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Daily News Discussion (DND)

5th - 6th August 2021

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Note -

- The Newspaper clippings pasted in PDF are important from Mains point of view as it contains the fodder material for Mains Answer Writing.
- Also watch DND video lectures everyday @ 4 PM on Sleepy's YouTube channel in order to understand how to get the most out of everyday's Newspaper.

Click [here](#) to watch the following topics on YouTube

1. Environment

1.1. Carbon border agreements (CBA)- DTE

- June 2021 marked a historic month, as the first dedicated climate law was signed into action by the European Parliament.
 - ✓ Historically, countries have introduced various measures that dis-incentivise carbon emissions: **Carbon taxes / cess, emissions trading systems and most recently, carbon border agreements (CBA).**
- **Carbon Border Arrangements (CBA) or Carbon border tax or carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM)**
 - ✓ Companies abroad that wanted to sell cement, iron, steel, aluminum, fertilizer or electricity to the EU would also be required to pay that price for each ton of carbon dioxide they emit in making their products.
 - ✓ The idea would be to level the carbon playing field.
 - ✓ The border tax would **not take effect until 2026**

Challenges

- Europe's industries may have to **make drastic and costly changes.**
- Steel producers like ArcelorMittal are experimenting with ways to use **hydrogen** instead of fossil fuels in their furnaces, though they warn that such upgrades could **cost tens of billions of dollars.**
- The countries that would potentially be **most affected include Russia, Turkey, China, Britain and Ukraine**, which collectively export large amounts of fertilizer, iron, steel and aluminum to the European Union
- Countries may also try to mount challenges to the border adjustment at the **World Trade Organization**
- If a **single country tries to impose policies** to cut emissions domestically, it runs the risk that, for instance, its steel and cement factories will face higher costs and be at a **disadvantage to foreign competitors** with looser environmental rules.
- If **steel and cement production shifts overseas** as a result, that would undercut the climate policy, since those foreign factories would be emitting just as much or more carbon dioxide elsewhere

Benefits

- One benefit of this is that it places **low-emission industries in the European Union** at an advantage when compared to the contrary, mostly from developing nations, which might also be cheaper.
- It **incentivises domestic industry** (in the EU), to lower their emissions, and consequently, fill in the gaps that the reduced imports will create.
- Help to achieve EU's overall greenhouse gas emissions **55% below 1990 levels by 2030.**

Way forward

- There are two ways of decreasing emission
 - ✓ Offering subsidies to low-emission businesses
 - ✓ Incentivising manufacturers enough to make the switch themselves.

Green public procurement (GPP)

- is a tool through which governments can capitalise on their purchasing power to choose goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact.
- The device, thus, makes an important contribution towards domestic and global sustainability goals.
- GPP is the systematic integration of norms that require the manufacturing sector to cut down emissions and adhere to green standards in production processes.
- It includes **public purchase of products and services**, which are less environmentally damaging when taking into account their whole life cycle.
- It is **increasingly used by countries** to achieve policy objectives in the area of environmental protection.
- Public procurement in **our country accounts for 20-25 per cent** of our gross domestic product, making it a space that witnesses a high interface between the public and private sectors.

1.2. Anaimalai flying frog (TH)

- Naturalist, frog enthusiast and Kerala Tourism guide Hadlee Renjith, who leads herping tours in Munnar, constructed two ponds at Windermere Estate to restore the habitat for the Anaimalai flying frog

Anaimalai flying frog

- Also known as the False Malabar Gliding Frog
- IUCN Status- Critically endangered
- Endemic to the southern part of the **Western Ghats**, the numbers of these frogs have declined rapidly due to the loss of habitat.
- **Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)**, which took it up as its first rapid action project for amphibian conservation and offered to fund it.

2. Science & Technology

2.1. New method of producing hydrogen from water

- Indian researchers have come up with an innovative hydrogen manufacture route which increases its production three times and lowers the energy required that could pave the path towards environment-friendly hydrogen fuel at a lower cost.

Current issues

- Due to the **extremely low abundance of molecular hydrogen** in the earth's atmosphere (350 ppbv), electric-field driven breakdown of water is an attractive route for production of hydrogen.
- However, such **electrolysis requires high energy input** and is associated with slow rate of hydrogen production.
- The use of **expensive platinum- and iridium-based catalysts** also discourages it for wide-spread commercialization.
- Therefore, the transition to 'green-hydrogen-economy' **demands approaches that lower the energy cost and material cost** and simultaneously improve the hydrogen production rate.

New Method

- A team of researchers from **IIT Bombay** have come up with an innovative route that provides viable solutions to all these challenges
- It involves **electrolysis of water in the presence of an external magnetic field**.
- In this method, the same system that **produces 1 ml of hydrogen gas required 19% lower energy to produce 3 ml of hydrogen** in the same time.
- This is achieved by synergistically coupling the electric and magnetic fields at the catalytic site.
- The electrocatalytic material -- **cobalt-oxide nanocubes** that are dispersed over hard- carbon based nanostructured carbon florets, is of prime importance to achieve this effect
- The interface between the carbon and cobalt oxide is key to magneto-electrocatalysis.
- It is advantageous as it forms a system that does not require the constant presence of the external magnetic field and is able to sustain the magnetisation for prolonged time periods

2.2. INS Vikrant

- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Vikrant, the country's **first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC-1)**, sailed out on Wednesday from Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) for her maiden sea trials

About

- Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 'Vikrant' designed by Indian Navy's Directorate of Naval Design(DND) is being built at Cochin Shipyard Limited(CSL), a Public Sector Shipyard under **Ministry of Shipping(MoS)**
- It is **262 m long, 62 m at the widest part and height of 59 m**
- Vikrant' has a top speed of **around 28 knots**



- It has Over 76% indigenous content
- It equipped with numerous **high-end technologies**, including network-centric distributed data processing and control systems and state-of-the-art weapons such as the Barak LR-SAM (long-range surface to air missile) and sensors.

Significance

- Shining example in the Nation's quest for '**Atma Nirbhar Bharat**' and 'Make in India Initiative'.
- The **INS Vikramaditya**, currently the Navy's only aircraft carrier that was commissioned in 2013, started out as the Soviet-Russian Admiral Gorshkov.
- The country's two earlier carriers, **INS Vikrant** and **INS Viraat** were originally the British-built HMS Hercules and HMS Hermes before being commissioned into the Navy in 1961 and 1987 respectively.
- **Only five or six nations currently have the capability** of manufacturing an aircraft carrier. India joins this elite club now.

3. Polity

3.1. Recusal of Judges

- Recently Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana **has recused himself from hearing a petition filed by Andhra Pradesh accusing Telangana** of depriving its people of their legitimate share of water for drinking and irrigation.

✓ The Chief Justice said he recused from hearing because he **hailed from both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**.

Recusal

- It is the **act of abstaining from participation in an official action** such as a legal proceeding due to a conflict of interest of the presiding court official or administrative officer.

Why does a judge recuse?

- When there is a **conflict of interest**, a judge can withdraw from hearing a case to prevent creating a perception that she carried a bias while deciding the case

Reason

- Holding **shares in a company** that is a litigant to having a prior
- Personal association with a party involved in the case
- An **appeal is filed in the Supreme Court** against a judgement of a High Court that may have been delivered by the SC judge when she was in the HC.
- Ex party communications with lawyers or non-lawyers.
- Rulings, comments or conduct.

What is the process for recusal?

- The decision to recuse generally **comes from the judge herself** as it rests on the conscience and discretion of the judge to disclose any potential conflict of interest.
- In **some circumstances**, lawyers or parties in the case bring it up before the judge.
- If a judge recuses, the case is listed before the **Chief Justice for allotment** to a fresh Bench.

Rules governing recusals

- There are **no formal rules** governing recusals, although several Supreme Court judgments have dealt with the issue

Ranjit Thakur v Union of India (1987)

- **Supreme Court** held that the tests of the likelihood of bias is the reasonableness of the apprehension in the mind of the party.
- The proper approach for the Judge is **not to look at his own mind and ask himself, however honestly, "Am I biased?" but to look at the mind of the party before him.**



- Charter 'Restatement of Values in Judicial Life 1999- code of ethics adopted by the Supreme Court.
- ✓ A Judge shall **not hear and decide a matter in a company in which he holds shares unless he has disclosed his interest** and no objection to his hearing and deciding the matter is raised

Can a judge refuse to recuse?

- Once a request is made for recusal, the decision to **recuse or not rests with the judge.**
- While there are **some instances where judges have recused even if they do not see a conflict** but only because such an apprehension was cast, there have also been several cases where judges have refused to withdraw from a case.
- For instance, in 2019, **Justice Arun Mishra** had controversially refused to recuse himself from a Constitution Bench set up to re-examine a judgement he had delivered previously, despite several requests from the parties

3.2.Suspension of MPs

- Rajya Sabha chairman Venkaiah Naidu suspended **for the day, six Trinamool Congress MPs** for entering the Well of the House with placards and shouting slogans, on the 14th day of the monsoon session of Parliament that continued to see disruptions and protests over the Pegasus

Suspension of MPs- Rules

Lok Sabha

Rule No. 373

- Speaker, if is of the opinion that the conduct of any Member is grossly disorderly,
- may direct Member to withdraw immediately
- Absent for remainder of the day's sitting.

Rule No.374

- Grave disorder or abusing the Rules of the House
- Named by the Speaker - automatically suspended
- House - motion may terminate suspension .

Rajya Sabha

Rule No. 255

- Chairman- grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the House.

Rule No. 256

- Disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the Council
- House - adopt a motion to suspend for a period not exceeding the remainder of the session.
- Council- Motion- terminate suspension
- Unlike the Speaker, however, the Rajya Sabha Chairman does not have the power to suspend a Member.

- Rule 255 says, "The Chairman may direct any member whose conduct is in his opinion grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the Council and any member so ordered to withdraw shall do so forthwith and shall absent himself during the remainder of the day's meeting

3.3.MPLADS (TH)

- 50% funds allotted for ongoing MPLADS projects lapse
- Virtually half of the belated ₹2,200 crore allotted for completing the ongoing MPLADS projects in 2020-21 simply lapsed, as the Finance Ministry granted "barely a week" to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) to release the funds
- Spending under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) had already halved before the government suspended the scheme for two years in April last year and diverted the funds for managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tighten norms

- The Finance Ministry also asked the Statistics Ministry to **further tighten the scheme's guidelines by September this year**, so that "if a work sanctioned by an MP is not used for five years, it will **automatically lapse** even if there is a committed liability for the work to be completed".
- Currently, funds **released to district authorities under MPLADS** is not lapsable, while funds not released by the government in a particular year are carried forward

THE HINDU

Dire straits

Spending under MPLADS had already halved before the government suspended the scheme for two years on April 6, 2020 and diverted the funds to manage COVID-19

- On March 16, 2021, the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) seeks funds to finish ongoing MPLADS projects. Department of Expenditure allots **₹2,200 crore** on the same day
- On March 22, the amount was transferred to Statistics Ministry with a caveat that it be exhausted by March 31
- **₹1,107.5 crore** utilised till March 31; balance of **₹1,092.5 crore** lapses

 **Unable to comprehend why ₹2,200 crore was allotted barely one week before the end of FY 2020-21**
SCF REPORT

Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)-Announced in 1993

- Initially the MPLADS was under the control of the Ministry of Rural Development.
- The MPLAD Scheme was transferred to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in October 1994.

Amount

- Rs. 5 lakh per MP, Later one crore ,Rs. 2 crore from 1998-99 and now it is Rs.5 crore from the financial year 2011-12
- The **MoSPI** has been responsible for the **policy formulation, release of funds and prescribing monitoring mechanism** for implementation of the Scheme.
- A **Department in each State/UT** is designated as the **Nodal Department with the overall responsibility of supervision, monitoring and coordination** of the MPLADS implementation with the districts and other Line Departments.
- The Government of India informs the State Nodal Department about the MPLADS **funds released to the District Authorities**.
- The **District Authorities report the status of MPLADS implementation** to the Government of India and State Nodal Department.
- Funds are released in the **form of grants in-aid directly to the district authorities**
- The **MPs have a recommendatory** role under the scheme.
- The funds released under the scheme are non-lapsable.
- **At least 10% of the projects under implementation in the district are to be inspected every year by the district authority.**



- MPLADS is a Plan Scheme **fully funded by Government of India.**
- **Lok Sabha Members** can recommend works **within their Constituencies**
- **Elected Members of Rajya Sabha** can recommend works **within the State of Election**
- ✓ **Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha** can recommend works **anywhere in the country**
- If a **Lok Sabha Constituency** is spread over more than one District, the Member of Parliament can choose any one of the Districts as Nodal District in his/her constituency
- M.Ps are to recommend every year, works costing **at least 15 per cent of the MPLADS** entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by **Scheduled Caste population** and **7.5 per cent** for areas inhabited by **S.T. population.**
- In order to **encourage trusts and societies for the betterment of tribal people**, a ceiling of **Rs. 75 lakh** is stipulated for building assets by trusts and societies subject to conditions prescribed in the scheme guidelines.
- The **District Authorities** should maintain information and data on implementation of the provision for SC/ST areas including inter changeability of funds and also furnish the same on quarterly basis to the nodal department of the State Government.

Natural & Man-made Calamities

- MPLADS works can also be implemented in the areas prone to or affected by the calamities like floods, cyclone, Tsunami, earthquake, hailstorm, avalanche, cloud burst, pest attack, landslides, tornado, drought, fire, chemical, biological and radiological hazards.
- **Lok Sabha MPs** from the non-affected areas of the State can also recommend permissible works up to a maximum of **Rs.25 lakh per annum** in the affected area(s) in that State.
- The funds would be released by the Nodal district of the MP concerned to the District Authority of the affected district.
- In the event of “Calamity of severe nature” in any part of the country, an MP can recommend works up to a maximum of **Rs.1 crore** for the affected district.
- ✓ Whether a calamity is of severe nature or not, will be decided by the Government of India.

Completion of abandoned/suspended works:

- In case, there is still any abandoned/suspended MPLAD work under the Scheme, it shall be **completed by the State Government from their own funds**
- MPLAD Scheme can be **converged in individual/stand-alone projects of other Central and State Government schemes** provided such works of Central/State Governments Schemes are eligible under MPLADS.

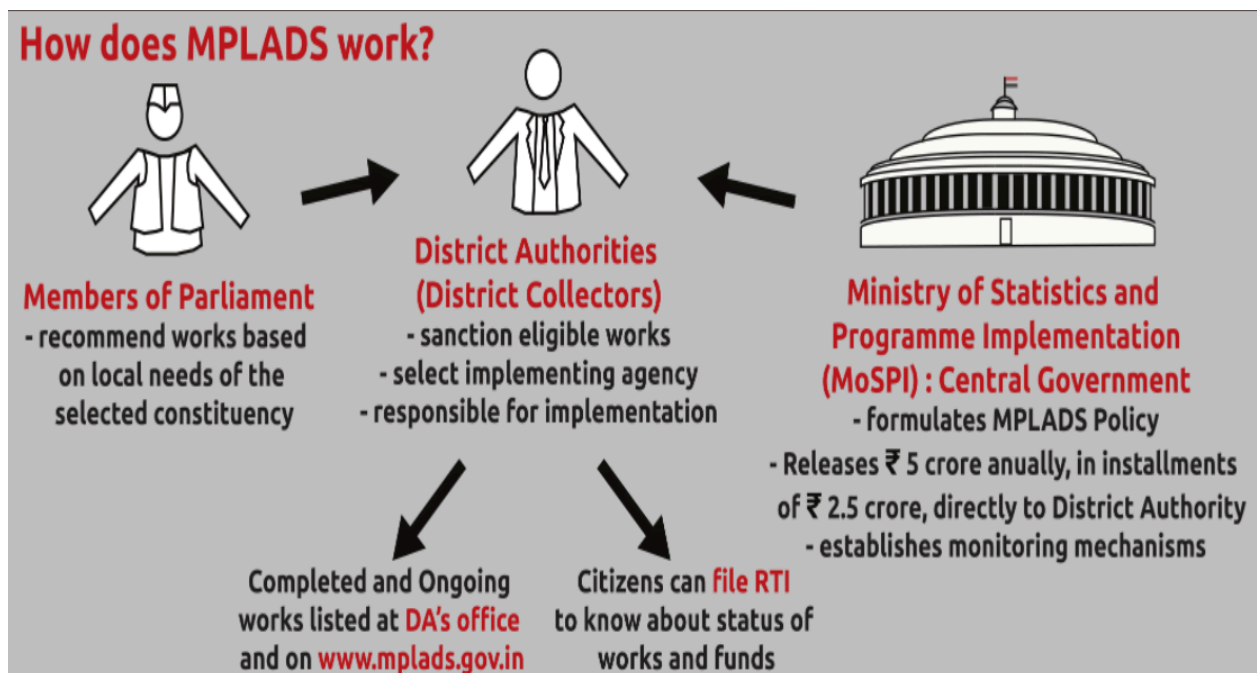
Prohibited work under MPLAD like

- **Office and residential buildings** belonging to **Central and State Government**
- Office and residential buildings and other works belonging to **private and commercial organizations**
- Naming of assets after any person.

- Acquisition of land or any compensation for land acquired.
- **Works within the places of religious worship** and on land belonging to or owned by religious faith/group. (However, **construction of crematoriums** and structures on burial/cremation grounds irrespective of religious faith **can be taken up under the MPLADS** regardless of the location being adjacent to or falling within the area under the places of religious worship)
- Execution of works in unauthorized colonies

Permissible

- Convergence of MPLADS with **MGNREGA**
- Convergence of MPLADS with Khelo India: National Programme for Development of Sports of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Utilisation of MPLADS Fund for welfare of the differently abled persons
- **Purchase of computers** for Government and Government aided educational institutions
- Purchase of **vehicles, including school buses/vans**, earth movers, and **equipments meant for hospitals, educational, sports, drinking water and sanitation** purposes belonging to Central, State, UT and Local Self Governments
- Purchase of **Ambulances for sick/injured animals** in Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks - **Vehicles to Transport Animals**



4. Economy

4.1. Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Bill 2021

- Parliament passes bill to amend Airports Economic Regulatory Authority Act
- The bill, which will **amend the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Act, 2008**, was moved on the floor of the house for passage and consideration by Civil Aviation Minister

Key provisions

- The annual traffic threshold of major airports **will rise from 15 lakhs to more than 35 lakhs**.
- This will see many airports in the country come out of the ambit of AERA.
- Hence those that will cease to be identified as major airports will come under the
- jurisdiction of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Government of India
- **The central government** may also designate any airport as a major airport by a notification.
- **The Bill** adds that the central government **may group airports** and notify the group as a major airport.
- Allow AERA to **regulate tariff and other charges for aeronautical services** for not just major airports with annual passenger traffic of more than 35 lakh, but also a group of airports
- **Allow the government** to club profitable and non-profitable airports as a combination/package to bidders to make it a viable combination for investment under PPP (Public-Private Partnership) mode.

Significance

- Pave the way for the privatization of a small, loss-making airport by clubbing it with a larger airport
- Notably, when the AERA bill was passed in 2008, the country had 11 airports with annual passenger traffic exceeding 15 lakhs, but the **increase in the volume of air travels** saw the number of airports almost triple eventually.

Airports Economic Regulatory Authority

- The Act 2008 provides for the establishment of an Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) to **regulate tariff and other charges for the aeronautical services rendered at airports** and to monitor performance standards of airports.
- Thus, AERA is the economic regulator of the airport infrastructure sector and air navigation services in the country.
- As per Section 13(2) of the Act, the Authority shall **determine the tariff once in five years** and may if so considered appropriate and in public interest, amend, from time to time during the said period of five years, the tariff so determined
- **Chairperson and Members:** The Authority shall consist of a Chairperson and two other Members to be appointed by the Central Government

Act applies to

- All airports whereat air transport services are operated or are intended to be operated, other than airports and airfields belonging to or subject to the control of the Armed Forces or paramilitary Forces of the Union.;

- ✓ All private airports and leased airports;
- ✓ All civil enclaves;
- ✓ All major airports
- **Chairperson and Members:** The Authority shall consist of a Chairperson and two other Members to be appointed by the Central Government

4.2.Limited Liability Partnership (Amendment) Bill 2021 (TH)

- Limited Liability Partnership (Amendment) Bill 2021 was introduced in Rajya Sabha on 29 July 2021 after the Union Cabinet gave its approval on 28 July 2021

key highlights of the bill

Decriminalisation of certain offences

- A total of 12 offences are to be **decriminalised under LLPs**.
- The decriminalised offences will then get **shifted to an internal adjudication** mechanism to help unclog criminal courts from routine cases

Introduction of Small LLPs

- The Bill provides for the **formation of a small LLP where:** (i) the contribution from partners is **up to Rs 25 lakh** (may be increased up to Rs 5 crore), (ii) **turnover** for the preceding financial year is **up to Rs 40 lakh** (may be increased up to Rs 50 crore)
- The Central government may also notify certain LLPs as start-up LLPs
- **Purpose-** to **encourage entrepreneurs**. These LLPs will be subject to fewer compliances, reduced fee or additional fee, and smaller penalties in the event of default.

Standards of accounting:

- In order to align with the Companies (Accounting Standards) Rules, the bill proposes the **Accounting Standards** for a class or classes of limited liability partnership.

Compounding of offences:

- Under the Act, the **Central government may compound any offence** under the Act which is punishable only with a fine.

Establishment of special courts

- The Bill proposes to empower the **Central government to establish or designate Special Courts** with a view to providing speedy trial of offences under the LLP Act.
- The special court will consist of: (i) a **Sessions Judge or an Additional Sessions Judge**, for offences punishable with imprisonment of three years or more; and (ii) a **Metropolitan Magistrate or a Judicial Magistrate**, for other offences.
- They will be **appointed with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the High Court**.
- **Appeals** against orders of these special courts will lie with **high courts**

Establishment of the Appellate Tribunal

- Under the Act, appeals against orders of the NCLT lie with the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).
- The Bill says that **appeals cannot be made against orders that have been passed with the consent of the parties.**
- Appeals must be filed within 60 days (extendable by another 60 days) of the order.

Adjudicating Officers

- Under the Bill, it has been proposed to **appoint as many officers as adjudicating officers to adjudicate penalties** under the LLP Act.
- These will be Central government officers **not below the rank of Registrar.**
- Appeals against orders of the adjudicating officers will lie with the Regional Director.

Change of name of LLP

- Under the provisions of the Act, the **Central government may direct an LLP to change its name on certain grounds** or pay a fine ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 5 lakh if it fails to comply.
- However, the amended Act now empowers the Central government to allot a new name to such an LLP instead of levying a fine

Non-compliance of Tribunal orders

- The amended Bill **removes non-compliance of NCLT order as an offence** which was earlier punishable with imprisonment up to six months and a fine up to Rs 50,000.

Punishment for fraud

- The amended Bill increases the **maximum term of imprisonment from two years to five years** for every person party to it knowingly if an LLP or its partners carry out an activity to defraud their creditors, or for any other fraudulent purpose.
- A fine between **Rs 50,000 and Rs 5 lakh** may also be imposed.

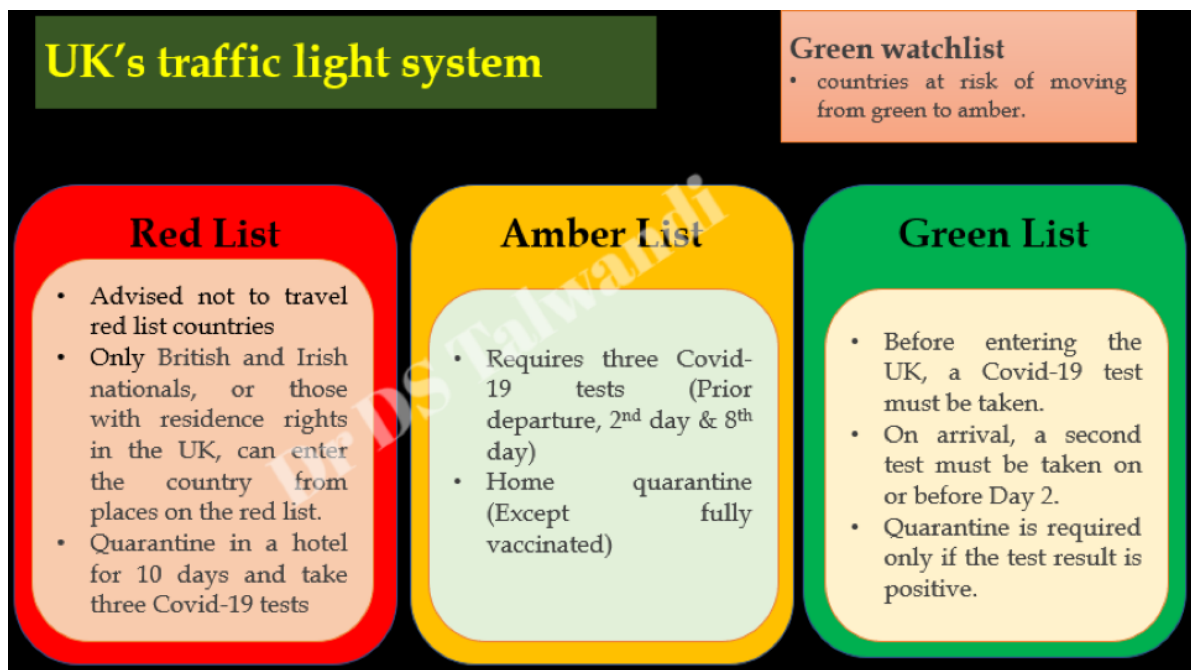
What is Limited Liability Partnership?

- A Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) is a partnership in which some or all **partners have limited liability.**
- It, therefore, exhibits elements of partnerships and corporations.
- In an LLP, **one partner is not responsible or liable for another partner's** misconduct or negligence.
- This is an important difference from that of an unlimited partnership.
- In an LLP, some partners may have a form of limited liability similar to that of the shareholders of a corporation.

5. International Relation

5.1.UK's traffic light system (IE)

- The United Kingdom on Wednesday moved India from its 'red' to 'amber' list, a categorisation created for international travel amid the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The classification makes it easy for people travelling to the UK from other countries to understand the rules they must follow to enter the country.
- The UK's traffic light system, as it has been named, lists countries into three categories – red, amber and green.
- The segregation is done based on "the risk posed by individual countries and territories"



5.2.Exercise Talisman Sabre (TH)

- Australia is keen that India join its biggest war games 'Exercise Talisman Sabre' in 2023 and a formal invite could be extended during Australian Defence Minister Peter Dutton's visit to India

Talisman Sabre 2021

- is the largest bilateral combined training activity between the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the U.S. military.
- The other countries include Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and U.K.