



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FEBRUARY, 2022

Week-2

8-14 Feb, 2022

★★ Useful for ★★

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

8th FEBRUARY 2022

New map for Jammu and Kashmir

- The Delimitation Panel proposed significant changes to the political map of J&K.
- The Commission has proposed to raise the number of Assembly constituencies to 90, with 24 additional seats being reserved for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Thus, Jammu and Kashmir will have a total of 114 seats in the Legislative Assembly.
- Out of these 90, 43 seats will be from the Jammu division (up from 37 seats), while 47 seats will be from Kashmir (up from 46 seats earlier).
- The 6 new seats in Jammu are proposed in the districts of Kathua, Samba, Rajouri, Reasi, Doda and Kishtwar. One new seat will also be added in the Kupwara district of Kashmir Valley.

About Delimitation Commission

- The Commission consists of a Retired Judge of the Supreme Court (Justice Ranjana Desai), Chief Election Commissioner (Sushil Chandra) and J&K Election Commissioner KK Sharma.
- The five Lok Sabha MPs from the State are associate members of the Commission. At present, three of them belong to the National Conference, while two are from the BJP.
- This is the fifth Commission formed since independence. It will be using the census data of 2011 for the delimitation exercise.
- It is to be noted that Parliament has frozen the delimitation process till 2026, as per the 84th amendment to the Constitution of India.

Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)

- **Context:** The Union government is committed to mobilising small farmers into farmer producer organisations (FPOs) and making them significant market forces in the coming years.

About Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs)

- Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) is a generic name, which refers to the farmer producers organization incorporated/ registered either under Part IXA of Companies Act or under Co-operative Societies Act of the concerned States.
- It is formed for the purpose of leveraging collectives through economies of scale in the production and marketing of the agricultural and allied sectors.
- The concept behind Farmer Producer Organizations is that farmers, who are the producers of agricultural products, can form groups.
- To facilitate this process, the Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) was mandated by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India, to support the State Governments in the formation of the Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

Artificial Neural Networks

- Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) are a significant advancement in Artificial Intelligence and Deep Learning.

Key Points

- Neural networks are a set of algorithms, modelled loosely after the human brain, that is designed to recognize patterns.
- An ANN is based on a collection of connected units or nodes called artificial neurons, which loosely model the neurons in a biological brain.
- Each connection, like the synapses in a biological brain, can transmit a signal to other neurons.
- An artificial neuron receives a signal then processes it and can signal neurons connected to it. The "signal" at a connection is a real number, and the output of each neuron is computed by some non-linear function of the sum of its inputs. The connections are called edges.

- Feedback or difference between the intended output and the input is computed at each layer and this difference is used to tune the parameters to each program. This method is called backpropagation and it is an essential component of the Neural Network.

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Green Bonds

- The government proposes to issue sovereign green bonds to mobilize resources for green infrastructure.
- The issuance of sovereign green bonds is part of the government's overall borrowing programme. These rupee-denominated papers will have a long tenure to suit the requirement of green infrastructure projects.

About Green Bond:

- Green Bond is a type of fixed-income instrument that is specifically earmarked to raise money for climate and environmental projects.
- The first green bond was issued in 2007 by the European Investment Bank, the EU's lending arm. This was followed a year later by the World Bank. Since then, many governments and corporations have entered the market to finance green projects.
- These bonds are typically asset-linked and backed by the issuing entity's balance sheet, so they usually carry the same credit rating as their issuers' other debt obligations.
- They are designated bonds intended to encourage sustainability and to support climate-related or other types of special environmental projects.

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

- **Context:** The Prime Minister of India kickstarted the 50th Anniversary celebrations of ICRISAT.

Key Points:

- ICRISAT is a non-profit, non-political organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world.
- ICRISAT is headquartered in Hyderabad, Telangana, India, with two regional hubs and six country offices in sub-Saharan Africa.
- It is a member of the CGIAR Consortium. CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future.
- It helps farmers by providing improved crop varieties and hybrids and also helps smallholder farmers in the drylands fight climate change.
- ICRISAT and its partners help empower these poor people to overcome poverty, hunger and a degraded environment through better agriculture.

Operation AAHT to Curb Human Trafficking

- Recently, Railway Protection Force has launched a nationwide operation named "Operation AAHT" to curb human trafficking.
- As part of "Operation AAHT, the RPF could act as a bridge cutting across States to assist the local police in the mission to curb the menace.

Key Points:

- Under this, special teams will be deployed on all long-distance trains/routes with a focus on rescuing victims, particularly women and children, from the clutches of traffickers.
- The infrastructure and intelligence network of the RPF could be utilized to collect, collate and analyze clues on victims, source, route, destination, popular trains used by suspects, the identity of carriers/agents, kingpins etc and shared with other law-enforcing agencies.
- The focus should be more on trains originating from districts bordering Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

NOTE:

As enshrined in the Indian Constitution

- **Article 23 (1)** it prohibits the trafficking of persons.
- **Article 24 (Right Against Exploitation)** of the Constitution of India.

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Kerala Lokayukta Act

- **Context:** Kerala governor signed the ordinance to amend the Kerala Lokayukta Act, 1999 aimed at curtailing powers of the anti-corruption body.

Key points:

- According to the Ordinance, a competent body will have the power either to accept or reject the verdict of Lokayukta after giving an opportunity to hear the parties concerned.
- Under Section 14 of the Kerala Lokayukta Act, a public servant is required to vacate office immediately if indicted by Lokayukta.
- However, the new amendment takes away Section 14 and now Lokayukta has only recommendatory authority, not mandatory jurisdiction.

About Ordinance:

- The ordinance making power is the most important legislative power of the President and the Governor. It has been vested in them to deal with unforeseen or urgent situations.
- Article 123 of the Constitution grants the President certain law-making powers to promulgate ordinances during the recess of Parliament.
- These ordinances have the same force and effect as an Act of Parliament but are in the nature of temporary laws.
- Likewise, the Governor of a state can issue ordinances under Article 213 of the Constitution, when the state legislative assembly (or either of the two Houses in states with bicameral legislatures) is not in session.

- The Constitution permits the central and state governments to make laws when Parliament (or the

CPEC Agreement

- **Context:** China and Pakistan have signed a new agreement on industrial cooperation as part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) plan.
- The agreement for the Second Phase has been signed between China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and Pakistan's Board of Investment.

Key Points:

- China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), & traverses through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- BRI was launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, and is aimed at enhancing China's influence around the world through China-funded infrastructure projects. It connects China to Central Asia, Europe and Africa through alternate routes. It consists of two complementary connectivity projects:
- **Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB):** This is an overland route connecting China to Europe, through land-locked Central Asia.
- **Maritime Silk Route (MSR):** It is a marine route starting from China and passing through Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, finally ending in Europe.

SIDBI's Survey on MSMEs

- Two-thirds of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (67 per cent) in India were temporarily shut for three months or more in FY2021 according to a survey of 1,029 enterprises by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

Major Findings

- Of 66 per cent of respondents in the survey reported a decline in profitability on account of stable fixed

costs and a decline in revenue during the FY2021 fiscal. over half of all MSMEs saw a decline of over 25 per cent in revenues

- About 65 per cent of the MSMEs surveyed, availed credit under the government’s Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) which provided banks and financial institutions a 100 percent guarantee against any losses suffered by them due to non-repayment of the ECLGS loans by borrowers.
- At the end of 2021, the government had issued guarantees on loans of Rs 2.88 lakh crore under the ECLGS.
- About 36 per cent of MSMEs surveyed had also availed loans under the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises scheme during FY2021.

About MSMEs:

- According to the recently proposed definition, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) will be classified as:

Micro
Investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment: Not more than Rs.1 crore and Annual Turnover; not more than Rs. 5 crore
Small
Investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment: Not more than Rs.10 crore and Annual Turnover; not more than Rs. 50 crore
Medium
Investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment: Not more than Rs.50 crore and Annual Turnover; not more than Rs. 250 crore

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Nai Roshni Scheme

- The Government has implemented various schemes for the welfare and upliftment of every section of the society including minorities especially the economically weaker & lesser privileged sections of the society.

About Scheme:

- The scheme was introduced by the Ministry of Minority Affairs in the year 2012.
- Its aim is to empower and instil confidence in women by providing knowledge, tools and techniques for interacting with Government systems, banks and other institutions at all levels. To embolden the minority women to move out of the confines of their homes and community and assume leadership roles in society.
- The scheme provides for a six days training programme followed by handholding for a period of one year.
- The Scheme is being implemented through Non-Governmental Organizations empanelled under the NaiRoshni Scheme.

Media Accreditation Guidelines- 2022

- The Central government released the Central Media Accreditation Guidelines-2022 on journalists, introducing an entire section about reasons that can result in the suspension of the accreditation.
- The new policy, prepared by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) and issued by the Press Information Bureau, lays down guidelines on how PIB accreditation will be granted to eligible journalists.
- At the moment there are 2,457 PIB-accredited journalists in the country.

Key Provisions:

- If a journalist “acts in a manner which is prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement of an offence”, her accreditation can be cancelled.
- As per the guidelines, the Government of India shall constitute a Committee called the Central Media Accreditation Committee, chaired by the Principal DG, PIB and comprising up to 25 members nominated by the Government to discharge the functions laid down under these guidelines.

- Accreditation allows journalists to access government offices in Delhi and is needed for entry to certain events in which the President or the Prime Minister are present.
- The general terms of accreditation would imply apply in the case of digital news publishers.
- Journalists working with newspapers, weekly or fortnightly magazines, news agencies, foreign publications, TV channels or agencies, and Indian TV news channels are also eligible for accreditation, based on the size of each platform. Freelancers with over 15 years of experience, and veteran journalists with over 30 years of experience, over 65 years old, with a publicly acclaimed distinguished career are also eligible.

Statue of Equality

- PM Modi recently unveiled the Statue of Equality at Muchintal near Hyderabad in Telangana, which has been constructed to honour the philosopher-saint Ramanujacharya and his teachings.
- Statue of Equality is one of the tallest metallic statues in the world of any person in a sitting position. It is 216 feet in height. It has been conceptualized by Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swami of Sri Ramanujacharya Ashram.
- It is built on a 54 feet high base building named 'Bhadra Vedi'. This building has a Vedic digital library, a research centre, a theatre, ancient Indian texts and an educational gallery featuring teachings of Sri Ramanujacharya.
- The Statue is made of Panchaloha - a combination of 5 metals viz. Gold, Silver, Copper, Zinc and Brass.

About Ramanujacharya

- Sri Ramanuja was an 11th-century Vaishnavite saint. State of Equality is a part of ongoing twelve days celebrations to mark the 1000th birth anniversary of Sri Ramanuja, referred to as 'Sri Ramajuna Sahasrabdi Samaroham'. He was born in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu.

- Sri Ramanuja was initiated by Vidyavrata Sanskara rituals at the age of eight. He later studied in Advaita Vedanta school under the guidance of his guru, Yadav Prakash.
- His philosophy of Vishishtadvaita is considered one of the most prominent schools of Indian philosophy, along with Shankara's Advaita and Madhava's Dvaita.
- Sri Ramanuja was a social reformer and worked for the upliftment of the downtrodden. He built upon his philosophy of Vishishtadvaita to show that everyone is equal and all differences based on gender, caste etc. should be discarded.
- Sri Ramanuja laid emphasis on using bhakti as a means of spiritual enlightenment. If we devote ourselves to Bhakti, we would be one with the supreme reality (god) and attain final bliss.
- Sri Ramanuja wrote influential texts like Bhasyas on the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita, in Sanskrit. His nine popular books are called Navaratna and include three Bhasyas (commentaries), three Gadyas (Prose texts) and three Vedanta texts.

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Haryana Prevention of Unlawful Conversion of Religious Bill, 2022

- The Haryana cabinet approved the draft Haryana Prevention of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2022.

Major Highlights:

- It prohibits religious conversions which are affected through misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurements or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or for marriage by making it an offence.
- It provides for greater punishment for such conversions in respect of minors, women, Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
- It also provides that the burden of proof as to whether a conversion was not affected through misrepresentation, use of force, under threat, undue

influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or for marriage for the purpose of carrying out conversion lies on the accused.

- The proposed Bill will also have a provision for declaring null and void any marriage that is found to have been solemnized by concealment of religion.

Parvatmala Project

- Recently, the Union Finance Minister announced National Ropeways Development Programme – “Parvatmala” while presenting Union Budget for 2022-23.
- The Parvat Mala approach is driven by seven engines like roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways and logistics infrastructure.
- It will be taken up on PPP mode.
- It will be a preferred ecologically sustainable alternative in place of conventional roads in difficult hilly areas.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH) will have responsibility for the development of ropeway and alternative mobility solutions technology, as well as construction, research, and policy in this area.

Sowa Rigpa

- **Context:** Registered practitioners of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Sowa-Rigpa are now authorized to issue medical fitness certificates.

About Sowa -Rigpa

- It is commonly known as the Amchi system of medicine is one of the oldest, living and well documented medical traditions of the world.
- It has been a popular practice in Tibet, Magnolia, Bhutan, some parts of China, Nepal, Himalayan regions of India and a few parts of the former Soviet Union etc.
- In India, this system has been practised in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling (West Bengal), Lahoul & Spiti (Himachal Pradesh) and Ladakh region of Jammu & Kashmir etc.

- The majority of theory and practice of Sowa-Rigpa is similar to “Ayurveda”.
- Yuthog Yonten Gonpo from Tibet is believed to be the father of Sowa Rigpa.
- Theory of Sowa-Rigpa:
- The basic theory of Sowa-Rigpa may be adumbrated in terms of the following five points:
 - The body in disease as the locus of treatment
 - Antidote, i.e., the treatment
 - The method of treatment through antidote
 - Medicine that cures the disease
 - Materia Medica, Pharmacy & Pharmacology

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‘Accelerate Vigyan’ Scheme

- Recently, the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) invited applications for the ‘Accelerate Vigyan’ scheme for the summer season.
- The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) is a statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) established through an Act of Parliament. Supporting basic research in emerging areas of Science & Engineering is the primary and distinctive mandate of the Board.

About ‘Accelerate Vigyan’ scheme

- “Accelerate Vigyan” (AV) strives to provide a big push to high-end scientific research and prepare scientific manpower which can venture into research careers and a knowledge-based economy.
- It will work on mission mode and an Inter-Ministerial Overseeing Committee (IMOC) among all the scientific ministries/departments as well as a few others, constituted for the purpose will help and support SERB in implementing the scheme as a successful embodiment.
- It will initiate and strengthen mechanisms of identifying research potential, mentoring, training and hands-on workshops, on a broad-based national scale.

- It aims to expand the research base in the country, with three broad goals - consolidation/aggregation of all scientific training programs, initiating High-end Orientation Workshops and creating opportunities for Research Internships for those who do not have access to such resources/facilities

SAMRIDH Initiative

- The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced a new partnership under the SAMRIDH initiative.
- In 2020, USAID, IPE Global, and stakeholders from the Indian government, academia, and the private sector developed the innovative SAMRIDH blended finance facility.

Objectives:

- To improve access to affordable and quality healthcare for vulnerable populations in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, and rural and tribal regions.
- To mobilize a capital pool of \$100+ million from the private sector and bilateral organizations across the healthcare landscape.
- Tackle Pandemic, and its continued threat to the healthcare system.
- Bridge supply-side gaps in healthcare facilities.

About Blended Finance:

- It is an approach towards financing where catalytic funding (e.g., grants and concessional capital) from public and philanthropic sources is utilized to mobilize additional private sector investment to realize social goals and outcomes.

Atal Tunnel: Longest Highway Tunnel

- **Context:** Atal Tunnel has officially been certified by the World Book of Records as the 'World's Longest Highway Tunnel above 10,000 Feet'.
- World Book of Records, UK, is an organisation that catalogues and verifies extraordinary records across the world with authentic certification.

About Atal Tunnel

- Atal Tunnel is the longest highway single-tube tunnel above 10,000 feet (3,048 m) in the world and is named after former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- It is a 9.02 km long, strategically significant Tunnel that runs under the 'Rohtang Pass' that was constructed on the Manali - Leh Highway.
- Constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- It cuts through a mountain west of the Rohtang pass and shortens the distance between Solang Valley and Sissu by around 46 km.

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Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI)

4.0

- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare has launched the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 4.0.
- The IMI 4.0 will have three rounds and will be conducted in 416 districts (including 75 districts identified for Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav) across 33 States and UTs.

Key Points:

- In the first round (Feb-April 2022), 11 states will conduct IMI 4.0. These are Assam, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura and Chhattisgarh.
- The others (22 states) will conduct the rounds from April to May 2022. These states/UTs include Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, Puducherry, Delhi, Punjab, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Telangana, Jharkhand, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, A & N Islands.
- Three rounds of IMI 4.0 have been planned to catch up on the gaps that might have emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic

About Mission Indradhanush

- Mission Indradhanush was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) on 25th December 2014 with the aim of achieving full immunization coverage for all children and pregnant women.
- The Ministry of Health is being technically supported by WHO, UNICEF, Rotary International and other donor partners.
- Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI): has been launched by the Government to reach each and every child under two years of age and all those pregnant women who have been uncovered under the routine immunisation programme.

Monetary Policy Review of RBI

- **Context:** Recently, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI based on an assessment of the current macroeconomic situation kept key policy rates, including repo and reverse repo rates unchanged.

Major Highlights

- **No change in Repo rate:** The central bank has retained the repo rate at 4 per cent to boost growth. This means banks won't hike lending and deposit rates and EMLs on loans will remain unchanged.
- **Reverse repo rate unchanged:** The RBI has retained the reverse repo rate at 3.35 per cent.
- **Marginal Standing Facility (MSF):** It also retained the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and kept the Bank Rate unchanged at 4.25 per cent.
- **Inflation to moderate:** The RBI has projected a 5.3 per cent consumer price (retail) inflation for the current financial year 2021-22 (FY22) despite rising crude oil prices.
- The central bank has projected the real GDP growth at 7.8 per cent for the next financial year (2022-23) while real GDP growth at 9.2 per cent for 2021-22 takes it modestly above the level of GDP in 2019-20.

About Monetary Policy Committee (MPC):

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) was constituted by the Central Government under Section 45ZB of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934.
- It determines the policy interest rate required to achieve the inflation target.
- Chaired by the Governor of RBI. MPC conducts meetings at least 4 times a year.

Chintamani Padya Natakam

- **Context:** Recently, the Andhra Pradesh government banned a 100-year-old play named 'Chintamani Padya Natakam'.

Key points:

- 'Chintamani Padya Natakam' was written in 1920 by playwright Kallakuri Narayana Rao, who was also a social reformer.
- The play is about Chintamani, a courtesan and a devotee of Lord Krishna, who finds salvation by singing bhajans.
- She is courted by Subbi Shetty, a businessman from the Arya Vysya community, who loses his wealth and family due to his attraction to Chintamani.
- The original play had a social message, but over the years, it has been modified purely for entertainment.
- The play is exhibited across the state, mainly in rural areas, during festivals and fairs.

Arya Vaishya or Arya Vysya:

- It is a Telugu-speaking Indian caste. Orthodox Komatis follow rituals prescribed in the Vasavi Puranam, a religious text written in late medieval times. Vasavi (Kanyakamba) is the kuladevi of the Komatis.
- The Komatis are divided into two sub-sects, the Gavara Komatis and the Kalinga Komatis.