



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY, 2023

Week-2

8-14 July, 2023

★★ Useful for ★★

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

8st JULY, 2023

Farmers Distress Index

- **Context:** Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), an institution under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed an early warning system called 'farmers distress index'.

Key Highlights:

- Its aim is to minimize the agrarian distress in the form of crop loss / failure and income shock. This will help in decreasing farmer suicides.
- The index methodology involves going through local newspapers, other news platforms and social media platforms for any report on incidence of farmers distress like localised cases of issues with debt repayment, death by suicide, pest attacks, drought, floods, migration, among others.
- contacts of farmers from the area will be collected to conduct telephonic interviews, which will have 21 standardized questions to gauge early signs of distress.
- The index will help in anticipating agrarian distress and prevent its spread from a few farmers to the village or block level by pre-warning different stakeholders, including central, state, local and also non-government agencies about the future occurrence of farmers distress in a particular block / district so that they can take timely preventive measures

Performance Grading Index 2.0

- **Context:** The Union Ministry of Education has released a report on Performance Grading Index 2.0 for States/UTs for the year 2021-22.

Key Highlights:

- The PGI for states/UTs was first released for the year 2017-18 and so far, it has been released up to the year 2020-21.

- It assesses the performance of the school education system at the State/UT level by creating an index.
- The PGI 2.0 structure comprises total weightage of 1000 points across 73 indicators, which are grouped under 2 Categories viz., Outcomes and Governance and Management.
- These categories are further divided into 6 domains, viz., Learning Outcomes (LO), Access (A), Infrastructure & Facilities (IF), Equity (E), Governance Processes (GP) and Teacher Education & Training (TET).
- Scores obtained by States/UTs have been classified into 10 grades with the highest achievable Grade is Daksh, which is for State/UT scoring more than 940 points out of a total of 1000 points. The lowest grade is Akanshi-3 which is for a score up to 460.
- None of the States/UTs has attained the highest Grade i.e Daksh.
- Only 2 States and UTs, namely Punjab and Chandigarh have attained Grade Prachesta -2 (score 641-700).
- The three poorest performing States/UTs Akanshi 3 are Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Mizoram.
- The maximum and minimum scores obtained by the States/UTs in 2021-22 are 659.01 and 420.64 respectively.
- The deviation between the maximum and minimum scores obtained by States/UTs is 23.8% of the maximum points, indicating that states such as Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Mizoram has to put more effort to reach the top slot. This disparity was 51 % in 2017-18.

9th JULY, 2023

Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2023

- **Context:** United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP) has released the Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2023.

Key Highlights:

- UNESCAP has been conducting the Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation since 2015.
- Its aim is to review the progress of trade facilitation reforms in their respective Member States
- India has positioned itself at the forefront of global trade facilitation efforts with an impressive score of 93.55% in 2023 vis a vis 90.32% in 2021.
- India is now the best performing country amongst all the countries of the South Asia region. The overall score of India has been greater than many developed countries including Canada, France, UK, Germany etc.
- India has achieved a perfect score of 100% in four key areas: Transparency, Formalities, Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation, and Paperless Trade.
- India has witnessed a substantial improvement in the score for “Women in Trade Facilitation” component from 66.7% in 2021 to 77.8% in 2023 thereby indicating commitment to gender inclusivity and the empowerment of women in the trade sector.
- This outstanding recognition reflects India’s continuous efforts to streamline trade procedures and improve transparency through initiatives such as Turant customs, single window interface for facilitation of trade (SWIFT), pre-arrival data processing, e-Sanchit, and coordinated border management.

Global Peace Index (GPI)

- **Context:** The 2023 Global Peace Index (GPI) has been released by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

Key Highlights:

- Iceland is the world’s most peaceful country
- The average level of global peacefulness has deteriorated by 0.42%.
- Afghanistan is the least peaceful country in the world for the eighth consecutive year.
- India has occupied the 126th spot in the ranking, two higher than its previous position.

- India has experienced an improvement of 3.5 per cent in overall peacefulness over the past year, owing to improvements in violent crime, neighboring countries’ relations and political instability.
- Further, the reduction in geopolitical tensions with China owing to the decrease in border incidents as well as less social unrest has led to an improvement in the political instability in India.
- Global Peace Index (GPI) released by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) to present the most comprehensive data-driven analysis to date on trends in peace, its economic value, and how to develop peaceful societies.
- The index covers 163 countries comprising 99.7 percent of the world’s population.

10th JULY, 2023

Nari Adalats

- **Context:** The Central Government is launching a unique initiative of setting up women-only courts called Nari Adalats.

Key Highlights:

- Nari Adalats are being set up at the village level as an alternate dispute resolution forum for resolving issues like domestic violence, property rights and countering the patriarchal system.
- It will also raise awareness about social schemes under the government while collecting valuable feedback to enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives.
- It will be launched on a pilot basis in 50 villages each in Assam and J&K and would be extended to the rest of the country over the next six months.
- This initiative is being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development under the Sambal sub-scheme of Mission Shakti.
- The implementation will be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, the Ministry of Rural Development and Common Service Centers operated by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

- The scheme takes inspiration from the Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats [People's Court of Women] which were run by the National Commission for Women (NCW) till 2014-15.
- The Nari Adalat of each village would have 7-9 members/Nyaya Sakhis [legal friends]: Half of which would be the elected members of the gram panchayat and the other half are women with social standing like teachers, doctors and social workers – who would be nominated by the villagers.
- The head of Nari Adalat called the Mukhya Nyaya Sakhi [chief legal friend] will be chosen among the Nyaya Sakhis, generally for a six-month term.
- The Nari Adalat will not hold any legal status as its primary focus will be on reconciliation, grievance redressal and creating awareness of rights and entitlements.

GSTN launches Geocoding in all States and UTs

- **Context:** The GST Network (GSTN) has introduced geocoding functionality in all states and union territories of India.

Key Highlights:

- Geocoding converts an address or description of a location into geographic coordinates.
- It has been introduced to ensure the accuracy of address details in GSTN records and streamline the address location and verification process.
- This is important because the accuracy of the address details is crucial in determining the applicable GST rates, place of supply rules, and other compliance requirements.
- The GST Network has already geocoded 1.8 crore principal places of businesses.
- This functionality is currently available for various types of taxpayers, including normal taxpayers, composition taxpayers, SEZ units, SEZ developers, Input Service Distributors (ISDs) and casual taxpayers who are active, cancelled or suspended.

About GST Network (GSTN):

- The GST Network (GSTN) is a non-profit organization. It has been established to manage the entire IT system of the GST portal.
- This portal is used by the government to track every financial transaction and it also provides taxpayers with all services from registration to filing taxes and maintaining all tax details.
- The GSTN was initially held by the Central Government with 24.5% of shares while the state government held 24.5%. The remaining 51% were held by non-Government financial institutions.
- However, later it was made a wholly owned government company having equal shares of state and central government.

11th JULY, 2023

Lambani embroidery

- **Context:** At the third G20 culture working group (CWG) meeting in Hampi, a Guinness world record was created for the 'largest display of Lambani items. Over 450 Lambani women artisans and cultural practitioners associated with Sandur Kushala Kala Kendra Kendra (SKKK) came together to display Lambani items.

Key Highlights:

- Lambani embroidery is a vibrant and intricate form of textile embellishment characterized by colorful threads, mirror work, and a rich array of stitch patterns.
- It is practised in several villages of Karnataka such as Sandur, Keri Tanda, Mariyammanahalli, Kadirampur, Sitaram Tanda, Bijapur, and Kamalapur.
- This embroidery is predominantly done by the skilled women of the Lambani community. It serves them as a vital source of livelihood and sustenance.
- Lambani embroidery involves stitching together small pieces of discarded fabric to create a beautiful fabric.

- The embroidery traditions of the Lambanis are shared in terms of technique and aesthetics with textile traditions across Eastern Europe, West, and Central Asia. This signifies the movement of the nomadic communities across such regions historically, forming a shared artistic culture.

Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR)

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said that it will conduct a three-day variable rate reverse repo (VRRR) auction for Rs. 2 lakh crore

Key Highlights:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) uses various ways to increase or decrease liquidity in the banking system.
- Repo rate is the rate at which the central bank gives loans to commercial banks against government securities.
- Reverse repo rate is the interest that RBI pays to banks for the funds. Variable rate reverse repo (VRRR) is a sub-type of reverse repo.
- VRRR is usually undertaken to reduce surplus liquidity by withdrawing existing cash in the system.
- RBI has been conducting VRRR every day since June 30 to ensure that the overnight call money rate remains close to the target rate of 6.50 per cent

50th meeting of GST Council

- **Context:** The 50th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council was held under the chairmanship of the Union Finance Minister

Key Highlights:

The decisions taken by the GST Council:

- The GST Council has approved the imposition of a uniform 28% tax on full "face value" of bets involving online gaming, casinos and horse racing. This will bring them on a par with betting and gambling. Currently, most online gaming platforms pay an 18 per cent tax on the commission collected for each game.

- The GST on restaurants inside Cineplex will attract 5% GST against 18% earlier. Currently, movie tickets below Rs 100 were taxed at 12%, while those above the threshold attracted 18% GST.
- GST Council has decided to exempt GST on import of cancer drug Dinutuximab, and Food for Special Medical Purposes (FSMP) used in the treatment of rare diseases. Currently, the drug attracts a 12% integrated GST.
- The council has recommended setting up of a mechanism for appellate tribunals. Demands for state-wise benches were presented by various states, and the Council approved setting up of as many as 40 benches in phases.

About GST Council:

- The GST Council is the most important part of India's GST regime. The council is responsible for recommending rates of tax, period of levy of additional tax, principles of supply, the threshold for exemption, floor level and bands of taxation rate, special provisions to certain states, etc.
- Article 279A of the constitution enables the formation of the GST Council by the President to administer and govern GST.
- The Union Finance Minister of India is a Chairman of the GST Council. Ministers nominated by the state governments are members of the GST Council.

12th JULY, 2023

Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX)

- **Context:** The 7th edition of Japan India Maritime Exercise 2023 (JIMEX 23) has been concluded in the Bay of Bengal

Key Highlights:

- JIMEX is an annual maritime exercise between India and Japan.
- Its aim is to consolidate the high degree of interoperability that exists between maritime forces of the two countries, through complex exercises in the surface, sub-surface and air domains.

- JIMEX 2023 witnessed complex exercises undertaken jointly by the two navies. Both sides engaged in advanced level exercises in all three domains of maritime warfare: surface, sub surface and air.
- JIMEX 23 saw the participation of INS Delhi – India's first indigenously built Guided Missile Destroyer, INS Kamorta – an indigenously designed and built Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette, P8I, maritime patrol aircraft and Dornier, ship-borne helicopters and fighter aircraft.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2023

- **Context:** Recently, the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2023 has been released.

Key Highlights:

- India has achieved a significant milestone in poverty reduction, with a remarkable number of people moving out of poverty within just 15 years.
- The latest update of the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) sheds light on this extraordinary achievement.
- It tells about how prevalent poverty is in the world and provides insights into the lives of poor people, their deprivations and how intense their poverty is — to inform and accelerate efforts to end poverty in all its forms.
- It compiles data from 110 developing countries covering 6.1 billion people, accounting for 92 percent of the population in developing countries.
- It offers a key perspective on SDG 1 i.e. to overcome the greatest global challenge: ending poverty in all its forms.

Sagar Sampark

- **Context:** The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has inaugurated the indigenous Differential Global Navigation Satellite System (DGNSS) called 'SAGAR SAMPARK'.

Key Highlights:

- Sagar Sampark is a terrestrial based enhancement system that corrects the errors and inaccuracies in the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) and provides more accurate positioning information.
- Sagar Sampark is able to transmit corrections for both GPS and Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS).
- It improves the accuracy of GPS positioning by reducing errors caused by atmospheric interferences, satellite clock drift and other factors.
- The error correction accuracy has been improved from 5 to 10 meters to less than 5 meters for 100 Nautical Miles from Indian coastlines.
- Sagar Sampark will help mariners in safe navigation and will reduce the risk of collisions, groundings, and accidents in the port and harbour areas. This will lead to the safe and efficient movement of vessels.

13th JULY, 2023

National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of the National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill in Parliament.

Key Highlights:

- The National Research Foundation (NRF) was one of the key recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020.
- To act as a coordinating agency between researchers, various government bodies and industry, thus bringing industry into the mainstream of research.
- To provide research grants to individuals.
- To facilitate research in India's universities, especially State universities, by funding research infrastructure and researchers.
- The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) created by an act of Parliament in 2008, will stand repealed and subsumed into the NRF.

- The NRF will operate with a budget of 50,000 crore for five years, of which 28% will be the government's share, and the remaining 72% will come from the private sector.

Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana

- **Context:** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana to empower senior citizens in India.

Key Highlights:

- Its nodal ministry is Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- National Action Plan for Senior Citizen (NAPSrc) had been revamped, renamed as Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) and subsumed in 2021. It is a Central-Sector Scheme.
- Its aim is to improve the quality of life of the Senior Citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities and by encouraging productive and active aging through providing support.

Anthropocene Epoch

- **Context:** According to the Anthropocene Working Group (AWG), sediments at Crawford Lake in Canada's Ontario have provided evidence of the beginning of the Anthropocene epoch.

Key Highlights:

- Anthropocene is a proposed epoch that denotes the present geological time interval, in which the Earth's ecosystem has gone through radical changes due to human impact.
- The word Anthropocene is derived from the Greek words anthropo, for "man," and cene for "new".
- The term was coined and made popular by biologist Eugene Storer and chemist Paul Crutzen in 2000.
- There are numerous phenomena associated with this proposed epoch such as global warming, sea-level

rise, ocean acidification, mass-scale soil erosion, the advent of deadly heat waves, deterioration of the biosphere and other detrimental changes in the environment.

- AWG has studied the sediments at Crawford Lake in Canada's Ontario. They have revealed that the Anthropocene epoch started sometime between 1950 and 1954. However, scientists still debate whether the Anthropocene is different from the Holocene.
- Moreover, the term Anthropocene has also not been formally adopted by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), the international organization that names and defines epochs.
- The primary question that the IUGS needs to answer before declaring the Anthropocene an epoch is if humans have changed the Earth system to the point that it is reflected in the rock strata.

About Anthropocene Working Group (AWG):

- Anthropocene Working Group (AWG) is an interdisciplinary research group dedicated to the study of the Anthropocene as a geological time unit.
- It was established in 2009 as part of the Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy (SQS), a constituent body of the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS).

14th JULY, 2023

PM Modi in France

- **Context:** The Indian Prime Minister will be attending the French National Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour.

Key Highlights:

- The National Day of France is celebrated on July 14 also known as Bastille Day and is marked by a long military parade, along with dancing and other merriment.
- Bastille Day signifies the start of the French Revolution, more than 200 years ago.

- In 1789, people were unhappy with King Louis XVI's reign, which had been dominated by food shortages and high taxes.
- After outbreaks of violence on the streets of Paris, an armed mob surrounded Bastille on the morning of 14 July.
- They stormed the Bastille prison and as word spread, the French Revolution was born.
- The mob chose Bastille because people were imprisoned here simply because the King said so, without trial and without publicly stated causes.
- The monarchy was eventually overthrown and Louis XVI and his wife Queen were executed
- Its objectives are to demonstrate Safe and Soft Landing on Lunar Surface, to demonstrate Rover roving on the moon and to conduct in-situ scientific experiments.
- The spacecraft consists of two parts - the propulsion and the Lander-rover modules.
- The propulsion module's main job is to take the lander-rover payloads to the moon. You can think of the propulsion module as a truck and the lander-rover payload as the cargo.
- After reaching the vicinity of the moon, the lander-rover payload will detach itself from the propulsion module and fall on to the moon.
- The lander has engines that will slow down the fall, so that it descends gently onto the moon rather than crash-landing on it.
- The rover is a tiny, trolley kind of device with wheels. Once the lander lands on the moon, the rover will slide out of the lander's belly and crawl over the moon's surface.
- Both the lander and the rover have instruments for experiments, such as analyzing the moon soil, checking how the moon's surface conducts heat, and how quake waves move through the moon surface.
- A successful soft landing will make India the fourth country, after the United States, Russia, and China, to achieve the feat.

Chandrayaan-3

- **Context:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the highly anticipated Chandrayaan-3 mission to the moon from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

Key Highlights:

- Chandrayaan-3 is India's third lunar mission.
- It is a follow-on mission to Chandrayaan-2 to demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface.

