



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

NOVEMBER, 2022

Week-4

22-30 Nov., 2022

★★ Useful for ★★

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

22nd NOVEMBER, 2022

Infrastructure Resilience Accelerator Fund (IRAF)

- **Context:** The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) recently announced setting up the Infrastructure Resilience Accelerator Fund (IRAF).

Key Highlights:

- It is a multi-donor trust fund, established with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).
- It will be managed by the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (UN MPTFO) to support global action on disaster resilience of infrastructure systems, especially in developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- Around \$50 million in financial commitments have already been announced for IRAF over an initial duration of five years.
- IRAF will play a crucial role in equipping the Coalition to deliver improved infrastructure governance, inclusive infrastructure services, diversified knowledge, and financing for resilient infrastructure globally.
- One of the first initiatives to be supported by the IRAF is the Infrastructure for the Resilient Island States (IRIS).
- Supported by the Governments of India, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the European Union, IRAF's multi-pronged program focus will offer customized technical assistance, capacity building, research, knowledge management, and advocacy across the infrastructure life cycle for countries at all stages of development.

About Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- CDRI was launched by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019.

- It is a partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and knowledge institutions.
- It aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.
- CDRI promotes rapid development of resilient infrastructure to respond to the Sustainable Development Goals' imperatives of expanding universal access to basic services, enabling prosperity and decent work.

E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022

- **Context:** The government notified E-waste (management) rules 2022, that will come into force from 1 April next year.

Key Highlights:

- **Mandatory for different stakeholders:** The rules will apply to every manufacturer, producer, refurbisher, dismantler and recycler involved in manufacturing, sale, transfer, purchase, refurbishing, dismantling, recycling and processing of e-waste or electrical and electronic equipment.
- **Restrict hazardous substances:** The government has restricted the use of hazardous substances in manufacturing electrical and electronic equipment (EEE).
- **Mandatory for manufacturers:** The rules mandate to reduce the use of lead, mercury, cadmium among others in the manufacturing of electronic equipment that have an adverse impact on human health and the environment.
- **Applicability:** This is applicable to all electrical devices and radiotherapy equipment, nuclear medicine equipment and accessories, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), electric toys, air conditioners, microwaves, tablets, washing machine, refrigerator and iPad among others.

- **Recyclability and Compatibility of components:** Manufacturer shall use the technology or methods so as to make the end product recyclable and shall ensure that components or parts made by different manufacturers are compatible with each other so as to reduce the quantity of e-waste.
- **Increased the range of electronic goods:** Covered laptops, mobile, cameras etc.
- **Targets for recycling:** Producers of electronic goods have to ensure at least 60% of their electronic waste is collected and recycled by 2023 with targets to increase them to 70% and 80% in 2024 and 2025, respectively. Companies will report these on an online portal.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility Certificates:** Similar to carbon credit mechanism, this will allow the offsetting of e-waste responsibility to a third party.
- **'Environmental compensation':** Companies have to provide compensation for the target they don't meet.
- **Industrial space for waste dismantling and recycling:** They will earmark industrial space for e-waste dismantling and recycling facilities, undertaking industrial skill development and establishing measures for protecting the health and safety of workers engaged in the dismantling and recycling facilities for e-waste.
- **Central Pollution Control Board:** It shall conduct random sampling of electrical and electronic equipment placed on the market to monitor and verify the compliance of reduction of hazardous substances provisions.
- **Imports regulations:** Imports or placement in the market for new electrical and electronic equipment shall be permitted only for those which are compliant with provisions laid down by the government. If a product does not comply with the e-waste management rules, the manufacturer will have to withdraw all samples from the market.
- **Exempted products:** The rule does not apply to waste batteries, packaging plastics, micro enterprises and radio-active waste, as covered under the provisions of the law.

Indian Biological Data Center (IBDC)

- **Context:** Union Minister of state for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh recently dedicated Indian Biological Data Center (IBDC) to the nation.

Key Highlights:

- As per the BIOTECH-PRIDE guidelines of the Government of India, IBDC is mandated to archive all life science data generated from publicly-funded research in India.
- Supported by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), it has been established at Regional Centre of Biotechnology (RCB), Faridabad with a data 'Disaster Recovery' site at National Informatics Centre (NIC), Bhubaneswar.
- It has a data storage capacity of about 4 petabytes and houses the 'Brahm' High Performance Computing (HPC) facility.
- The computational infrastructure at IBDC is also made available for researchers interested in performing computational-intensive analysis.
- Fundamentally, IBDC is committed to the spirit of data sharing as per FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) principles.
- IBDC has started nucleotide data submission services via two data portals viz. the 'Indian Nucleotide Data Archive (INDA)' and 'Indian Nucleotide Data Archive - Controlled Access (INDA-CA)' and has accumulated over 200 billion bases from 2,08,055 submissions from more than 50 research labs across India.
- It also hosts an online 'Dashboard' for the genomic surveillance data generated by the INSACOG labs. The dashboard provides customized data submission, access, data analysis services, and real-time SARS-CoV-2 variant monitoring across India.

23rd NOVEMBER, 2022

India-EU Intent of Cooperation Pact

- **Context:** India and the European Union signed an "Intent of Cooperation on High-Performance Computing (HPC), Weather Extremes and Climate Modeling and Quantum Technologies"

Key Highlights:

- Intent of Cooperation, aimed at establishing collaboration on HPC applications using Indian and European Supercomputers in the areas of Bio molecular medicines, Covid therapeutics, mitigating climate change, predicting natural disasters and Quantum Computing.
- The Intent of Cooperation builds further on the commitments made by both sides for deepening technological cooperation on Quantum and High-Performance Computing during the EU-India Leaders' meeting on May 8, 2021.
- HPC is tackling some of the biggest challenges in the world today. The demand for High-Performance Computing Systems is increasing rapidly in various application domains. Under this partnership, India and EU will leverage expertise from both sides to optimise HPC towards developing advanced technology solutions in multiple fields."

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

- **Context:** Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) will reduce global annual GDP by 3.8% by 2050, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said and added that it could push 24 million more people into extreme poverty.

Key Highlights:

- The WHO made the announcement to highlight the urgent need for sustained multisectoral action to prevent and contain antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
- The WHO said that preventing and combating AMR has been one of eight Flagship Priorities of the WHO South-East Asia Region since 2014. All Member States continue to implement national action plans to address AMR, and in each Member State, a multisectoral working group or coordination committee on AMR has been established, in alignment with the Global Action Plan on AMR, adopted in 2015.
- Most Member States continue to implement national monitoring systems for resistance pathogens and antimicrobial consumption as well as foster stewardship in human health.

- All Member States are enrolled in the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (GLASS) AMR and the South-East Asia Region is the only WHO Region in which all countries carry out the annual Tracking AMR Country Self-Assessment Surveys, which this year was expanded to include the environment sector for the first time.
- For this year's World Antibiotic Awareness Week (WAAW), the One Health Quadripartite-- which includes WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)-- is highlighting the urgent need to increase One Health action to address AMR, with the theme 'preventing antimicrobial resistance together'.

24th NOVEMBER, 2022

Loss and Damages (L&D) Fund

- **Context:** COP27 established a 'Loss and Damage' fund to compensate the most vulnerable countries for damages from climate-linked disasters.

Key Highlights:

- Governments took the ground-breaking decision to establish new funding arrangements, as well as a dedicated fund, to assist developing countries in responding to loss and damage.
- It is a fund created to cost rich and developed countries who are majorly responsible for polluting the environment to the poorer and least developed countries who have made negligible contribution to pollution but are more vulnerable to extreme climate events.
- The expected monetary compensation from L&D fund is estimated to be nearly \$500 billion and rising by \$200 billion annually.
- Governments also agreed to establish a 'transitional committee' to make recommendations on how to operationalize both the new funding arrangements and the fund at COP28 next year.

- The first meeting of the transitional committee is expected to take place before the end of March 2023.
- Parties also agreed on the institutional arrangements to operationalize the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage, to catalyze technical assistance to developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.
- Santiago Network will connect vulnerable developing countries with providers of technical assistance, knowledge, resources they need to address climate risks comprehensively in the context of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage.
- Serious concern was expressed that the goal of developed country Parties to mobilize jointly USD 100 billion per year by 2020 has not yet been met, with developed countries urged to meet the goal, and multilateral development banks and international financial institutions called on to mobilize climate finance.
- The Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damages, set up in 2013, was the first formal acknowledgment of the need to compensate developing countries struck by climate disasters.
- The agreement was signed by two countries in April this year.
- After the ratification, both sides will decide a date to implement the pact and customs authorities will also issue a notification a day before the implementation.
- The agreement, once implemented, will provide duty-free access to the Australian market for over 6,000 broad sectors of India, including textiles, leather, furniture, jewelry and machinery.
- Under the pact, Australia is offering zero-duty access to India for about 96.4 per cent of exports (by value) from day one. This covers many products that currently attract 4-5 per cent customs duty in Australia.
- Labour-intensive sectors which would gain immensely include textiles and apparel, few agricultural and fish products, leather, footwear, furniture, sports goods, jewelry, machinery, electrical goods and railway wagons.]
- India's goods exports to Australia stood at USD 8.3 billion and imports from the country aggregated to USD 16.75 billion in 2021-22.

India-Australian Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

- **Context:** The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has thanked Australian PM Anthony Albanese as Australian parliament approves free trade agreement with India.

Key Highlights:

- India and Australia would now implement the free trade agreement on a mutually agreed date as the Australian Parliament approved the pact between the two countries.
- The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (AI-ECTA) needed ratification by the Australian parliament before its implementation. In India, such pacts are approved by the Union Cabinet.

Karmayogi Prarambh Module

- **Context:** The Karmayogi Prarambh Module was launched by Prime Minister Modi recently for all those who were appointed under the Rojgar Mela.

Key Highlights:

- The module is an online orientation course for all new appointees in various Government departments.
- It will include a code of conduct for Government servants, workplace ethics & integrity, human resource policies and other benefits and allowances that will help them to get acclimatized to the policies and transition smoothly into the new roles.
- They will also get an opportunity to explore other courses on platform to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies.
- The Prime Minister distributed about 71,000 appointment letters to newly inducted recruits under Rojgar Mela via video conferencing.

- The Rozgar Mela is expected to act as a catalyst in furthering employment generation and providing meaningful opportunities to the youth for their empowerment as well as direct participation in national development.
- Earlier in October, 75,000 appointment letters were handed over to newly inducted appointees under Rozgar Mela.
- The physical copies of the appointment letters to the new appointees will be handed over at 45 locations across the country (except Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh).
- In addition to the categories of posts filled earlier, posts of teachers, lecturers, nurses, nursing officers, doctors, pharmacists, radiographers and other technical and paramedical posts are also being filled.
- A significant number of posts are being filled by the Ministry of Home Affairs in various Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF).

25th NOVEMBER, 2022

India's First Center of Excellence for Green Port and Shipping

- **Context:** The first National Center of Excellence for Green Port & Shipping (NCoEGPS) in India was unveiled recently by the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal.

Key Highlights:

- This is a significant effort on the part of the Ministry of Ports, and Shipping to provide greener solutions.
- The Deendayal Port Authority Kandla, Paradip Port Authority, Paradip, V.O Chidambaranar Port Authority, Thoothukudi and Cochin Shipyard Limited, Kochi have all extended their support to the ministry to set up this centre. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is the knowledge and implementation partner for this project.

- The center wants to promote carbon neutrality and the circular economy (CE) in India's maritime industry by creating a legislative framework and road map for adopting alternative technologies. India wants to expand the current contribution of renewable energy—less than 10%—to 60% of the total electricity required by each of its main ports. This will be done using energy produced by the sun and the wind.

UNEP's Champions of the Earth, 2022

- **Context:** India's Purnima Devi Barman, an Assam-based wildlife biologist, is one of the five 'Champions of the Earth' for this year's United Nations Environment Programme.

Key Highlights:

- The annual awards are the highest environmental honour that the UNEP confers on individuals and organisations whose actions have a "transformative impact" on the environment. She has been honoured in the Entrepreneurial Vision category.
- The other honourees include Arcenciel (Lebanon); Constantino (Tino) Aucca Chutas (Peru); Sir Partha Dasgupta of the United Kingdom and Cecile Bibiane Ndjebet (Cameroon).

Lachit Barphukan

- **Context:** The Prime Minister greeted the nation on the occasion of Lachit Diwas and said, this Lachit Diwas is special because it marks the 400th birth anniversary of the great Ahom general Lachit Barphukan.

Key Highlights:

- Lachit Barphukan was a famous General of the Royal Army of the Ahom Kingdom of Assam, who defeated the Mughals and successfully halted the ever-expanding ambitions of the Mughals under Aurangzeb. Lachit Barphukan inspired the Assamese soldiers in the Battle of Saraighat fought in 1671, and delivered a crushing and humiliating defeat to the Mughals.

- The Assam government organized three-daylong events in the national capital to let people know more on the valor and patriotism of Lachit Barphukan.
- Union Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the exhibition on the occasion highlighting the life and achievement of the Ahom dynasty and Lachit Barphukan among others.
- Sitharaman has urged the Assam government to hold such exhibitions across the country to let people know about the achievement of the Ahom kingdom and the valor of Lachit Barphukan.
- She has also requested the Ministry of Culture to join hands with the Assam government in its endeavor. Ms. Sitharaman said that the heroics of Lachit Barphukan inspired and motivated her.

26th NOVEMBER, 2022

IORA Council of Ministers meeting

- **Context:** India participated in the 22nd Council of Ministers's meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) held at Dhaka in Bangladesh.

Key Highlights:

- India reaffirms strong commitment to strengthen IORA to promote peace, security and prosperity in Indian Ocean Region and in Indo-Pacific.
- IORA priority areas of Disaster Risk Management and Science, Technology and Innovation towards capacity building and strengthening of IORA Secretariat.
- IORA is the largest and pre-eminent organization in the Indian Ocean Region with 23 Members and 10 Dialogue Partners. The Council of Ministers adopted the IORA's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific' which would guide enhancement of IORA's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

CITES CoP 19

- **Context:** The 19th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 19) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and

Flora (CITES) is being held at Panama City. At CoP 19, India's proposal for induction of fresh water turtle Batagur kachuga earned wide support of the parties in CoP 19 of CITES. It was widely appreciated by the parties and well accepted when introduced.

Key Highlights:

- CITES lauded and recorded the works done by the India in the area of conservation of tortoises and fresh water turtles and efforts made in combating wildlife crime and illegal trade of turtles in the country.
- At CITES CoP 19, India reiterated its commitment regarding conserving tortoises and fresh water turtles in the country. India also highlighted that many of the species of turtles and freshwater tortoises which are recognized as critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable or near threatened are already included in Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and given high degree of protection.
- India while intervening pressed upon that listing of many such species in CITES Appendix II will further enhance the protection of the species from getting indiscriminately and illegally traded worldwide.

India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

- **Context:** Government of India, and Secretary General of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), held a Joint Press Conference, to announce the intent to pursue negotiations on the India-GCC FTA.

Key highlights:

- The FTA is envisaged to be a modern, comprehensive Agreement with substantial coverage of goods and services. Both sides emphasized that the FTA will create new jobs, raise living standards, and provide wider social and economic opportunities in India and all the GCC countries. Both sides agreed to significantly expand and diversify the trade basket in line with the enormous potential that exists on account of the complementary business and economic ecosystems of India and the GCC.

- It may be noted that the GCC is currently India's largest trading partner with bilateral trade in FY 2021-22 valued at over USD 154 billion with exports valued at approximately USD 44 billion and imports of around USD 110 billion (non-oil exports of USD 33.8 Billion and non-oil imports of USD 37.2 Billion). Bilateral trade in services between India and the GCC was valued at around USD 14 billion in FY 2021-22, with exports valued at USD 5.5 Billion and imports at USD 8.3 Billion.
- GCC countries contribute almost 35% of India's oil imports and 70% of gas imports. India's overall crude oil imports from the GCC in 2021-22 were about \$48 billion, while LNG and LPG imports in 2021-22 were about \$21 billion. Investments from the GCC in India are currently valued at over USD 18 billion.
- To strengthen e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has launched eGramSwaraj, a user friendly web-based portal. eGramSwaraj aims to bring in better transparency in the decentralised planning, progress reporting and work-based accounting.

Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana

- **Context:** An RTI enquiry revealed that bad loans under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana for all banks since the launch of the scheme, added up to Rs 46,053.39 crore as on June 30, 2022 and this is just 3.38 per cent of the total disbursements of Rs 13.64 lakh crore under the scheme during the period.

Key Highlights:

- Over seven years since launch, borrowers of Mudra loans – essentially micro and small enterprises – have paid their EMIs (equated monthly instalments) to banks.
- Non-performing assets of banks for Mudra loans – including those extended during the Covid-19 pandemic when small enterprises were the worst hit – are lower than the average NPAs of the sector as a whole, data obtained under the Right to Information Act reveals.
- Nearly 5,000 crore of loans or 16.32 per cent of the total bank assets in Maharashtra under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana to help small businesses are unpaid as of June 2022, as per official data.
- Parbhani district in the backward Marathwada region of Maharashtra has the highest non-performing assets (NPAs) at 60.54 per cent.
- As per the data, 30,019 crore was taken as loan under the MUDRA scheme as of June 2022 by more than 52 lakh borrowers in Maharashtra. Out of this, 4,898 crore taken by 6.19 lakh borrowers has been classified as NPAs.

27th NOVEMBER, 2022

e-Panchayat Mission Mode Projects

- **Context:** eGramSwaraj and Audit Online of Ministry of Panchayati Raj wins Gold Award under the National Awards for e-Governance.

Key Highlights:

- e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (eGramSwaraj and AuditOnline) of Ministry of Panchayati Raj has won the GOLD AWARD under the category "Excellence in Government Process Re-engineering for Digital Transformation" of the National Awards for e-Governance.
- The award is a recognition of the excellent and exemplary work done by Team eGovernance and supported by Team NIC-MoPR. Various stakeholders, especially Panchayati Raj Institutions which adopted e-Panchayat applications very fast, have helped in making the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project successful by strengthening the Panchayati Raj System and making it effective, transparent and efficient.

- As far as Mudra loan is concerned, out of the total outstanding of Rs 6,204 crore as on March, Rs 695.50 crore was NPA, which is 11.24 per cent of the total outstanding loan in Haryana. The NPA of the public sector banks was over 18.63 per cent, followed by Sarv Haryana Gramin Bank (10.84 per cent) and private sector banks (3.55 per cent).

28th NOVEMBER, 2022

China's zero Covid Policy

- **Context:** China is following a policy it calls "dynamic zero" - taking action wherever COVID flares up in order to eradicate it. China's government says this saves lives, because uncontrolled outbreaks would put many vulnerable people at risk, including the elderly.

Key Highlights:

- To deal with the coronavirus, nations have followed various strategies. The West has primarily followed the vaccine-powered living with the virus approach, which is essentially based on the belief that the virus is here to stay, and its complete elimination is not possible, at least in near future, therefore nations must continue with their functioning adapting to this new normal. China is having a difficult time accepting this fact and is adhering to a more aggressive approach with the "zero COVID" policy, which involves complete control and maximum suppression for the elimination of the virus by using aggressive public health measures, such as contact-tracing, social isolation, mass testing, and lockdowns.
- In China, under this policy, cities are directed to impose stringent lockdowns and follow strict measures of social isolation even if only a small number of cases are reported.
- The objective of the strategy is to ensure there are no new infections and the virus is eliminated so that the nation can resume its usual social and economic affairs.

- To eliminate the virus, draconian measures were getting implemented such as separating families after testing positive and placing people in isolation. These measures are creating emotional turmoil among the general public as post-separation, the essential medical treatments are not prompt due to administrative flaws, thus extending the period of separation.
- There are also reports of incidents where individuals who tested negative were taken to quarantine facilities and were forced to give access to their residence to disinfect the premises.
- People are expressing resentment towards the heavy-handedness of the government. Videos are circulating on social media platforms of the public pleading for help, for reasons such as lack of food, delay in treatment, infants getting separated from their parents, and more. However, the authorities in China have denied all allegations and have reiterated that the policy is essential for saving lives.

Austra-Hind 2022 Military Exercise

- **Context:** Bilateral training exercise between the armies of India and Australia began in Rajasthan. The 'Austra Hind 22' exercise is scheduled from November 28 to December 11.

Key Highlights:

- This is the first exercise in the AUSTRALIA HIND series, with all arms and services contingents from both armies participating.
- According to the Defence Ministry, it will be a yearly event held alternately in India and Australia. The exercise aims to strengthen military ties, share best practises and promote the ability to work together.
- The two armies will be able to share best practises in tactics, techniques, and procedures for conducting tactical operations at the company and platoon levels to neutralise hostile threats during this joint exercise.
- The armies of India and Australia are to engage in variety of tasks during the exercise, including joint planning, joint tactical drills, sharing the fundamentals of special weapons skills, and raiding a hostile target.

29TH NOVEMBER, 2022

SHAKTI Scheme

- **Context:** The Ministry of Power launched a scheme for the procurement of aggregate power of 4500 MW for five years under B (v) of the SHAKTI (Scheme for Harnessing and Allocating Koyala Transparently in India) Policy.

Key Highlights:

- The aim of the Shakti scheme is to ensure the availability of coal to all the thermal power Plants in India, in a way that is transparent and objective and at the same time, it aims to transfer the benefits of linkage coal to the end consumers.
- The scheme is supposed to be beneficial not just for the infrastructure sector, but also for the public sector banks which have huge loans unpaid at the end of the power companies.
- The scheme also aims to reduce the dependence on imported coal and promote domestic industries.

SARAS 3 Telescope

- **Context:** SARAS 3, a radio telescope designed and built at the Raman Research Institute (RRI) has provided clues to the nature of the Universe's first stars and galaxies.

Key Highlights:

- Scientists have determined properties of radio luminous galaxies formed just 200 million years post the Big Bang, a period known as the Cosmic Dawn thus providing an insight to the properties of the earliest radio loud galaxies that are usually powered by supermassive black holes.
- In a first-of-its-kind work, using data from SARAS 3, researchers from the Raman Research Institute (RRI), Bengaluru, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Australia, along with collaborators at the University of Cambridge and the University of Tel-Aviv, estimated

the energy output, luminosity, and masses of the first generation of galaxies that are bright in radio wavelengths.

- The results from the SARAS 3 telescope are the first time that radio observations of the averaged 21-centimeter line have been able to provide an insight to the properties of the earliest radio loud galaxies that are usually powered by supermassive black holes,. This work takes forward the results from SARAS 2, which was the first to inform the properties of earliest stars and galaxies.
- SARAS 3 has improved our understanding of astrophysics of Cosmic Dawn, telling us that less than 3 percent of the gaseous matter within early galaxies was converted into stars, and that the earliest galaxies that were bright in radio emission were also strong in X-rays, which heated the cosmic gas in and around the early galaxies," said Singh, one of the authors of the paper titled 'Astrophysical Constraints from the SARAS 3 non-detection of the Cosmic Dawn Sky-Averaged 21 cm Signal'.

Kolkali Folk Art

- **Context:** Kolkali folk art became an attraction at recently conducted Kerala school youth festival in Kerala which is a biggest cultural event in Asia.

About Kolkali folk art:

- Kolkali is a folk art performed in Malabar region of Kerala India.
- The dance performers move in a circle, striking small sticks and keeping rhythm with special steps. The circle expands and contracts as the dance progress. The accompanying music gradually rises in pitch and the dance reaches its climax.
- Kolkali is now a popular event in Kerala School Kalolsavam, which is considered as the biggest cultural event of Asia. There are two styles of Kolkali: the actual Kolkali and Thekkan Koladi. The actual Kolkali consists of Thacholikali , Rajasooyam etc. The actual kolkali is almost at verge of extinction and Thekkan Koladi is still alive as it is added in state kololsavams.

30th NOVEMBER, 2022

RBI's Retail Digital Rupee

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to launch the first pilot for the retail version of the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC-R)

Key Highlights:

- CBDC-R is an electronic version of cash primarily meant for retail consumption. Retail CBDC can provide access to safe money for payment and settlement as it is a direct liability of the central bank
- The retail pilot project will initially cover four cities — Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru and Bhubaneswar. It will be subsequently extended to Ahmedabad, Gangtok, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Indore, Kochi, Lucknow, Patna, and Shimla.
- The pilot project will be in the form of a digital token that represents legal tender. It will be issued in the same denominations as paper currency and coins, and will be distributed through intermediaries, i.e. banks. Users will be able to transact with e-R through a digital wallet offered by the participating banks and stored on mobile phones/devices.
- The transactions using the retail CBDC can be both person-to-person as well as person-to-merchant, and payments can be made using QR codes shown at merchant locations.
- The retail CBDC will not earn any interest. It can be converted into other forms of money such as bank deposits

About CBDC

A CBDC is a legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form. It is exchangeable at par with existing currency.

Samanvay 2022

Indian Air Force conducted the Annual Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise "Samanvay 2022" at Air Force Station in Agra.

Key Highlights:

- The exercise aims to provide a unique platform for the exchange of domain knowledge, experience and best practices with the participating Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries. Various representatives of the ASEAN countries are supposed to participate in the exercise.
- The exercise includes assessing the efficacy of institutional Disaster Management structures and contingency measures and to build a deep understanding of it.
- In India various national and regional stakeholders are involved in Disaster Management. The exercise will promote a synergistic approach by involving various institutions like the Armed Forces, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Border Roads Organisation (BRO), India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Civil Administration.
- The exercise would aid in the evolution of institutional frameworks for effective communication, interoperability, cooperation and their application for the successful conduct of HADR.

FSSAI approved Yak As 'Food Animal'

The Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) has approved the Himalayan Yak as a 'food animal'.

Key Highlights:

- The move is expected to help check the decline in the population of the high-altitude bovine animal by making it a part of the conventional milk and meat industry
- Food Animals are those that are raised and used for food production or consumption by humans.
- The NRC-Yak had in 2021 submitted a proposal to the FSSAI, for considering the yak as a food animal. However, The FSSAI responded with an official approval recently after a recommendation from the department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

- The animal play multi-dimensional socio-cultural-economic role for the pastoral nomads who rear yaks mainly for earning their nutritional and livelihood security due to virtual inexistence of other agricultural activity in the high reaches of Himalayan region.
- FSSAI's recognition of Yak as food producing animal will help farmers benefit economically for rearing the animal and it will open up several vistas of economic benefits for both farmers and food processors

About Himalayan Yak

- Yaks are reared under transhumance system which is primitive, unorganised and full of hardship.
- Yak milk is highly nutritious, rich in fat, contain essential minerals and have medicinal value.
- Yak farmers produce various traditional meat products. These products are confined to local community level, produced and sold locally, the director said, adding that Yak meat is known to be very lean and it is better than beef.

