

Special Marriage Act 1954 (SMA) and Interfaith Marriages

❖ Context

- Recently, The law that governs **inter-faith marriages** in the country, the **Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954**, is being challenged for endangering the lives of young couples who seek refuge under it.
- Last year a **petition was moved before the Supreme Court**, seeking striking down of several of its provisions.
- The government is yet to submit its response.

❖ Key Highlights

- The petition has sought to **repeal section 6 and 7 of SMA**, which mandates publication of the public notice, on the ground that it is unreasonable and arbitrary.
 - **Section 6(2)**- it should be affixed at a conspicuous place at the office of the marriage officer.
 - **Section 7(1)**- Allows any person to object to the marriage **within 30 days of the publication** of the notice, failing which a marriage can be solemnized under Section 7(2).

❖ Interfaith Marriages:

- It simply means the **matrimonial relation between individuals who follow different religious faiths**.
- Marriage between the same faiths has been governed by the **Hindu Marriage Act 1955, Muslim personal Law**.
- But to rectify and include interfaith marriages, the Center passed the **Special Marriage Act 1954**.
- Special Marriage Act considers **Interfaith Marriages as secular**.

❖ Special Marriage Act 1954

- It is the legislation made to **validate and register interreligious and inter-caste marriages** in India.
- It allows two individuals to **solemnise their marriage through a civil contract**.
- No **religious formalities are needed** to be carried out under the Act.
- This Act **includes Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists marriages**.
- The **consenting couple** (Men above 21 years and women above 18 years) who were going to get married have to provide a 30-day Notice at the Marriage Registrar's office.
- After 30 days they can get married. If there are any objections raised then the Marriage Registrar will investigate the objection
- This Act **applies** not only to **Indian citizens** who belong to different castes and religions but also to **Indian nationals who live abroad**.

Special Drawing Rights (SDR)

❖ Context

- Of the accretion of \$31.2 BN in foreign exchange reserves in July-Sep 2021, \$17.86 BN (~57%) was by way of SDR support received from IMF

❖ Key Highlights

❖ About SDR

- Created in **1969** by the IMF
- **Not a currency** but a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of the IMF members
- **Basket of currencies define SDR** - US dollar, Euro, Chinese Yuan, Japanese Yen & British Pound

❖ BoP

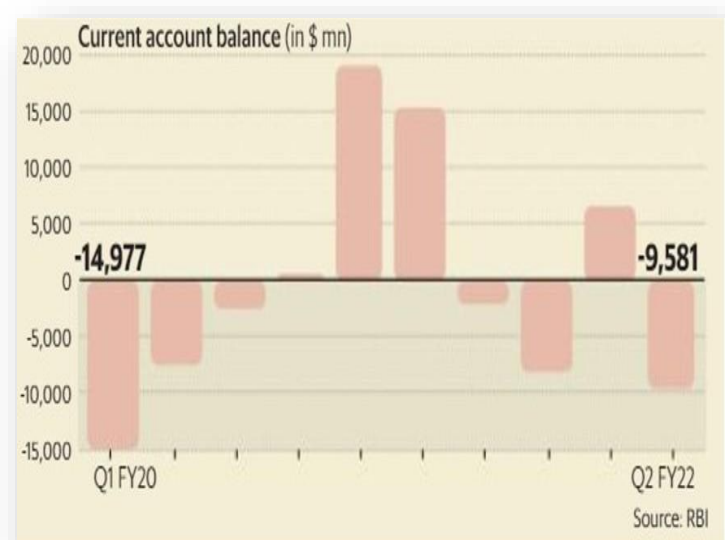
- Balance of Payments reflects **the total transactions of the country with the rest of the world**

❖ Key components of BoP

- **Current Account**
 - Net trade of export & import of goods/services
 - Net earnings on crossborder investment (Primary Income)
 - Net transfer payments (Secondary Income)
- **Capital Account** - Financial instruments- assets/liability transactions:
 - Banking & Other Capital
 - Direct Investment
 - Portfolio Investment
 - Loans
 - Change in Reserves

❖ India's BoP position in recent years

- In the **July-September quarter of FY22**, India's current account slipped into a **deficit of \$9.58 billion** as against a **surplus of \$6.57 billion** in the **April-June quarter of FY22**.



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❖ Role of SDR in BoP

- **Supplement Foreign Exchange Reserve** of a country and make it financially **resilient**
- Provides **liquidity support** to developing and low-income countries allowing them to tide over BoP situations
- Help **cushion worsening CAD**
- Countries worldwide are going through one of the worst economic and health crisis
- **However**, dependence on SDR for BoP is **not a comfortable position** for a country as the IMF support comes with conditions sometimes like in 1991 crisis and economic reform

Chips to Startup Programme (C2S)

❖ Context

- **MeitY** has **sought applications** from 100 academia, R&D organizations, start-ups and MSMEs under its Chips to Startup (C2S) Programme.

❖ Key Highlights

❖ Objective

- To train **85,000 number of high-quality and qualified engineers** in the area of Very large-scale integration (VLSI) and Embedded System Design
- **Development** over 5 years of
 - Application Specific Integrated Circuits (**ASIC**) – 175
 - System on Chips (**SoC**) working prototypes - 20
 - **IP core repository**
- Inculcating the **culture of SoC/ System Level Design** at Bachelors, Masters and Research level
- Act as a **catalyst for growth of Start-ups** involved in fabless design.

❖ Implementation

- The programme would be implemented at about **100 academic institutions/R&D organizations across the Country** (including IITs, NITs, IIITs, Government/Private Colleges and R&D Organisations).
- **Startups and MSMEs can also participate** in the programme by submitting their proposals under **Academia- Industry Collaborative Project**, Grand Challenge/ /Hackathons/RFP for development of System/SoC/IP Core(s).
- **C-DAC** (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing), a scientific society operating under MeitY, will serve as the **nodal agency** for the programme.
- It **addresses each entity of the value chain** in electronics viz.
 - quality manpower training,
 - research and development,
 - hardware IPs design,
 - System design,
 - application-oriented R&D,
 - Prototype design
 - Deployment with the help of academia, industry, start-ups and R&D establishments.

News in Between the Lines

National Startup Day

❖ Context

- PM announced **16th January** as celebration of National Startup Day

❖ Key Highlights

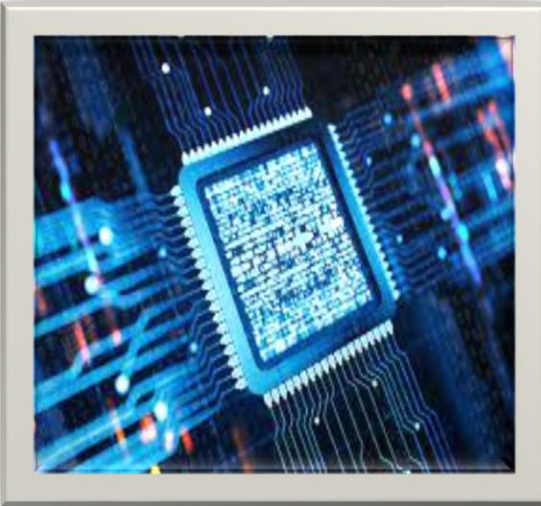
- Validation of role of startups in the growth of country's GDP
- Backbone of new India
- Encourage young talent to see entrepreneurship as primary career option
- Contribution of Startups
 - Large infusion of FDI in asset class outside of public markets
 - Export of product and services
 - Larger base of retail investors



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Design Linked Incentives Scheme



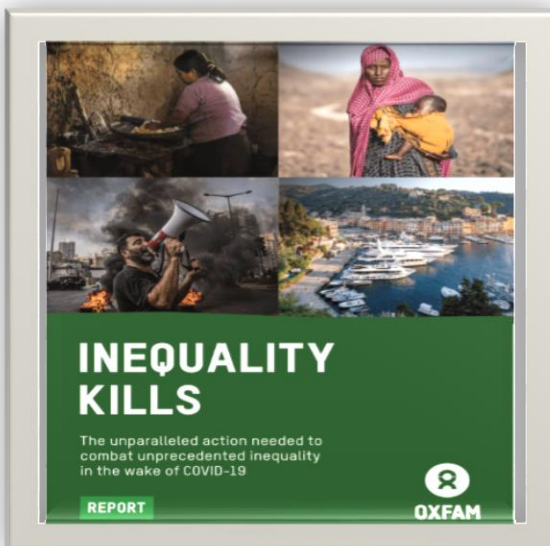
❖ Context

- MeiT Y sought applications from 100 domestic companies, startups and MSMEs

❖ Key Highlights

- Aims to nurture **20 domestic companies** involved in semiconductor design and facilitating them to achieve turnover of more than 1500 crores in next 5 years
- Part of 76000 crores (\$10 BN) package announced by the government in December
- **CDAC** - nodal agency of implementation
- **Three components**
 - **Chip Design Infrastructure support - India Chip Centre** will be setup by CDAC to host state-of-the-art design infra and facilitate its access to supported companies
 - **Production Design Linked Incentive - Upto 15% of the eligible expenditure** (15 crore maximum per application) - will be reimbursed
 - **Deployment Linked Incentive - 6% to 4% of net sales turnover over 5 years** subject to a ceiling of ₹30 Crore per application will be provided to approved applicants whose designed products are deployed
- The approved applicants that claim incentives under the scheme will be encouraged to retain their domestic status

'Inequality Kills' report



❖ Context

- Released by Oxfam ahead of WEF Davos Agenda

❖ Key Highlights

- Inequality contributes to death of at least **21,000 people globally each day** due to lack of access of healthcare (5.6 MN annually) , **hunger (2.1 MN annually)**
- **Income of 84% households** in India declined
- **Number of Billionaires** grew from 102 to 142 (39%), third largest in the world after US, China
- The **collective wealth of India's richest 100 persons** reached **record high of \$775 BN**
- Share of bottom 50% in national wealth mere 6%
- **During the pandemic** (Mar 20 to Nov 21), the **wealth of Indian billionaires** increased from \$313 BN to \$719 BN (**more than doubled**)
- Whereas in the meanwhile, **more than 4.6 crores Indians**, are estimated to have **fallen into extreme poverty** (nearly half of the global new poor according to UN report)
- **Gender parity** has been pushed back by the pandemic from 99 years to **135 years** as **women lost earnings of \$800 BN** with **1.3 crore fewer women in work** than in 2019
- **Imposing a 4 per cent tax on 98 wealthiest families** in the country can look after the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** for **more than two years**, the **Mid-Day Meal Programme** for **17 years** or the **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan** for **six years**.
- **Privatization of basic services** is **detrimental** to society - 52 percent of the parents who send their children to private schools reported having to pay hiked fees for the AY 2021-22.



Volcanic Eruption in Tonga



❖ Context

- Recently, eruption of an **underwater volcano Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai** near Tonga was likely the biggest recorded anywhere on the planet in more than 30 years

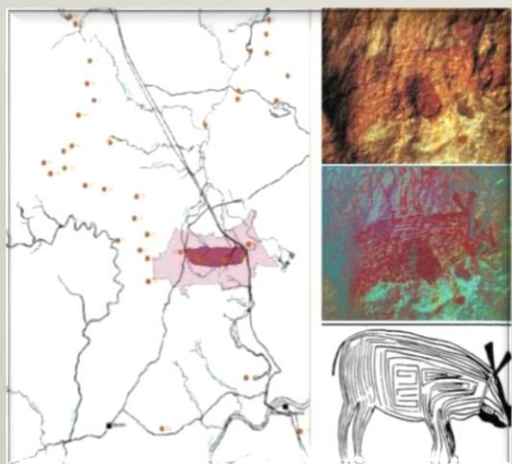
❖ Key Highlights

- **Gas and steam was spewed up to 20 kilometers (12.4 miles)** into the atmosphere and **tsunami waves** were sent crashing across the Pacific.
- The Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano has **erupted regularly** over the past few decades
- There are an estimated **one million undersea volcanoes**, and most of them are **located near the tectonic plates.**

❖ Tonga Island

- The Tonga Islands **occur along the Ring of Fire**—a perimeter of heightened volcanic and seismic activity that encircles the **Pacific Ocean basin.**
- It is a **group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean**, located near Fiji and Samoa.
- It is divided into **four main groups** -Tongatapu, Ha'apai and Vava'u and Niuas.
- Tonga is the **only Pacific country with a constitutional monarchy.** It is ranked the **second most vulnerable country to natural hazards (after Vanuatu).**

Bhimbetka Rock Shelters



❖ Context

- The **depiction of a two-horned Sumatran rhino** was recently discovered in the Bhimbetka rock shelters of Madhya Pradesh (MP).

❖ Key Highlights

- It was **drawn with a red pigment in Udden**, one of the caves in the Bhimbetka complex.
- It **suggests early human migration** in the subcontinent.

❖ About Bhimbetka Rock Shelters

- The Bhimbetka rock shelters are an archeological site in MP that **spans the prehistoric Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods.**
- It **exhibits the earliest traces of human life in India** and evidence of Stone Age starting at the site in Acheulian times.
- These rock shelters are **declared a Unesco World Heritage Site** in 2003
- **Dr V. S. Wakankar**, a most renowned archeologist, discovered these caves in 1958
- It is popular for its **prehistoric cave paintings done in red and white.**
- The oldest of all the paintings dates back to around 12,000 years back, while the most latest is around 1000 yrs old.

Kala Kumbh



❖ Context

- Recently, the **National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA)** celebrated 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' with Kala Kumbh.

❖ About Kala Kumbh

- It is an **artist workshop for painting scrolls** measuring approximately 750 meters, **representing the tales of valor of unsung heroes of India's freedom movement.**
- The works of art done on the **gigantic scrolls** will form an integral part of the Republic Day celebrations 2022, marking a unique **collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Defense.**
- The Kala Kumbh is organized under azadi ka amrit mahotsav. It will **reflect unity in diversity in the country.**
- More than 600 artists will participate in creating the scrolls. The **artists are predominantly from Odisha and Chhattisgarh.**
- It is **intended to inspire people about the rich national heritage and legacy of Bharat in its true sense.**
- The scrolls will also carry the message of **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.**



- It aims to interact and promote the **mutual understanding between different states and people**. It includes language, traditions, culture, music, cuisine, best practices, etc.

International Passage Exercise (PASSEX)



❖ Context

- Recently, the **Indian Navy's** indigenously designed and built guided-missile destroyer, **INS Kochi**, exercised with **Russian Federation Navy's** RFS Admiral Tributs and Kamov Ka-27 helicopter in the Arabian Sea.
- Earlier, Indian Naval ships conducted **PASSEX** with the **US Navy** also.

❖ Key Highlights

- The exercise showcased **cohesiveness and interoperability between the two navies** and included **tactical manoeuvres, cross-deck helicopter operations and seamanship activities**.
- **The Kamov Ka-27-**
 - It's a military helicopter **developed for the Soviet Navy**, and currently in service in various countries including Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam, China, South Korea, and India.
- **INS Kochi (D64)-**
 - It's the **second ship of the Kolkata-class stealth guided-missile destroyers** built under the code name **Project 15A** for the Indian Navy.
 - She was **constructed by Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL)** in Mumbai.
 - After undergoing extensive sea trials, she was **commissioned to Indian Navy service on 30 September 2015**.
- **Other Exercises of India and Russia:**
 - **Exercise TSENTR 2019** (Multilateral Military Exercise).
 - **Indra Exercises** - Joint Tri-Services (Army, Navy, Air Force) Exercises.
 - **ZAPAD 2021** (Multilateral Military Exercise).

Thiruvalluvar Day



❖ Context

- Prime Minister paid tributes to the Tamil poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar on Thiruvalluvar Day (15 January)

❖ Key Highlights

- Thiruvalluvar is regarded as a **cultural icon**. His most popular work is a collection of couplets on politics, ethics, economy, and love, called "**Thirukkuaaa**".
- While a lot is not known about the life of Thiruvalluvar, it is believed that he **used to live in the town of Mylapore**, which in today's time is a neighbourhood in Chennai.
- He is believed to have **lived between the 3rd-4th century or 8th-9th century**.
- He is **thought to be linked to Jainism**. However, Hindus have also claimed that Thiruvalluvar belonged to hinduism.
- Dravidian groups also count him as a saint, as **he dismissed the caste system**.
- He had **contributed the Tirukkural or 'Kural' to the Sangam literature**.

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