



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

OCTOBER, 2021

Week-4

22-31 Oct, 2021

★★ Useful for ★★

CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams

22nd OCTOBER 2021

FATF's 'Greylist'

- Context:** Pakistan will continue to be on the "Grey List" of the FATF as it needs to "further demonstrate" that action is being taken against UN-designated terrorists.
- The FATF also announced the 'greylisting' of Jordan, Mali and Turkey, following the conclusion of the Plenary session.

About Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

- It is an inter-governmental decision-making body. It was established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris to develop policies against money laundering and its Secretariat is located in Paris.
- India became an Observer at FATF in 2006. Since then, it has been working towards full-fledged membership. On June 25, 2010, India was taken in as the 34th country member of FATF.

FATF Lists:

- Black List:** Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put on the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.
- Enlisted nations:** North Korea and Iran.
- Grey List:** Countries that are considered a safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

NOTE:

Pakistan has been on the FATF grey list since June 2018 and was asked to implement the FATF Action Plan fully by September 2019.

BharatNet PPP

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is likely to soon come out with a revised tender for the public-private partnership (PPP) implementation of BharatNet.

About BharatNet

- BharatNet project originally aimed to provide broadband services at 100 Mbps to around 2.5 lakh gram panchayats of the country.
- Aim:** To provide on-demand, affordable broadband connectivity of 2 Mbps to 20 Mbps for all households of India especially in rural areas.
- Implementing Agency:** The project is being implemented by Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).
- Funding:** The entire project is being funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), which was set up for improving telecom services in rural and remote areas of the country.

Sovereign Gold Bond

- The Government of India in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has decided to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds.

Key points:

- Launched in:** November 2015.
- Its objective is to reduce the demand for physical gold and shift a part of the domestic savings (to purchase gold) into financial savings.
- Issuance:** The Gold Bonds are issued as Government of India Stock under the Government Securities (GS) Act, 2006. These are issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the Government of India.
- Eligibility:** It is restricted for sale to resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), trusts, universities and charitable institutions.
- Price:** The price is calculated based on the spot price of gold as provided by the Mumbai-based India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA).
- Term:** Maturity period is 8 years, with an option to exit the investment after the first five years.
- Investment Limit:** Gold bonds can be purchased in multiples of one unit.
- Interest Rate:** A fixed rate of 2.5% per annum is applicable on the scheme, payable semi-annually.

Debrigarh wildlife Sanctuary

- Context:** The wildlife wing of Odisha's forest department decided to relocate around 420 families from four zero-connectivity villages in Debrigarh wildlife sanctuary, Bargarh district in Odisha.
- The move is aimed to reduce man-animal conflict and provide better living conditions to the relocated families.

Key points:

- The 353-square kilometre sanctuary is situated adjacent to the huge Hirakud reservoir.
- The sanctuary is an important biogeographic zone from both the ecological and environmental points of view.
- It is home to over 40 species of mammals, 234 species of birds, 41 species of reptiles, 12 species of amphibians, 42 species of fishes, 85 species of butterflies and 38 species of spiders.
- Wild animals like leopards, elephants, gaur, wild boar, Sambar, Deer, a host of birds and other animals are found in the thick and dense forests of the Debrigarh sanctuary.
- It is also known for its easy sightings of animals particularly Indian Bison's, Wild Boars, Sambhar and Peacocks to name a few.

23rd OCTOBER 2021

e-Prisons

- Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has advised the States to update the 'ePrisons' and 'Interoperable Criminal Justice System' databases.

Key Points:

- It aims at computerization of the functioning of prisons in the country.
- It is a cloud-based product designed with easy to use GUI and embedded with comprehensive security features.

- It is developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Electronics & IT. It has been operationalised in all States and Union Territories.
- The e-Prisons uses data maintained by the States and Union Territories on the National Prisons Information Portal as per protocols notified for e-Prisons.
- It provides vital information about the inmates, lodged in the prisons, in a real-time environment to the prison officials and other entities involved in the Criminal Justice System.

About National Prisons Information Portal

- It is a citizen-centric portal showing statistical data of various prisons in the country.
- Visitors can book their visit request to meet their ward inside the prison through this portal. Grievances with respect to their wards inside the prisons can also be submitted through the portal.

■ NOTE:

Kara Bazaar Portal for showcasing and selling the products manufactured in various prisons of the country by inmates.

Cumbre Vieja Volcano

- Cumbre Vieja volcano erupted on Spain's Canary Island of La Palma. Cumbre Vieja last erupted in 1971 and in 1949.
- La Palma is one of the eight volcanic islands in Spain's Canary Islands archipelago off Africa's western coast. It has rugged and forested terrain and is dotted with volcanoes like Teneguía and Cumbre Vieja. Capital: Santa Cruz de la Palma.

Key Points:

- The Canary archipelago (group of islands) is located in the Atlantic Ocean, about 1300 km South of mainland Spain and 115 km West of the African coast (Morocco).
- It includes 7 islands belonging to Spain, among which La Palma (in the North-West of the archipelago), Tenerife and Gran Canaria (central).

UNEP's "From Pollution to Solution" Report

- Recently, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has released a comprehensive assessment named 'From Pollution to Solution: a global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution'.

Key Findings

- The amount of plastics in the oceans has been estimated to be around 75-199 million tonnes at present. Without meaningful action, emissions of plastic waste into aquatic ecosystems are projected to nearly triple by 2040.
- The report talks about the extreme pressures being exerted on the planet due to plastic pollution and the need for urgent action to offset it.
- Plastics labelled as biodegradable may take hundreds of years to degrade in the oceans; litter poses similar risks to individuals, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning.
- The main sources of marine litter and plastic pollution are land-based. Approximately 7,000 million of the estimated 9,200 million tonnes of cumulative plastic production between 1950 and 2017 became plastic waste.
- Plastic can also alter global carbon cycling through its effect on plankton and primary production in marine, freshwater and terrestrial systems.

Plastic Waste In India:

- Plastic waste contributes about 5-6 per cent of total solid waste generated in India. India consumes about 13 million tonnes of plastic and recycles only about 4 million tonnes.

International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- Context:** Recently, the fourth general assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was held virtually. This virtual meeting was presided by the Union Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy (GoI) and the President of the ISA Assembly.

Key Points:

- 108 countries participated in the ISA Assembly, including 34 observer & prospective countries and 74 Member Countries.
- It was also participated by 23 Partner Organizations and 33 Special Invitee Organisations.
- During the meeting countries discussed how MSME clusters can replace diesel gensets with hydrogen.
- Discussion was focused on how ISA's waste management programme will be significant for the growing volume of waste & toxic materials, high cost of waste treatment and lack of waste specific legislation.
- They also discussed an update on One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative. This concept of a single global grid for solar was proposed at the First Assembly of the ISA in 2018.

2 New Programmes Launched:

- Management of Solar PV panels & battery usage waste & Solar Hydrogen programme.
- Hydrogen initiative aimed at enabling the use of solar electricity to produce hydrogen at a more affordable rate than what is available currently (USD 5 per KG), by bringing it down to USD 2 per KG.

NOTE:

The ISA also announced a partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies in order to mobilize \$1 trillion in global investments for solar energy among the member countries of ISA.

24th OCTOBER 2021

Prime Minister Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana

- The Prime Minister launched the Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission.
- It is one of the largest pan-India schemes for strengthening healthcare infrastructure across the country. It is in addition to the National Health Mission.

Key Points:

- Its objective is to fill gaps in public health infrastructure, especially in critical care facilities and primary care in both urban and rural areas. It also aims to build an IT enabled disease surveillance system by developing a network of surveillance laboratories at block, district, regional and national levels, in Metropolitan areas
- Through this, critical care services will be available in all the districts of the country with more than five lakh population through exclusive critical care hospital blocks, while the remaining districts will be covered through referral services.
- Under this, People will have access to a full range of diagnostic services in the public healthcare system through a network of laboratories across the country, and integrated public health labs will be set up in all the districts.

Significance:

- People will have access to a full range of diagnostic services in the public healthcare system through a network of laboratories across the nation.
- An IT enabled disease surveillance system will be made by developing a network of surveillance laboratories at block, district, regional and national levels, in metropolitan areas.
- Number of hospitals are being opened up in various districts of Uttar Pradesh.
- It will also work towards building up a trained frontline health workforce to respond to any public health emergency.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

- **Context:** The Chief of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority has accused the United States of sabotaging the multi-billion dollar project, the economic lifeline of Pakistan.

Key points:

- Launched in 2015, the CPEC is the flagship project of the multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a pet project of Chinese President Xi Jinping, aimed at enhancing Beijing's influence around the world through China-funded infrastructure projects.
- The 3,000 km-long China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) consists of highways, railways, and pipelines.
- CPEC eventually aims at linking the city of Gwadar in South Western Pakistan to China's North Western region Xinjiang through a vast network of highways and railways.
- The proposed project will be financed by heavily-subsidised loans that will be disbursed to the Government of Pakistan by Chinese banks.

Jayanagar-Kurtha Cross-border Rail Section

- Recently, India handed over a 34.9 km long cross-border rail link to the Nepal government.

Key Points:

- It is connecting Jayanagar in Bihar to Kurtha in Nepal.
- It is part of the 68.7 km Jayanagar - Bijalpura- Bardibas rail link built under the Government of India's grant assistance programme of NPR 8.77 billion.
- **Benefits:** The cross-border rail link is expected to enhance trade and commerce activities as well as people to people linkage between the two countries.

India- Nepal Relations

- India and Nepal share a very cordial relation spanning across different fields. Economic Cooperation: India has been a key development partner of Nepal.
- Following the massive earthquakes in Nepal in April and May 2015, India promptly offered to help.
- About 150 Indian ventures operate in Nepal in manufacturing, services (banking, insurance, dry port, education and telecom), power sector and tourism industries.

25th OCTOBER 2021

- Both Nepal and India have a common approach to regional and multilateral institutions and hence, work in tandem in the United Nations, Non-aligned Movement and other international fora on most of the important international issues.
- India as Nepal's largest trading partner. India has provided a transit facility to Nepal for the third country trade. Both the public and private sectors of India have invested in Nepal.

National Fund to Control Drug Abuse

- Recently, the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has recommended the use of the National Fund to Control Drug Abuse to carry out de-addiction programmes, rather than just policing activities.
- The proposal is sent to the Department of Revenue under the Finance Ministry to decriminalise possession of "small quantities" of drugs, as defined in the NDPS Act.

Key Points:

- The fund was created in accordance with a provision of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, which had a nominal corpus of ₹23 crores.
- Under the NDPS Act, the sale proceeds of any property forfeited, grants made by any person and institution, and income from the investments of the fund, go towards the fund. The Act states that the fund would be used to combat illicit trafficking of narcotics, rehabilitate addicts, and prevent drug abuse.

■ NOTE:

- As per the National Crime Records Bureau's Crime in India 2020 report, a total of 59,806 cases were lodged under the NDPS Act, of which 33,246 pertained to cases of possession of drugs for personal use, and 26,560 cases of possession of drugs from trafficking.
- Most common drugs used in India: Alcohol, cannabis, opium, and heroin are the major drugs misused in India. Buprenorphine, propoxyphene, and heroin are the most commonly injected drugs.

Amended Technology Up-gradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS)

- Recently, the Union Minister of Textiles reviewed the Amended Technology Up-gradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS) at the 5th Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) meeting organized by the Ministry of Textiles.
- The scheme was reviewed to boost the Indian Textile Industry by enabling ease of doing business, bolstering exports & fuelling employment.

Key Points:

- The Ministry of Textiles had introduced Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) in 1999 as a credit-linked subsidy scheme intended for modernization and technology up-gradation of the Indian textile industry.
- The ongoing Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS) scheme was approved in 2016 with an outlay of Rs. 17822 crore and implemented through the web-based iTUFS platform.
- The scheme promotes ease of doing business in the country and achieves the vision of generating employment and promoting exports through "Make in India" with "Zero effect and Zero defect" in manufacturing.

Textile Sector In India

- India's textiles sector is the second-largest employer in the country after agriculture. The domestic textiles and apparel industry contributes 5% to India's GDP, 7% of industry output in value terms, and 12% of the country's export earnings.
- India is the 6th largest exporter of textiles and apparel in the world. India is one of the largest producers of cotton and jute in the world. India is also the 2nd largest producer of silk in the world and 95% of the world's hand-woven fabric comes from India.

Metaverse

- Facebook is planning to rebrand itself with a new name to reflect its focus on building the metaverse. This will create 10,000 jobs in the European Union in the next five years to work on futuristic technology.

Key Points:

- The term 'metaverse' was coined by American writer Neal Stephenson in his 1992 novel Snow Crash, where a 3D virtual world was inhabited by the avatars of real people.
- It is a broad term. It generally refers to shared virtual world environments which people can access via the internet.
- The metaverse is a digital reality that combines aspects of social media, online gaming, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and cryptocurrencies to allow users to interact virtually.
- The definition of the metaverse is evolving, but today it refers to real-time 3D virtual spaces, where users can meet, create, socialise, work, buy goods and services and attend events with other people who are not in the same physical space.

Melioidosis (Whitmore's) Disease

- Context:** A made-in-India aromatherapy spray is being pulled off retail giant Walmart's shelves in the United States after a medical investigation linked it to melioidosis.
- The spray was reported to contain a bacterium, *Burkholderia pseudomallei*.
- Other than mentioning that the spray was manufactured in India, no other details on the spray's origins were disclosed.

About Melioidosis:

- Melioidosis is also called Whitmore's disease. It is a rare but serious disease in the United States with 12 cases reported annually.
- It is an infectious disease that can infect humans or animals. The disease is caused by the bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei*.

- It is predominantly a disease of tropical climates, especially in Southeast Asia and northern Australia where it is widespread.
- The bacteria causing melioidosis are found in contaminated water and soil.
- It is spread to humans and animals through direct contact with the contaminated source.

Queen Heo Hwang-ok of Korea

- Context:** The Queen Heo Hwang-ok Memorial Park will be inaugurated in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.
- It is named after a Korean queen believed to have had Indian roots. It lies on the banks of the River Sarayu in Ayodhya. It has acres of green space, mostly known as Ram Katha Park.

About Queen Heo Hwang-ok:

- She was a Korean queen who is believed to have been born Princess Suriratna of Ayodhya, daughter of King Padmasan and Indumati.
- Padmasan ruled the ancient kingdom of Kausala, a region that extended from present-day UP to Odisha.
- Her story is described in Samguk Yusa (Memorabilia of Three Kingdoms), a 13th-century collection of legends, folktales and history of Korea's three kingdoms — Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla — and some other regions.
- In 48 BC, the princess, then 16, travelled to Korea from the ancient land of 'Ayuta' and married Kim Suro, founder and King of Geumgwan Gaya in south-eastern Korea.
- She became the first queen of Geumgwan Gaya, believed to be located around modern-day Gimhae city in Southern Gyeongsang province.

26th OCTOBER 2021

NIPUN Bharat Mission

- The National Steering Committee (NSC) for implementation of the NIPUN Bharat Mission has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Union Education Minister.

- It is constituted to oversee the progress of the National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy and provide guidance on policy issues.

About NIPUN Bharat:

- Implemented by: Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), the Ministry of Education.
- It aims to achieve the goal of universal proficiency in foundational literacy and numeracy for every child by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27, as envisaged by National Education Policy 2020. It aims to cover the learning needs of children in the age group of 3 to 9 years.
- A five-tier implementation mechanism will be set up at the National- State- District- Block- School level in all States and UTs, under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha.
- Significance:** It will help students to take a big leap in their higher classes, but it will also have a major impact in making our students globally competitive. It will also benefit the socio-economic disadvantaged group thus ensuring access to equitable and inclusive quality education.

■ NOTE:

The National Education Policy, 2020 focuses on improving the standard of education through various measures such as the introduction of New pedagogical and curricular structure, Early Childhood Care and Education, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Transforming Assessment for Student Development, Experiential and Competency-based Learning etc.

Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship

- The Union Minister for Education and Skill Development inaugurated phase-II of the Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship.

Key Points:

- This scheme launched on a pilot basis in 2019, across 75 districts in Gujarat, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- It is a two-year-long fellowship conceived to create opportunities for young, dynamic individuals to contribute to enhancing skill development at the grassroots.
- Designed under SANKALP, the fellowship aims to address the challenge of non-availability of personnel for implementation of various programmes at national, state and district levels.
 - SANKALP stands for Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion.
 - Launched by the Government in January 2018, it is a World Bank loan assisted project that aims to strengthen institutional mechanisms for skill development and increase access to quality and market-relevant training for youth across the country.
- MGNF is a unique blend of academic and work-based training handled at the IIM campus and the districts, respectively.
- Eligibility:** 21-30 years age-group, have a graduation degree from a recognized university and be citizens of India.
- The sharp focus on developing skills for local needs gives impetus to the "vocal for local", and also building an industry-relevant skill base will help the cause of "Atmanirbhar Bharat".

27th OCTOBER 2021

Banni: India's First Buffalo IVF Calf

- India witnessed the birth of its first IVF calf of a Buffalo breed namely Banni in Gujarat's Kutch region.
- The process was carried out to enhance the number of genetically superior buffaloes to increase milk production.
- Banni buffaloes are also known as "Kutchi" or "Kundi".

Key Points

- This breed of buffaloes is usually bred and preserved by a local community found in Kutch, called the 'Maldharis'.
- Banni Buffaloes has higher milk production potentials and is also more disease resilient when compared to other common breeds.
- They are also well-adapted to survive extreme weather conditions such as water scarcity, frequent droughts, low humidity and high temperatures.

About In-vitro fertilization (IVF):

- IVF is a process of fertilization where an egg is combined with sperm outside the body. It is a type of assisted reproductive technology used for infertility treatment and gestational surrogacy.
- The process involves monitoring and stimulating a female ovulatory process, removing an ovum or ova (egg or eggs) from the female ovaries and letting sperm fertilise them in a liquid in a laboratory.

Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2019

- The Actor Rajinikanth has conferred the Dadasaheb Phalke Award at a National Film Awards ceremony by the Vice-President of India.

About Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- The Government of India started it in 1969 to commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke, known as the 'Father of Indian Cinema'. He made India's first full-length feature film Raja Harishchandra in 1913.
- It is the highest honour for an artist in Indian cinema.
- The recipients are honoured for their "outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema."
- The award comprises a Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus) medallion, a shawl, and a cash prize of Rs. 10 lakh.
- It is presented annually at the National Films Awards

ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals, an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

28th OCTOBER 2021

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- According to a study, even enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions are not nearly enough to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C.

About Paris Agreement:

- The agreement stated that NDCs would work to achieve the goal of keeping global temperature rise this century to well below 2°C above the pre-industrial level and to pursue efforts to limit the rise to 1.5°C.
- As per the agreement's "ratcheting mechanism", nations are expected to submit progressively more ambitious NDCs every five years.

India's first NDC has three main elements:

- An emissions-intensity target of 33%–35% by 2030 below 2005 levels;
- To increase the share of non-fossil-based energy resources to 40% of installed electric power capacity by 2030 with support;
- To create an additional (cumulative) carbon sink of 2.5–3 Giga Tonnes (Gt) CO₂ through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

New targets in CoP 26:

- Many countries have announced new and updated nationally determined contributions (NDC) ahead of the 26th session of the Conference of Parties (CoP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- These new commitments take 7.5 percent off predicted 2030 greenhouse gas emissions compared to the old commitments. Reductions of 30 per cent are needed to stay on the least-cost pathway for 2°C and 55 per cent for 1.5°C.

'Podu' Shifting Cultivation

- The Telangana government has decided to move landless, non-tribal farmers engaged in shifting cultivation ('Podu') inside forests to peripheral areas as it looks to combat deforestation.

Key Points:

- Podu lands are the lands tilled by tribal people in forests.
- Telangana government has red-flagged encroachment of forests by non-tribals, who are indulging in the practice of shifting agriculture (podu).
- Several political leaders have raised the issues of shifting agriculture and deforestation wherein encroachers clear a portion of land to raise crops one season and move to a different location next season, thereby clearing large areas of forests.

National Population Register (NPR)

- Context:** The latest form of the National Population Register (NPR) appears to have retained contentious questions such as "mother tongue, place of birth of father and mother and last place of residence" according to a document compiled by a committee under the Registrar General of India.

Key points:

- The new questions were part of a trial exercise involving 30 lakh respondents in September 2019.
- The NPR schedule to be used in Census 2021 is given in Annexure X. According to the Annexure: "National Population Register 2020", the respondent

will have to specify the "name of State and district" if the place of birth of father and mother is in India and mention the country's name if not born here.

About National Population Register (NPR):

- It is a Register of usual residents of the country.
- It is being prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National level under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- NPR was first done in 2010 and was later updated in 2015 when it was linked with Aadhar. It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- A usual resident is defined for the purposes of NPR as a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more.

29th OCTOBER 2021

Non-Fungible Token (NFT)

- Context:** The term Non-Fungible Token is often heard in the news because of Salman Khan's non-fungible tokens (NFTs) that will be available on NFT marketplace Bollycoin.

Key Points:

- Non-Fungible Token is a digital asset that represents real-world objects like art, music, in-game items and videos.
- They are bought and sold online, frequently with cryptocurrency, and they are generally encoded with the same underlying software as many cryptos.
- It was first created by inventors in 2014 and named "monetized graphics".

- The key difference between cryptocurrency and NFT is that cryptocurrency is fungible. One can trade a Bitcoin for another Bitcoin but cannot do so for an NFT.

■ NOTE:

Cryptocurrencies are “a stateless digital currency” in which encryption techniques are used for trading and these ‘currencies’ operate independently of a Central bank like the RBI, “rendering it immune from government interference”.

Project Readiness Financing (PRF) Loan

- Context:** The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank signed a \$4.5 million project readiness financing (PRF) loan.
- The PRF supports the development of long-term solutions to improve urban mobility in Aizawl by identifying high-priority urban transport investments for the ensuing project and enhancing its readiness by supporting due diligence and other preparatory activities.

About Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- Asian Development Bank is a regional development bank established on 19th December 1966. The ADB was modelled closely on the World Bank.
- Headquarters:** Manila, Philippines.
- Members:** 68 members, 49 from within Asia.
- Japan holds the largest proportion of shares in ADB followed by the USA, because Japan is one of the largest shareholders of the bank, the president has always been Japanese.
- ADB is an official United Nations Observer.

16th East Asia Summit (EAS)

- Recently, the Indian Prime Minister spoke about Global Value Chains, during ASEAN - East Asia Summit virtual summit on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit with the leaders.

Key Highlight:

- The 16th East Asia Summit was hosted by Brunei as EAS and ASEAN Chair.
- Their overall focus on the importance of a resilient global value chain was highlighted. They discussed about important regional and international issues, including Indo-Pacific, South China Sea, UNCLOS, terrorism, and the situation in Korean Peninsula and Myanmar.
- India stressed the importance of Free, Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific and raised the idea of developing global standards on cybersecurity.
- India's commitment to provide Quad-sponsored vaccines to Indo-Pacific nations was reiterated.

About East Asia Summit (EAS)

- The concept of East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad.
- It established in 2005, it is the Indo-Pacific's premier forum for strategic dialogue.
- It is the only leader-led forum at which all key partners meet to discuss political, security and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific.
- Apart from the 10 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states, the East Asia Summit includes India, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Russia.
- India is one of the founding members of the East Asia Summit.

30th OCTOBER 2021

Registration of Births and Deaths Act (RBD), 1969

- Context:** Recently, the Centre has proposed amendments to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act (RBD), 1969. Presently, the registration of births and deaths is done by the local registrar appointed by States.

Proposed amendments:

- It is proposed that the Chief Registrar (appointed by the States) would maintain a unified database at the State level and integrate it with the data at the “national level,” maintained by the Registrar General of India (RGI).
- The appointment of “Special Sub-Registrars, in the event of a disaster, with any or all of his powers and duties for on the spot registration of deaths and issuance of extract thereof, as may be prescribed.
- The amendments will imply that the Centre will be a parallel repository of data.
- **A new Section 3-A:** The database of registered births and deaths at the national level may be used, with the approval of the Central government to
 - Update the Population Register prepared under the Citizenship Act, 1955.
 - Electoral registers or electoral rolls prepared under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
 - Aadhaar database prepared under the Aadhaar Act, 2016.
 - Ration card database prepared under the National Food Security Act, 2013.
 - Passport database prepared under the Passport Act.
 - The driving licence database under the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019.

Inheritance of Property Bill, 2021

- The Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC) is scheduled to introduce the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Khasi Inheritance of Property Bill, 2021.

Key Highlights:

- It will enable all siblings, both males and females, to get an equal share of the parent's property. It is an attempt to modify a customary practice of inheritance

of the Khasi tribe in which the youngest daughter of the family is bequeathed the full share of parental property.

- It will prevent a sibling from getting parental property if they marry a non-Khasi and accept the spouse's customs.

About KHADC:

- Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council was constituted under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India (Article 244 (2), 275 of The Constitution of India) with Executive, Legislative and Judicial powers.
- Its jurisdiction extends to the 4 (four) Districts of Meghalaya State, namely
 - East Khasi Hills District,
 - West Khasi Hills District,
 - South West Khasi Hills District and Ri Bhoi District

■ NOTE:

The 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution provides for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram to safeguard the rights of the tribal population in these states. This special provision is provided under Article 244(2) and Article 275(1) of the Constitution.

Climate Vulnerability Index

- Recently, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) has carried out a first-of-its-kind district-level climate vulnerability assessment, or Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI).

Key Points:

- CEEW is an environmental think tank. The index is published in a report titled “Mapping India's Climate Vulnerability – A District-level Assessment”.

- In this index, CEEW has analysed 640 districts in India to assess their vulnerability to extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods, heatwaves, droughts, etc.
- Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Bihar are most vulnerable to extreme climate events such as floods, droughts and cyclones in India.
- More than 80 per cent Indians live in districts vulnerable to climate risks – that is 17 of 20 people in India are vulnerable to climate risks, out of which every five Indians live in areas that are extremely vulnerable
- 60% of Indian districts have medium to low adaptive capacity in handing extreme weather events – these districts don't have robust plans in place to mitigate impact
- The CVI has ranked 20 states out of which Assam and Andhra Pradesh are the most vulnerable to extreme weather events, and Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal are the least vulnerable.

About CEEW:

- Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) is one of Asia's leading not-for-profit policy research institutions.
- The Council was founded in 2010 to also serve as a platform for people with different skills to come together, pursue their interests and build careers in public policy.

31st OCTOBER 2021

Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)

- Recently, the Government has reconstituted the seven-member Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) by inducting three new

members. It will continue to be chaired by economist Bibek Debroy.

About EAC-PM

- EAC-PM is an independent body to advise the government, especially the Prime Minister, on economic and policy-related matters.
- Set up in September 2017 with a term of two years, replacing the erstwhile PMEAC, which was headed by former Reserve Bank of India governor C Rangarajan during the terms of former prime minister Manmohan Singh.
- Function & Mandate:** Analysing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the Prime Minister and advising him thereon.
- Addressing issues of macroeconomic importance and presenting views thereon to the Prime Minister", either on its own or upon reference.

Nag River Revitalization Project

- The Nag River revitalization project has been approved by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC).

About Project:

- Conceptualized by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways and is an ambitious project for the region of Nagpur.
- Nag river flows through Nagpur city, hence giving it the name. It is now a highly polluted water channel of sewage and industrial waste.
- It is approved under the National River Conservation Plan and will be implemented by the National River Conservation Directorate(NRCD).
- It will reduce the pollution level in terms of untreated sewage, flowing solid waste and other impurities flowing into the Nag river and its tributaries.

Agni-V

- **Context:** India has successfully test-fired its longest-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, Agni-V.

Key Points:

- It is the most advanced surface-to-surface indigenously built fire and forgets ballistic missile. which once fired cannot be stopped, except by an interceptor missile.
- It was successfully launched from APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha
- The three-stage solid-fuelled engine missile is capable of striking targets at ranges up to 5,000 km. With a very high degree of accuracy and can reach most parts of China.
- The Agni series constitutes the backbone of the nuclear weapons delivery . It also includes the Prithvi short-range ballistic missiles and fighter aircraft. It has the capability of carrying a nuclear warhead of about 1.5 tonnes.
- It has been developed under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).

Different range of Agni Class of Missiles:

- **Agni I:** Range of 700-800 km.
- **Agni II:** Range more than 2000 km.
- **Agni III:** Range of more than 2,500 Km
- **Agni IV:** Range is more than 3,500 km and can fire from a road-mobile launcher.
- **Agni-V:** The longest of the Agni series, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 km.
- **Agni-P (Prime):** It is a canisterised missile with a range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 km. It will replace the Agni I missile.

