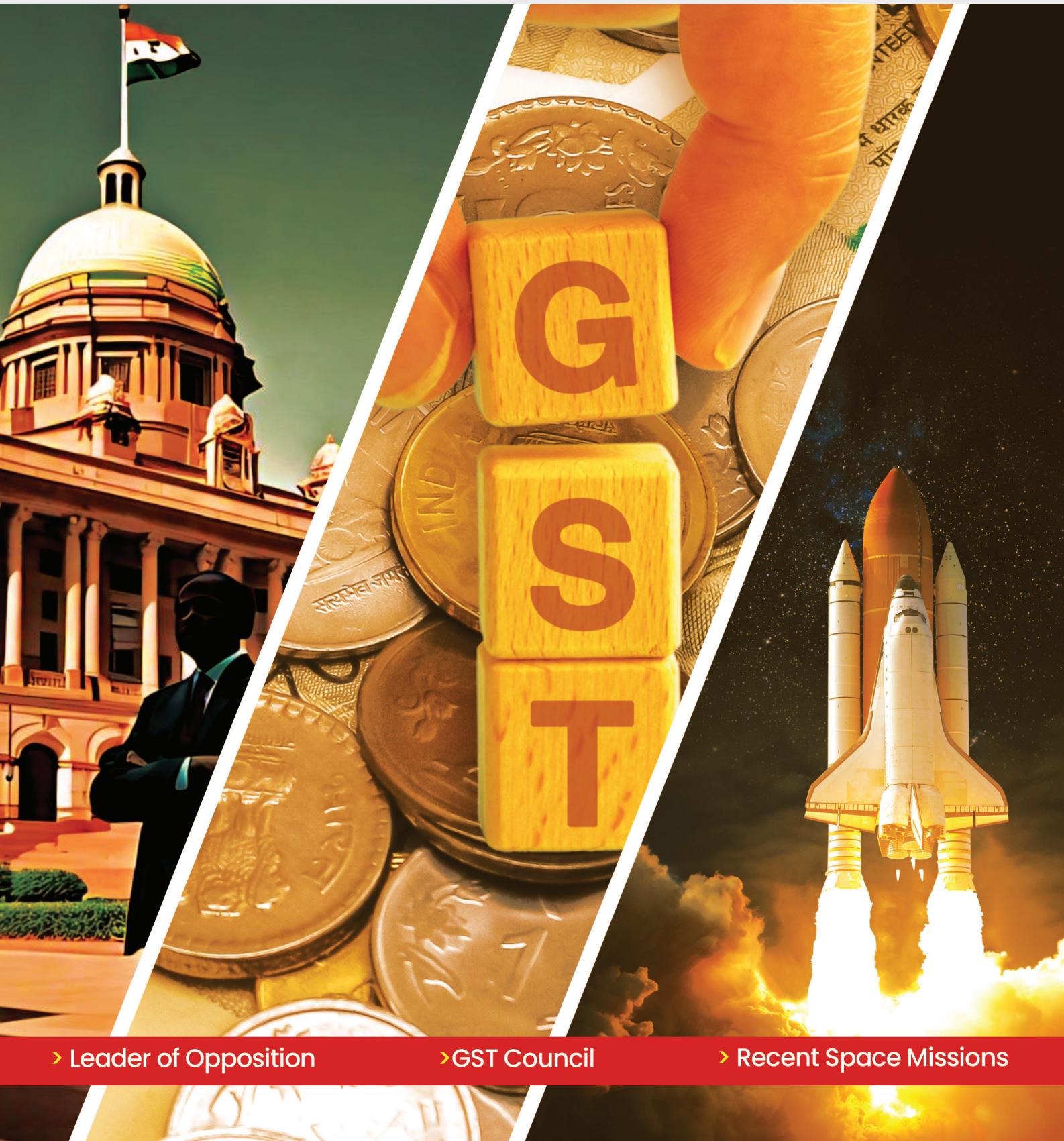




FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



› Leader of Opposition

› GST Council

› Recent Space Missions

23rd JUNE - 29th JUNE, 2024

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you gauge your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

INDEX

Goods And Service Tax Council	1
Recent Space Missions	5
Leader of Opposition	9
Coastal Regulation Zone	12
Kurukshestra - MAY 2024	17
Ethics - Case Study	21
Ethics - Examples	21
Model Essay	22
Mains Jot Down	23
Cherrypicks of the week	25

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GOODS AND SERVICE TAX COUNCIL

Syllabus: GS II - Constitutional Bodies (powers, functions and responsibilities)

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Explain the salient features of the constitution(One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016. Do you think it is efficacious enough 'to remove cascading effect of taxes and provide for common national market for goods and services'? **(2017)**

Q) "The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play." Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise. **(2018)**

Q) How have the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission of India enabled the states to improve their fiscal position? **(2021)**

Q) Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. **(2022)**

Q) Discuss the role of the National Commission for Backward Classes in the wake of its transformation from a statutory body to a constitutional body **(2022)**

GST Compensation Cess

➤ GST Compensation Cess:

- » It is a levy applied on certain goods and services in India to compensate states for any revenue loss they might incur due to the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- » The cess aims to compensate states for revenue loss due to GST implementation on July 1, 2017, for five years or as recommended by the GST Council.
- » During the COVID-19 pandemic, the GST Council extended the compensation cess to help states manage the revenue shortfall caused by the economic downturn.
- » It is collected by the Central Government of India through the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN).
- » It is levied on specific **luxury and sin goods** such as:
 - Tobacco and Tobacco Products,
 - Aerated Drinks,

• Motor Vehicles:

- Large cars and SUVs
- Motor vehicles for the transport of 10 or more persons
- Motorcycles with an engine capacity of over 150cc.

• Coal:

- Imported and domestically produced coal, lignite, and peat

• Pan Masala

• Other Luxury Goods:

- Various other high-end and luxury items as classified by the government from time to time

➤ Section 73 of GST Act, 2017:

- » Determination of tax not paid or short paid or erroneously refunded or input tax credit wrongly availed or utilised for any reason other than fraud or any wilful-misstatement or suppression of facts

INTRODUCTION

GST Council is a constitutional body established under Article 279-A to provide recommendations to the Union and State Governments on matters concerning GST, introduced by the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016.

WHY IN NEWS

The 53rd Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council met in Delhi under the Chairpersonship of Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, on Saturday (June 22).

About

Constitutional Provisions:

- The 101st Amendment Act, of 2016 inserted a new Article 279-A in the Constitution, which empowers the President to constitute a GST Council or by an order.

Members:

- Union Finance Minister (Chairperson)
 - Union Minister of State (Finance) from the Centre.
 - Each state can nominate a minister in-charge of finance or taxation or any other minister as a member.

Functions:

- Recommendations to the Union and the states on - important GST-related issues
 - Decides on various rate slabs of GST
 - considers special rates for raising additional resources during natural calamities/disasters and special provisions for certain States.

Working:

- Makes decisions with a majority of at least three-fourths of the weighted votes of members present and voting.
 - Quorum of 50% of the total members.
 - The Central Government's vote holds one-third of the total weight in a meeting.
 - The votes of all state governments combined have a weightage of two-thirds of the total votes cast.

Policy Formulation:

- Setting GST Rates
 - Tax Exemptions
 - Rate Rationalisation

Ensuring Uniform Taxation:

- Ensures uniformity in tax laws, procedures, and rates across all states.
 - Reduction in Tax Cascading by subsuming various indirect taxes

Dispute Resolution: between states or between the Centre and states

Fiscal Federalism:

- Ensures a balanced sharing of tax powers between the Centre and states.
 - Promotes collaboration and cooperative

Simplifying Compliance:

- Ease of Doing Business
 - Reducing Litigation

Monitoring and Review:

- Council meets periodically to review the implementation of GST,
 - Adaptation to Economic Changes

Inclusive Decision-Making:

- Includes representatives from the Centre and all states
 - Consensus
 - Decisions are generally made through consensus

Revenue Distribution: Compensation to States for any revenue loss due to its

NEED FOR THE ACT

GST Council Meeting:

- Met for the first time since the formation of the new Union government.

Key Highlights

→ Aadhaar-based Biometric Authentication:

- The council is rolling out biometric-based Aadhaar authentication nationwide for better tax-compliance.

→ Exemption for Hostel Accommodation:

- Hostel accommodation services outside educational institutions are **exempt from GST for rents up to Rs 20,000 per person per month.**

→ Indian Railways Services:

- GST exemption on platform tickets

→ Reduction in GST Rate on Cartons:

- The GST rate on various types of carton boxes has been reduced from **18% to 12%.**

→ GST Reduction on Milk Cans and Solar Cookers:

- A uniform **GST rate of 12%** for all milk cans, regardless of the material (steel, iron, or aluminium).

→ Waiver of Interest and Penalties for Non-Fraudulent Cases:

- Waiving interest and penalties for demand notices issued under **Section 73 of the GST Act.**

→ New Monetary Limits for Filing Appeals:

- New monetary thresholds for filing appeals by the department: Rs 20 lakh for the GST Appellate Tribunal, Rs 1 crore for High Court, and Rs 2 crore

for the Supreme Court.

→ Central Support and Conditional Loans to States:

- Introduction of the '**Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment**'.
- Some loans are conditional on states implementing citizen-centric reforms and capital projects.
- Encourage states to meet criteria to access these loans.

Issues Requiring Urgent Attention

→ Inclusion of Petroleum Products:

- The central government intends to bring petrol and diesel under the GST regime.

→ Compensation Cess:

- Initially levied for five years ending **June 30, 2022; extended to March 31, 2026.**
- The Centre borrowed Rs 1.1 lakh crore in 2020-21 and Rs 1.59 lakh crore in 2021-22.
 - The Centre created a **special borrowing window** specifically for the purpose of compensating states for GST shortfall. This allowed the Centre to raise funds on behalf of the states.
 - The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, as the government's debt manager, conducted auctions to issue these securities in the domestic market. Financial institutions, banks, insurance companies, and other investors participated in these auctions.
- Expectations that loans could be repaid by 2025-26; decision needed on whether to discontinue the cess thereafter.

LIMITATIONS

- Policies cannot be undone** by the states and the states will accordingly have to compromise on their budgets and the entire fiscal policies.

● Virtual veto to Centre:

- It is not possible to attain the desired majority if the Union doesn't vote for the recommendation. In fact, the Union can veto the recommendations of the Council.

● Backdoor entry of Centre to State areas:

- It wouldn't be an exaggeration to suggest that the council could serve as a means for the Central government to indirectly influence the decision-making and policy formulation of state governments.

● Different political ideologies:

- Considering the deep political divide and fundamentally differing ideologies, achieving a convergence of views between different parties is challenging.

WAY FORWARD

Enhancing Efficiency and Effectiveness

★ Strengthening Consensus-Building Mechanisms:

- » **Improved Dialogue and Communication:** Foster better communication channels between the Centre and states to ensure smoother decision-making.

★ Data-Driven Decision Making:

- » **Robust Data Analytics:** Utilise advanced data analytics to assess the impact of GST rates and exemptions, helping in evidence-based decision-making.
- » **Regular Impact Assessments:** Conduct periodic impact assessments of GST policies on various sectors and regions to make informed adjustments.

★ Enhancing Transparency and Accountability:

- » **Public Disclosure:** Increase transparency by making Council meeting minutes and key decisions publicly available.

Streamlining Processes

★ Simplifying Tax Structure:

- » **Rate Rationalisation:** Continue efforts to rationalise GST rates by reducing the number of tax slabs, aiming for a more straightforward and predictable tax structure.
- » **Clarity on Exemptions:** Provide clear guidelines on exemptions and reduce ambiguities to prevent litigation and disputes.

★ Improving Compliance:

- » **Technology Integration:** Enhance the use of technology for GST filing, compliance, and enforcement to reduce manual errors and increase efficiency.
- » **Simplified Procedures:** Simplify compliance procedures for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to ease their tax burden and administrative workload.

★ Reducing Litigation:

- » **Advance Rulings:** Strengthen the mechanism of advance rulings to provide clarity on tax matters, reducing the scope for disputes.

- » **Dispute Resolution Mechanism:** Establish a faster and more efficient dispute resolution mechanism to address grievances promptly.

Addressing Key Policy Issues

★ Inclusion of Petroleum Products:

- » **Phased Inclusion:** Develop a phased approach for bringing petroleum products under the GST framework, balancing revenue considerations for both Centre and states.

★ Compensation Cess:

- » **Review and Adjustment:** Periodically review the necessity and impact of the compensation cess, considering economic conditions and fiscal needs.

★ Rate Rationalisation:

- » **Balanced Approach:** Ensure that rate rationalisation balances revenue needs with economic growth objectives.
- » **Pilot Studies:** Conduct pilot studies and economic simulations before implementing major rate changes to understand potential impacts.

Strengthening Institutional Framework

★ Capacity Building:

- » **Training and Development:** Invest in continuous training and development programs for tax officials and GST practitioners to keep them updated on best practices.

★ Enhanced Coordination:

- » **Inter-State Coordination:** Facilitate better coordination among states for uniform implementation and addressing interstate trade issues.
- » **Centre-State Cooperation:** Strengthen mechanisms for ongoing cooperation between the Centre and states on GST matters.

CONCLUSION

By implementing the comprehensive strategies and fostering collaborative efforts among stakeholders, the GST Council can further streamline operations, enhance transparency, and effectively address challenges, thereby strengthening India's indirect tax regime for sustained economic growth and development.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Explain the key provisions of the Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016, and how can the GST Council optimise its operations to bolster India's economic growth and maintain an efficient indirect tax framework? **(15 marks)(250 words)**

RECENT SPACE MISSIONS

Syllabus: GS III - Science and Technology

PYQ MAPPING

Q) India has achieved remarkable successes in unmanned space missions including the Chandrayaan and Mars Orbiter Mission, but has not ventured into manned space missions, both in terms of technology and logistics? Explain critically. **(2017)**

Q) What is India's plan to have its own space station and how will it benefit our space programme? **(2019)**

X-RAY POLARIMETER SATELLITE (XPOSAT)

Details

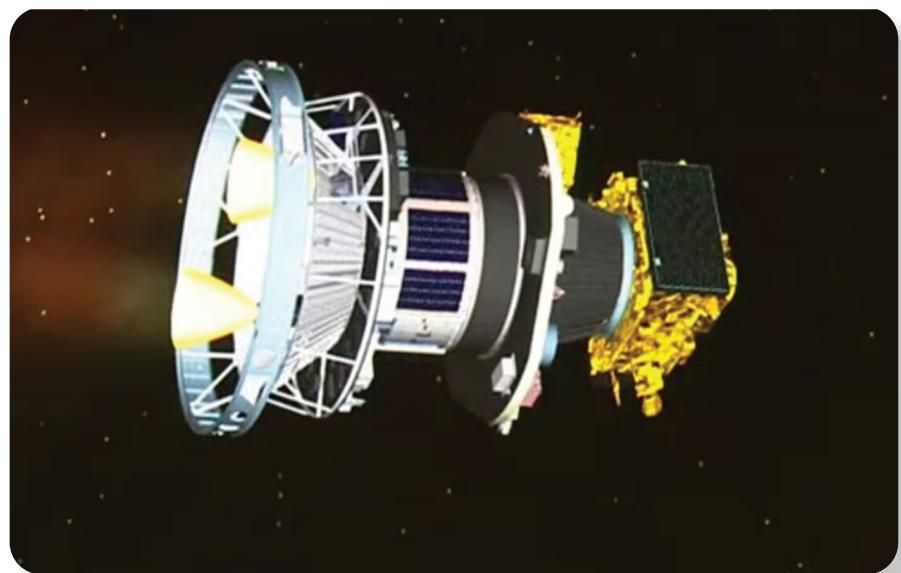
- ➡ **Launch Date:** January 1, 2024.
- ➡ **Launch Site:** Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota
- ➡ **Orbit:** Low Earth Orbit
- ➡ **Significance:** XPOSAT marks a significant leap in India's space research, being the first dedicated mission to study X-ray polarisation from celestial sources. This mission sheds light on the fundamental physical processes governing exotic astronomical objects like black holes, neutron stars, and active galactic nuclei.

Scientific Objective

- ➡ **Understanding Emission Mechanisms:** X-ray polarimetry offers a unique tool to probe the geometry of the emission regions and the physical processes at play in these extreme environments.
- ➡ **Breaking Degeneracy:** XPOSAT's data, along with existing spectroscopic and timing information, will help break down limitations of current models and refine our understanding of these objects.

Technical Aspects

- ➡ **Low Earth Orbit:** The spacecraft will operate in a low Earth orbit, allowing for pointed observations of celestial X-ray sources.
- ➡ **Dual Payload:** XPOSAT carries two scientific payloads:
 - » **POLIX (Polarimeter Instrument in X-rays):** Measures the degree and angle of X-ray polarisation in the medium energy range (8-30 keV). This is the first dedicated instrument for this purpose in this energy band.
 - » **XSPEC (X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing):** Provides high-resolution spectra and timing information of X-ray emissions in the soft energy range (0.8-15 keV). This data complements POLIX observations and allows for long-term monitoring of spectral variations.



GSLV-F14/INSAT-3DS MISSION

Details

- ➡ **Launch Date:** February 17, 2024
- ➡ **Launch Vehicle:** Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F14)
- ➡ **Launch Site :** Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC-SHAR) Sriharikota, India
- ➡ **Orbit:** Geostationary Orbit
- ➡ **Satellite:** INSAT-3DS (Indian National Satellite System - 3D Meteorological)
- ➡ **Funding Agency:** Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)
- ➡ **Significance** - Designed to enhance meteorological observations and monitor land and ocean surfaces for weather forecasting and disaster warnings, the satellite will complement the existing INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR satellites. Indian industries played a significant role in its development.



Scientific Objective

- ➡ **Enhanced Weather Forecasting:** INSAT-3DS will improve weather monitoring capabilities for India, leading to more accurate forecasts and early warnings for disasters.
- ➡ **Technological Advancement:** This mission showcases India's indigenous space and meteorological satellite development expertise
- ➡ **Improved Services:** The data will benefit various MoES departments like India Meteorological Department (IMD), National Centre For Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), and IITM for enhanced weather services and ocean monitoring.

Technical Aspects

- ➡ **Payloads:**
 - » 6-channel Imager for capturing Earth images.
 - » 19-channel Sounder for atmospheric profiling.
 - » Data Relay Transponder (DRT) for relaying data from remote platforms.
 - » Satellite Aided Search & Rescue (SAS&R) transponder for emergency response.

BOEING'S STARLINER/ STARLINER CST-100

Details

- ➡ **Launch Date:** June 5 2024
- ➡ **Launch Vehicle:** Attached to the Atlas V launch vehicle using a unique launch vehicle adapter (LVA).
- ➡ **Launch Site:** Space Launch Complex 41 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, USA
- ➡ **Manufactured By:** Boeing, with the Commercial Crew Program (CCP) of NASA
- ➡ **Significance:** This historic first crewed mission for Starliner marks a major step for both NASA's commercial crew program and the development of a more robust commercial space industry.

Scientific Objective

- ➡ Backup for SpaceX's Dragon in transporting astronauts.
- ➡ The program aims to ensure safe, reliable, and cost-effective transportation for space station missions, thereby increasing research time.
- ➡ Reduces NASA's reliance on a single provider.
- ➡ Competition with SpaceX, Dream Chaser (Sierra Space), and Blue Origin's projects will drive down costs and increase innovation in commercial spaceflight.

Technical Aspects

- ➡ Design:
 - » Partially reusable: Crew capsule (reusable up to 10 times) and service module (expendable).
 - » Capacity: Up to 4 astronauts for International Space Station missions, docked for up to 7 months.
 - » Size: Slightly larger than Apollo command module or SpaceX Dragon.

CST-100 STARLINER

MANNED SPACECRAFT
DEVELOPED BY BOEING
UNDER THE NASA
PROGRAM

Weight:	13 t
Diameter:	4.56 m
Length:	5.03 m
Volume:	11 m³
Crew:	up to 7 people
First Launch:	December 20, 2019 (unmanned)
Launch Vehicle:	Atlas-5 N22
Landing:	using parachutes



ISRO'S RLV LEX-03 MISSION (PUSHPAK)

Details

- ➡ **Mission:** Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) Landing Experiment (LEX)-03
- ➡ **Experiment Date:** 23 June 2024
- ➡ **Conducted by** - The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
- ➡ **Vehicle used** - Released from an Indian Air Force Chinook helicopter
- ➡ **Significance:** Third and final successful test in a series demonstrating autonomous landing capability of a winged RLV named "Pushpak."



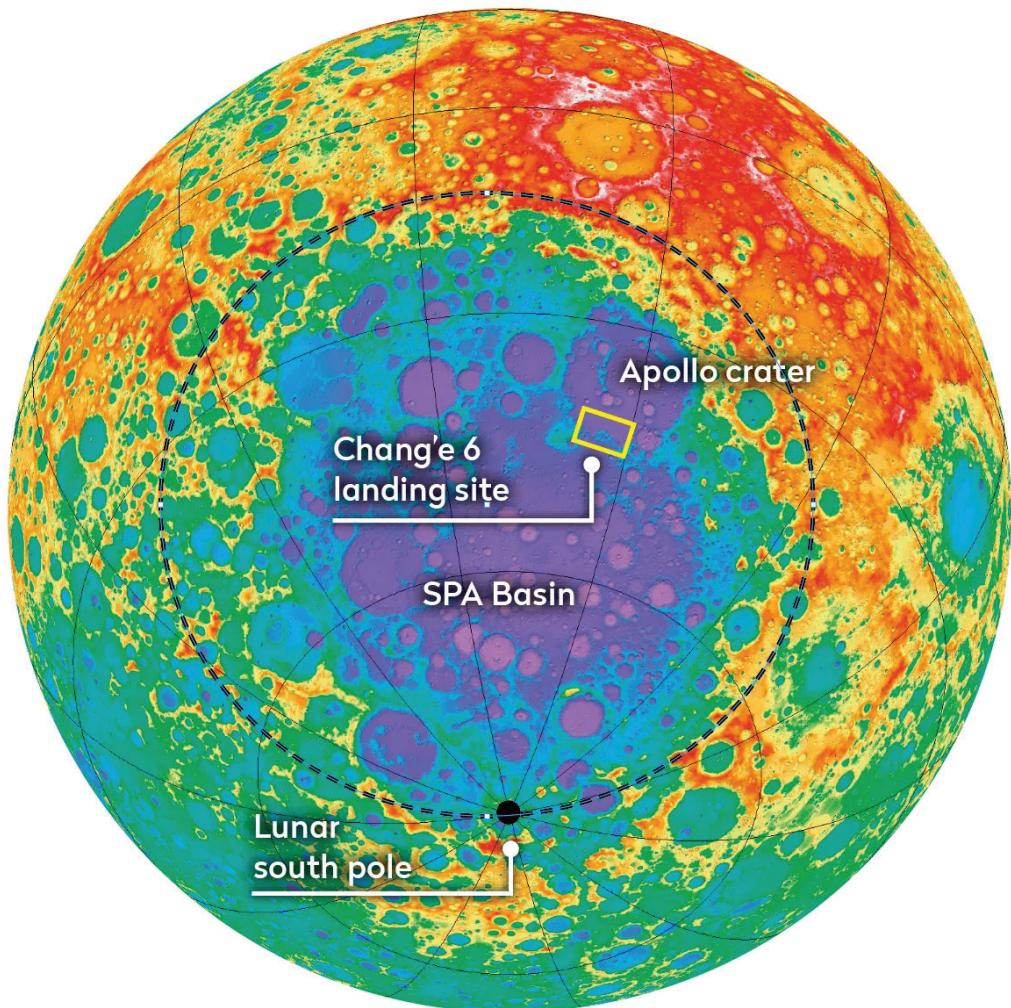
Key Achievements

- ➡ **Challenging Conditions:** Successfully landed under more challenging scenarios compared to previous LEX missions, including a greater release distance (500m vs 150m) and stronger winds.
- ➡ **High-Speed Landing:** Achieved a precise horizontal landing at over 320 kmph, exceeding commercial aircraft and fighter jets. This simulates the high-speed re-entry conditions of a spacecraft.
- ➡ **Advanced Guidance:** Validated an advanced guidance algorithm for longitudinal and lateral error corrections, crucial for future orbital re-entry missions.
- ➡ **Reusable Systems:** Demonstrated the reusability of the winged body and flight systems from LEX-02, highlighting ISRO's design efficiency.

CHANG'E 6

Details

- ➡ **Launch Date** - May 3, 2024
- ➡ **Launch Vehicle**: Long March 5
- ➡ **Launch Site**: Wenchang, People's Republic of China
- ➡ **Funding Agency**: China National Space Administration (People's Republic of China)
- ➡ **Mission**: A lunar lander and sample return mission that successfully landed on the far side of the Moon, specifically within the South Pole-Aitken Basin.
- ➡ **Significance**: China Achieves Historic First with Samples from Moon's Far Side. China's Chang'e 6 mission has successfully brought back samples from the moon's far side, marking a new milestone in the nation's lunar space race with the U.S.
- **Far Side**: The far side of the Moon, also sometimes referred to as the "dark side", is the lunar hemisphere that always faces away from Earth.



Scientific Objective

- ➡ **Sample Analysis**: The 1.9 kg of retrieved lunar material will be examined for age, composition, and presence of potential volatiles (water ice) trapped in the permanently shadowed craters of the South Pole-Aitken Basin. This data will be crucial for understanding the Moon's geological history and potential resources.
- ➡ **Expanded Knowledge**: Studying far-side samples, potentially younger than those collected previously, can provide insights into lunar activity during a period relevant to early life on Earth. This broadens our understanding of the solar system's evolution.

Technical Aspects

- ➡ **Mission Design**: Similar to Chang'e 5, Chang'e 6 utilises a four-module spacecraft (orbiter, return vehicle, lander, and ascender) for lunar orbit insertion, sample collection, ascent, docking, and Earth return.
- ➡ **International Collaboration**: The mission highlights China's growing space partnerships. Instruments from France, Sweden, ESA, and Italy contribute to scientific analysis.

SAMPLE QUESTION

- Q) Discuss the recent developments in space technology and their implications for scientific research, national security, and commercial ventures. Highlight the role of both public and private sectors in these advancements **(10 marks)(150 words)**

LEADER OF OPPOSITION

Syllabus: GS II - Parliament; Statutory Bodies

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Which steps are required for constitutionalization of a Commission? Do you think imparting constitutionality to the National Commission for Women would ensure greater gender justice and empowerment in India? Give reasons. **(2020)**

Q) The jurisdiction of the Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI) regarding lodging an FIR and conducting a probe within a particular state is being questioned by various States. However, the power of States to withhold consent to the CBI is not absolute. Explain with special reference to the federal character of India. **(2021)**

Q) Discuss the role of the National Commission for Backward Classes in the wake of its transformation from a statutory body to a constitutional body. **(2022)**

Q) Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. **(2022)**

SHORT TAKES

➤ Direction 121 of the Indian Parliament:

- o It laid down the recognition of a party or group in Lok Sabha as having "at least a strength equal to the quorum fixed to constitute a sitting of the House, that is one-tenth of the total number of members of the House".
- o The direction only mentions criteria for the **recognition of a party or group and not of the leader of the opposition**.

WHY IN NEWS

Rae Bareli MP Rahul Gandhi is Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, a position that lay vacant for 10 years because no party had numbers equalling a tenth of the strength of the House, which has been by practice a requirement to lay claim to the post.

INTRODUCTION

- The Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in India is a key political figure who heads the largest opposition party in either the **Lok Sabha** (House of the People) or the **Rajya Sabha** (Council of States), the two houses of the Indian Parliament.
- The LoP's role is defined by the **Salaries and Allowances of Leader of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977**.
- This position involves leading the opposition in legislative debates, scrutinising government actions, and representing opposition parties' views.

IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES

- ◆ **A K Gopalan:** 1st Leader of Opposition of Lok Sabha (however, there was no such official recognition then)
- ◆ **Ram Subhag Singh (1969-1970):** 1st officially recognised Leader of Opposition Lok Sabha
- ◆ **Yashwantrao Chavan (1977- 1978):** 1st Statutory recognised Leader of Opposition Lok Sabha
- ◆ **L K Adwani:** Longest continuous term- 5 years, 213 days
- ◆ **Shyam Nandan Prasad Mishra (1969-1971)** - 1st Leader of Opposition of Rajya Sabha

CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY ROLE

1. Seating and Ceremonial Roles:

- o Occupies a **front-row seat in the House, to the left of the Chair**.
- o Escorts the Speaker-elect to the rostrum during ceremonial occasions.
- o Entitled to a front-row seat during the President's address to both Houses of Parliament.

2. Committee Membership:

- o Represents the Opposition in high-powered committees headed by the Prime Minister.
- o Participates in the selection of key posts like CBI Director, Central Vigilance Commissioner, Chief Information Commissioner, NHRC chairperson and members, and Lokpal.

3. Order of Precedence:

- o Ranked at No. 7, alongside Union Cabinet ministers, National Security Advisor, Principal Secretary to the PM, Vice-Chairperson of NITI Aayog, former PMs, and chief ministers.
- o They thus enjoy a cabinet position in precedence.

4. Shadow Prime Minister

- o An **official booklet on Parliament published in 2012** says the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha "is considered as a shadow Prime Minister with a shadow Cabinet, ready to take over the administration if the Government resigns or is defeated on the floor of the House".

POLITICAL ROLE

1. **Critiquing Government Policies:** The LoP provides constructive criticism and alternative policies to government proposals.
2. **Representing the Opposition:** The LoP voices the concerns and viewpoints of opposition parties in parliamentary debates.

CONTROVERSIES

- ▼ The controversies begin with the question "Who is eligible to serve as Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha?"
- ▼ The position of Leader of Opposition is defined under **The Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977.**
- ▼ The Act defines the Leader of Opposition as a member of either the Council of States or the House of the People (Lok Sabha), who leads the largest opposition party recognized by the Chairman of the Council of States or the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- ▼ According to **PDT Achary, the former Lok Sabha Secretary General**, the Speaker is obligated to recognize the leader of the largest opposition party as the Leader of Opposition. There is no requirement that the party must have at least 10% of the total members of the House.
- ▼ He also argues that with the **Tenth Schedule of the constitution (Anti-defection)**, the definition of parliamentary party does not include the 10% rule.
- ▼ Contrary to a common misconception, **there is no specific rule mandating a minimum of 10% of MPs for a party to be recognized as the Leader of Opposition.**
- ▼ **Direction 121** issued by the Speaker pertains to the recognition of a party or group for the purpose of granting specific facilities in the House.
- ▼ This directive specifically addresses the recognition of a party, rather than the appointment of the Leader of Opposition.
- ▼ Historically, the Congress party, despite having a large majority in 1984 with 415 MPs, denied the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which had 30 MPs, the position of Leader of Opposition.
- ▼ This was then repeated by the BJP Government from 2014-2024, where **two lok sabha (16th and 17th)** did not have an officially recognised LoP.

LIMITATIONS

● Statutory Requirements:

- » The position of Leader of Opposition is currently recognized by the Government only if the opposition party or coalition has at least 10% of the total seats in the House.

are limited compared to those of the ruling party.

● Privileges and Funding:

- » The Leader of Opposition is entitled to certain privileges and funding for their office, but these

● Role in Parliamentary Committees:

- » While the Leader of Opposition traditionally heads the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), their influence in other parliamentary committees may vary depending on the government's stance.

● Lack of Executive Powers:

- » Unlike in some other parliamentary systems, the Leader of Opposition in India does not have executive powers or authority.

● Challenges in Functioning:

- » The effectiveness of the Leader of Opposition can be hindered by political dynamics, the ruling party's dominance, and the speaker's discretion in recognizing their role and rights in Parliament.

WAY FORWARD

★ Review of Statutory Requirements:

- » Reassessing the criteria for recognizing the Leader of Opposition to ensure inclusivity and representation of diverse political viewpoints.

★ Enhancing Privileges and Funding:

- » Providing adequate resources and privileges to facilitate the Leader of Opposition's effective functioning, comparable to those of the ruling party.

★ Empowering Parliamentary Committees:

- » Strengthening the role of the Leader of Opposition in parliamentary committees beyond the Public Account Committee, ensuring their meaningful participation and influence.

★ Dialogue and Consensus Building:

- » Promoting constructive dialogue and consensus-building among political parties to enhance the role and recognition of the Leader of Opposition.

★ Transparency and Accountability:

- » Ensuring transparency in parliamentary procedures and decision-making processes, with accountability mechanisms to support the Leader of Opposition's role in holding the government accountable.

BEST PRACTICES

☀️ United Kingdom:

- » In the UK, the Leader of the Opposition is formally recognized, and they receive official support such as funding and staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- » The British political system features a unique institution called the **Shadow Cabinet**.
 - It mirrors the ruling cabinet with corresponding members from the opposition party, preparing them for future ministerial roles and serving as an alternate cabinet in case of a change in government.

☀️ Australia:

- » The Australian Parliament provides **resources and facilities** to the Leader of the Opposition to ensure they can effectively perform their parliamentary duties.
- » The opposition leader plays a crucial role in parliamentary committees and debates, holding the government accountable.

CONCLUSION

Implementing these measures could significantly strengthen the role and relevance of the Leader of Opposition in India's parliamentary system, ensuring greater accountability, inclusivity, and effective governance. This, in turn, could enhance democratic practices and uphold the principles of checks and balances essential for a vibrant democracy.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) How can India overcome the existing limitations and enhance the role of the Leader of Opposition in Parliament after a decade without one, ensuring effective governance and accountability? **(10 marks)(150 words)**

COASTAL REGULATION ZONE

Syllabus: GS II - Government Policies and Intervention

PYQ MAPPING

Q) “Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate ‘protection and prevention of degradation’ to the environment.” Comment with relevant illustration. **(2018)**

Q) What is wetland? Explain the Ramsar concept of ‘wise use’ in the context of wetland conservation. Cite two examples of Ramsar sites from India **(2018)**

Q) Explain the causes and effects of coastal erosion in India. What are the available coastal management techniques for combating the hazard? **(2022)**

SHORT TAKES

» Floor Space Index (FSI):

- o It refers to the ratio of the total built-up area (floor area) to the size of the plot of land on which a building stands.
- o It is a critical parameter used to regulate construction density and intensity within CRZ areas, particularly in CRZ-II (Urban) zones.

WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, the Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan stated that 66 grama panchayats in Kerala were given the benefits of Coastal Regulation Zone – II (CRZ-II), which has relatively fewer restrictions and includes areas within municipal limits.

INTRODUCTION

- India, with over 7,000 kilometres of coastline, ranks 20th globally in terms of coastline length. To safeguard coastal ecology and conserve the environment, the Indian government introduced the **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)** in 1991.
- **Coastal Regulation Zones (CRZ)** in India are designated areas along the coastline with specific rules to protect the environment, promote sustainable development, and manage activities like construction and tourism to safeguard coastal ecosystems.

COASTAL REGULATION ZONE

→ The coastal areas of seas, bays, creeks, rivers, and backwaters which get influenced by tides up to **500 m** from the high tide line (HTL) and the land between the low tide line (LTL) and the high tide line have been declared as coastal regulation zone (CRZ) in 1991.

→ The **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change** declared the Coastal Regulation Zones under the **Environment Protection Act 1986 section 3**.

→ CRZ Rules are formulated by the Union Environment Ministry, with their enforcement entrusted to **state governments** through **Coastal Zone Management Authorities**.

» Classification:

» CRZ-I:

- o Includes ecologically sensitive areas, where no construction is allowed except activities for atomic power plants, defence.
- o Between Low Tide Line and High Tide Line in areas which are not ecologically sensitive, the following may be permitted:
 - Exploration and extraction of natural gas
 - Construction of basic amenities like schools, roads, etc. for traditional inhabitants living within the biosphere reserves
 - Salt harvesting by solar evaporation of seawater
 - Desalination plants
 - Storage of non-hazardous cargo such as edible oil, fertilisers within notified ports
- o 2019 Notification further divided **CRZ-I** into **CRZ- I A** and **CRZ- I B. (See below)**

» CRZ-II:

- o Includes **designated urban areas** that are substantially built up. Construction activities are allowed on the landward side only.

» CRZ-III:

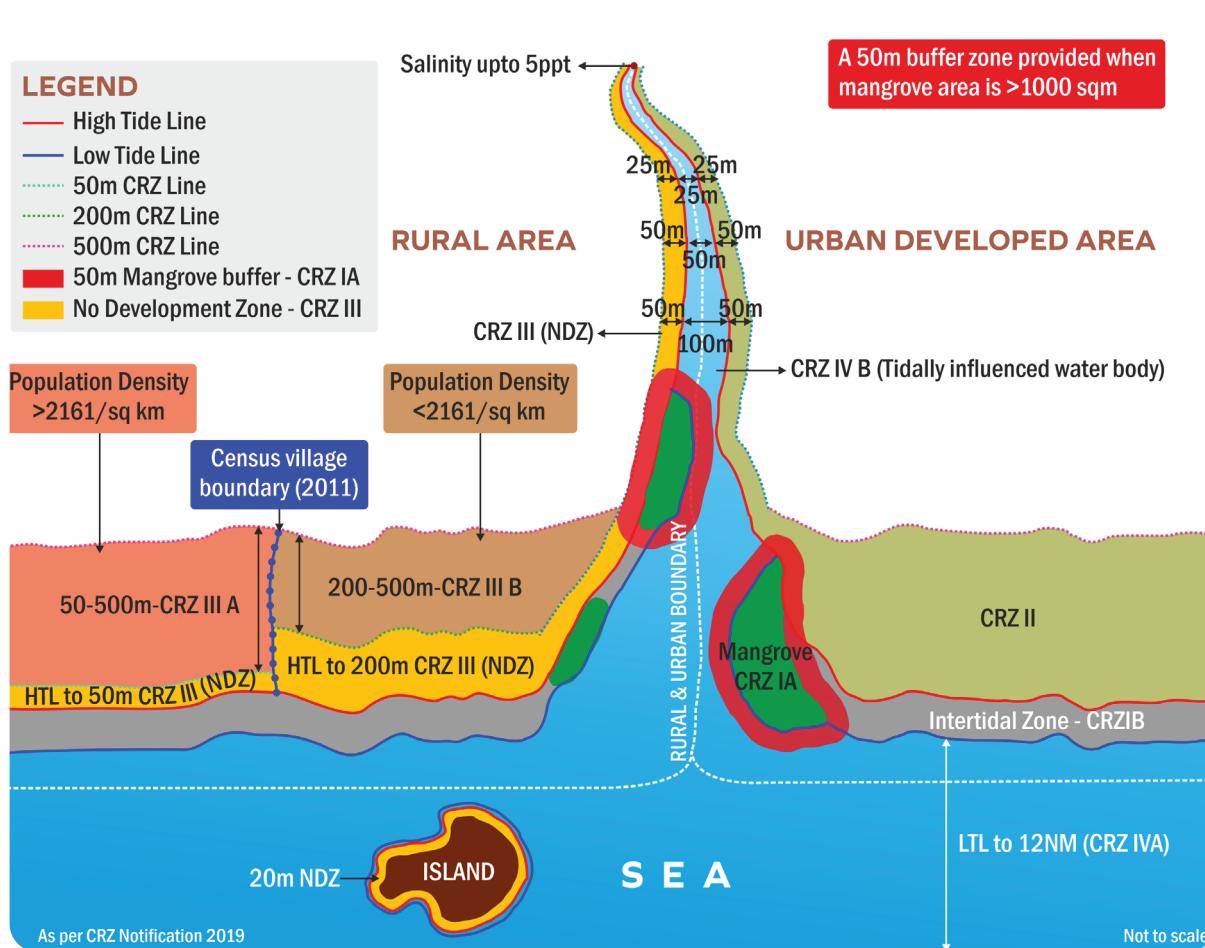
- o Includes relatively undisturbed areas, mainly rural areas. No new construction of buildings is allowed in this zone except repairing of the existing ones.
 - o However, constructions of dwelling units in the plot area lying between 200-500 m of the high tide line is allowed.
 - o **CRZ 2018 Notification** further classified it into **CRZ-III A** and **CRZ-III B**.

» CRZ-IV:

- o Includes the water area covered between Low Tide Line and 12 nautical miles seaward.
 - o Except for fishing and related activities, all actions impugning on the sea and tidal water will be regulated in this zone.

» NDZ:

- o It is the **No Development Zone** where no new construction is allowed except for the repairs of existing authorised structures.
 - o Activities like agriculture, horticulture, gardens, pastures, parks, play fields, forestry and salt manufacture from sea water are permitted.
 - o It extends upto 200m from the HTL towards land in the CRZ III area. Here there is restriction
 - o In the 2018 notification, **NDZ was altered** to 50m from HTL towards land in CRZ III A areas and 200m from HTL towards land in CRZ III B areas.



TIMELINE OF CRZ REGULATIONS

➤ First issued in **1991** by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 with the mandate to take measures to protect and conserve our coastal environment.

➤ **Shortcomings of CRZ 1991:**

- » Uniform regulations for the entire Indian coastline without taking into account the diversity in terms of biodiversity, demographic patterns, natural resources, etc.
- » Laid **no clear procedure** for obtaining CRZ clearance.
- » Post clearance monitoring and enforcement mechanisms were not laid out.
- » Measures/rules to check pollution emanating from land-based activities were not included.
- » Caused hardships to traditional communities living in ecologically sensitive coastal stretches (fishermen, slum dwellers, etc.).

➤ **CRZ 2011 notification**

➤ The CRZ 2011 notification took into account the issues of CRZ 1991.

» **Objectives of CRZ 2011:**

- o To conserve and protect coastal stretches;
- o To ensure livelihood security to the fishing & local communities living in the coastal areas;
- o To promote development in a sustainable manner based on scientific principles, taking into account natural hazards and sea-level rise.

➤ **CRZ 2018 notification**

➤ Based on the **Shailesh Nayak committee's** recommendations and feedback from coastal states and union territories, the CRZ 2018 notifications were issued.

➤ **Provisions:**

- » **Floor Space Index Norms Eased:** The CRZ 2011 Notification froze the Floor Space Index (FSI) for CRZ-II (Urban) areas at 1991 levels. The CRZ 2018 Notification has lifted this freeze, allowing FSI adjustments for redevelopment to meet current needs.
- » **New Categories for densely populated rural areas:** For CRZ-III (Rural) areas, two separate categories have now been stipulated as below:
 - o **CRZ-III A** – These are densely populated rural areas with a population density of 2161 per square kilometre as per the 2011 Census.
 - Such areas will have a No Development Zone (NDZ) of 50 metres from the High Tide Line as against 200 metres from the High Tide Line stipulated in the CRZ Notification, 2011.
 - o **CRZ-III B** – Rural areas with a population density of below 2161 per square kilometre as per the 2011 Census.
 - Such areas shall continue to have an NDZ of 200 metres from the HTL.
- » **Tourism infrastructure in coastal areas:**
 - o Temporary tourism facilities such as toilet blocks, change rooms, drinking water facilities, etc. have now been permitted in Beaches. However, a minimum distance of 10 m from HTL should be maintained for setting up of such facilities.
- » **CRZ Clearances streamlined:**
 - o Only such projects/activities, which are located in the CRZ-I (Ecologically Sensitive Areas) and CRZ IV (area covered between Low Tide Line and 12 Nautical Miles seaward) will be required to be cleared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.
 - o For the CRZ-II (urban) or CRZ III (rural) areas, the CRZ clearance will be considered at the state level by the Coastal Zone Management Authority (CZMA).

» **No Development Zone (NDZ) of 20 metres for Islands:**

- o For islands close to the mainland coast and for all Backwater Islands in the mainland, an **NDZ of 20 m has been stipulated.**
- » **Pollution abatement:** To address coastal pollution, treatment facilities are now permitted in CRZ-I B areas (between the Low Tide Line and High Tide Line), provided necessary safeguards are in place.
- » **Defence and strategic projects** are exempted from regulations.

 **CRZ 2019 Notification:**

» **CRZ 1 is further divided into:**

» **CRZ-I A:**

- o It shall constitute the following ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs) and the geomorphological features which play a role in maintaining the integrity of the coast viz.:
 - Mangroves (in case mangrove area is more than 1000 square metres, **a buffer of 50 metres** along the mangroves shall be provided and such area shall also constitute CRZ-I A)
 - Corals and coral reefs, Sand dunes, Biologically active mudflats;
 - National parks, marine parks, sanctuaries, reserve forests, wildlife habitats and other protected areas under the provisions of WildLife (Protection) Act, 1972 (53 of 1972), Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (69 of 1980) or Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986), including Biosphere Reserves;
 - Salt marshes, Turtle nesting grounds, Horseshoe crabs' habitats, Seagrass beds, Nesting grounds of birds;
 - Areas or structures of archaeological importance and heritage sites.
- o It allows "**eco-tourism activities** such as mangrove walks, tree huts, nature trails, etc" in eco-sensitive areas, demarcated as CRZ-IA.
- o Sea links, salt harvesting and desalination plants and roads on stilts are also allowed in CRZ-IA.

» **CRZ-I B:** The intertidal zone i.e. the area between Low Tide Line and High Tide Line shall constitute the CRZ-I B.

- o The controversial practice of **land reclamation**, which involves creating new land from oceans or lake beds and has significant impacts on coastal ecology, has been **permitted in intertidal or CRZ-IB** areas for the **development of ports and sea links.**

WHAT IS CURRENTLY MAKING HEADLINES?



Kerala ask for relaxation in norms:

- » Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced that **66 grama panchayats** in Kerala have been granted CRZ-II benefits, which have fewer restrictions and include areas within municipal limits.
- » The Department of Atomic Energy recommended restrictions in some areas.
- » Kerala designated **175 panchayats as Legally Designated Urban Areas and requested CRZ-II benefits for all.**
- » The final draft of Kerala's Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) for 10 coastal districts will be submitted to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change after approval by the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, Chennai.

ISSUES WITH CRZ NOTIFICATIONS

▼ **Complex and Ambiguous Regulations:**

- » CRZ regulations are often seen as complex and difficult to interpret, leading to confusion and non-compliance.

- » Frequent amendments and overlapping jurisdictions between various authorities can create uncertainty.

▼ **Enforcement Challenges:**

- » Weak enforcement mechanisms and inadequate resources hinder effective implementation.
- » Corruption and lack of accountability in regulatory bodies can exacerbate enforcement issues.

▼ Conflict of Interest:

- » There is often a conflict between development interests (such as tourism, real estate, and infrastructure projects) and environmental conservation.
- » Pressure from commercial interests can lead to dilution of regulations.

▼ Displacement of Local Communities:

- » Strict regulations can affect the livelihoods of coastal communities, such as fishermen, by restricting their access to resources and traditional practices.

- » Rehabilitation and compensation for displaced communities are often inadequate.

▼ Environmental Degradation:

- » Despite regulations, coastal areas continue to face issues like erosion, pollution, and habitat destruction due to illegal construction and non-compliance.
- » Climate change and rising sea levels pose additional threats that are not fully addressed by existing CRZ norms.

▼ Lack of Public Awareness and Participation:

- » Local communities are often unaware of CRZ regulations and their implications.
- » Limited public participation in the decision-making process can result in regulations that do not adequately reflect the needs and concerns of stakeholders.

WAY FORWARD

✳ Simplification and Clarification of Regulations:

- o Simplify and clarify the CRZ rules to make them more understandable and accessible.
- o Ensure that amendments are well-publicised and that stakeholders are adequately informed.

- o Ensure that CRZ regulations account for the socio-economic needs of local communities.
- o Provide adequate compensation, rehabilitation, and alternative livelihood options for affected communities.

✳ Strengthening Enforcement Mechanisms:

- o Increase funding and resources for regulatory bodies to enhance enforcement capabilities.
- o Implement stricter penalties for violations to deter non-compliance.

✳ Enhancing Environmental Protection:

- o Adopt an integrated coastal zone management approach that balances development needs with environmental protection.
- o Encourage sustainable tourism and eco-friendly development practices.

- o Implement measures to address coastal erosion, pollution, and habitat destruction.
- o Incorporate climate change adaptation strategies into CRZ regulations.

✳ Balancing Development and Conservation:

✳ Increasing Public Awareness and Participation:

- o Encourage sustainable tourism and eco-friendly development practices.

- o Conduct awareness campaigns to educate local communities and stakeholders about CRZ regulations.
- o Foster greater public participation in the regulatory process through consultations and community engagement initiatives.

✳ Protecting Local Communities:

CONCLUSION

Addressing these criticisms through effective strategies and collaboration with state governments can enhance CRZ regulations in India, promoting sustainable development and protecting coastal ecosystems and communities.

SAMPLE QUESTION

- Q)** With a focus on promoting sustainable development and safeguarding coastal ecosystems and communities, how can effective strategies and collaboration with state governments be leveraged to enhance CRZ regulations in India? **(15 marks)(250 words)**

KURUKSHETRA - MAY 2024

TOWARDS EMBRACING GREEN TECHNOLOGIES

INTRODUCTION

The **May 2024 edition of Kurukshetra magazine focuses on Green Technologies**, which aim to tackle environmental challenges and promote sustainability by minimising environmental impacts, conserving resources, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The issue explores applications across energy, agriculture, and material science. Green technologies offer benefits like reduced carbon emissions, improved air and water quality, and resource conservation, while also fostering economic growth through job creation, market expansion, and cost savings.

GREEN TECHNOLOGIES

PRECISION FERMENTATION

- ➡ Precision fermentation uses microbial hosts **to produce specific molecules** like proteins, enzymes, flavours, or fats.
- ➡ Also known as **microbial fermentation**, this technology has diverse applications in the food and pharmaceutical industries, especially for producing biopharmaceuticals.



NO TILL FARMING

- ➡ No-till farming, also known as zero tillage or direct seeding, is an agricultural technique that **eliminates the traditional practice of ploughing** or tilling the soil before planting crops.

ELECTRIC MOBILITY

- ➡ India is getting an electric three-wheeler passenger vehicle that **charges from 0 to 100% in 15 minutes**. The new EV was launched in a collaboration between auto manufacturer Omega Seiki Mobility and battery-tech startup Exponent Energy



UNDERSTANDING GREEN TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE FUTURE

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- ➡ Renewable Energy Transition in Germany
- ➡ Integrated bus transit system (Sustainable Transportation) in Curitiba, Brazil
- ➡ Waste to energy plants in Sweden
- ➡ Sustainable building design in Singapore
- ➡ Agro ecological farming practises in Costa Rica



CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

PHOTOVOLTAIC CELL

- A photovoltaic cell, also known as a solar cell, is a semiconductor device that converts light energy directly into electrical energy through the photovoltaic effect
- When sunlight hits the cell, it excites electrons in the semiconductor material, creating electron-hole pairs. These excited electrons are then captured to produce an electric current, which can be used as a power source.



CONCENTRATED SOLAR POWER (CSP)

- It utilises **mirrors or lenses to focus sunlight onto a receiver**, generating heat. This heat is then converted into electricity through a conventional power plant or used for industrial processes.
- Emerging technologies in CSP, like **molten salt storage and advanced heat transfer fluids**, enhances system efficiency and storage, enabling continuous power generation even without sunlight.



TANDEM SOLAR CELL

- A solar cell that utilises **multiple layers of different semiconductor materials** stacked on top of each other thereby achieving power conversion efficiencies of over 30%
- This layered approach allows them to capture a broader spectrum of sunlight compared to traditional single-junction solar cells.
- **Example: Perovskite-silicon hybrid cells** which combine the light absorption properties of perovskite with the stability and well-established manufacturing processes of silicon

PASSIVATED Emitter AND REAR CONTACT (PERC)

- Passivated Emitter and Rear Contact (PERC) solar cells are an enhanced type of silicon solar cell that feature an additional layer on the back, boosting their energy conversion efficiency.
- It is a modified conventional cell which produces 6-12% more electricity.

WINDFLOAT

- It is a technology for **floating offshore wind turbines**. It's essentially a special platform that allows wind turbines to be installed in deep ocean waters, where traditional fixed-bottom structures become impractical.

KITE WIND ENERGY SYSTEM

- Uses a kite or tethered airfoil that flies at high altitudes, capturing stronger and more consistent winds.
- The kite's movement generates mechanical energy, which is converted into electrical energy by a ground-based generator.

VERTICAL AXIS WIND TURBINES (VAWTS)

- They have a vertical rotor shaft and blades that are perpendicular to the ground.
- Unlike Horizontal Axis Wind Turbines (HAWTs), VAWTs can capture wind from any direction, making them suitable for turbulent wind conditions often found in urban environments.



PLANT MICROBIAL FUEL CELL (PMFC)

- It is a bio-electrochemical system that converts chemical energy into electrical energy through microbial reactions.
- It is based on the principle of rhizodeposition which is the deposition of organic compounds from the roots of plants.
- Microbes in the soil, called exoelectrogens, consume these plant-derived organic compounds.
- As the microbes break down the organic matter, they release electrons. These electrons flow through the PMFC system, generating a small electric current.

TRIBOELECTRIC NANOGENERATOR (TENG)

- It is a device that converts mechanical energy from everyday movements like pressing, sliding, or rubbing into electrical energy. It utilises the triboelectric effect, which is the transfer of electrons between two materials upon contact.

SMALL MODULAR REACTORS (SMR)

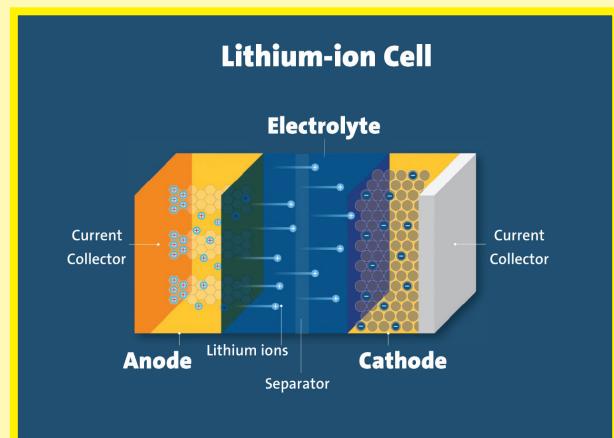
- A Small Modular Reactor (SMR) is a type of nuclear fission reactor that is designed to be smaller and more modular than traditional nuclear power plants.
- SMRs are typically defined as having a power capacity of up to 300 MWe (megawatts electric) per unit.
- More suitable for small electricity grids and more easily integrated with renewable energy sources
- More than 80 SMRs in 18 countries under various stages of development.

LITHIUM ION BATTERY

- Most popular rechargeable battery type
- Can store a large amount of energy in a small space, making them ideal for portable electronics.
- Lithium, cobalt, nickel, and other key materials are crucial for lithium-ion batteries. Rising demand has increased their prices.
 - Cobalt, concentrated in geopolitically unstable regions, is especially prone to price fluctuations.

SODIUM ION BATTERY

- A promising rechargeable battery technology emerging as a potential alternative to lithium-ion batteries.
- Sodium is significantly more abundant and geographically widespread than lithium thus making it comparatively cheaper



RURAL COMMUNITIES AND GREEN WASTE TECH

HASIRU MANE PROJECT

- In Karnataka, the "Hasiru Mane" project by NGO Hasiru Dala **trains trans women** from marginalized communities to produce compost from organic waste, generating sustainable livelihoods and promoting environmental stewardship.

PUNSARI VILLAGE

- In Gujarat, Punsari village exemplifies sustainable development by generating electricity from village waste, showcasing the potential of waste-to-energy initiatives.



The construction of a new Dry Waste Collection Cen

PIND CYCLE PROGRAM

- In Punjab, the "Pind Cycle" program incentivizes villagers to collect agricultural waste for biomass energy production. This initiative reduces crop burning incidents, improves air quality, and provides alternative sources of income for rural households.

GREEN TECHNOLOGIES IN SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

FORWARD OSMOSIS

- Forward osmosis uses an **eco-friendly chemical compound to draw water through a membrane**, leaving salt behind.
 - Waste heat is then used to separate the chemical from the water, allowing for reuse.
 - This process is low in energy consumption.

CLATHRATE DESALINATION

- Clathrate desalination **traps water molecules in carbon dioxide under pressure**, forming clathrate crystals.
 - These crystals are later broken down to release freshwater.
 - New technology increases crystal size, making this low-energy technique suitable for any water quality.



FREEZE DESALINATION

- Freeze desalination **removes salt by shifting water from liquid to solid**, forming ice crystals.
 - These are then melted to produce freshwater, utilizing density gradients. It's an energy and cost-efficient method.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You've recently assumed the role of Superintendent of Police in a district where leaked question papers from a public service commission exam have recently garnered attention, and you are leading the ongoing investigation. Information suggests that the questions were exchanged via a Telegram channel by a group of individuals, with the investigation pointing towards a nexus led by a local MLA who wields significant influence in state politics. Upon realising the investigation is progressing accurately, the MLA attempts to exert influence and threatens to have you transferred. As a young officer new to the area, the threat proves challenging to you.

- What are the ethical issues involved in the case?
- What are the options available to you and what will be your course of action?
- What measures will you implement to effectively address and mitigate the issue?

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- Ethics in Technology:** Bangalore faces severe traffic congestion, ranking 6th globally in 2024. To address this, IISc's Centre of Data for Public Good(CDPG) and Bengaluru Traffic Police are organising The Bengaluru Mobility Challenge hackathon to find AI and geospatial technology solutions.
- Integrity:** The Kerala High Court took serious note of CCTV footage showing a local leader dumping waste on the roadside and asked the State government about actions taken against him. The court also highlighted the issue of garbage beside railway tracks and emphasised the Railways' responsibility to clear the waste.
- Religious Freedom:** Tajikistan government has officially banned the hijab through new legislation forbidding the import, sale, promotion, and wearing of clothing deemed foreign to the national culture. This law includes fines for violations and also bans the customs of certain Eid festivities.
- Women Empowerment:** Voice of Baceprot, an Indonesian metal band formed by three Muslim women, has defied gender stereotypes and gained international acclaim, culminating in their upcoming performance at Glastonbury, the renowned British festival. Despite criticism from conservative quarters in Indonesia, they continue to advocate for gender equality through their music.
- Lack of equity:** Delhi University has demanded nearly Rs 7 lakh as penalty from visually impaired assistant professor for overstaying in an undergraduate girls' hostel, where she resided for over two years due to lack of suitable accessible accommodation.
- Gender Equality:** In a bid to challenge the male-dominated culture of police stations, Uttar Pradesh Police has appointed four women sub-inspectors as Station House Officers (SHOs) in Ghaziabad. This move aims to provide greater leadership opportunities for women within the force, recognizing their capabilities to field roles despite existing institutional biases.
- Democratic Attitude:** Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud cautioned against viewing courts as "temples of justice" and judges as "deities," emphasising that judges should see themselves as "servers of the people" and stressed the importance of compassion and empathy in the judiciary.
- Environment Ethics:** Denmark plans to introduce the world's first carbon emissions tax targeting livestock such as cows with an annual levy of 672 krone (\$96) per cow starting in 2030. This initiative, part of a broader agreement to invest in environmental measures like reforestation, aims to tackle the country's agricultural emissions.
- Good Governance/Public Service:** The state government will sell expensive cancer drugs and other essential medicines at Karunya community pharmacies without profit, reducing treatment costs for patients. Around 800 types of medicines, including post-organ transplant drugs, will be available at these reduced prices.



MODEL ESSAY

"The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history"

Introduction

- Quote by philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
- Emphasises the repetitive nature of human behaviour and the failure to heed past lessons.

Importance of Learning History:

- **Understanding the Past:** History provides context for current events and allows us to see the long-term consequences of decisions.
Eg: WWII fascism informs us about dangers of unchecked nationalism and authoritarianism today.
- **Identifying Patterns:** Helps recognize recurring patterns in human behaviour and societal trends, helping us predict and avoid future pitfalls.
Eg: Roman Empire's fall highlights dangers of corruption, social inequality, and infrastructure neglect.
- **Informing Decisions:** Historical knowledge can guide us in making informed decisions by offering examples of successful and failed strategies.
Eg: Studying the environmental devastation caused by the Industrial Revolution
- **Fostering Empathy:** Studying the struggles and triumphs of past societies can foster understanding across cultures.
Eg: Studying immigrant hardships fosters empathy
- **Countering Repetition:** Examining historical mistakes can help us avoid repeating them in the present or future.
Eg: WWII nuclear war reminds us of the importance of nuclear non-proliferation treaties.

Challenges to Learning from History:

- **Oversimplification:** The complexity of historical

events can be reduced to oversimplified narratives, making it difficult to draw accurate lessons.

- **Selective Memory:** People tend to focus on historical events that confirm their existing beliefs, neglecting valuable insights from opposing viewpoints.
- **Contextual Differences:** Historical circumstances are often unique, making it difficult to directly apply past solutions to present problems.
- **Cultural Differences:** Diverse cultural backgrounds can affect how history is interpreted and taught, leading to varying lessons and understandings.
- **Political Influence:** Governments and political entities may manipulate historical narratives to serve current political agendas, affecting the objectivity

Conclusion

- Reminder of the importance of continuous learning-need for a proactive approach to applying historical knowledge to contemporary challenges.
- Emphasise the need for a more critical and nuanced engagement with the past to inform our present and future.

Sample Quotes

- *If agriculture goes wrong, nothing else will have a chance to go right - M.S Swaminathan*
- *The enemy of the art is the absence of limitations- Orson Welles*
- *The greatest ideas are the simplest- William Golding*

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS- III - SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- ➡ The **Army Hospital in New Delhi** has inaugurated a pioneering **skin bank**.
- ➡ Its primary functions include harvesting, processing, preserving, and supplying high-quality human skin allografts for burn treatment centres and polytrauma care.
- ➡ It will serve as a centralised hub for the collection, processing, storage, and distribution of skin grafts.
- ➡ This landmark initiative aims to revolutionise the treatment of severe burn injuries and other skin-related conditions among armed forces service members and their families.



GS- I - ART & CULTURE

- ➡ Kerala also announced that **June 23** will be celebrated annually as '**City of Literature**' Day in **Kozhikode**.
- ➡ In October 2023, UNESCO announced **Kozhikode as India's first UNESCO 'City of Literature'** and placed it under the literary category of the **UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)**.

➡ Nalanda University

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated a new campus of the varsity.
- It was founded in the 5th century CE by Emperor **Kumaragupta**.
- It was the first residential university of the world sustained by the conscientiousness of the learned monks and teachers, which included masters such as **Nagarjuna, Aryabhata** and **Dharmakirti**.



GS- III - DEFENCE & TECHNOLOGY

➡ Javelin anti-tank Weapon System

- **India** and the **US** held discussions on the co-production of American javelin missiles in India.
- It is a **single man-portable medium-range anti-tank weapon system**. Missile automatically guides itself to the target after launch (fire-and-forget principle), this allows the gunner to take cover and avoid counter fire.
- It can be safely fired from inside buildings or bunkers.



GS- II - INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- ➡ The **RBI** has revised the framework for entering into **bilateral swap agreements with SAARC central banks** that wish to use the swap facility.
- ➡ **Currency Swap Arrangement (CSA)** is a contract under which two counterparties agree to exchange two currencies at a set rate and then to re-exchange those currencies at an agreed upon rate at a fixed date in future.



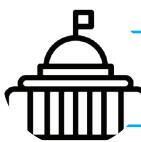
GS- II - HEALTH

- ➡ Recently, a study raised concerns over intensive animal agriculture (**factory farming**).
- ➡ Intensive animal agriculture is also a breeding ground for zoonotic diseases, which are illnesses that can be transmitted from animals to humans.
- ➡ The **United Nations** report titled "**Preventing the Next Pandemic**" identifies the increasing demand for animal protein as a key driver of pandemics.
- ➡ Approximately 60% of known infectious diseases and up to 75% of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic in origin.
- ➡ Each year, zoonoses are responsible for 2.5 billion cases of human illness and 2.7 million human deaths worldwide.



GS- III - INFRASTRUCTURE

- ➡ The Ministry of Coal initiates India's **First Ever Pilot project for Underground Coal Gasification in Jharkhand.**
- ➡ This initiative aims to revolutionise the coal industry by using in-situ coal gasification.
- ➡ Coal Gasification
 - It is a process to convert underground coal into valuable gases like methane, hydrogen, carbon monoxide (CO), and carbon dioxide (CO₂).
 - In the gasification process, coal is partially oxidised by air, oxygen, steam, or CO₂ under controlled conditions to produce a liquid fuel known as syngas.



GS- II - GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- ➡ The Kerala Assembly has passed a resolution to rename the state as 'Keralam'. Renaming a state is governed by **Article 3** of the Constitution, which allows Parliament to alter state names by law.
- ➡ A bill, introduced in Parliament on the **President's** recommendation, is referred to the state legislature for their views.
- ➡ It is passed by a **simple majority** in both houses and, upon receiving the President's assent, the name change is recorded in the **First** and **Fourth Schedules** of the Constitution.



GS- II - EDUCATION

- ➡ Ladakh has achieved full functional literacy under the **ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram or New India Literacy Programme (NILP)**.
- ➡ Centrally sponsored scheme launched by the Ministry of Education to cover all aspects of Education for All.
- ➡ Beneficiaries: Cover non-literates of age group of 15 years and above



GS- III - CYBERSECURITY

- ➡ According to the Centre, a paper leak on the darknet led to the cancellation of the UGC-NET exam.
- ➡ **Darknet**
 - The DarkNet is a part of the Internet inaccessible via traditional search engines like Google and browsers like Chrome or Safari.
 - It uses non-standard communication protocols, making it hidden from ISPs and government authorities.
 - Content on the DarkNet is encrypted and requires a specific browser, such as TOR (The Onion Router), to access.



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CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

FRONT RUNNING

- It is when a broker or an investor joins a trade because they have pre-existing non-public information concerning a significant transaction that may change the asset's price, equity, or derivative to obtain economic benefits.
 - It is also known as **forward-trading** or **tailgating**.
 - It is **illegal** in India.

MOONLIGHTING

- It refers to a side job in addition to one's primary employment.
 - In moonlighting, often such side jobs are taken by employees in secret, without informing the employer.

RHISOTOPE PROJECT

- It is an innovative conservation initiative aimed at protecting rhinos from poaching by using **nuclear science**.
 - Established by Wits University in South Africa in 2021, the project involves **inserting small, non-toxic doses of radioisotopes into the horns of live rhinos**.
 - This makes the horns detectable by radiation detectors at international borders, thereby discouraging poaching and smuggling.

INDICONEMA

- It is a newly discovered genus of **freshwater diatoms**, found in the rivers of the **Eastern** and **Western Ghats** in India.
 - This genus features unique valve symmetry and a distinct valve structure, differing significantly from other members in the **Gomphonemoid** group.
 - It has pore fields at both the head and foot poles, unlike others that have them only at the foot pole.

LAHAR

- Also known as **cold lava**, is a type of volcanic mudflow or debris flow composed of a slurry of pyroclastic material, rocky debris, and water.
 - These flows can be extremely destructive, capable of moving at high speeds and covering large distances.
 - Lahars are **typically triggered by volcanic eruptions that melt snow and ice or by heavy rainfall mixing with volcanic ash**.