

Weekly Current Affair

साप्ताहिक करेंट अफेयर्स

STAND UP India
Endeavour and Prosper



(03-09 April 2022)

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International Relations

Forbes World's Billionaires List 2022

Why in News

- Recently, Forbes has released the 36th Annual World's Billionaires List 2022.
- Elon Musk has topped the list for the first time.



Key Points

Top 3 on the Forbes World's Billionaires List 2022:

Rank	Name	Net Worth	Source of wealth
1	Elon Musk	\$219 billion	Tesla, SpaceX
2	Jeff Bezos	\$171 billion	Amazon
3	Bernard Arnault & family	\$158 billion	LVMH

- Forbes found 2,668 billionaires around the globe for the 2022 World's Billionaires list, down from a record 2,755 last year.
- Collectively, they're worth \$12.7 trillion, down from a record \$13.1 trillion on the 2021 list.
- The U.S. still reigns supreme, with 735 billionaire citizens, 11 more than in 2021.
- **India's Mukesh Ambani**, Chairman of RIL has ranked 10th position on the global list with a net worth of \$90.7 billion.

Source: [forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com)

India hosts Clean Energy Ministerial Senior Officials meeting

Why in News

- India is hosting the **Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) Senior Officials meetings** starting from 6 April, 2022. This will conclude on 8 April.



Weekly Current Affairs

- The meeting will also be used to prepare the agenda for the upcoming Clean Energy Ministerial Meeting in September 2022.

Key Points

- The meeting is being organised to review the work of various work streams in Clean Energy Policies.
- The Government of India and the United Kingdom lead the plenary dialogue on the future of Energy Transition.
- This was followed by discussions on topics such as Clean Power, Green Steel, and Hydrogen.
- International Energy Agency, International Renewable Energy Agency and UN High Level Action Champions presented the findings of the State of Sectoral Transitions (SoST) draft report.

About Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM):

- CEM is a high-level global forum of 29 member countries to promote policies and programs that advance clean energy technology through sharing of knowledge and best practices with a focus on transition to a global clean energy future.

Source: ET

IPCC report on Mitigation of Climate Change scientifically establishes India's position on the historical responsibility of developed countries for consuming the carbon budget

Why in News

- Welcoming the Summary of Policymakers (SPM) and the Working Group III (WG3) contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released on 4th April 2022, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav said that the historical responsibility of developed countries for consuming the carbon budget is scientifically established by the report, and called for the need of taking deep and urgent global emissions reduction.

Key Points

- The Report dealing with climate change mitigation and international cooperation is a major contribution of IPCC to the global fight against climate change.



- It also states that public finance falls short of the Copenhagen (reiterated when the Paris Agreement was signed) goal of USD 100 billion per year by 2020.
- Among other important things the Report has underlined the need for deep and urgent global emissions reduction mentioning that four-fifths of the total carbon budget for 1.5 deg C temperature increase and two-thirds of the total carbon budget for 2 deg C warming has been already consumed.
- Both cumulative and per capita annual emissions rose during the pre-2020 period. Pre-2020 emissions reduction in developed countries has been insufficient in comparison to the developing world's needs for sustainable development. Both historical cumulative emissions and per capita annual emissions show that India's role (as part of South Asia) is minimal.

In India:

- Further, at COP26 in November 2021 at Glasgow, United Kingdom, as the implementation of the Paris Agreement began, India reaffirmed its commitment to climate actions, including the goal of net zero by 2070.

About Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change:

- It is the international body for assessing the science related to climate change.
- It was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.

Source: PIB

India contributes \$500,000 to UN Women

Why in News

- **India** has contributed USD 500,000 to the **UN Women**, the United Nations agency for gender equality and women empowerment.

Key Points

- The amount was handed over by T. S. Tirumurti, India's permanent representative to the UN to Dr. Sima Bahous, UN Women Executive Director.

About UN Women:

- UN Women is a United Nations agency committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.
- The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, founded in 1976) and other organisations merged to form UN Women, which began operations in January 2011.



National

India's contribution of USD 72,124 to UNESCO Fund for Elimination of Doping in Sport in 2022

Why in News

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports released India's contribution of USD 72,124 to **UNESCO Fund for Elimination of Doping in Sport** in 2022.



युवा कार्यक्रम
एवं खेल मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
**YOUTH AFFAIRS
AND SPORTS**

Key Points

- As per the resolution of 7COP held at Paris, 29-31 September, 2019, the State Parties had agreed for 1% of the contribution of the regular budget of respective nations to UNESCO towards the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport.
- First time in 2021, the Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports made a contribution of USD 28172 towards the UNESCO Fund on the basis of a request received from UNESCO.

Background:

- Copenhagen Declaration on Anti-Doping in Sport was agreed to by the Government of India in March, 2003, which was the political document through which Governments signaled their intention to formally recognize and implement the World Anti-Doping Code brought out by the **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)**.
- This was the first step towards the preparation of the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport.
- India is a signatory to the International Convention Against Doping in Sport, also known as the "UNESCO Anti-Doping Convention", which was ratified by India on 07 November 2007.
- The **National Anti-Doping Agency**, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Youth Affairs, is responsible for adopting, implementing and enforcing anti-doping programmes in India.

Source: PIB



Comprehensive Training Program on Natural Farming

Why in News

- Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the **Comprehensive Training Program on Natural Farming**, organized by the **National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)**, Hyderabad.



Key Points

About MANAGE:

- MANAGE was established in 1987, as the National Centre for Management of Agricultural Extension at Hyderabad, by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India as an autonomous Institute.
- MANAGE is the Indian response to challenges of agricultural extension in a rapidly growing and diverse agriculture sector.

Natural farming:

- It can be defined as a “chemical- free farming and livestock based.
- Natural farming is a promising means of reducing the dependence of farmers on external inputs, reducing the cost of cultivation and increasing the income of the farmers.
- The Government is promoting the Indian Natural Farming System (BPKP) as a sub-scheme of Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) to promote traditional indigenous practices.
- In the coming days, trained master trainers will organize 750 awareness programs for 30,000 village heads across the country and help in taking forward the initiative of natural farming in their respective states.
- 4.09 lakh hectare area is covered under natural farming.
- An announcement has also been made in the budget for the year 2022-23 to promote natural farming.

Other Initiatives related to Agriculture:

- National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture
- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana
- Rainfed Area Development
- Sub-mission on Agro Forestry
- Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region

Source: PIB



'One Health' pilot project

Why in News

- The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD), Government of India has launched a pilot project in the state of Uttarakhand to implement the **One Health Framework** by One Health Support Unit.

Key Points

One Health Concept:

- One Health is an approach that recognizes that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment.
- One Health' vision derives its blueprint from the agreement between the tripartite-plus alliance comprising the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).
- The key objective of the Unit is to develop a national One Health roadmap based on the learnings of the pilot project implementation.
- The Inter-ministerial One Health committee under the chairmanship of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India has been established to lead the implementation of the One Health Support Unit.
- By developing the One Health Framework, India will successfully address the need for efficient disease reporting and response coordination, optimum utilization of resources, emergency preparedness, build capability to handle diseases of economic and zoonotic importance, and create public awareness on animal diseases of zoonotic and economic significance.
- In keeping with the long-term objectives, India established a National Standing Committee on Zoonoses as far back as the 1980s.

Source: PIB



Chhattisgarh ranks first in the country with the lowest unemployment rate

Why in News

- Chhattisgarh has been ranked first among states with the lowest unemployment rate in the country.
- According to the **latest data released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)**, Chhattisgarh has registered an unemployment rate of 0.6



percent this March, which is the lowest so far.

Key Points

- As per the data, Haryana has the highest unemployment rate at 26.7 percent, followed by Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir at 25 percent each and Jharkhand at 14.5 percent.
- Chhattisgarh ranks first in the country with the lowest unemployment rate while the country's unemployment rate stood at 7.6 percent in the same month (March).
- The Chhattisgarh government adopted a new model of development three years ago in line with Mahatma Gandhi's vision of 'Gram Swaraj' envisaging inclusive development of the state and launched various schemes including Suraji Gaon Yojana, Narva-Garva-Ghurva-Bari programme, Godhan Nyay Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana etc. for boosting the rural economy.
- The state government has set up the 'Chhattisgarh Employment Mission' intending to create around 15 lakh new employment opportunities in the next five years.

Source: Indian Express

'XE' variant of coronavirus

Why in News

- Recently, The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) announced that a 50-year-old woman with a travel history to South Africa may have been infected with the **newly-discovered 'XE' variant of the coronavirus.**



Key Points

- XE, a sub-variant of Omicron, which caused the third wave of Covid-19 this winter, had not been found in India until now.

XE variant of coronavirus:

- The Omicron variant, which is responsible for over 90 per cent of the infections detected this year, has two prominent sub-variants, called BA.1 and BA.2. There is a BA.3 sub-variant as well, but that is less common.
- During the initial phase, the BA.1 sub-variant was the most widespread. In India, however, it was the BA.2 that was the most dominant during the third wave.
- BA.2 was found to be slightly more transmissible than BA.1, even though it was not more dangerous.
- In the last couple of months, the BA.2 variety has become the most widespread across the globe, accounting for almost 94 per cent of all



Omicron infections in the last one month, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Source: Indian Express

De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes

Why in News

- Recently, a standing committee of Parliament has criticised the functioning of the development programme for de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes.
- The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment, headed by BJP Lok Sabha MP Rama Devi, tabled its 31st report in Parliament.
- The report said the “Committee are constrained to note that the Scheme for economic empowerment of DNT communities formulated to provide coaching, health insurance, facilitate livelihood and financial assistance for construction of homes for the members of DNT, with total outlays of Rs 200 crore for the period of five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26 and the Department could not spend even a single rupee in 2021-22.



Key Points

De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes:

- These are communities who are the most vulnerable and deprived.
- Denotified tribes (DNTs) are communities that were ‘notified’ as being ‘born criminal’ during the British regime under a series of laws starting with the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871.
- Nomadic and semi-nomadic communities are defined as those who move from one place to another rather than living at one place all the time.

Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT):

- A National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) was constituted in 2006 by the then government.
- It was headed by Balkrishna Sidram Renke and submitted its report in June 2008, in which it said, “It is an irony that these tribes somehow escaped the attention of our Constitution makers and thus got deprived of the Constitutional support unlike Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.”
- The Renke commission estimated their population at around 10.74 crore based on Census 2001.



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- A new Commission constituted in February 2014 to prepare a state-wise list, which submitted its report on January 8, 2018, identified 1,262 communities as de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic.
- While a number of these tribes are categorised under SC, ST and OBC, many are not.
- The standing committee report in Parliament has cited a statement by the Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, that 269 DNT communities are not covered under any reserved categories.

About Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNC):

- The government set up the Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNC) under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the purpose of implementing welfare programmes.
- The DWBDNC was constituted on February 21, 2019 under the chairmanship of Bhiku Ramji Idate.

Source: Indian Express

Government accords 'In-Principle' approval for five new sites for locating nuclear power plants

Why in News

- Recently, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said in Lok Sabha that the Government has accorded 'In-Principle' approval for five new sites for locating nuclear power plants in future.



Key Points

- The Government has accorded administrative approval and financial sanction for construction of 10 indigenous 700 MW Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) to be set up in fleet mode.
- On progressive completion of the projects under construction and accorded sanction, the nuclear capacity is expected to reach **22480 MW by 2031**.
- There are presently 22 reactors with a total capacity of 6780 MW in operation and one reactor, KAPP-3 (700 MW) has been connected to the grid on January 10, 2021.



Note:

- The requirement of uranium for domestic safeguarded nuclear reactors is met by indigenously mined and produced uranium.
- Moreover, Natural Uranium Ore Concentrate (UOC) is being procured from countries having Inter Governmental Agreement for supply of nuclear fuel.
- Efforts have been made to procure nuclear fuel from Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Canada.

Source: newsonair

Digital Dashboard for District Ganga Committee Performance Monitoring System

Why in News

- Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched the '**Digital Dashboard for District Ganga Committees (DGCs) Performance Monitoring System' (GDPMS)**.

**Key Points**

- DGC Digital Dashboard will go a long way in establishing a people-river connect and will play an important role in the success of **Namami Gange Programme**.

About District Ganga Committees:

- District Ganga Committees were constituted in the districts on the Ganga River basin for putting in place a mechanism at the district level to ensure people's participation in management and pollution abatement in river Ganga and its tributaries.
- The DGCs are mandated to ensure proper utilization of assets created under Namami Gange, monitor drains/sewage falling in River Ganga and its tributaries, create strong connect of people with Ganga rejuvenation.

Source: PIB

Stand Up India Scheme completes 6 years

Why in News

- The sixth anniversary of the Stand Up India scheme was on 5th April 2022.
- Over 30 thousand 160 crore rupees have been sanctioned under Stand Up India Scheme to more than 1 lakh 33 thousand 995 accounts since inception of the Scheme.



Key Points

About Stand Up India scheme:

- Stand Up India scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 5th April 2016.
- It facilitates loans to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and women borrowers for setting up a greenfield enterprise in manufacturing, services, or trading sector.

Purpose of Stand Up India:

- Promote entrepreneurship amongst women, SC & ST category
- Provide loans for greenfield enterprises in manufacturing, services or the trading sector and activities allied to agriculture;
- Facilitate bank loans between Rs.10 lakh and Rs.1 crore to at least one Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch of Scheduled Commercial Banks

Note: In 2019-20, the Stand Up India scheme was extended for the entire period coinciding with the 15th Finance Commission period of 2020-25.

Source: newsonair

Mission Integrated Bio-refineries

Why in News

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh launched a major futuristic PPP (Public Private Participation) mode initiative for 'Clean Energy' with the full launch of "**Mission Integrated Bio-refineries**" to accelerate Clean Energy solutions through Public -Private Alliances.



Key Points

- Dr Jitendra Singh also launched three **Material Acceleration Platforms (MAP)** set up by Department of Science and Technology (DST) on Integrated Clean Energy Material Acceleration Platform on Storage, Integrated Clean Energy Material Acceleration Platform on Materials and Integrated Clean Energy Material Acceleration Platform on Bioenergy and Hydrogen with a total cost of \$ 6 Million USD.
- He enumerated that these platforms would leverage emerging capabilities in next-generation computing, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, and robotics to accelerate the pace of materials discovery up to 10 times faster.



- He also announced '**National Funding Opportunity on Sustainable Aviation Fuels**' to support and conduct RD&D (Research, Development & Demonstration) to foster technological innovations in advanced biofuels for aviation applications.
- He announced the funding opportunity of **Hydrogen Valley Platform**, which is also a global initiative to optimise the hydrogen demand and supply by onsite generation and utilization, utilize the renewable resources effectively, and water excess areas with geographical identity.
- DST has committed to facilitate the delivery of three clean hydrogen valleys in India by 2030.

Mission Integrated Bio-refineries:

- The Mission is Co-led by India and the Netherlands. Also involved are Brazil and Canada as core members, and the European Commission and the United Kingdom as supporting members.
- This is the sixth Mission launched by Mission Innovation, and joins initiatives focused on clean hydrogen, green power systems, net zero shipping, carbon dioxide removal and urban transitions.

Mission Innovation:

- Mission Innovation is a global initiative to catalyse action and investment in research, development and demonstration to make clean energy affordable, attractive and accessible to all this decade.
- Launched alongside the Paris Agreement in 2015

Source: PIB

Union Environment Minister launches Awareness Mascot 'Prakriti' & green initiatives for effective Plastic Waste Management

Why in News

- The Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav launched 'Prakriti', a mascot to spread greater awareness among masses about small changes that can be sustainably adopted in our lifestyle for a better environment, and various green initiatives taken by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to ensure effective Plastic Waste Management (PWM) in the country.
- The event also saw felicitation of the winners of the India Plastic Challenge–Hackathon 2021.



Key Points

- To tackle the challenge of plastic pollution, the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi announced India's pledge to phase out Single Use Plastics (SUPs) by 2022.
- India is generating about 3.5 Million Tonnes of plastic waste annually and the per capita plastic waste generation has almost doubled over the last five years.
- Further, he informed about the recently released IPCC Working Group III contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), which focuses on mitigation measures to keep the world aligned to the Plastic Waste Management goals and what we can do to remain on the roadmap set by the Paris Agreement.

Source: PIB

PM Narendra Modi holds talks with Nepal PM Sher Bahadur Deuba in Delhi

Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba held delegation-level talks at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on 2 April 2022.
- Prime Minister Deuba, accompanied by a high-level delegation, arrived in New Delhi on 1 April 2022 on a three-day visit.



Key Points

- This is Prime Minister Deuba's first bilateral visit abroad since assuming office for the fifth time in July last year.
- Nepal is important for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region, and the leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti Beti" relationship.
- Nepal shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian states - Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Note: The last Head of State/Head of Government-level visit from Nepal was in May 2019, when then PM K P Oli visited India for the swearing-in ceremony of PM Narendra Modi. Before that PM Modi had visited Nepal in August 2018 for the 4th BIMSTEC Summit in Kathmandu.

Source: Business Standard



Central govt exempts genome edited crops from stringent GM regulations

Why in News

- The Central government has for the first time issued an order exempting certain types of genome edited crops from the stringent regulations applicable on **genetically modified or GM crops** thus giving a big boost to their further research and development.



Key Points

- The Ministry of Environment and Forest in an order issued recently, exempted SDN1 and SDN2 genome edited plants from Rules 7-11 of the Environment Protect Act (EPA) for manufacture, use or import or export and storage of hazardous microorganisms or genetically engineered organisms or cells rules-1989.
- Genome editing or gene editing was discovered back in 2012, but Indian regulators took nearly a decade to comprehend its potential for developing crops resistant to biotic and abiotic stresses and with nutritional superiority.

Genome editing:

- A decade ago, scientists in Germany and the US discovered a technique which allowed them to 'cut' DNA strands and edit genes. For agriculture scientists this process allowed them to bring about desired changes in the genome by using site directed nuclease (SDN) or sequence specific nuclease (SSN).

Note: Globally, European Union countries have bracketed genome edited crops with GM crops. Countries like Argentina, Israel, US, Canada, etc have liberal regulations for genome edited crops.

Source: Business Standard

Broadcast Seva Portal for broadcasters launched

Why in News

- Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, and Youth Affairs & Sports, Anurag Singh Thakur launched the **Broadcast Seva Portal** in New Delhi.



Key Points

About Broadcast Seva Portal:

- Broadcast Seva Portal is an online portal solution for speedy filing and processing of applications of broadcasters for various kinds of licenses, permissions, registrations, etc.
- It will reduce the turnaround time of applications and at the same time will help applicants track the progress.
- It will reduce the human interface that was required earlier and thus add to capacity building of the Ministry and will be a major step towards Ease of Doing Business.
- It will boost the business environment and empower the entire broadcast sector by directly benefiting more than 900 Satellite TV Channels, 70 Teleport operators, 1700 Multi-service operators, 350 Community Radio Stations (CRS), 380 Private FM Channels and others.
- The portal would bring Transparency, Accountability & Responsiveness in the ecosystem and all information will be available on a single dashboard.

Source: HT

Railway Protection Force: Operation Upalabdh

Why in News

- Recently, **RPF (Railway Protection Force)** conducted a Pan India Drive against the touts under **Operation Upalabdh**.



Key Points

About Operation Upalabdh:

- The month long drive under Operation Upalabdh has been able to curb the activities of touts substantially and make railway tickets available to the common man.
- Indian Railways advises the common public not to procure tickets from unauthorised persons as it is not only likely to be forfeited once detected, but may also land the buyer in legal trouble.

About Railway Protection Force (RPF):

- RPF is a security force under the ownership of Indian Railways, Ministry of Railways, Government of India established by the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957.
- It has the power to search, arrest, investigate, and prosecute offenses committed under Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act 1966,

Note: In February 2022, the RPF had launched a nationwide operation to curb human trafficking named **Operation AAHT**.



Source: PIB

President Kovind holds bilateral talks with his Turkmenistan counterpart Serdar Berdimuhamedow

Why in News

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** and his Turkmenistan counterpart Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow held delegation-level talks at Oguzhar palace Ashgabat and exchanged views on various regional and international issues.
- This is the first-ever visit of the President of India to independent Turkmenistan and comes just after the inauguration of new Turkmen President Berdimuhamedov.
- A postage stamp commemorating 30 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Turkmenistan was also released.



Key Points

- India and Turkmenistan signed four agreements, including in financial intelligence and disaster management.
- The two leaders highlighted the significance of the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Ashgabat Agreement on International Transport and Transit Corridor.
- President Kovind pointed out that the Chabahar port built by India in Iran could be used to improve trade between India and Central Asia.
- On the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, President Kovind suggested that issues related to security of the pipeline and key business principles may be addressed in Technical and Expert level meetings.

Note:

- Turkmenistan is an important partner for India in the India-Central Asia Summit framework, the first of which India hosted virtually in January this year.
- President Kovind's trip to Turkmenistan will be followed by a state visit to the Netherlands from April 4-7 at the invitation of King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima.

Source: Indian Express



India and Australia sign Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement

Why in News

- The Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, and Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Government of Australia, Dan Tehan signed the **India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA)**, in a virtual ceremony in presence of the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison.



Key Points

Salient features of India-Australia ECTA:

- The India-Australia ECTA is the first trade agreement of India with a developed country after more than a decade.
- The Agreement encompasses cooperation across the entire gamut of bilateral economic and commercial relations between the two friendly countries, and covers areas like Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons, Telecom, Customs Procedures, Pharmaceutical products, and Cooperation in other Areas.

Note:

- Australia is the 17th largest trading partner of India and India is Australia's 9th largest trading partner.
- India-Australia bilateral trade for both merchandise and services is valued at US\$ 27.5 billion in 2021.
- India's merchandise exports to Australia grew 135% between 2019 and 2021.
- India's merchandise imports from Australia were US\$ 15.1 billion in 2021, consisting largely of raw materials, minerals and intermediate goods.
- India and Australia are partners in the trilateral **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** arrangement along with Japan which seeks to enhance the resilience of supply chains in the Indo-Pacific Region.
- Further, India and Australia are also members of the recently formed **Quad**, also comprising the US, and Japan, to further enhances cooperation and develops partnership across several issues of common concern.

Source: PIB



Prime Minister Modi interacts with students in the 5th Pariksha Pe Charcha Programme

Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with students on the subject of upcoming exams on 01 April 2022 in the 5th Pariksha Pe Charcha Programme.



Key Points

- The programme was organised at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi, where school students of grades 9th to 12th, parents, and teachers had interaction with the Prime Minister.
- The program was organised by the Ministry of Education's Department of School Education and Literacy.
- **Note:** First edition of the Pariksha Pe Charcha was held on February 16, 2018.

Source: HT

CJI N V Ramana launches FASTER software to transmit court orders swiftly

Why in News

- Chief Justice of India N V Ramana launched **FASTER (Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records)** — a digital platform to communicate interim orders, stay orders, bail orders etc., of the Supreme Court to authorities concerned through a secured electronic communication channel.



Key Points

- The FASTER system is developed by the Registry in collaboration with the National Informatics Centre.
- To reach all districts of India through this system, so far 73 nodal officers have been nominated at various levels.
- All nodal officers have been connected through a specific Judicial Communication Network (JCN) by creating a secured pathway.

Note: The Supreme Court has also launched other programmes involving technology like Artificial Intelligence (AI) based portal 'SUPACE' in the judicial system aimed at assisting judges with legal research.

Source: Indian Express



State

Punjab-Haryana dispute over rivers waters and SYL Canal

Why in News

- The Haryana Vidhan Sabha has passed a resolution seeking completion of the **Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal**, bringing back into focus the contentious issue of sharing of river waters between Haryana and Punjab.



Key Points

The river waters:

- The canal, once completed, will enable sharing of the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas between the two states. The issue dates back to 1966 at the time of reorganisation of Punjab and formation of Haryana. Punjab was opposed to sharing the waters of the two rivers with Haryana, citing riparian principles.

The shares:

- A decade before the formation of Haryana, the water flowing down Ravi and Beas was assessed at 15.85 million acre feet (MAF) per year. The Union government had organised a meeting in 1955 between the three stakeholders — Rajasthan, undivided Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir — and allotted 8 MAF per year to Rajasthan, 7.20 MAF to undivided Punjab and 0.65 MAF to J&K.

The canal:

- On April 8, 1982, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launched the construction of the SYL Canal with a groundbreaking ceremony in Kapoori village in Patiala district. A stretch of 214 km was to be constructed, out of which 122 km was to cross Punjab and 92 km in Haryana. But the Akalis launched an agitation in the form of Kapoori Morcha against the construction of the canal. Then in July 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and then Akali Dal chief Sant Harchand Singh Longowal signed an accord agreeing for a new tribunal to assess the water.

Punjab's argument:

- As per a state government study, many areas in Punjab may go dry after 2029. The state has already over-exploited its groundwater for irrigation



purposes as it fills granaries of the Centre by growing wheat and paddy worth Rs 70,000 crore every year.

Haryana's claim:

- Haryana has been staking claim to the Ravi-Beas waters through the SYL Canal on the plea that providing water for irrigation was a tough task for the state. In southern parts, where underground water had depleted up to 1700 feet, there was a problem of drinking water.

Source: Indian Express

Punjab Assembly passes resolution seeking immediate transfer of Chandigarh to state

Why in News

- Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann moved a resolution in the assembly seeking immediate transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab.
- The longstanding dispute between Punjab and Haryana over Chandigarh flared up after the Centre notified Central Service Rules for employees in the Union Territory instead of the Punjab Service Rules.



Key Points

- After Partition, Shimla was made the temporary capital of Indian Punjab.
- The capital was officially moved from Shimla to Chandigarh on September 21, 1953.
- The Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966 carved out the new state of Haryana from undivided Punjab, created the new Union Territory of Chandigarh under the direct control of the Centre, and transferred the hill territories of Punjab to Himachal Pradesh.
- Chandigarh, identified as the capital of Punjab in The Capital of Punjab (Development and Regulation) Act, 1952, became the common capital of both Punjab and Haryana, and properties were divided between the states in the ratio 60:40.

Note:

- The concept of Union Territories was not in the original version of the Constitution but was added by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956.



- According to Article 3 of the Indian Constitution, the constitutional power to create new states and union territories in India is solely reserved to the Parliament of India.

Source: Indian Express

Polity

Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022

Why in News

- Recently, Lok Sabha passed **Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022.**



Key Points

- The Bill moved by External affairs Minister S. Jaishankar amends the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005.
- The 2005 Act prohibits unlawful activities (such as manufacturing, transport, or transfer) related to weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery.
- Weapons of Mass Destruction are biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons.
- The present Bill bars persons from financing any prohibited activity related to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- To prevent persons from financing such activities, the central government may freeze, seize or attach their funds, financial assets, or economic resources (whether owned, held, or controlled directly or indirectly).
- It may also prohibit persons from making finances or related services available for the benefit of other persons in relation to any activity which is prohibited.

Efforts to control the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction are enshrined in international agreements such as:

- Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of 1968
- Biological Weapons Convention of 1972
- Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993

Source: Indian Express



Economy

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

Why in News

- So far, India has signed 13 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with its trading partners, including the 3 agreements, namely India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA), India-UAE Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA) signed during the last five years.
- This information was given by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Smt. Anupriya Patel, in the Lok Sabha recently.



Key Points

- The economic impact assessment of FTAs undertaken both in terms of data analysis and stakeholder consultations from time to time, has revealed that there has been growth in both exports and imports with FTA partners.

The list of FTAs signed by India:

SN	Name of the Agreement
1	India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (FTA)
2	Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives and Afghanistan)
3	India-Nepal Treaty of Trade
4	India-Bhutan Agreement on Trade, Commerce and Transit
5	India-Thailand FTA - Early Harvest Scheme (EHS)



SN	Name of the Agreement
6	India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)
7	India-ASEAN CECA - Trade in Goods, Services and Investment Agreement (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam)
8	India-South Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)
9	India-Japan CEPA
10	India-Malaysia CECA
11	India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)
12	India-UAE CEPA
13	India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)

Source: PIB

HDFC to merge with HDFC Bank to create third most valuable company in the country

Why in News

- HDFC Limited will merge with HDFC Bank.
- The merger is set to make the company the third most valuable in the country.

Key Points

- HDFC will acquire a 41 percent stake in HDFC Bank through the transformational merger.
- HDFC Limited Chairman Deepak Parekh has described it as a merger of equals. He said mergers will enhance diversity of assets of the combined entity.



About HDFC Bank Limited:

- HDFC Bank Limited is an Indian banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai.
- It is India's largest private sector bank by assets and world's 10th largest bank by market capitalisation as of April 2021.
- **Founded:** August 1994, India

About HDFC Ltd:

- Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited is an Indian financial services company based in Mumbai.
- It is a major housing finance provider in India.
- **Founded:** 1977

Source: Business Standard

India's merchandise exports hit a record high \$418 billion in 2021-22

Why in News

- India's merchandise exports spurt to a record high of USD 418 billion in the 2021-22 fiscal on higher shipments of petroleum products, engineering goods, gems and jewellery and chemicals, according to official data released recently.



Key Points

- India's goods trade (exports and imports) crossed USD 1 trillion during 2021-22 as the country's imports too have touched an all-time high of USD 610 billion.
- Outbound shipments touched an all-time monthly high of USD 40.38 billion in March 2022. Exports stood at USD 35.26 billion in March 2021.
- India's merchandise exports had breached the targeted USD 400 billion mark on March 21 this year.
- Agriculture exports crossed USD 48 billion during April 2021-March 2022.
- **Note:** The top export destinations are the US, the UAE, Bangladesh, the Netherlands, Singapore, Hong Kong, the UK, Belgium and Germany.

Source: India Today



Defense

9th Edition of India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise culminated

Why in News

- The 9th Edition of the India – Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise which commenced on 25 Mar 2022 at Special Forces Training School, Bakloh (HP) culminated on 06 April 2022.



Key Points

- Over the past two weeks, Special Forces contingents from India and Kyrgyzstan shared their expertise and best practices of tactics, techniques and procedures to counter existing and emergent threats across the entire spectrum of conflict.
- Besides sharing special skills and techniques between participating Special Forces contingents, the joint training further strengthened the existing bond between India and Kyrgyzstan that has fostered over years of mutual respect for strategic autonomy, democratic values and zero tolerance for terrorism.

Facts about Kyrgyzstan:

- **Capital:** Bishkek
- **President:** Sadyr Japarov
- **Currency:** Kyrgyzstani som

Source: PIB

Science & Technology

ICMR-NIV scientists find presence of IgG antibodies against Nipah in 51 bat samples from southern India

Why in News

- Scientists at Pune's Indian Council of Medical Research – National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV) were able to detect the presence of IgG antibodies against **Nipah virus infection (NiV)**



in 51 bats that were captured from Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

Key Points

- Nipah virus (NiV) is one of the priority pathogens with a pandemic potential. Though the spread is far slower than SARS-CoV-2, case fatality is the biggest concern.
- The first human infection with NiV was identified during an outbreak of severe encephalitis in Malaysia in 1998–1999.
- Both animal-to-humans and human-to-human transmission has been documented during different outbreaks.
- More than 700 human cases of Nipah virus infections were reported from Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, Singapore and Philippines during 1998– 2018.

Antibody:

- Antibody, also called immunoglobulin, is a protective protein produced by the immune system in response to the presence of a foreign substance, called an antigen.
- A wide range of substances are regarded by the body as antigens, including disease-causing organisms and toxic materials.
- Antibodies recognize and attack onto antigens in order to remove them from the body.

Different Types of Antibodies:

- IgG, IgM, IgA, IgD, IgE

Source: Indian Express

Indian Antarctic Bill-2022

Why in News

- Nearly 40 years after India first signed the Antarctic Treaty, the government has brought in a draft **Indian Antarctic Bill-2022** to regulate and monitor activities at its research stations in the frozen continent.
- Earth Sciences Minister Dr Jitender Singh tabled the draft Bill in Lok Sabha.



Key Points

About Antarctica Bill:

- The draft bill is the first domestic legislation with regard to Antarctica in India.
- Twenty-seven countries already have domestic legislations on Antarctica. Many others, such as India, are now following suit.



- The Bill now puts into place a comprehensive list of regulations related to Antarctica, for such scientific expeditions, as well as for individuals, companies and tourists.
- The most significant part of the Bill is extending the jurisdiction of Indian courts to Antarctica, for crimes on the continent by Indian citizens, or foreign citizens who are a part of Indian expeditions.
- The Bill also provides for Indian tour operators to be able to operate in Antarctica after acquiring a permit.
- There are 40 permanent research stations in Antarctica of which two – Maitri and Bharati — are Indian.

About Antarctica Treaty:

- The Antarctic Treaty was signed in 1959 by 12 countries and came into force in 1961.
- The objectives of the treaty are to demilitarize Antarctica and establish it as a zone used for peaceful research activities and to set aside any disputes regarding territorial sovereignty, thereby ensuring international cooperation.
- Currently, 54 nations are signatories to the Antarctic Treaty, but only 29 nations have a right to vote at the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings – this includes India.
- India signed the Antarctic Treaty in 1983 and received consultative status the same year.

Source: Indian Express

Sports

Sports Minister launches new rare chemical Reference Materials to strengthen anti-doping testing

Why in News

- The National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) has indigenously developed six new and rare Reference Materials (RMs), which is the purest form of chemical required for anti-doping analysis in all WADA-accredited Laboratories across the world.
- The RMs were launched by the Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Singh Thakur during the 15th Governing Body Meeting of NDTL.



Key Points

- The six RMs have been developed in less than a year by NDTL in association with the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER)-Guwahati and the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), Jammu.
- These Reference Materials are not readily available across the world but are needed by every WADA-accredited laboratory for their anti-doping analysis.
- India itself has been importing RMs from Canada and Australia.

Source: newsonair

Australia wins 7th ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 title

Why in News

- **Australia** won the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 title after defeating England in the final by 71 runs at Hagley Oval in Christchurch, New Zealand.



Key Points

- This is the record for the seventh time Australia women have won the world cup.
- The 2022 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup was the twelfth edition of the Women's Cricket World Cup, which was held in New Zealand in March and April 2022.

Source: India Today

Awards & Honours

Ramdarash Mishra selected for Saraswati Samman 2021

Why in News

- Noted poet and litterateur **Prof Ramdarash Mishra** will be awarded the prestigious **Saraswati Samman 2021**, for his collection of poems 'Mein to Yahan Hun'.



Key Points

- Born in Dumri village in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur district on August 15, 1924, Mishra has excelled in different branches of Hindi literature.



About Saraswati Samman:

- The Saraswati Samman is an annual award for outstanding prose or poetry literary works in any of the 22 languages of India listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India.
- The Saraswati Samman was instituted in 1991 by the K. K. Birla Foundation. It consists of ₹15,00,000, a citation and a plaque.
- Candidates are selected from literary works published in the previous ten years by a panel that included scholars and former award winners.

Source: HT

Grammy Awards 2022

- The 64th Annual Grammy Awards were held at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada. This was the first time a Grammy Awards ceremony was held in Las Vegas, USA.
- Every year, the Grammys honour musical artistes, compositions and albums.
- They have been held every year since 1959.
- Jon Batiste emerged as the biggest winner, with 5 wins out of 11 nominations.
- **Indian-American singer Falguni Shah** has won the Grammy Award 2022 for the Best Children's Music Album for A Colourful World.
- **Indian music composer Ricky Kej** has made India proud again at the Grammy Awards stage. After bagging the prestigious music award in 2015 for his album 'Winds of Samsara', this year Kej lifted the coveted award along with Rock-legend Stewart Copeland (The Police) for the Best New Age Album 'Divine Tides'.



List of main winners of the 64th annual Grammy Awards:

- Album Of The Year: 'We Are' by Jon Batiste
- Record Of The Year: 'Leave the door open' by Bruno Mars and Anderson Paak
- Best New Artist: Olivia Rodrigo
- Best Rap Album: "Call Me If You Get Lost," Tyler, the Creator
- Best Country Album: "Starting Over," Chris Stapleton
- Song Of The Year: "Leave the Door Open," Silk Sonic (Brandon Anderson, Christopher Brody Brown, Dernst Emile II and Bruno Mars)



- Best Rock Album: "Medicine at Midnight," Foo Fighters
- Best Rock Song: "Waiting On a War," Foo Fighters
- Best Music Video: "Freedom," Jon Batiste
- Best Country Song: "Cold," Chris Stapleton
- Best Folk Album: "They're Calling Me Home," Rhiannon Giddens with Francesco Turrisi
- Best Music Film: "Summer of Soul"

Source: Indian Express

Appointments/Resignations

Vinay Mohan Kwatra, India's ambassador to Nepal, appointed new foreign secretary

Why in News

- Vinay Mohan Kwatra, the ambassador to Nepal, has been appointed the new foreign secretary of India.

Key Points

- Kwatra will succeed Harsh Vardhan Shringla, who will retire at the end of April.
- He has been serving as Ambassador of India to Nepal from March 2020.
- Vinay Mohan Kwatra, who has been in foreign service for over 32 years, has also served as Ambassador to France.

Source: HT



Hungary PM Viktor Orbán wins fourth term

Why in News

- Nationalist Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party had won a fourth term in office.

Key Points

- Viktor Orbán in November 2020 became the country's longest-serving Prime



Minister. In December 2021, he became the longest-serving incumbent head of government in the European Union.

- For the first time more than 200 international observers monitored the election in Hungary, an EU member, along with thousands of domestic volunteers from both camps.

Facts about Hungary:

- **Capital:** Budapest
- **Currency:** Hungarian forint

Source: TOI

Dr. S Raju takes over as DG, Geological Survey of India

Why in News

- **Dr. S Raju** has taken over as the Director General of **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** in Kolkata.



Key Points

- He succeeds R. S. Garkhal who superannuated on 31st March 2022.
- Prior to assuming the present post Dr. Raju was holding the post of Additional Director General and National Head, Mission-III & IV at GSI HQ.

About Geological Survey of India (GSI):

- It is a Government of India organization under the Ministry of Mines, one of the oldest of such organisations in the world and the second oldest survey in India after Survey of India.
- **Headquarters:** Kolkata, West Bengal
- **Founded:** 4 March 1851

Source: PIB

ITU's Standing Council Standing Committee appoints India's Aprajita Sharrma as Vice-Chairperson

Why in News

- India has secured a leadership position in Council Standing Committee on Administration and Management of **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** as an Indian official has been appointed as vice chairperson for the same.



Weekly Current Affairs

- The International Telecommunication Union at Council meetings held at Geneva from 21st March till 31st March, 2022, has announced the appointment of **Ms Aprajita Sharma**, an IP&TAF Service officer as the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Administration and Management.

Key Points

- She will remain as vice chairperson of Council Standing Committee for the years 2023 and 2024 and its chairperson for the years 2025 and 2026.

About International Telecommunication Union (ITU):

- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for all matters related to information and communication technologies.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Founded:** 17 May 1865
- **Head: Secretary-General;** Houlin Zhao

Source: ET

Books & Authors

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan releases a book “Birsa Munda – Janjatiya Nayak”

Why in News

- Union Education and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan released a book “Birsa Munda – Janjatiya Nayak” written by Prof. Alok Chakrawal, Vice Chancellor, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur.



Key Points

- This book is a comprehensive attempt to bring to the fore the struggle of Bhagwan Birsa Munda and the contribution of forest dwellers in the freedom movement.
- He appreciated Prof. Alok Chakrawal for making an effort to inscribe the story of the unsung heroes of freedom in the national memory on Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

Source: PIB

Sreeram Chaulia 's new book “Crunch Time: Narendra Modi’s National Security Crises”

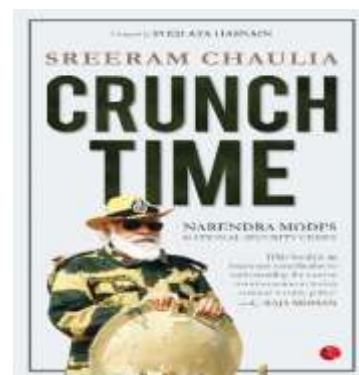


Why in News

- Dr Sreeram Chaulia has authored a new book titled "Crunch Time: Narendra Modi's National Security Crises".

Key Points

- The book was released by Meenakshi Lekhi, Minister of State for External Affairs at the India International Centre in New Delhi.
- Dr Sreeram Chaulia is the Dean of the Jindal School of International Affairs of OP Jindal Global University, Sonipat.
- The book highlights the much needed public faith in the state to protect the country from security threats posed by India's external adversaries.
- The book analyses Prime Minister Modi's series of decision-making moves during the crises with Pakistan and China.



Important Days

April 7, World Health Day

Why in News

- World Health Day is celebrated every year on 7 April to commemorate the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948.

Key Points

- The theme for World Health Day 2022 is 'Our Planet, Our Health'.

History:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) convened the first World Health Assembly in 1948, which called for the establishment of a "World Health Day."
- The first World Health Day was held on April 7, 1950, and it has been observed on that date every year thereafter.

Source: India Today



April 05, National Maritime Day

Why in News

- National Maritime Day is observed on April 5th every year.



Key Points

- The National Maritime Day was first celebrated on April 5, 1964.
- The legacy of Indian shipping first started on April 5th, 1919, when the first ship The SS Loyalty manufactured by The Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd. sailed from Mumbai to the United Kingdom.
- India also became a member of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in 1959.
- **Note: World Maritime Day** is observed every year on the last Thursday of the month of September.

Source: India Today

April 2, World Autism Awareness Day

Why in News

- World Autism Awareness Day is observed on April 2, every year.



Key Points

- The **theme** for World Autism Awareness Day 2022 is "Inclusive Quality Education for All".
- The objective of the day is to create awareness about Autism and also to encourage people to support those who are suffering from this disorder.

History:

- It was designated by the United Nations General Assembly resolution.
- World Autism Awareness Day, passed in council on 1 November 2007, and adopted on 18 December 2007.

About Autism:

- Autism is a neurodevelopment disorder characterized by deficits in social and language communication, as well as repetitive behaviors and restricted interests.

Note: As per the 2011 Census of India, there are 7,862,921 children with disability below the 19-year age group, among which 595,089 have an intellectual disability.

Source: newsonair



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