



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

APRIL, 2023

Week-1

1-7 April, 2023

★★ Useful for ★★

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

1st APRIL, 2023

New India Literacy Program (NLIP)

- **Context:** 22.7 lakh adults from 10 states and union territories in India became qualified as literate adults in 2022-23 by passing an assessment test conducted under New India Literacy Program (NLIP).

Key Highlights:

- NILP has been allocated 150 crore for 2022-23 of which nearly 80 crore was released to the States to kickstart the scheme.
- This budget does not include funds to hire teachers, meaning that the entire scheme is volunteer-driven.
- To bridge this gap, the Education Ministry encourages students and teachers to volunteer their time to teach adults. As an incentive for college students, a credit-based framework is being put in place with the help of the University Grants Commission.
- NLIP is the first government scheme that covers the missing age group of 15 to 18-year-old children who are at risk of dropping out of school.
- The Right to Education covers children till 14 years and adult literacy programmes target persons over 18 years.

About (New India) Literacy Programme:

- Its Nodal Ministry is Ministry of Education
- It is a centrally-sponsored Scheme
- Its aim is to support the States and Union Territories in promoting literacy among non-literates in the age group of 15 and above across the country.
- The scheme aims to cover 5 crore non-literates during the implementation period from 2022-23 to 2026-27.
- The scheme has five components namely: Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Critical Life Skills, Vocational Skills Development, Basic Education and Continuing Education.

Piezoelectric Effect

- **Context:** For the first time, scientists have reported evidence of the piezoelectric effect in liquids.

Key Highlights:

- The discovery of Piezoelectric effect in liquids opens the door to applications that have previously not been accessible with solid-state materials and are more readily recyclable and in many instances pose fewer environmental issues than many currently used piezoelectric materials.
- The liquids also displayed the inverse piezoelectric effect which means they became distorted when an electric charge was applied, this fact could be used to control how the liquids bent light passing through them by passing different currents through them.
- Using this simple control mechanism, vials of these liquids could be used for lenses with dynamic focusing abilities
- The Piezoelectric effect has been known for 143 years and in this time has been observed only in solids.
- The reason the piezoelectric effect has only been expected in solids thus far is that the body being squeezed needs to have an organized structure, like the pyramids of quartz. Liquids don't have such structure; instead, they take the shape of their container.

About Piezoelectric Effect:

- Piezoelectric Effect is the ability of certain materials to generate an electric charge in response to applied mechanical stress.
- One of the unique characteristics of the piezoelectric effect is that it is reversible. This means materials exhibiting the direct piezoelectric effect (the generation of electricity when stress is applied) also exhibit the converse piezoelectric effect (the generation of stress when an electric field is applied).

- Quartz is the most famous piezoelectric crystal. It is used in this capacity in analog wristwatches and clocks. Such crystals are used in cigarette lighters, electric guitars, TV remote controls, audio transducers, and other instruments where converting mechanical stress to a current is useful.
- It is believed that the Piezoelectric effect was discovered in 1880, in quartz, by Jacques and Pierre Curie.

EOS-06 Satellite

- **Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has released images of Earth captured by the EOS-06 satellite.

Key Highlights:

- The images are generated by the ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC). NRSC/ISRO has generated a global False Colour Composite (FCC) mosaic from the images captured by the Ocean Colour Monitor (OCM) payload on board EOS-06.
- Mosaic with 1 km spatial resolution is generated by combining 2939 individual images, after processing 300 GB data to show the Earth as seen during February 1 and 15.
- The EOS-06 third generation satellite in the Oceansat series was launched by ISRO onboard the PSLV-C54 along with eight Nano-satellites on November 26, 2022.
- EOS-06 provides continued services of Oceansat-2 with enhanced payload capability and carries four payloads OCM-, Sea Surface Temperature Monitor, Ku-Band Scatterometer, and ARGOS.
- The EOS-06 is envisaged to observe ocean colour data, sea surface temperature and wind vector data to use in Oceanography, climatic and meteorological applications.
- The satellite also supports value added products such as potential fishing zones using chlorophyll, SST and wind speed and land based geophysical parameters

2nd APRIL, 2023

Foreign Trade Policy, 2023

- **Context:** The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry has launched the Foreign Trade Policy 2023.

Key Highlights:

- Foreign Trade Policy (2023) is a policy document which is based on continuity of time-tested schemes facilitating exports as well as a document which is nimble and responsive to the requirements of trade. It is based on principles of 'trust' and 'partnership' with exporters.
- The policy is based on these 4 pillars-- Incentive to Remission, Export promotion through collaboration – Exporters, States, Districts, Indian Missions, Ease of doing business, reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives and Emerging Areas – E-Commerce Developing Districts as Export Hubs and streamlining SCOMET policy.
- This policy comes after much delay as the last Foreign Trade Policy effective from 2015-20 saw four extensions amid major global supply chain disruptions such as covid-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war.
- The policy emphasizes export promotion and development, moving away from an incentive regime to a regime which is facilitating, based on technology interface and principles of collaboration. Reduction in fee structures and IT-based schemes will make it easier for MSMEs and others to access export benefits.
- Duty exemption schemes for export production will now be implemented through Regional Offices in a rule-based IT system environment, eliminating the need for manual interface.
- Four new towns, namely Faridabad, Mirzapur, Moradabad, and Varanasi, have been designated as Towns of Export Excellence (TEE) in addition to the existing 39 towns.

- The TEEs will have priority access to export promotion funds under the Market Access Initiative (MAI) scheme. It will also be able to avail Common Service Provider (CSP) benefits for export fulfillment under the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme
- Exporter firms recognized with 'status' based on export performance will now be partners in capacity-building initiatives on a best-endeavour basis. 2-star and above status holders would be encouraged to provide trade-related training based on a model curriculum to interested individuals.
- The FTP aims at building partnerships with State governments and taking forward the Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) initiative. This would promote exports at the district level and accelerate the development of the grassroots trade ecosystem.
- India is placing more emphasis on the "export control" regime as its integration with export control regime countries strengthens.
- There is a wider outreach and understanding of SCOMET (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies) among stakeholders.
- E-commerce exports are a promising category that requires distinct policy interventions from traditional offline trade. Various estimates suggest India's e-commerce export potential in the range of \$200 to \$300 billion by 2030.
- FTP 2023 outlines the intent and roadmap for establishing e-commerce hubs and related elements.
- Advance authorization Scheme accessed by Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) units provides duty-free import of raw materials for manufacturing export items.
- Based on interactions with industry and Export Promotion councils, certain facilitation provisions have been added in the FTP 2023.
- Government is strongly committed to reducing litigation and fostering trust-based relationships to help alleviate the issues faced by exporters. In line with "Vivaad se Vishwaas" initiative which sought to settle

tax disputes amicably, the government is introducing a special one-time Amnesty Scheme under the FTP 2023 to address default on Export Obligations. This scheme is intended to provide relief to exporters who have been unable to meet their obligations under EPCG and Advance Authorizations.

Atal Innovation Mission

- **Context:** Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog has launched three new resources aimed at fostering innovation and creativity among India's youth.

Key Highlights:

The three new resources launched under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):

- **ATL Tinkering Curriculum** is a structured learning pathway designed to help students develop and hone their innovation skills.
 - The curriculum has been developed in collaboration with Makerghat and covers a wide range of concepts, from basic electronics and mechanics to cutting-edge technologies such as 3D printing and the Internet of Things.
 - With this curriculum, students will be encouraged to identify and design creative solutions to everyday problems through hands-on, experiential learning.
- **Equipment Manual** provides comprehensive guidance on the equipment provided in the Atal Tinkering Labs in schools across the country.
 - The manual contains detailed information about each equipment and tool, including the specifications, applications, and examples of projects that can be built using them.
 - It is a valuable resource for anyone looking to explore the possibilities of innovation and problem-solving.
- **Calendar of Activities for 2023-24** outlines a year-long schedule of events, workshops, and competitions aimed at promoting innovation and entrepreneurship among students.

3rd APRIL, 2023

Kangra Tea: European GI tag

- **Context:** Himachal Pradesh's Kangra Tea has got a European Union Geographical Indication Tag (GI tag).

Key Highlights:

- The European Commission (EC) has awarded protected geographical indication (PGI) status to Kangra tea, a unique variety of tea grown in the Kangra district of India's Himachal Pradesh.
- It is a type of tea derived from the leaves, buds and tender stems of the *Camellia sinensis* species as cultivated in the Kangra valley (Himachal Pradesh, India).
- Kangra tea is grown 900-1,400 meters above sea level, on the slopes of the Dhauladhar mountain range in the Western Himalayas.
- It is planted from seed stock raised in the Kangra valley and other selected varieties for the region.
- The Kangra area yearly receives high amounts of rainfall. For example, the city of Dharmshala and its surrounding areas are recorded to be the second highest rain-receiving areas after Mawsynram of Meghalaya state in India.
- 'Kangra tea' leaves contain up to 13% of catechins and up to 3% of caffeine and amino acids such as theanine, glutamine, and tryptophan.
- It is produced using high efficiency whole leaf-orthodox manufacture. It means that 'Kangra tea' is made up of whole leaf and flavour-enriched leaves with the highest content of polyphenols (catechins).
- The tag will help Kangra tea to get an opportunity to enter the European market

Eravikulam National Park

- **Context:** Eravikulam National Park (ENP) in Munnar, has set up a Fernarium inside the park.

Key Highlights:

- Eravikulam National Park (ENP), the natural habitat of Nilgiri tahr in Munnar, has a new attraction that is a Fernarium set up inside the park this is the first time such a fern collection has been established in the hill station.
- Eravikulam National Park is located in the Western Ghats of India, in the state of Kerala.
- The park was initially established as a game sanctuary in 1975 to protect the endangered Nilgiri tahr, a type of mountain goat that is endemic to the Western Ghats.
- In 1978, the sanctuary was converted into a national park, covering an area of 97 square kilometers.
- It is home to a variety of wildlife, including not only the Nilgiri tahr but also macaques, leopards, and several species of birds. The park is also known for its lush forests, rolling grasslands, and cascading waterfalls.

India's Unemployment Rate

- **Context:** India's unemployment rate has risen to a three-month high of 7.8% in March 2023, according to the latest data released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).

Key Highlights:

- This marks an increase from the 7.2% unemployment rate recorded in February and represents a setback for the country's efforts to revive its economy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The unemployment rate in urban areas of India reached 8.4%, while in rural areas it stood at 7.5 per cent, as per the available data.
- The CMIE managing director said that the decline in India's labor market conditions led to a drop in the employment rate from 36.9 per cent in February to 36.7 per cent in March.
- In March, unemployment was the highest in Haryana at 26.8 per cent. It was closely followed by Rajasthan at 26.4 per cent, Jammu and Kashmir at 23.1 per cent, Sikkim 20.7 per cent, Bihar 17.6 per cent and Jharkhand 17.5 per cent.

4th APRIL, 2023

National Electricity Plan 2022-27

- **Context:** National Electricity Plan (NEP) 2022-27 has been rolled out which marks a discernible reversal in the policy thrust from its last edition.

Key Highlights:

- The Electricity Act 2003 stipulates that the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) shall prepare a National Electricity Plan in accordance with the National Electricity Policy and notify such plan once in 5 years.
- The first plan was notified in 2007, 2nd in 2013 and the third National Electricity Plan (notified in 2018) covers the detailed Plan for 2017-22 and the prospective Plan for 2022-27.
- The fresh draft, in a tacit admission of the ground realities, cites the need for fresh coal-based capacity ranging from 17 GW to nearly 28 GW till 2031-32.
- There is a projected battery storage requirement in 2031-32 of between 51 GW to 84 GW with a daily usage rate of 5 hours.
- Battery Energy Storage systems (BESS) especially based on Lithium-ion batteries are one of the storage options.
- The cost of the BESS is reducing in an unprecedented way making it one of the preferred options for deployment.
- BESS has various advantages of balancing the grid against load fluctuations, intermittency in generation etc.
- Hybrid generation models blended with off-stream pumped storage projects, where every day, after the sun rises and solar output is more than the absorbing capacity of the grid, the rest of the solar generation can be diverted to water-based energy storage or pump storage plants (PSP). This will basically perform solar energy shifts and provide backup power.

Einstein Tile

- **Context:** A group of four scientists have discovered an entirely new shape which has 13 sides and has named it "the hat". It is the first 'Einstein' tile to have been found.

Key Highlights:

- It is a shape that could be singularly used to create a non-repeating (aperiodic) pattern on an infinitely large plane.
- A set of tile types is considered to be aperiodic if copies of these tiles can only form patterns without repetition.
- The name bears no connection to Albert Einstein but means 'one stone' in German
- The discovery has answered a long-standing question in the field of plane geometry where one tries to tile a plane in different ways. While several ways tiling exists in nature and the real world (think bathroom tiles or the hexagons of honeycomb), these are periodic and have a translation symmetry—the size, shape and angle remain the same, only the location changes.
- Aperiodic tiling will help physicists and chemists understand the structure and behaviour of quasicrystals, structures in which the atoms are ordered but do not have a repeating pattern.
- The newly discovered tile might be a springboard for innovative art.

Competition Amendment Bill, 2023

- **Context:** The upper house (Rajya Sabha) of the Indian parliament passed the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2023, to amend the Competition Act, 2000.

Key Highlights:

- The Bill seeks to amend the Competition Act, 2002 which gives the Competition Commission of India (CCI) its powers to prevent practices that harm competition and the interests of consumers.

- The Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2023, is the most significant change to the Competition Act in the last 20 years.
- It aims to bring the competition regime up to speed with the changes in how businesses operate currently, especially in the digital markets. It incorporates many of the changes proposed by the Competition Law Review Committee.
- The Bill seeks to define 'turnover' for the purpose of penalty as global turnover derived from all the products and services by a person or an enterprise.
- The idea is to levy a penalty as a percentage of global turnover of the offending company, moving away from the current practice of levying a part of the local or relevant market turnover as penalty.
- The Bill decriminalises certain offences under the Act by changing the nature of punishment from imposition of fine to civil penalties.
- These offences include failure to comply with orders of the CCI and directions of the Director General related to anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position.
- The new provisions expand the scope of CCI's merger regulation by bringing deals worth more than 2,000 crore requiring regulatory clearance.
- The amendment introduces a scheme for commitment and settlement which is meant to reduce litigation by way of negotiated settlements.
- This scheme is available to cases of anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominance, but not to cartels.
- By reducing the use of the US dollar, countries can reduce the influence of US monetary policy on their own economies.

5th APRIL, 2023

Prosopis chilensis

- **Context:** According to an avian distribution study, *Prosopis chilensis*, an alien invasive plant is threatening to pulverise native vegetation across 21 islands in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve (GoMBR).

Key Highlights:

- *Prosopis chilensis* is a drought-resistant plant native to the arid regions of four South American countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Peru.
- It is a small to medium-sized legume tree that grows up to 12 m in height and 1 m in diameter. It is also known as Chilean mesquite.
- The study found the *Prosopis chilensis* in seven or eight islands. This will slowly kill the native trees and cause irreparable damage to the mangroves and also create indiscriminate destruction of marine life.
- The study could not find any major studies on the invasiveness of this species or how it came to India.

About Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve:

- This Biosphere Reserve encompasses a chain of 21 islands (2 islands already submerged) and adjoining coral reefs off the coasts of the Ramanathapuram and the Tuticorin districts of Tamil Nadu.
- It is India's first marine biosphere reserve. It is also the first maritime biosphere reserve in South and South East Asia.
- It is one of the important habitats for coastal birds migrating as far as the Arctic Circle. The 21 islands also serve as resting places for birds migrating to and from the nearby Sri Lankan islands.
- Gulf of Mannar region in Tamil Nadu is one of the four major coral reef areas. The others are the Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat, Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

SLINEX-23

- **Context:** The 10th annual SLINEX-2023 bilateral maritime exercise between India and Sri Lanka has commenced in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Key Highlights:

- The exercise is divided into two phases, the Harbour Phase and the Sea Phase, each lasting three days.
- The Indian Navy is represented by INS Kiltan and INS Savitri, while the Sri Lanka Navy is represented by SLNS Vijayabahu and SLNS Samudura.

- In addition, the exercise also includes participation from the Indian Navy's Chetak helicopter and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft, as well as Sri Lanka Air Force's Dornier and BEL 412 helicopters.
- The exercise will also feature the Special Forces of both navies working together.
- Vietnam pledged to develop policies for major river basins management by 2025 and clean running water by 2030
- The African Union Commission and Continental Africa Investment Programme (AIP) aims to close Africa's water investments gap by mobilising at least \$30 billion per year by 2030.
- The EU aims to support 70 million individuals to an improved drinking water source and sanitation facility by 2030.
- Switzerland submitted 5 commitments in the areas of Water Convention and transboundary cooperation.

U.N. Water Conference 2023

- **Context:** The 2023 UN Water Conference took place at UN Headquarters in New York

Key Highlights:

- The 2023 UN Water Conference was co-hosted by Tajikistan and the Netherlands. Its aim is to support the achievement of internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The Conference was held after a gap of 46 years. It coincided with the review of Implementation of the UN Decade for Action on Water and Sanitation (2018-2028).
- The 1977 conference resulted in the first global 'Action Plan' recognising that all peoples, whatever their stage of development and social and economic conditions, have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs.
- This declaration led to several decades of global funding and concerted effort to provide drinking water and sanitation for all.

Initiatives taken at the Conference:

- 700 voluntary commitments to form the Water Action Agenda.
- USA announced a commitment of up to \$49 billion in investments to support climate resilient water and sanitation infrastructure and services
- Japan announced that it will contribute 500 billion yen to the solution of water-related social issues faced by the Asia-Pacific region by developing quality Infrastructure

6th APRIL, 2023

Kathua's Basohli Painting

- **Context:** The world-famous 'Basohli Painting' from Kathua district has obtained the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag. This is the first time in the history of GI registration that the Jammu region got a GI tag for handicrafts.

Key Highlights:

- Basohli Painting have perfect geometrical patterns, bright colours and glossy enamel.
- The figures in the paintings are shown clad in rich costumes, stylised faces and large bulging eyes lending unique individuality to these paintings.
- These are painted on paper, cloth, or wood using natural pigments and dyes. Ochre yellow, brown, and green grounds are the predominant colours.
- Basohli Painting originates in Basholi region of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It is popular for its miniature art style with vivid, evocative colours, bold lines, and deep-set facial patterns.
- The Basholi painting style flourished during the 17th and 18th centuries under the patronage of local rulers and wealthy merchants.

- The portraits of local rulers, Radha-Krishna, and Madhava-Malati love themes and themes from the Bhagavata Purana.
- It is considered the first school of Pahari paintings.

India Justice Report, 2022

- **Context:** Recently, in the India Justice Report (IJR) 2022 the State of Karnataka has achieved the top rank.

Key Highlights:

- The India Justice Report (IJR) was initiated by Tata Trusts in 2019, and this is the third edition. The foundation's partners include the Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS-Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and How India Lives, IJR's data partner.
- This report is based on overall data of 4 pillars of justice delivery namely Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid.
- The 3rd edition also assesses the capacity of the 25 State Human Rights Commissions in the country separately.

Key Findings of the report:

- As of December 2022, against a sanctioned strength of 1,108 judges, the High Courts were functioning with only 778 judges.
- The subordinate courts were found functioning with 19,288 judges against a sanctioned strength of 24,631 judges.
- The number of cases pending per judge is rising in most States over the past five years.
- At High Court level: Uttar Pradesh has the highest average pendency – cases remain pending for an average of 11.34 years, West Bengal for 9.9 years. The lowest average High Court pendency is in Tripura (1 year), Sikkim (1.9 years) and Meghalaya (2.1 years).

- The number of cases a judge has to deal with has steadily increased.
- Between 2018 and 2022, the caseload per judge increased in 22 States and Union Territories.
- The case clearance rate (CCR), or the number of cases disposed of in a year measured against the number filed in that year, is a common metric used to determine the rate at which cases are disposed of.
- The report found that the High Courts are clearing more cases annually than the subordinate courts.
- Between 2018-19 and 2022, the national average improved by six percentage points (88.5% to 94.6%) in High Courts, but declined by 3.6 points in lower courts (93% to 89.4%).
- Tripura is the only State where the CCR in district courts remained above 100%, with the exception of 2020 — the year of the pandemic.
- Nationally, the number of court halls appears sufficient for the number of actual judges.
- However, that space will become a problem if all the sanctioned posts are filled.
- caste-based reservations vary from State to State, at the district court level, no State or Union Territory could fully meet all its Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes quotas.
- State-wise data on caste diversity in High Courts remains unavailable.
- There are more women judges at the district court level than at the High Court level, with 35% of the total number of judges at the district court level and only 13% of judges in the High Courts across the country being women.
- Goa, with 70%, has the highest percentage of women judges at subordinate courts, followed by Meghalaya and Nagaland at 63% each.
- Among the High Courts, Sikkim, with a total strength of just three judges, has the highest national average at 33.3% of women judges.
- Bihar, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Uttarakhand continued to have no women judges in their High Courts.

7th APRIL, 2023

Open-Source Seeds Movement

- **Context:** As Farmers have innovated and shared seeds without any intellectual property rights (IPR) for centuries. They also haven't sought exclusive rights over seeds and germplasm to prevent others from innovating on the seeds. However, with the emergence of the global IPR regime over plant varieties, there is a dire need to 'open-source' seeds.

Key Highlights:

- Open-Source Seeds concept aims to maintain open access to global plant genetic resources ensuring its accessibility to all farmers, plant breeders and communities for this generation and all to come.
- It affirms that plant genetics and their physical traits cannot, and should not, be owned by individuals or corporations. In other words, plants should never be privatized or restricted because they are a collective resource.
- In India, the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA), Hyderabad, developed an open-source model that included an agreement between CSA and the recipient of the seed/germplasm.
- it can be used in farmer-led seed conservation and distribution systems. There are many traditional-variety conservation and sharing initiatives in India involving farmers.
- it can also be used to promote farmer-led participatory plant-breeding exercises. Traditional varieties often lack uniformity and aren't of excellent quality for seed development and breeding purposes. Open-source principles can help overcome these two challenges by facilitating testing, improvisation and adoption.

IPR protection in agriculture:

- There are two major modes of IPR protection in agriculture that are plant-breeders' rights and patents.
- In this regime, rights-holders could demand royalty on seeds and legally enforce IPR. In some national IPR regimes, rights-holders can also restrict the unauthorised use of seeds to develop new varieties.

- Together, they restrict farmers' rights and the freedom to develop new varieties using germplasm from IP-protected varieties.
- They have consolidated the seed sector by increasing the number of plant varieties covered by IP Rights (IPRs).

IP regime evolved in the agriculture sector:

- The Green Revolution was spearheaded by public-sector breeding institutions and seeds were available as reasonably priced hybrids with no restrictions on farmers to cultivate, reuse and share.
- But the private sector led the genetic revolution in agriculture, with seeds mostly made available as hybrids and protected by strong IPRs.
- The WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) requires member states to provide protection for plant varieties either by patents or by an effective standalone system.

Aquaculture Bill

- **Context:** The Government of India has introduced the Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

Key Highlights:

- The Bill seeks to amend the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005.
- it aims to decriminalize the offences under the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act.
- it seeks to promote ease of doing business and to fine-tune the operational procedures of the authority.
- it aims to promote newer forms of environment-friendly coastal aquaculture, such as cage culture, seaweed culture, marine ornamental fish culture, and pearl oyster culture.
- It includes a provision to prevent the use of antibiotics and pharmacologically active substances that are harmful to human health in coastal aquaculture.

About Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005:

- The act provides for the establishment of the Coastal Aquaculture Authority for regulating the activities connected with coastal aquaculture in coastal areas and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

- The Act mandates Central Government to take all such measures as it deems necessary or expedient for the regulation of coastal aquaculture by prescribing guidelines, also to ensure that coastal aquaculture does not cause any detriment to the coastal environment and concept of responsible coastal aquaculture shall be followed in regulating coastal aquaculture activities to protect the livelihood of various sections of people living in the coastal areas.

About Aquaculture:

- It is the breeding, rearing, and harvesting of fish, shellfish, algae, and other organisms in all types of water environments.

Initiatives of government of India:

- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY): the Government of India approved the flagship scheme, Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), in May 2020 under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat COVID-19 relief package with a vision to bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of the fisheries sector.
- New sub-scheme named Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PMMKSSY) announced in the Union Budget 2023-24 to further enhance the earnings and incomes of fishermen, fish vendors and micro & small enterprises engaged in the fisheries sector.

International Finance Corporation (IFC)

- **Context:** The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has announced that it will not support investments in new coal projects.

Key Highlights:

- The IFC funds banks and other financial institutions that in turn lend to infrastructure and energy projects.
- In 2020, the IFC unveiled a policy requiring clients to reduce their exposure to coal projects by half by 2025, and to zero by 2030. But this did not prevent new investments.

- From 2023, IFC is taking the next step toward alignment with the Paris Agreement ambitions under which IFC will start requiring a commitment from financial institution clients to not originate and finance any new coal projects.
- India which sources about three-fourths of its electricity from coal has 28.5 GW of coal power capacity planned, about a third of which is already approved and 32 GW of coal power capacity under construction.
- Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh are the States with the highest capacities of coal power under development.
- The bulk of investments in India's prospective coal plants are by State utilities. Hence, the impact of IFC's decision to not invest in coal projects is not known.
- However, this step by IFC should ideally prompt Indian State utilities to move away from new coal-fired plants and only fund those that are in the advanced stages of construction.

About International Finance Corporation (IFC):

- Established in the 1950s, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) headquartered in the United States of America.
- It is the largest global development institution focused exclusively on the private sector in developing countries.
- Its purpose is to advance economic development and improve the lives of people by encouraging the growth of the private sector in developing countries.
- It provides financing of private-enterprise investment in developing countries around the world, through both loans and direct investments.
- It also provides advisory services to encourage the development of private enterprise in nations that might be lacking the necessary infrastructure or liquidity for businesses to secure financing.