion.

**Importance of Fisheries Sector in India**

• **Contribution in Economy:**
  ○ The fisheries sector continued to register an annual growth rate of more than 10 percent.
  ○ Owing to its massive coastline of over 8,000 km and a vast network of rivers, fisheries have always played a significant role in India's economy.

• **Global Share & Exports:**
  ○ In 2019-20, with an overall production of 142 lakh tons, India produced 8% of the global share.
  ○ During the same time period, India's fisheries exports stood at Rs 46,662 crore, constituting about 18% of India's agricultural exports.

• **Livelihood:**
  ○ Fisheries provide employment and income for millions, especially the rural populations.
  ○ Currently, this sector provides livelihood to more than 2.8 crore people within the country.
• **Important Nutrients:**
  ○ Fisheries and aquaculture remain an important source of food and nutrition.
  ○ Fish being an affordable and rich source of animal protein, is one of the healthiest options to mitigate hunger and nutrient deficiency.

**Challenges to Fisheries Sector**

• **Poor Infrastructure:**
  ○ Storage, inventory, transportation mechanisms are all at loss compared to the ones needed for giving this sector a proper boost.

• **Environmental Issues:**
  ○ There remains issues of over-exploitation, adverse impacts of worsening climate change, frequent events of oil spills, discharge of effluents, hazardous chemicals etc.

• **Reduced Tariffs:**
  ○ Tariffs on fish and fishery products have been reduced significantly more than those for agricultural products as a result of multilateral agreements.

• **Untapped potential:**
  ○ The Economic Survey of India, 2019-20 estimated that, only 58% of the country's inland potential has been tapped so far.

• **Limited Species:**
  ○ Limited number of species grown / cultured, mainly due to weak linkages between research and development and fish farmers community.

• **Food borne diseases:**
  ○ There has been an overall increase in food-borne diseases throughout the world and consumer pressure has forced many governments to impose stricter quality assurance requirements on the food supply.
  ○ Although fish products are not identified as a major vector, the processing industry has had to respond to the challenge.

• **Economic loss:**
  ○ FAO estimates that up to 20 mt of fish is wasted by being discarded at sea immediately after catch.
  ○ In addition to the economic loss the issue of conservation is attracting increased attention.

**Government Efforts**

• **Separate ministry:**
  ○ The Prime Minister has envisaged a separate ministry for the fisheries sector. The potential of the sector has been realized and since then in a short span of time.
● Export Target:
  ○ India has set the ambitious target of achieving one lakh crore income from the sector. The Government of India is providing all necessary support to achieve the one lakh crore export target from the sector by 2024-25.

● Blue Revolution Scheme:
  ○ The recently concluded Blue Revolution Scheme launched in 2015-16 with Rs 3000 crore outlay, for over five years, made vital contributions towards the sector’s development.

● Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund:
  ○ To address the critical gaps in fisheries infrastructure, the government created the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund in 2018-19 with an outlay of Rs. 7,522 crore.

● Three Major Transformations:
  ○ The growth of inland aquaculture, specifically freshwater aquaculture.
  ○ The mechanization of capture fisheries.
  ○ The successful commencement of brackish water shrimp aquaculture.

● Additional Impetus to Matsya Sampada Yojana:
  ○ The Government is implementing Matsya Sampada Yojana and has infused Rs 20,000 crore in the sector through the scheme.

[Diagram of the Fishery and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund]

Image Courtesy: DoF

● Five Major Fishing Harbours:
  ○ The development of five major fishing harbours (Kochi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Paradip, Petuaghat) as hubs of economic activity.
  ○ It envisages development of world class infrastructure and amenities including measures required for reducing post-harvest losses.
  ○ Further, export potential from these modernised harbours is expected to rise by 10% to 15%, creating around 50,000 direct and indirect jobs.
• Development of Inland Fishing Harbours & Fish Landing Centres:
  ○ This is the first ever government support for such an activity.
  ○ This will benefit lakhs of traditional inland fishermen dependent on fishing in Ganga and Brahmaputra for their livelihood.
  ○ The development will be one of the steps to realise the call to transform 'Namami' Ganga to 'Arth' Ganga.

• Seaweed Park:
  ○ Establishment of a unique multipurpose seaweed park in Tamil Nadu.
  ○ The proposed park would be the center of production for quality seaweed-based products, developed on a hub and spoke model.
  ○ This project is expected to provide enormous scope for engaging women from villages and increasing their income.

• National Fisheries Policy, 2020:
  ○ To develop an ecologically healthy, economically viable and socially inclusive fisheries sector that contributes towards economic prosperity and wellbeing of fishers and fish farmers, and provides food and nutritional security to the country in a sustainable and responsible manner.

• Other Initiatives:
  ○ Seaweed farming is another part where the government is putting more emphasis on.
  ○ Government is also focusing on empowering fisherwomen and promoting entrepreneurship in the sector.

• Focus on SDGs:
  ○ In keeping with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), effective governance of 'Blue Economy' would mean striking a balance between effectively utilizing fisheries to meet consumer demands and sustain livelihoods of fishing communities on one hand and preserving the ecosystem on the other.

Way Ahead
• States need to be inspired by each other and explore options to grow in the marine sector.
• There is a need to come up with environment friendly fishing and also look for sustaining the sector while continuing the consumption.
• The Government of India has already extended the support of KCC to the fishermen and women.
• The Government needs to start a massive campaign to raise greater awareness about the fisheries sector.

Source: PIB
Internal Security

JPC Report on the PDP Bill
Syllabus: GS 2/ International Relations

In News

- The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill, 2019 has submitted its report.

About

- The PDP Bill was first brought to the Parliament in 2019 and was referred to the JPC for examination at the time.
- The Bill was drafted after a Supreme Court ruling that declared 'Right to Privacy' a fundamental right in August 2017, Puttaswamy judgment.

Major Highlights

- **Controversial exemption clause**: It allows the Government to keep any of its agencies outside the purview of the law. The committee has retained Clause 35 with minor changes.
  - Critics say that “public order” should be removed as a ground for exemption.
  - They had also pressed for “judicial or parliamentary oversight” for granting such exemptions.
  - The members had also suggested that “there should be an order in writing with reasons for exempting a certain agency from the ambit of the Bill.
  - Clause 35 is open to misuse since it gives unqualified powers to the Government.

- **Clause 35**: In the name of “public order”, ‘sovereignty’, “friendly relations with foreign states” and “security of the state” allows any agency under the Union Government exemption from all or any provisions of the law.
  - A secure nation alone provides the atmosphere which ensures personal liberty and privacy of an individual.

- **Rationale behind the retention of this clause**: The report notes that this clause is for “certain legitimate purposes” and also said there is precedent in the form of the reasonable restrictions imposed upon the liberty of an individual, as guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution and the Puttaswamy judgment.
  - A secure nation alone provides the atmosphere which ensures personal liberty and privacy of an individual.

- **Bill creates two parallel universes**: One for the private sector where it would apply with full rigour and
  - One for the Government where it is riddled with exemption, carve outs and escape clauses.

- **Stricter regulations for social media platforms**: It has recommended that all social
media platforms, which do not act as intermediaries, should be treated as publishers and be held accountable for the content they host, and should be held responsible for the content from unverified accounts on their platforms.

- It has said no social media platform should be allowed to operate unless the parent company handling the technology sets up an office in India.
- A statutory media regulatory authority, on the lines of the Press Council of India, may be set up for the regulation of the contents on all such platforms irrespective of the platform where their content is published, whether online, print or otherwise.

- **Policy on data localisation**: Some of the other recommendations of the committee include development of an alternative indigenous financial system for cross-border payments on the lines of Ripple (U.S.) and INSTEX (E.U.).
  - The Central Government, in consultation with all the sectoral regulators, must prepare and pronounce an extensive policy on data localisation.

- **No provision to keep a check on collection of data by hardware manufacturers**: There is a threat of data leak through hardware which is a serious concern.
  - It has recommended that the Government should make efforts to establish a mechanism for the formal certification process for all digital and IoT devices that will ensure the integrity of all such devices with respect to data security.

**Ringfencing data**

Concluding its deliberations since 2019, the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Personal Data Protection Bill adopted its report on Monday

**Key recommendations**

- Treat as publishers all social media platforms which do not act as intermediaries, and they be held accountable for the content they host.
- Allow no social media platform to operate in India unless the parent company handling the technology sets up an office in India.

**Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill 2019**

- The genesis of this Bill lies in the report prepared by a Committee of Experts headed by **Justice B.N. Srikrishna**.

- **Key Features**:
  - **Categorisation of Data**: Constitute 3 types of user data: Sensitive, Critical and General.
○ **Concept of Data Principle:** Gives data principle right over his/her personal data & how it can be utilised.

○ **Right to Forgotten:** This allows an individual to remove consent for data collection and disclosure.

○ **Exemptions:** Government is qualified to obtain the data for research or on national security concerns.

○ **The setting of Independent Regulator:** Data protection Authority (DPA) to safeguard the interest and check misuse of data.

○ **Data Protection Officer (DPO):** Each company will have a DPO in which to work in liaison with the Data Protection Authority (DPA).

○ **User Verification Mechanism:** Social media companies need to develop UVM based on the severity of data.

○ **Data Localisation Norms:** Non-personal data can be stored and processed outside but personal data within the Indian Territory.

**Puttaswamy v. Union of India**

- It is a **landmark decision of the Supreme Court of India**, which holds that the **right to privacy** is protected as a fundamental right under **Articles 14, 19 and 21** of the Constitution of India.

- It held that “the right to privacy is protected as an **intrinsic part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21** and as a part of the freedoms guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution.

- It explicitly overrules previous judgements of the Supreme Court in **Kharak Singh vs State of UP and M.P Sharma vs. Union of India**, which held that there is no fundamental right to privacy under the Indian Constitution.

*Source: TH*

**Facts In News**

**Economy**

**El Salvador’s Bitcoin City**

*Syllabus : GS 3/Indian Economy & Related Issues/Science & Technology*

**In Context**

- El Salvador is planning to build an entire city based on the **largest cryptocurrency Bitcoin**.

- In September 2021, **El Salvador became the first country** in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender.
About El Salvador’s Bitcoin city

- Bitcoin city will be laid out in a circle (like a coin) and there will be a plaza in the city centre that will be host to a huge Bitcoin symbol.
  - There would be residential areas, malls, restaurants and a port in the Bitcoin city.
  - In addition, the country will have access to “digital education, technology and sustainable public transportation.”

- The city would be funded with the issuance of a $1 billion Bitcoin Bond.

- The city will be located along the Gulf of Fonseca near a Conchagua volcano to take advantage of the country’s geothermal energy — to power both the city and cryptocurrency mining (an energy-consuming process of solving complex mathematical calculations day and night to verify and add crypto coins to the Blockchain network).

- Significance:
  - The city would be built with attracting foreign investment in mind.
  - The move aims to spur the country’s economic growth and investment

What are Bitcoin Bonds?

- It represents the start of a reformation of capital markets, built on Bitcoin and layer-2 technologies like the Liquid Network.

- Dividends can be distributed to investors instantly, with built-in cryptography to maintain confidentiality.

- Bonds can be traded 24/7 with other assets like stable coins, using protocols that help eliminate the need for trust.
• Dividends will be paid easily to bondholders using tools deployed on top of the Liquid network.

El Salvador

• El Salvador, the country of Central America. It is the smallest and most densely populated of the seven Central American countries. Despite having little level land, it traditionally was an agricultural country, heavily dependent upon coffee exports.

• El Salvador is bounded by Honduras to the north and east, by the Pacific Ocean to the south, and by Guatemala to the northwest. Its territory is situated wholly on the western side of the isthmus, and it is, therefore, the only Central American country that lacks a Caribbean coast.

• Currency of El Salvador:
  ○ El Salvador fully ‘dollarized’ its economy in 2001 to-
    ■ take advantage of the stability that it offers and attract investments.
    ■ get linked to the monetary policies of the Federal Reserve in Washington.
    ■ prevent hyperinflation in the economy

![Image of Central America](Image Courtesy: Britannica)

Bitcoin

• Bitcoin was launched in 2009 by Satoshi Nakamoto.

• It is a type of digital currency in which a record of transactions is maintained and new units of currency are generated by the computational solution of mathematical problems, and which operates independently of a central bank.

• It is the first and biggest of decentralised cryptocurrencies, which are online payment systems.

Source: IE
International Relations

UNESCO-ABU Peace Media Awards 2021

Syllabus : GS 2/India & Foreign Relations

In News

● TV and Radio shows produced by Doordarshan and All India Radio respectively received multiple awards at the recently held ABU - UNESCO Peace Media Awards 2021 at Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

About

● All India Radio’s programme ‘Living on the edge - The coastal lives’ won an award in the category of ‘Ethical and Sustainable Relationship with Nature’.
  ○ It explores life for fishing communities living on the edge of Visakhapatnam.
  ○ This programme was devised and produced by Monika Gulati, Programme Executive of All India Radio in Delhi.

● Doordarshan’s programme `DEADefinitely Leading the Way won an award under the ‘Living Well with Super Diversity’ category.
  ○ It talks about the inspiring journey of a specially-abled child.
  ■ The purpose of the documentary is to motivate specially-abled persons to live their life with dignity. The documentary was produced and directed by Pradeep Agnihotri, Programme Executive of Doordarshan in Delhi.

About ABU-UNESCO T4P Media Awards

● The awards are given by UNESCO in collaboration with Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union under the ‘Together for Peace’ (T4P) initiative undertaken by the UNESCO Asia – Pacific Regional Office and supported by the Government of Japan.

● T4P Media Awards highlight the crucial role of independent and ethical journalism, combined with Media Information and Literacy and critical thinking of citizens for peace-building and promoting understanding within and between countries.

● The Awards honour innovative and creative content, which informs and educates audiences on best practices of building positive peace that have increasing urgency in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Newsonair.gov
Defence

INS Visakhapatnam
Syllabus: GS 3/Defence

In News

- Recently, INS Visakhapatnam was commissioned at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.

About INS Visakhapatnam

- It is designed at the Directorate of Naval Design, the Indian Navy’s in-house organisation, and built by the state-owned Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai.
- It is the first of the stealth guided-missile destroyers being indigenously constructed under Project 15B.
- The warship is equipped to fight under Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) warfare conditions.
- The ship is propelled by a powerful combined gas and gas (COGAG) propulsion plant, consisting of four reversible gas turbines, which enables it to achieve a speed of over 30 knots or approximately 55 km/hr.

- **Capability**:
  - It is “one of the most technologically advanced guided-missile destroyers in the world”.
  - It has the capability to embark two anti-submarine warfare helicopters and is packed with sophisticated state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, including surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, medium and short-range guns, anti-submarine rockets and advanced electronic warfare and communication suits.
  - It is capable of undertaking multifarious tasks and missions spanning the full spectrum of maritime warfare.

- **Importance**
  - Augment the Indian Navy’s reach and flexibility, and mobility.
  - Help deal with emerging challenges in the Indian Ocean Region.

Project 15B ships

- The Rs.35,000 crore Project 15B envisages the construction of four stealth guided-missile destroyers, with the remaining three to be commissioned between 2023 and 2025.
  - These ships have been designed indigenously by the Directorate of Naval Design, New Delhi.
- Project 15B ships “feature cutting-edge advanced technology and are comparable to the best ships of similar class anywhere in the world".
The ships also feature enhanced stealth features — which make them difficult to detect — that have been achieved through “shaping of hull and use of radar transparent deck fittings”.

The ships run on four gas turbines and incorporate new design concepts for “improved survivability, sea keeping, stealth and manoeuvrability”.

P 15B ships will be equipped to carry and operate two multiple role helicopters.

Source: TH

Miscellaneous

Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace for 2021
Syllabus: GS1/ Social Justice, Awards, Miscellaneous

In News

Pratham, a pioneering civil society organisation has been awarded the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize 2021.

Pratham

Pratham began its work in slum areas by setting up community-based pre-schools and by offering remedial education to students who lagged behind in their classes.

Pratham

- Set up in 1995 by Mrs. Farida Lambay and Dr. Madhav Chavan in Mumbai.
- Pratham began its work in slum areas by setting up community-based pre-schools and by offering remedial education to students who lagged behind in their classes.
- Its Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), based on surveying 6,00,000 rural Indian children, is now used as a model to assess educational outcomes and learning deficiencies in 14 countries over three continents.
- In basic education, Pratham develops low-cost and replicable innovations, working with the government and engaging the community to improve learning outcomes. Its programmes now cover children and young adults in 21 States.

About the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize

- The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development was instituted in the memory of the former prime minister by a trust (Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust) in her name in 1986.
- It consists of a monetary award of Rs 25 lakh along with a citation.
- The award is given to individuals or organisations who work towards ensuring international peace and development, ensuring that scientific discoveries are used to further the scope of freedom and better humanity, and creating a new international economic order.

Source: TH