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# Daily News Discussion (DND)

23rd - 24th September 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. Mains value addition

### Terrorism (P-II/III/IV)

- The arrest of several persons from Kerala by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with terror-related cases recently has raised concerns about suspected sleeper cells of the Islamic State (IS) operating in the State.

### Citizenship (Paper II)

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** revealed in Parliament, that from 1985 to February 28, 2019, 63,959 people have been declared “foreigners” through ex parte orders by the Foreigners Tribunal in Assam.
- So, effectively 62% of the total people, who have been challenged as foreigners, have been declared as “foreigners” in the state.

### Guwahati High Court

- It said **citizenship**, being an important right of a person, **should be decided based on merit**. It should consider the material evidence that is produced by the person concerned. It should not be cancelled ex-parte or by default.



## 2. Environment

### 2.1.Blue Flag Certification (PIB)

- Recently two more Indian Beaches get coveted International Blue Flag Certification
- India now has 10 Blue Flag beaches

#### About

- Two more beaches, namely Kovalam beach in Tamil Nadu and Eden beach in Puducherry in India have been awarded 'Blue Flag' certification on September 22, 2021.
- In 2020, eight beaches in India were given the Blue Flag certification

#### Blue Flag certification

- Began in France in 1985 and areas outside Europe in 2001
- It is an international eco-level tag that is given by the **Foundation for Environment Education in Denmark (FEE)**.
- **FEE Denmark** regularly monitors and audits for strict compliance with the 33 criteria at all times.
- The Certification is given to a **beach, marina, or sustainable boating tourism operator**. It serves as an eco-label. It is awarded **annually**.
- The **international jury comprises** members are from FEE , United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) , United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) , International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) , United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Criteria

✓ It is accorded based on 33 criteria's. These criteria's are divided into 4 major heads namely:

❖ Environmental education and information

❖ Bathing water quality

❖ Environmental management

❖ Conservation and safety services in the beaches

#### Eight blue flag beaches (2020)

- Shivrajpur in Gujarat,
- Ghoghla in Daman & Diu,
- Kasarkod in Karnataka and,
- Padubidri beach in Karnataka,
- Kappad in Kerala,
- Rushikonda in Andhra Pradesh,
- Golden beach of Odisha,
- Radhanagar beach in Andaman and Nicobar



- Beach Environment and Aesthetics Management Services (BEAMS) is a program that focuses on the sustainable development of the coastal regions in India.
- **Launched by the Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM)** and the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- It is an initiative under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).
- The prime objective of ICZM is to conserve and protect the coastal and marine ecosystems through the holistic management of resources
- **Objectives of BEAMS programme:**
  - ✓ Decrease pollution in coastal waters,
  - ✓ Promote sustainable development of beach facilities,
  - ✓ Conserve and protect coastal ecosystems and natural resources

## 2.2.WHO tightens global air quality norms (TH)

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) in its **first-ever update since 2005** has tightened global air pollution standards

### About

- The upper limit of annual PM2.5 as per the 2005 standards, which is what countries now follow, is 10 microgram per cubic metre.



## India

- The move doesn't immediately impact India as the **National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)** don't meet the WHO's existing standards.
- The government has a dedicated **National Clean Air Programme that aims for a 20% to 30% reduction** in particulate matter concentrations by 2024 in 122 cities, keeping 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration.
- These are cities that don't meet the NAAQS when calculated from 2011-2015.
- India's NAAQs – last revised in 2009 – specify an annual limit of 60 microgram per cubic metre for PM 10 and 100 for a 24-hour period.
- Similarly it's 40 for PM 2.5 annually and 60 on a 24-hour period.
- There are also standards for a host of chemical pollutants including sulphur dioxide, lead and nitrogen dioxide.
- Environmental organisation Greenpeace** in a statement said the new guidelines meant that among 100 global cities, Delhi's annual PM2.5 trends in 2020 was 16.8 times more than WHO's revised air quality guidelines, while Mumbai's exceeded 8-fold, Kolkata 9.4, Chennai 5.4, Hyderabad 7 and Ahmedabad exceeded 9.8 fold
- According to experts of **Global Burden of Disease study**, over 95% of India's population already lived in areas where pollution levels were higher than WHO's 2005 norms.

## National Ambient Air Quality Standards

- National Ambient Air Quality Standards are the standards for ambient air quality with reference to various identified pollutant notified by the Central Pollution Control Board under the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981**.
- List of pollutants under NAAQS:** Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), Particulate Matter (size less than 10 μm), Particulate Matter (size less than 2.5 μm), Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), Lead (Pb), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>), Benzene (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>6</sub>), Benzo(a)Pyrene (BaP)-particulate phase only, Arsenic(As), Nickel (Ni)

## REVISED AFTER 16 YEARS

WHO | Then & Now

Pollutant*	Average	2005*	2021*
PM2.5	Annual mean	10	5
	24-hour mean	25	15
PM10	Annual mean	20	15
	24-hour mean	50	45
O <sub>3</sub>	Peak season	NS**	60
	8-hour mean	100	100
NO <sub>2</sub>	Annual mean	40	10
	24-hour mean	NS**	25
SO <sub>2</sub>	24-hour mean	20	40
CO	24-hour mean	NS**	4

India's National  
Ambient  
Air Quality  
Standards  
(NAAQS)

Average

● Annual mean  
● 24-hour mean

PM2.5

40 | 60

PM10

60 | 100

NO<sub>2</sub>

40 | 80

SO<sub>2</sub>

50 | 80

Average

(8 hour mean)

O<sub>3</sub>

100

CO

2

\* micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ); \*\*NS - Not Set; PM2.5 & PM10 - Particulate Matters; O<sub>3</sub> - Ozone; NO<sub>2</sub> - Nitrogen Dioxide; SO<sub>2</sub> - Sulfur Dioxide; CO - Carbon Monoxide

## 2.3.Climate-Induced Migration and Modern Slavery (DTE)

- Recently, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and Anti-Slavery International released a report named **Climate-Induced Migration and Modern Slavery**.

### Key Highlights

- Climate change-induced extreme weather events put women, children and minorities at risk of modern slavery and human trafficking, **40.3 million people are living under slavery in the world**

### Sundarbans

- Characterised by intense, recurrent and sudden onset disasters
- Rising sea levels, erratic rainfall, increased frequency of cyclones, tidal surges and floods, mean that millions of people across the Sundarbans are unable to work for most of the year.
- In 2009, **Cyclone Aila** caused widespread damage to lives and livelihoods.
- In 2020, during **Cyclone Amphan**, 400 kilometres of embankment was breached and seawater entered the flood plains resulting in widespread displacement from homes and loss of livelihoods for more than two million people
- Such events made locals vulnerable to traffickers and drove them into forced labour
- Severe cyclone and flooding in Sundarbans delta had also reduced the land for agriculture, which is the major source of livelihood.

### Case study

- A case study from **Accra in Ghana** showed that after drought, the young men and women in northern Ghana were forced to migrate to major cities.
- The women worked as porters and are at risk of trafficking, sexual exploitation and debt bondage

### Scale of displacement

- Over **216 million people could be internally displaced by 2050** across six regions due to climate change, according to **World Bank** estimates. Of these, over 81 per cent will be in Sub-Saharan Africa (86 million), East Asia and the Pacific (49 million) and the **South Asian region (40 million)**.
- As many as **55 million people were internally displaced within their countries** due to extreme weather events in 2020. This is the highest in the last one decade.

### Modern slavery

- including debt bondage, bonded labour, early / forced marriage and human trafficking – converge with climate change, particularly climate shocks and climate-related forced displacement and migration.

### 3. Science & Technology

#### 3.1. Winged microchip (IE)

- Northwestern University engineers have created an electronic microchip with the capability of flight

##### About



- About the size of a grain of sand, the new flying microchip (or "microflier") **does not have a motor or engine**.
- Instead, it **catches flight on the wind** – much like a maple tree's propeller seed – and spins like a helicopter through the air toward the ground.
- These microfliers are the "smallest-ever human-made flying structures".
- By studying **maple trees and other types of wind-dispersed seeds**, the engineers optimised the microflier's aerodynamics to ensure that it – when dropped at a high elevation – falls at a slow velocity in a controlled manner.
- This behaviour stabilizes its flight, ensures dispersal over a broad area and increases the amount of time it interacts with the air, making it ideal for **monitoring air pollution and airborne disease**
- These microfliers also **can be packed with ultra-miniaturised technology, including sensors, power sources, antennas for wireless communication and embedded memory to store data**



#### 3.2. New ammonium nitrate rules (IE)

- Mindful of the explosion in Beirut, Lebanon, in August last year that led to the deaths of over 200 people, the government has amended rules for storage and handling of ammonium nitrate to improve public safety, including requiring fire fighting facilities

##### Rules

- The rules require that ammonium nitrate received at ports be transferred to **storage houses 500 metres beyond the port area**
- The rules also **permit the auction of seized lots of ammonium nitrate** to ensure safe and speedy disposal besides requiring that Ammonium Nitrate be imported in bagged form only.
- Provision for adequate fire-fighting facilities in storage and handling areas**, improvement of flooring in storage and handling areas

## Ammonium nitrate ((NH<sub>4</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>)

- In pure form it is a white, crystalline chemical which is soluble in water. It is the main ingredient in the manufacture of commercial explosives used in mining and construction. Pure ammonium nitrate is not an explosive on its own.
- It is classified as an oxidiser (Grade 5.1) under the **United Nations classification of dangerous goods**.
- If mixed with ingredients like fuel or some other contaminants, or because of some other external factors, it can be very explosive.
- In the majority of terror attacks in India, including those in **Pulwama, Varanasi, Malegaon, Pune, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Mumbai**, ammonium nitrate has been used along with initiator explosives like RDX.
- It is used as an ingredient for the production of industrial explosives, anaesthetic gases, fertilisers, cold packs

## Fire Hazard

- Large quantities of stored ammonium nitrate are regarded as a major fire hazard, with multiple reported cases across the world.
- The explosion of large storage can happen primarily in **two ways**.
  - ✓ **One** is by some type detonation or initiation because the storage comes in contact with explosive mixture.
  - ✓ **Second**, the blast can result due to a fire which starts in the ammonium nitrate store because of the heat generated due to the oxidation process at large scale.
- The second one seems to be the primary likely cause of the incident at Beirut port

## Regulations in India

- In India, The Ammonium Nitrate Rules, 2012, under The Explosives Act, 1884, **define ammonium nitrate** as the “compound with formula NH<sub>4</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> including any mixture or compound having more than 45 per cent ammonium nitrate by weight including emulsions, suspensions, melts or gels but excluding emulsion or slurry explosives and non explosives emulsion matrix and fertilizers from which the ammonium nitrate cannot be separated
- The manufacture, conversion, bagging, import, export, transport, possession for sale or use of ammonium nitrate is covered under The **Ammonium Nitrate Rules, 2012**.
- The rules also make storage of ammonium nitrate in large quantities in populated areas illegal in India.
- For the manufacture of ammonium nitrate, an **Industrial licence is required under the Industrial Development and Regulation Act, 1951**.
- A license under the **Ammonium Nitrate Rules, 2012** is also required for any activity related to ammonium nitrate.

## 4. Geography

### 4.1.CIM-Pitamber and Keshari variety (IE)

- CIMAP's high-yielding **curcuminoid-rich variety of turmeric** named 'CIM-Pitamber', and the NBRI's 'Keshari' variety of turmeric have been introduced in Nabarangpur of Odisha.
- In 2019, a consortium of **12 national research and development laboratories** joined hands in a rare effort to transform livelihoods in Odisha's Nabarangpur.
- Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) in Lucknow is one of the five Council of Scientific and Industrial Research laboratories involved in the effort

#### CIM-Pitamber

- **50% more yield** than existing varieties
- **Tolerant to the leaf blotch disease of turmeric.**
- **Curcuminoid(Anti cancer properties) content is 12.5%** more than the existing variety

#### Keshari variety

- Tolerant to low temperature and frost during winter
- Curcuminoid content is around 1.16 %, which is also more than other existing cultivated varieties

#### Turmeric

- Turmeric, a plant in the ginger family, is **native to Southeast Asia and is grown commercially in that region**, primarily in India. Its rhizome (underground stem) is used as a culinary spice and traditional medicine
- Historically, turmeric was **used in Ayurveda** and other traditional Indian medical systems, as well as Eastern Asian medical systems such as **traditional Chinese medicine**.
- In India, it was traditionally used for disorders of the **skin, upper respiratory tract, joints, and digestive system**.
- **Curcumin** is a major component of turmeric, and the activities of turmeric are commonly attributed to curcuminoids (curcumin and closely related substances). Curcumin gives turmeric its yellow color.

## 5. Economy

### 5.1. Single window system for investors (IE)

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has launched the national single window system for investors and businesses to improve Ease of Doing Business (EoDB).
- India was placed at **63rd position in the World Bank's ease of doing business report, 2020** out of 190 countries
- DPIIT along with Invest India** initiated the process of developing the portal as a National Single Window System (NSWS).

#### National Single Window System

- National Single Window System is a **one-stop digital platform** that aims at allowing investors to apply for various pre-operations approvals required for commencing a business in the country.
- The system aims to make the **business registration process easier, allowing the beneficiary to get significant approvals online**, without having to run to the government offices for approvals and can avail themselves of services with just a click.
- Currently, the platform hosts approvals across **18 Central Departments & 9 States**. Another 14 Central depts & 5 states will be added by December 2021.

### 5.2. 45th GST Council Meeting (IE)

- Recently 45th GST Council was held.

#### Key Changes

**What's in store** | The 45th GST Council meeting was chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Lucknow on Friday. Among the key decisions are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Concessional tax rates on COVID-19 essential medicines like Tocilizumab extended till December 31</li>   <li>■ Muscular atrophy drugs such as Zolgensma and Viltepso that cost around ₹16 cr. exempted from GST</li>   <li>■ Import of leased aircraft exempted from I-GST</li>   <li>■ Food delivery apps to collect GST instead of restaurants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tax on <b>fortified rice kernels</b> for ICDS scheme reduced from 18% to 5%</li>   <li>■ GST on <b>cancer drug Keytruda</b> brought down from 12% to 5%</li> </ul>
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## GST Council : constitutional body (Article 279A)

### Representative

- Union

- ✓ The Union Finance Minister will be the Chairperson

- ✓ As a member, the Union Minister of State will be in charge of Revenue of Finance

- State

- ✓ The Minister in charge of finance or taxation or any other Minister nominated by each State government, as members

- Voting power

- ✓ Union- 1/3rd vote in council

- ✓ State- 2/3rd vote in council

- ✓ Quorum-50% of total membership

- ✓ Decision- 75% vote support

## 6. International Relation

### 6.1. Surya Kiran exercise (15th)

- India and Nepal began a 14-day combined battalion-level military exercise, called 'Surya Kiran', in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh.
- The **14th edition** of the exercise took place in **Saljhandi, Nepal in 2019**.
- During the exercise, which will continue till October 3, an Infantry Battalion each from the Indian Army and the Nepali Army will be training together to develop inter-operability and share their experience of **counter-terrorism and disaster relief operations**

### 6.2. Cumbre Vieja volcano in La Palma

- The Canary Islands' first volcanic eruption in 50 years has forced the evacuation of about 5,000 people

#### About

- La Palma is the most north-westerly island of the Canary Islands, Spain
- The Canary Islands are a group of ocean island volcanoes located off the coast of western Africa that have been formed by volcanic activity since around 20 million years ago



## 7. History

### 7.1. Shree Padmanabha Swamy Temple (IE)

- The Supreme Court recently declined a plea filed by Shree Padmanabha Swamy Temple Trust seeking to exempt it from the audit of 25 years as ordered by the top court last year.
- A bench said the audit should be completed as early as possible, preferably within three months.

#### Background

- In 2011, **treasure worth over Rs. 1 lakh crore** has been discovered in its underground vaults.
- Later **Kerala HC** had asked the state government to set up a trust to take control of the temple.
- Reversing the 2011 Kerala High Court decision, the **Supreme Court upheld the right of the Travancore royal family** in administration of the historic Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Kerala.
- The court said that, as per customary law, the **shebait rights (right to manage the financial affairs of the deity) survive with the members of the family** even after the death of the last ruler.
- The Apex Court **entrusted the responsibility of managing affairs of the temple to a district judge of Thiruvananthapuram** who will head an administrative committee that will oversee the affairs
- The **trust argues** that since it had been constituted (on earlier orders by the court) to oversee rituals of the Temple, with no role in the administration, **it is a distinct entity from the temple and could not be included in the call for an audit.**
- According to the **Administrative Committee**, it is in great financial stress and the offerings are not sufficient to meet the expenses, seeking an audit of the temple-related trust run by the Travancore royal family

#### Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple

- The history of Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple dates back to 8th century but the present structure was built in the 18th century by the then Travancore **Maharaja Marthanda Varma**.
- Initially made of wood but later it was constructed with granite.
- Marthanda Varma, noted among Travancore kings, did a major renovation to the temple and it resulted in the present day structure of the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple.
- It was Marthanda Varma who introduced the **Murajapam and Bhadra Deepam** festivals in the temple.

- *Murajapam*, which literally means continuous chanting of prayers, is still conducted in the temple once every six years.
- The temple is built in the **unique Chera style of architecture**, and its main deity is **Lord Vishnu** who is found in the **Anantha Shayana posture** (reclined posture of eternal yoga) on **Adishesha or king of all serpents**
- It is known to be one of the **108 holy temples associated** with Vaishnavism in India.