



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

MAY, 2024

Week-1

01-07 May, 2024

★★ Useful for ★★

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

1st MAY, 2024

Street Vendors Act

- **Context:** The Street Vendors Act, 2014, was a big step forward after almost 40 years of legal discussions and activism by street vendor groups throughout India.

Key Highlights:

- It aimed to safeguard and manage street vending in cities by setting up rules at the state level and implementing them through Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
- Accommodating all 'existing' vendors in vending zones and issuing vending certificates.
- Establishing a participatory governance structure through Town Vending Committees (TVCs), with 40% representation of street vendor representatives and 33% of women street vendors.
- Mechanisms for addressing grievances and disputes through a Grievance Redressal Committee.
- Setting a precedent for inclusive and participatory approaches to address street vending needs in cities.
- Street vendors, comprising about 2.5% of a city's population, serve diverse functions in city life. Local vegetable sellers and food vendors are essential providers of daily services.
- The vendors make city life affordable for others by providing vital links in the food, nutrition, and goods distribution chain at reasonable prices.
- They are integral part of Indian culture. For example, Mumbai without its vada pav or Chennai without its roadside dosai.

Project ISHAN

- **Context:** With the idea of One nation, one airspace, India has initiated Project ISHAN (Indian Single Sky Harmonized Air Traffic Management) at Nagpur.

Key Highlights:

- It is an integration initiative which seek to merge India's four Flight Information Regions (FIRs) in Delhi,

Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai into one airspace around Nagpur.

- This project aims to enhance the capacity of the aviation industry to handle the increasing domestic passenger numbers, which has been predicted to double by 2030.
- The aim behind the initiative is to reduce carbon footprint, enhance safety, and reduce aircraft fuel usage.
- A single flight information region (FIR) created as part of Project ISHAN would offer numerous advantages in terms of safety, efficiency, user satisfaction, reduced carbon footprint, and optimal manpower utilization.
- There are several challenges in implementation such as standardization of technology, revision of procedures, and formulation of new policies.
- For the better implementation of ISHAN initiative, there will be requirement of Uniform technology implementation across all regions, comprehensive retraining of air traffic control officers, policy reforms and updates to accommodate new processes and technologies.

The paradox of thrift

- **Context:** Keynesian economists argue that a rise in individuals' savings, by reducing the amount of money that is spent on final goods and services, can in effect cause a significant fall in overall savings and investment

Key Highlights:

- The concept was popularized by British economist John Maynard Keynes in his 1936 book The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money.
- The paradox of thrift, also known as the paradox of savings, refers to the theory that a rise in the savings rate of individuals can cause a fall in the overall savings in an economy.
- This is in contrast to the belief that a rise in individuals' savings rates will cause a rise in the overall savings in the economy.
- So even though savings may be good for an individual household, it is believed that it may not be good for the wider economy.

2nd MAY, 2024

Thrombosis Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS)

- **Context:** UK pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca has acknowledged the potential for its COVID-19 vaccine to cause a rare side effect known as Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS).

Key Highlights:

- The vaccine, which was utilized in India under the name Covishield, was developed by AstraZeneca in collaboration with Oxford University during the pandemic and was manufactured by the Serum Institute of India.
- Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) is a rare yet serious condition linked to certain COVID-19 vaccines, notably adenovirus vector vaccines.
- TTS is marked by the presence of blood clots (thrombosis) along with low levels of platelets (thrombocytopenia), crucial for blood clotting.
- It often involves unusual clot locations, such as in the brain (cerebral venous sinus thrombosis) or abdomen.
- Symptoms of TTS can include severe headaches, stomach pain, swelling in the legs, trouble breathing, and problems with thinking or seizures.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) reported in 2023 that TTS emerged as a new adverse event following immunization.
- Early recognition and treatment are crucial for managing TTS effectively.
- The development of a cohesive treatment plan tailored to the requirements and clinical trajectory of TTS patients requires interdisciplinary collaboration between cardiologists, haematologists, neurologists, and other allied health specialists.

Supersonic Missile-Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART) system

- **Context:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted a flight test of the SMART system from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island, situated off the coast of Odisha.

Key Highlights:

- The SMART (Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo) is a next-generation missile-based lightweight torpedo delivery system which can be launched from both coasts and warships.
- The system comprises a long-range supersonic missile carrier that can travel up to 643 km, a lightweight torpedo with a range of 20 km and a 50 kg high explosive warhead as the payload.
- It uses a two-stage solid propulsion system, electromechanical actuators, precision inertial navigation, and a datalink for mid-course updates and terminal homing of the torpedo.
- It will enhance the anti-submarine warfare capability of the Indian Navy beyond the conventional range.
- This system can help in countering China's presence in the Indian Ocean region and also enhances India's self-reliance in defense capabilities.

3RD MAY, 2024

Booker Prize

- **Context:** The Booker Prize, one of the most prestigious awards in the literary world, has recently come under fire for the historical links to slavery of its original sponsor, Booker Group.

Key Highlights:

- The Booker Prize, is a prestigious literary award conferred each year for the best single work of sustained fiction written in the English language, which was published in the United Kingdom and/or Ireland.

- The Booker Prize was founded in 1969, initially just for writers from the Commonwealth, but later opened to writers globally.
- **Past Indian recipients:** Arundhati Roy (God of Small Things), Kiran Desai (Inheritance of Loss), Aravind Adiga (White Tiger).
- The International Booker Prize is awarded for a work of fiction translated into English and published in the United Kingdom or Ireland. It was instituted in 2004.
- In 2022 Geetanjali Shree for her Hindi novel, Tomb of Sand received the prize.
- By encouraging insurance investment and accessibility, this initiative contributes to broader financial inclusion, empowering more people to safeguard their financial future.
- The policy incentivizes agents to promote and sell Bima Vistaar policies to wider distribution and adoption of insurance products particularly in rural and underserved communities.
- According to the Economic Survey 2022-23, India's life insurance density increased from USD 11.1 in 2001 to USD 91 in 2021.
- The Indian insurance market is poised to emerge as one of the fastest-growing globally in the coming decade. India is currently the 10th largest insurance market globally and is expected to rise to the 6th position by 2032.

Bima Vistaar

- **Context:** The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) has proposed Bima Vistaar. IRDAI is banking on the troika to help further its goal of 'Insurance for All' by 2047.

Key Highlights:

- Bima Vistaar is an ambitious all-in-one affordable mass product which aim to target the rural areas of the country.
- It is a comprehensive insurance product that combines life, health, accident, and property coverage. It is provided by both public and private insurance companies.
- The policy aims to address the essential insurance needs of India's rural population with a single, affordable product. It has been made accessible at Rs 1,500 per policy.
- The policy offers life cover for Rs 820, health cover for Rs 500, personal accident cover for Rs 100, and property cover for Rs 80. If taken as a family floater, it costs Rs 2,420, with an extra Rs 900 for additional family members.
- The policy facilitates the expansion of insurance coverage in rural areas of India, promoting financial security among underserved populations.
- With competitive pricing, the Bima Vistaar policy offers accessible insurance solutions to individuals and families and thus ensuring reliable coverage at reasonable costs.

4th MAY, 2024

World Press Freedom Index (2024)

- **Context:** Recently, the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) released its latest edition of World Press Freedom Index.

Key Highlights:

- It is published annually by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) that ranks 180 countries and regions according to the level of freedom available to journalists.
- It has been published every year since 2002.
- It provides a snapshot of the media freedom situation based on an evaluation of pluralism, independence of the media, quality of legislative framework, and safety of journalists in each country and region.
- The press freedom questionnaire covers five categories — political context, legal framework, economic context, socio-cultural context and security.
- India's ranking in the World Press Freedom Index has seen a decline over the years.
- In 2022, India was ranked 150th out of 180 countries.
- However, in 2023, India's ranking slipped further to 161st.

- In 2024, India's score in the World Press Freedom Index fell from 36.62 to 31.28, but its rank improved from 161 in 2023 to 159 in 2024. It was due to other countries slipping in their rankings.

GI Tag to Kutch Ajrakh

- **Context:** Ajrakh from Kutch gets GI tag by the Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trademarks (CGPDTM).

Key Highlights:

- The term "Ajrakh" is derived from the word 'Azrak,' which means indigo, a primary dye used in the printing process.
- Ajrakh is a traditional textile craft originating from Gujarat, particularly in areas like Sindh, Barmer, and Kutch.
- This art form involves intricate hand-block printing on specially treated cotton fabric, creating elaborate designs that are steeped in symbolism and historical significance.
- Introduced more than 400 years ago by Sind Muslims, Ajrakh is a popular attire among nomadic pastoralist and agricultural communities such as the Rabaris, Maldharis, and Ahirs.

Oxytocin: Amounts to 'Animal Cruelty'

- **Context:** Recently, the Delhi High Court has taken serious note of the continued use of the Oxytocin in dairies across the national capital which amounts to 'animal cruelty'.

Key Highlights:

- It is a hormone that is naturally secreted by the pituitary glands of mammals during sex, childbirth, lactation, or social bonding.
- It is being administered to cattle to force milk let-down and increase the production of milk.
- It is not only harmful to the health of the cattle but also to humans who consume the milk.
- The Union government had banned the use of Oxytocin in 2018, citing its misuse on milch cattle to increase yield.

- Despite the ban, the hormone continues to be used in dairies across Delhi.

5th MAY, 2024

7th India-Indonesia Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC)

- **Context:** Recently, the seventh India-Indonesia Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meeting was held in New Delhi. Both nations agreed to enhance collaboration in areas of defence industry, maritime security and multilateral cooperation.

Key Highlights:

- Both countries expressed satisfaction with the increasing scope of their defence cooperation between both the nations.
- The meeting focussed on increasing the defence collaboration between Indian and Indonesian Defence firms. There was active involvement of Indian defense industry partners such as Bharat Forge, Mahindra Defence, and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited.
- India and Indonesia emphasized cooperation in maritime security, considering their shared vision of the Indo-Pacific region.
- Both nations are actively involved in multilateral cooperation, featuring frequent high-level interactions. Indonesia's significant role in India's Act East Policy and the broader Indo-Pacific region was also highlighted.
- The collaboration aims to enhance domestic production, boost military capabilities, and strengthen ties between India and Indonesia. This joint effort addresses common security challenges and fosters strategic partnerships between the two nations.

Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)

- **Context:** Recently, Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, expressed to invest billions of dollars towards the development of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI).

Key Highlights:

- It is a concept that represents a futuristic vision where machines possess cognitive abilities at par with humans, capable of reasoning, problem-solving, perception, learning, and language comprehension.
- It is defined as AI that is at least as good as humans at nearly all of the cognitive things that humans do.
- It is often confused with generative AI, which includes AI systems that generate new documents, images, and sounds. However, AGI is a more nebulous and profound concept.
- While AI has made significant strides in recent years, no AI tool to date has passed the Turing test (a benchmark proposed by 20th-century computer scientist Alan Turing).
- It measures an AI's ability to exhibit intelligent behaviour equivalent to, or indistinguishable from, that of a human.
- The current state-of-the-art AI technologies, including ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others, are essentially prediction machines. They can predict, with a high degree of accuracy, the answer to a specific prompt because they've been trained on vast amounts of data.
- However, they lack the human level of performance in terms of creativity, logical reasoning, sensory perception, and other capabilities.
- The timeline for the realisation of AGI is uncertain.
- Some researchers believe that we are decades away from realising AGI, and a few even predict that we won't see AGI this century.
- When AGI does arrive, it's going to be a significant milestone for every aspect of our lives, businesses, and societies.

6th MAY, 2024

Opposing Forces (OPFOR) Unit

- **Context:** The Indian Army is reportedly in the process of establishing a new unit called Opposing Forces (OPFOR) aimed at simulating adversarial roles during military exercises and wargame training.

Key Highlights:

- It is a military unit tasked with representing an enemy, usually for training purposes in war game scenarios.
- The concept of OPFOR is not new and is already in use in countries like the United States.
- The proposed OPFOR unit will be formed from existing military units and will mirror the weapons, operating methods, and tactics of potential adversaries.
- It aims to provide regular troops with scenarios closely resembling actual wartime conditions.
- Traditionally, military exercises divide participating troops into 'blue land' and 'red/yellow land' with the latter representing adversarial forces.
- The introduction of OPFOR is expected to democratise this training, allowing all participating troops to gain firsthand experience during on-ground exercises.

Sustainable Development Goals progress

- **Context:** The United Nations summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was held in New York recently. It assessed progress towards achieving the 17 SDGs and 169 specific targets set by the agenda-2030, adopted in 2015.

Key Highlights:

- SDGs stand for Sustainable Development Goals. They are a set of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.
- These goals cover a wide range of social, economic, and environmental issues, aiming to address the world's most pressing challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice.
- The SDG programme is internationally non-binding. However, all countries have committed to work towards these goals.
- Reports indicate that progress has been slow and off track. While there were some improvements between 2015 and 2019, they were largely inadequate to meet the goals.

- The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global crises have significantly impeded progress.
- Not enough focus has been attached to goals about the environment and protecting biodiversity. This slow progress is worrying because it goes against the idea that all the SDGs are connected and cannot be separated. It also puts the environment at risk of getting worse in a faster manner.
- **The UN SDG Report 2023 identified five key areas for urgent action: –**
 - Commitment of governments to seven years of accelerated, sustained, and transformative actions to deliver on SDG promises.
 - Concrete, integrated, and targeted policies and actions to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, and end the war on nature, with a focus on advancing women's and girls' rights and empowering the vulnerable.
 - Strengthening national and subnational capacity, accountability, and public institutions to deliver accelerated progress.
 - Recommitment of the international community to deliver and mobilize resources to assist developing nations.
 - Continued strengthening of the UN development system.
- It exhibits semiconductor properties when fabricated into this single-atom-thick layer. Typically, gold is known for its excellent conductivity, but it behaves differently in its goldene form.
- These sheets of goldene are roughly 100 nanometres thick (a nanometre is a billionth of a metre), approximately 400 times thinner than the thinnest commercially available gold leaf.
- Goldene has been created by first placing a single layer of silicon between titanium carbide layers.
- Then gold is added which diffused into the structure and replaced the silicon, forming a monolayer of gold.
- This was done with the help of an age-old Japanese technique using chemical popularly known as Murakami's reagent. This chemical is also used to forge katanas and high-quality knives.
- Goldene ultra-thin and lightweight properties could significantly reduce the amount of gold needed in electronics.
- As a catalyst, goldene offers economic benefits over traditional three-dimensional gold due to its efficiency and reduced material usage. This could be useful in various chemical processes.
- The technique developed to create goldene could also be adapted to produce two-dimensional sheets of other precious metals like iridium and platinum, expanding the range of applications.
- Goldene has a unique structure where each atom connects to six others, not twelve. This could lead to specific uses in turning carbon dioxide into other materials, producing hydrogen, and purifying water.

7th MAY, 2024

GOLDENE

- **Context:** For the first time, scientists have successfully developed a free-standing, single-atom-thick sheet of gold. This marks the first instance of a metal being transformed into a 2D sheet. This breakthrough paves the way for numerous exciting opportunities in the future.

Key Highlights:

- Goldene is a 2-dimensional allotrope of gold, which means it consists of a single layer of gold atoms arranged in a two-dimensional structure.

Boeing Starliner

- **Context:** Indian-origin astronaut Captain Sunita Williams and her colleague are set to embark on a mission to the International Space Station (ISS) Boeing Starliner spacecraft.

Key Highlights:

- Starliner is a spacecraft that transports astronauts in space, after being launched there by a rocket.

- It consists of a crew capsule and a service module.
- The crew capsule houses the astronauts and will be able to survive reentry and return to the ground.
- The service module consists of the equipment and systems the astronauts need to survive in space, including air and temperature control, water supply, sanitation, etc.
- It also consists of engines and fuel required to maneuver the spacecraft. The service module won't be reusable.
- The appointment, made by the Appointment Committee of the Cabinet based on the recommendation of the Search-cum-Selection Committee, comes with a salary of 2.50 lakh per month for a tenure of four years.

Whitley Gold Award 2024

- **Context:** Purnima Devi Barman Gets the 'Green Oscar' Whitley Gold Award 2024.

Key Highlights:

- **Sanjaya Kumar Mishra**
 - **Context:** Sanjaya Kumar Mishra to head GST Appellate Tribunal.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - Retired Justice Sanjaya Kumar Mishra has been appointed as the President of the Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) by the Centre.
 - The move aims to streamline the resolution of disputes concerning businesses efficiently.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - Dr. Purnima Devi Barman, a wildlife biologist from Assam, has been recognized with the prestigious Whitley Gold Award for her exemplary conservation efforts aimed at protecting the endangered Greater Adjutant Stork and its wetland habitat.
 - This accolade, often referred to as the 'Green Oscar', highlights her remarkable contributions to wildlife conservation and underscores the importance of grassroots efforts in safeguarding biodiversity.

