



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

APRIL, 2022

Week-4

22-30 April, 2022

★★ Useful for ★★

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

22nd APRIL 2022

China-Solomon Islands Security Agreement

- **Context:** Recently, a security pact has been signed between China and the Solomon Islands to enhance the existing cooperation arrangements with the Solomon Islands.

Key facts

- Manasseh Sogavare, the Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands stated that this pact was signed to improve security concerns in the nation.
- With the announcement of the pact, concerns are rising about the impact of this pact as it gives China a foothold in this South Pacific region.
- The details of the pact have not been released, but a draft that was leaked suggested that Chinese police will be deployed at the request of the archipelago to maintain social order and Chinese warships can stop at the Solomon Islands.

Issues

- The most vocal critic of the agreement has been Australia as it already has a security agreement with the Solomon Islands since 2017.
- The US and New Zealand have also raised their concern regarding the transparency of the pact and about the increase of Chinese presence in this area.
- The US has announced plans that it will be reopening its embassy in Honiara (capital of the Solomon Islands) which was closed in 1993.

SAANS Campaign

- **Context:** The Karnataka Government recently launched the 'Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully' (SAANS) campaign which aims to ensure early detection and greater awareness of pneumonia in children under the age of five.

Key highlights

- The Karnataka Govt. has taken initiative for community awareness generation through extensive mass media and digital campaigns regarding pneumonia
- To generate awareness, ASHA workers have also been roped in. Also, across the state, facility-level management for severe pneumonia cases is being strengthened.
- All healthcare providers in the state are taking up active screening of the children who are under-five for management and early identification of pneumonia.
- As per SRS 2018, Karnataka's under-five mortality is at 28 per 1000 live births.
- By 2025, the state's goal is to reduce the under-five mortality to 23 per 1,000 live. Also, to achieve the National Health Policy goals, pneumonia mortality has to be reduced to less than 3 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- In India, childhood pneumonia still remains a health threat to the children who are aged below five years contributing to 15 percent of the nation's under-five deaths.

NOTE:

Pneumonia is a lung infection that is caused due to viral, bacterial, or fungal infection.

Ajay Kumar Sood

- **Context:** Ajay Kumar Sood, an eminent physicist has been appointed as the Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to Government of India.



Key facts

- He has been appointed to the post for a three-year period.
- The appointment has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).

- He is a member of the Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.
- He is known for his work on graphene. Also, he is a physics professor at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.

23rd APRIL 2022

Suman Bery

- **Context:** The Union Government appointed economist Suman Bery as the Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog after Rajiv Kumar resigned from the post recently. Rajiv Kumar had been appointed as the Vice-Chairperson of NITI Aayog in 2017.



Key facts

- Suman Bery was the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) Director-General for a period of 10 years from 2001 to 2011.
- He is a Global Fellow in the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars' Asia programme in Washington, DC.
- He had earlier served as a member of India's Statistical Commission, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, and Reserve Bank of India's Technical Advisory Committee on Monetary Policy.
- Prior to joining NCAER, he was with the World Bank, having joined through the Young Professionals' Program.
- At World Bank, he worked on country policy and strategy, and financial sector development notably in the Caribbean and Latin America.

DIPAM's Guidelines on Strategic Disinvestment

- **Context:** The Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) have been barred by the Union Government from

participating in the strategic disinvestment of other government-owned companies unless given specific approval by the Government.

Key highlights

- The announcement has been made after examining the Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) participation as a bidder in the strategic disinvestment of PSE in accordance with the new PSE policy.
- Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) has highlighted that PSEs suffer from a lack of innovation, fresh capital infusion, the ability to diversify production and services, and modern technology.
- Besides, due to multiple accountability systems, these enterprises lack adaptability and are also commercially risk-averse in a dynamic business environment.
- DIPAM has stated that the PSE policy will be minimizing the government's presence in the PSEs across all economic sectors so that newer investment opportunities can be made available for the private sector, so that infusion of private capital, innovation, technology, and best management practices can happen.

24th APRIL 2022

SIPRI Report

- **Context:** A report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on World Military Expenditure stated that India was the world's third-highest military spender behind the US and China.

Key highlights

- In the year 2021, the global defence expenditure reached an all-time high and stood at USD 2.1 trillion despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

- According to the data released by SIPRI, the military spending of India stood at USD 76.6 billion in 2021, which is a 0.9 percent increase from 2020 and a 33 percent increase from 2012.
- According to the SIPRI data, the top five military spenders in the world are:
 1. The United States
 2. China
 3. India
 4. The United Kingdom
 5. Russia
- These top 5 countries account for 62 percent of the world's global military expenditure.

Emmanuel Macron

- The President of France Emmanuel Macron re-elected after defeating a far-right leader Marine Le Pen.



Key facts

- Macron is the first French sitting president in the past 20 years to have been re-elected.
- Macron received 51.5 percent of the votes while Le Pen received 41.5 percent.
- During his presidency, Macron has overseen many reforms to taxation, labour laws, and pensions. Renewable energy transitions were also pursued by him.
- In his foreign policy, he asked for reforms in the European Union and also signed bilateral treaties with Germany and Italy. He also presided over a dispute with Australia and the United States over the AUKUS security treaty and continued French involvement in the civil war of Syria.
- He also severely criticized and responded against the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

National Panchayati Raj Day

- **Context:** National Panchayat Raj Day is celebrated on the 24th of April annually.

Key facts

- National Panchayat Raj Day was first celebrated in 2010.
- In India there are over six lakh villages, with over 750 districts and six thousand blocks that are all governed by the Panchayati Raj system.
- On this day in 1992, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment was enacted. As a result of this amendment, the powers of the grassroots were decentralized and the Panchayati Raj was founded. Hence, this day is commemorated by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj as the National Panchayati Raj Day.

Background

- In 1957, a committee under the chairmanship of Balwantrai Mehta was established. This committee suggested bringing changes to the central power system and thus the Panchayati Raj came into existence.
- The first state to implement Panchayati Raj system was Rajasthan (1959).
- The Panchayati Raj scheme was inaugurated by the Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India.

25th APRIL 2022

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0

- **Context:** Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0 (UBA 2.0) has successfully completed four years on 25th April 2022.

About Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA)

- The Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is a flagship programme that falls under the ambit of the Ministry of Education and aims to link the country's Higher Education Institutions with a set minimum of five villages so that these higher institutions can help in contributing to the social and economic betterment of the communities of these villages by using their knowledge base.
- Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT Delhi) is the national coordinating institute for the UBA.

- Under UBA, two major domains for the holistic development of villages are covered which are: Human development and economic development in an integrated manner.
- UBA's objective is to engage the students and the faculties of the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to understand the country's rural realities.
- Under this scheme, the students and the faculties help in identifying the developmental issues that are being faced in the rural areas and coming up with sustainable solutions.
- At present, under this scheme 748 Institutions are participating. 605 institutions have been selected for Phase-2. Out of the selected 292 are Non-Technical Institutions and 313 are Technical Institutions.

Raisina Dialogue 2022

- **Context:** The Raisina Dialogue 2022 was recently inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Key highlights

- The President of European Commission Ursula Von Der Leyen was the chief guest of the event.
- The theme of the event was "Terranova- Impassioned, Impatient, Imperiled".
- This year's dialogue had near about 100 sessions with more than 210 speakers from 90 different countries. In this dialogue, there were various conversations and panel discussions across multiple formats on the six thematic pillars.
- This year's dialogue featured participation from Carl Bildt, former PM of Sweden; Stephen Harper, former PM of Canada; Mohamed Nasheed, former President of Maldives; and Anthony Abbott, former PM of Australia.
- The Foreign Ministers of Argentina, Armenia, Portugal, Poland, Norway, Slovenia, Netherlands, Lithuania, Nigeria, Guyana, Madagascar, Luxembourg, and the Philippines also attended this event physically.

About Raisina Dialogue

- Raisina Dialogue is the India's premier conference on geo-economics and geo-politics. It was started in the year 2016.
- The conference aims to address the most challenging issues that are being faced by the global community.
- The Ministry of External Affairs organizes this conference in collaboration with the Observer Research Foundation (ORF).
- This conference brings together various leaders in business, politics, civil society, and media annually to explore cooperation opportunities and to discuss the current state of the world.

26th APRIL 2022

Twitter

- **Context:** Twitter, the social media platform, has recently been acquired by billionaire Elon Musk for around USD 44 billion, in the world's one of the biggest technology deals.

Key highlights

- Musk has raised USD 25.5 billion of fully committed debt and has raised margin loan financing from around a dozen banks so as to back the bid. After the competition of this deal, Twitter will become a privately held organization.
- On 14th April 2022, Musk announced his plans of taking over Twitter. He has plans to make Twitter a private organization. Musk wanted to buy Twitter as he wants to use the platform as a mechanism for free speech.
- He also talked about plans of making the platform better by enhancing the digital product with new features, getting rid of spambots, and authenticating all humans who will be using Twitter. The algorithms will also be made open source to increase trust.

NASA's Space Equity Action Plan

- **Context:** The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has released an equity action plan with the aim of making space more accessible.

Key highlights

- This Equity Action plan has deepened the commitments to identify and remove the barriers that are limiting opportunity in the underrepresented and underserved communities.
- This framework will add fairness as a core component to every mission of NASA to make space more accessible to all.
- According to NASA, the focus must be shown on businesses that are categorised as service-disabled veterans, disadvantaged, historically underutilised, and women-owned businesses that can promote equitable development of the economy.
- NASA has made plans to engage with contractors in the underserved communities including studying barriers in the procurement programmes, using dedicated product service lines, and increasing engagement events.
- By 2029, NASA has aimed to increase the outreach events for the underserved communities by 50 per cent.
- By the year 2025, the full transfer of the earth science data of NASA to the cloud will be complete.
- NASA will be hosting data sets for environmental justice on the Amazon Web Services Open Data platform. Around 2,700 users will be trained by NASA to use the data of the agency effectively so that environmental parameters like water resource management and air quality can be addressed.

27th APRIL 2022

UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

- **Context:** Recently, Russia decided to quit the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Key highlights

- According to the UNWTO, Russia decided to withdraw from this organization ahead of a vote by the body to suspend Russia for its war against Ukraine.
- The UNWTO had earlier called the Russian aggression against Ukraine as being inconsistent with the United Nations Charter and being against the UNWTO's fundamental aim.
- The decision to suspend Russia must be approved by 2/3rd of its members (159 members).
- This is the first time the UNWTO has met to discuss the suspension of one of its member nations.

About UNWTO

- The UNWTO is an organization of the United Nations that has been entrusted with the promotion of sustainable, responsible, and universally accessible tourism.
- It is an international organization that promotes tourism to drive economic growth, environmental sustainability, and inclusive development.
- **Headquarters:** Madrid, Spain
- **Secretary-General:** Zurab Pololikashvili

National Framework for Malaria Elimination

- **Context:** The National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) 2016-2030 outlines the strategies of India to eliminate the disease by the year 2030.

Key highlights

- The National Framework for Malaria Elimination has been developed with the aim of eliminating malaria from India and contributing to improved quality of life, health, and poverty alleviation.
- The NFME defines objectives, goals, targets, strategies, and timelines that will serve as a roadmap for planning and advocating malaria elimination in India in a phased manner.

- The NFME is in line with the Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance Malaria Elimination Roadmap and the WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030 (GTS).
- **Objectives of the NFME:**
 - Elimination of malaria from all low (Category 1) and moderate (Category 2) UTs and states by 2022
 - Reducing malaria incidence to less than 1 case per 1000 in all UTs and States and eliminating malaria by 2024 in at least 31 states and UTs
 - By 2027, the indigenous transmission of malaria must be eliminated in all UTs and States (Category 3)
 - Preventing the re-establishment of local malaria transmission in areas where it has been eliminated so as to maintain a malaria-free status in India by 2030.

Palli village

- **Context:** Palli village, located in the Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir, has become India's first panchayat to become carbon neutral and fully solar energy powered.

Key facts

- Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the 500 KW solar plant at this carbon-neutral panchayat.
- The 500 KW solar plant was set up at Palli in a record three weeks' time.
- In Palli in a total area of 6,408 square metres 1,500 solar panels have been set up.
- These solar panels will be providing clean electricity to 340 houses that are located in the panchayat.
- Palli will now be looked at as a model panchayat, and this will motivate the other panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir, and India to become carbon-neutral.

About Carbon Neutrality

- Carbon Neutrality refers to achieving zero carbon dioxide emissions. This can be achieved by balancing carbon dioxide emissions with their removal or

through the elimination of emissions.

- The term carbon neutral is used in the context of energy production, transportation, industry, and agriculture.
- Net-zero emissions can be achieved only when an organization's greenhouse gas emissions are balanced by their removal.

28th APRIL 2022

Enterprise India Initiative

- **Context:** The Union Ministry for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has inaugurated the Enterprise India initiative in line with the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

About Enterprise India

- It is a series of entrepreneurship development activities and events that are being organized from 27th April 2022 to 27th May 2022 with the aim of promoting entrepreneurship culture and generating awareness about the initiatives and schemes of the MSME Ministry across the nation.
- The event's aim is to create synergies between various concerned departments, ministries, and the Industry Associations.
- Some key activities that will be organized under this event include organizing entrepreneurship awareness programmes through various field offices, conferences with Industry Associations, special campaigns on Udyam Registration, demonstration of Nukkad Nataks in the country's aspirational districts, conducting 'MSME Expedition' in several States of the nation, the launch of MSME Sustainable Zed Certification Scheme, and organizing MSME Mega exhibitions and conventions.
- The interaction with the MSME industry Associations will also be bringing out constructive suggestions to make the country's MSME sector vibrant.

Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) Programme

- **Context:** The Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) programme

was recently announced by the Government of India with the aim of manufacture Microprocessors to achieve industry-grade commercial silicon and design for the next generation of microprocessors by December 2023.

Key highlights

- This initiative is in line with the government's ambition toward Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- DIR-V will be witnessing partnerships between academia, start-ups, and multinationals with the aim of making India not a talent hub of RISC-V as well as a supplier of RISC-V SoC (System on Chips) to the world for mobile devices, servers, IoT, automotive, microcontrollers, etc.
- The blueprint for the roadmap of implementation and design of the DIR-V Programme with the VEGA Processor by C-DAC and the SHAKTI Processor by IIT Madras.
- Along with this, the strategic roadmap for the country's semiconductor innovation and design to catalyze the semiconductor ecosystem was also unveiled.
- Ministry of Electronics and IT has plans to join the RISC-V International as a premier board member to contribute, collaborate, and advocate India's expertise with other global leaders of RISC-V.
- Professor V. Kamakoti, the Director of IIT Madras will be the Chief Architect of the programme.

29th APRIL 2022

GAGAN Satellite Technology

- **Context:** Recently, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) successfully conducted a trial through GAGAN- the latest indigenous satellite-based augmentation system.

Key Facts

- IndiGo became the first airline in Asia that used the indigenously developed satellite-based navigation system while landing at the Kishangarh airport, Rajasthan.
- India is the first country in the Asia Pacific region that has achieved this.

About GAGAN

- GAGAN which is an acronym of GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation, is a Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) that provides Satellite-based Navigation services with integrity and accuracy that is required for civil aviation applications.
- GAGAN has been jointly developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Airports Authority of India (AAI).
- This system provides corrections to the global positioning system (GPS) signal to improve the management of air traffic.
- The GAGAN Signal-In-Space (SIS) is available via the GSAT-10 and GSAT-8 satellites.
- This system is interoperable with the other international SBAS systems that are being used across the world and will be able to provide seamless navigation across the regional boundaries.

Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD)

- **Context:** The Union Government recently launched a central accident database management system, named Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD) that will help in analyzing the causes of road accidents and devise safety interventions with the aim of reducing such accidents in India.

Key facts

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- It has been developed by Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) and being implemented

by the National Informatics Centre.

- The cost of the project is Rs 258 crore and it has been supported by the World Bank.
- The system has been launched as a pilot in 59 districts of six States which are Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu in February 2022.
- Recently, this project has been launched in Chandigarh.

About iRAD

- iRAD is a web-based Information Technology (IT) solution that will help in enabling various agencies like the Public Works Department (PWDs), police, etc. to enter details about the road accident from various perspectives like road engineering, investigation, condition of the vehicle, etc.
- The iRAD mobile application will allow the police personnel to enter details regarding a road accident, along with videos and photos, after which a unique ID will be created for the uploaded incident. Then, an engineer from the local body or the PWDs will receive an alert on their mobile device. Then, they will visit the site, examine it, and upload all the required details like road design, etc. The data collected will be analyzed by a team at IIT-M and then corrective measures that need to be taken will be suggested.

30th APRIL 2022

Maharashtra Gene Bank Project

- **Context:** Recently, Maharashtra Cabinet approved the 'Maharashtra Gene Bank', a first-of-its-kind project in India.

Key facts

- The objective of the Maharashtra Gene Bank Project is to conserve genetic resources in Maharashtra including marine diversity, seeds of local crops, and animal diversity.

- The 'Maharashtra Gene Bank Project' will work on seven themes:
 - Marine biodiversity
 - Local crop/seed varieties
 - Indigenous cattle breeds
 - Freshwater biodiversity
 - Grassland, scrubland, and animal grazing land biodiversity
 - Conservation and management plans for areas under forest right
 - Rejuvenation of forest areas
- In the next five years, an amount of 172.39 crores will be spent on these seven focus areas.
- The project will be implemented by the Maharashtra State Biodiversity Board (MSBB) and will be overseen by committees under the chief secretary and the principal secretary (forests).
- The MSBB will coordinate with institutions like the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) Goa to document and conserve rare and endangered marine species.

NOTE:

Genetic diversity is the variation in genes and genotypes within a species. Genetic diversity plays an important role in the survival of a species.

Global Security Initiative

- **Context:** Chinese President Xi Jinping has put forward a new Global Security Initiative which aims to promote security for all in the world and to oppose unilateralism, and group politics and bloc confrontation.

Key highlights

- The initiative is aimed at countering the initiatives of west like the Indo-Pacific strategy of the USA, the QUAD and the AUKUS (Australia-U.K.-U.S.) security pact.

- **The six areas defined by Chinese president are:**

- Stay committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative peace & security.
- Stay committed to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries.
- Stay committed to abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.
- Stay committed to taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously.
- Stay committed to peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries.
- Stay committed to maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional domains.

About QUAD

QUAD is an informal strategic security dialogue comprising of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. Quad is viewed as a response to increased Chinese economic and military power.

About AUKUS

AUKUS is a trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (USA) for the Indo-Pacific region. Under this, the US and the UK will help Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines.

Farmer Distress Index

- **Context:** The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is planning to create the Farmer Distress Index (FDI) with the aim of tracking, identifying, and supporting the real distressed and needy farmers of India.

Key highlights

- Depending on the distress level, the financial institutions and the government can decide on an appropriate support package instead of handing out a distress package to all the farmers as is the current practice.
- This index won't be uniform across the nation as it will be changing depending upon the place's stress levels.
- This index will help the government departments, financial sector, and insurance companies.
- The distress of a farmer is generally calculated by the extent of damage to their crops.
- The index will be integrating high-frequency data regarding climatic conditions, weather conditions, agricultural commodities, the debt burden on farmers, and the market.
- This index will be measuring variables like excessive rainfalls, monsoon rains, variations in soil moisture and temperature, dry spells and drought, the area under irrigation, the yield of major crops in each district, unusual frost, and depth of underground water.
- The marketing opportunities that are available to the farmer such as MSP support will also be assessed by this index.
- Based on the distress severity, the lenders and the government will be able to provide crop loan restructuring, unconditional grants, or complete debt waivers.

