

## The National Emblem

### ❖ Context

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India unveiled the National Emblem cast on the roof of the new Parliament building.

### ❖ Key Highlights

- It has been casted at the top of the Central Foyer of the new Parliament building,
- It is **6.5-metre-high** and **made of bronze, and weighs 9,500 kg.**
- A supporting structure of steel weighing around 6,500 kg has been constructed to support the Emblem.

### ❖ About National Emblem



- The national emblem is an adaptation of the **Lion Capital, originally found atop the Ashoka Column at Sarnath**, established in 250 BC.
- The capital has **four Asiatic lions**—symbolizing power, courage, pride and confidence—seated on a circular abacus.

- The abacus has **sculptures of a bull, a horse, a lion and an elephant.**
- In the national emblem, **three lions are visible**; the abacus shows a bull and horse separated by a **dharma chakra**; the outlines of two more dharma chakras are visible on either side of the abacus.
- Buddhist interpretations say the **animals represent different phases of the Buddha's life,**
- Non-religious interpretations say **they depict the reign of emperor Ashoka** in the four geographical directions, while the wheels depict his enlightened rule.
- The national emblem is a **symbol of the Government of India** and is used on official documents.
- The Lion capital was **adopted as the national emblem on January 26, 1950.**
- The Indian National Emblem's motto is '**Satyamev Jayate.**
- It is the **official seal of the President of India** and the **Central and state governments.**

## RBI's New Mechanism For Settling International Trade in Rupees

### ❖ Context

- RBI has introduced a rupee settlement system for international trade.

### ❖ Vostro Account

- For settlement of trade transactions with any country, **Authorised Dealer Bank** in India may open **special rupee vostro accounts** of **correspondent banks** of the partner trading country.
- A vostro account is an account a correspondent bank holds on behalf of another bank.
- The bank of a partner country may approach an AD bank in India for opening of a special INR Vostro account.
- The AD bank will seek **approval from the Reserve Bank** with details of the arrangement.
- The AD bank maintaining the special Vostro Account will ensure that the correspondent bank is not from a country or jurisdiction in the updated FATF public statement on high risk and non cooperative jurisdictions on which FATF has called for counter measures.

### ❖ Mechanism

- **All exports and imports** under this arrangement may be **denominated and invoiced in rupee (INR).**
- **Exchange rate** between the currencies of the two trading partner countries may be **market determined.**

- Indian importers shall make payment in INR into the special vostro account of the correspondent bank of the partner country.
- Indian exporters should be paid the export proceeds in INR from the balances in the designated special vostro account.
- Exporters may receive advance payment against exports from overseas importers in Indian rupees.
- The issue of bank guarantee for trade transactions, undertaken through this arrangement, is permitted subject to adherence to provisions of FEMA notification.
- The rupee surplus balance held may be used for permissible capital and current account transactions in accordance with mutual agreement.

### ❖ Impact

- Can help India in **facilitating trade with the countries under sanction.**
- Can help in stabilising the rupee which is at historic low against the dollar.
- Can help in narrowing the widening current account deficit.

## Office of Insurance Ombudsman

### ❖ Context

- A selection panel of the Ministry of Finance has selected eight new insurance ombudsman for various centres across the country. The orders of their appointments will be issued by the Ministry.

### Face to Face Centres



### ❖ About the office

- It is an alternate **grievance redressal platform**.
- The aim is to resolve grievances of aggrieved policyholders of all **personal lines of insurance, group insurance policies, policies issued to sole proprietorship and micro enterprises**.
- It has been established under **Insurance Ombudsman Rules 2017** issued by the Ministry of Finance in exercise of the powers conferred by **section 24 of IRDA Act, 1999**.
- It is selected from amongst the persons having experience of the insurance industry, civil service, administrative service or judicial service.
- He is appointed for **three years** and is eligible for reappointment.
- He can be removed from his office on the ground of **gross misconduct**.

### ❖ Executive Council of Insurers

- The office of ombudsman works under the **administrative control** of the Executive Council of Insurers which has also been established under the rules.
- It comprises of :
  - Two persons nominated by LIC.
  - Three person nominated by GIC - 2 for general insurers and 1 for health insurers.
  - One representative of IRDAI.
  - One representative of D/o Financial services, MoF.
  - Chairman, LIC or Chairman, General Insurers' (Public Sector) Association of India (GIPSA) - **chairperson by rotation**.

### ❖ Selection Committee

- It comprises of :
  - IRDAI Chairperson - Chairman of the committee.
  - One representative of LIC from the council.
  - One representative of GIC from the council.
  - One representative from Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance.

### ❖ Advisory Committee

- As per the rules, the committee can consist of not more than five members including one central government nominee.
- It is **constituted by IRDAI** to review the performance of the ombudsman.

### ❖ Number of offices

- As per the rules, the number of offices are specified by the council.
- There are 17 ombudsman offices at present, covering the country, situated in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Noida, Pune and Patna.

### ❖ Complaint to Ombudsman

- Before making any complaint to the ombudsman, representation to the insurer is to be submitted.
- Compliant is to be made within **one year** of :
  - If insurer reject the complainant's representation.
  - If complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the insurer.
  - If one month has expired and the insurer fails to furnish a reply.
- Has to be made **in writing** by the person /legal heirs/ nominee/assignee to the office under whose territorial jurisdiction, the place of residence of the person is located.

## James Webb Telescope

### ❖ Context

- Recently, **Webb Telescope** revealed the clearest image to date of the **early universe, going back 13 billion years**.



### ❖ Key Highlights

- The latest tranche included the "mountains" and "valleys" of a star-forming region called **NGC 3324 in the Carina Nebula**, dubbed the "Cosmic Cliffs," 7,600 light years away.
- Webb also **revealed never before seen details of Stephan's Quintet**.
  - It is a grouping of five galaxies including four that experience repeated close encounters.
  - It provides insights into how early galaxies formed at the start of the universe.

### ❖ About James Webb Telescope

- The telescope has been developed under an international partnership between **NASA**, the European Space Agency (**ESA**) and the Canadian Space Agency (**CSA**).

- It was launched aboard a rocket on December 25, 2021.
- It headed to an outpost 1.5 million kilometers (9,30,000 miles) from Earth.
- It is currently at a point in space known as the Sun-Earth L2 Lagrange point.
  - L2 is approximately 1.5 million km beyond Earth's orbit around the Sun.
- It is a successor of the **Hubble Telescope**.
- The telescope will study the **atmospheres of a wide diversity of exoplanets**
- It will also **search for atmospheres similar to Earth's**, and for the signatures of key substances such as **methane, water, oxygen, carbon dioxide**, and **complex organic molecules**, in hopes of finding the building blocks of life.

## Face to Face Centres





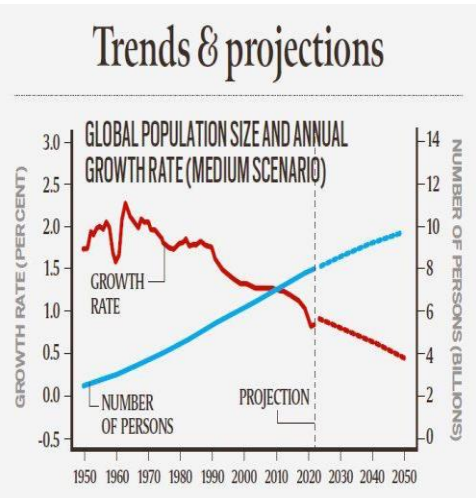
**World Population Prospects 2022**

❖ **Context**

➤ Recently, the 2022 edition of the **United Nations' World Population Prospects (WPP)** was released.

❖ **Key Highlights of the Report**

- **India is projected to surpass China** as the world's most populous country in 2023.
- It also projected the **world's population to reach 8 billion** on November 15, 2022.



- The **pace of population growth is slowing down.**

- In 2020, the global growth rate fell under 1% per year for the first time since 1950.
- The **46 least developed countries (LDCs)** are among the world's **fastest-growing.**

- **Regional Variation:** More than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be **concentrated in just eight countries.**

- The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.

- The **population of older persons is increasing both in numbers and as a share of the total.**
- A sustained **drop in fertility** has led to an increased concentration of the population at working ages (between 25 and 64 years).
  - It created an opportunity for accelerated economic growth per capita.
- **International Migration:** It is having important impacts on population trends for some countries.
  - The **outflows were due to temporary labour movements**, such as :
    - Pakistan (net flow of -16.5 million),
    - India (-3.5 million),
    - Bangladesh (-2.9 million),
    - Nepal (-1.6 million)

❖ **About World Population Prospects (WPP)**

- The Population Division of the UN has been publishing the WPP in a **biennial cycle since 1951.**
- Each revision of the WPP **provides a historical time series of population** indicators starting in 1950.
- It does so by taking into account newly released national data to revise estimates of past trends in fertility, mortality or international migration.

**News in Between the Lines**

**Ammonia, Phosphate Pollution in Yamuna**



❖ **Context**

➤ Increased levels of ammonia and phosphates have been observed in the Yamuna.

❖ **Ammonia Pollution**

- Ammonia is a **colourless gas** and is used as an industrial chemical in the production of **fertilisers, plastics, synthetic fibres, dyes** and other products.
- Ammonia occurs naturally in the environment from the **breakdown of organic waste matter**, and may also find its way to ground and surface water sources through industrial effluents or through contamination by sewage.
- The safety limit for Yamuna is **0.5 PPM (as per BIS).**
- If the concentration of ammonia in water is **above 1 ppm it is toxic to fishes.**
- In humans, long term ingestion of water having ammonia levels of 1 ppm or above may cause damage to internal organs.

❖ **Phosphate Pollution**

- The pollutant is responsible for a **toxic white foam** in the river.
- Its level has increased from the **safety limit of 0.1 PPM (as per BIS)** to 0.7 PPM.
- Detergents, domestic wastewater, industrial effluents, idol immersion, pesticide residue and untreated sewage are some of the sources of this pollutant in the river.

**ICSE Initiative**

❖ **Context**

➤ Central Bureau of Investigation has joined the Interpol's **International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) initiative.**

❖ **Key Highlights**

- India is the **68th country** to have access to this database and software.

**Face to Face Centres**





- It will allow CBI to collaborate with investigators in other countries for detecting **child sex abuse online** and identifying abusers, victims, and crime scenes from audio-visual clips using **specialised software**, the database.
- The ICSE database uses **video and image comparison** to analyse **Child Sex Exploitation Material (CSEM)** and make connections between victims, abusers and places.

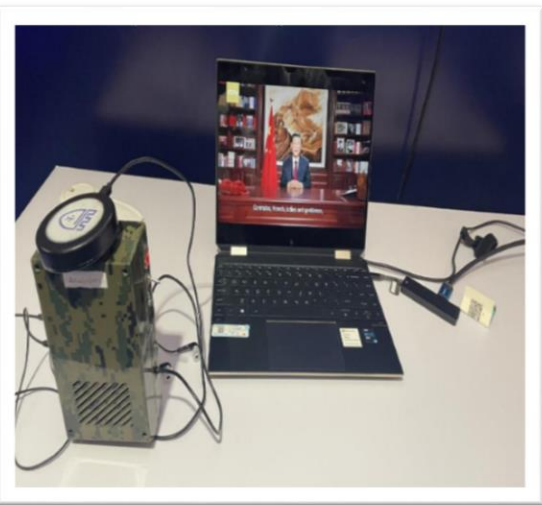
❖ **Interpol**

- Interpol is the world's largest international police organisation with 195 member countries, and is headquartered in **Lyon, France**.
- Each member country hosts an Interpol **National Central Bureau** that connects their national law enforcement to it.
- In India, the **CBI is the nodal agency**.

❖ **Online Child Sexual Abuse in India**

- According to Interpol data, India reported over **24 lakh instances** of online child sexual abuse from **2017 to 2020**, with **80% victims** being girls **below the age of 14 years**.
- In 2019, the CBI set up a special unit called the '**Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention/Investigation (OCSAE)**', for tracking and monitoring posting, circulation and downloads of CSEM online.

## AI-based Mandarin Translation Devices



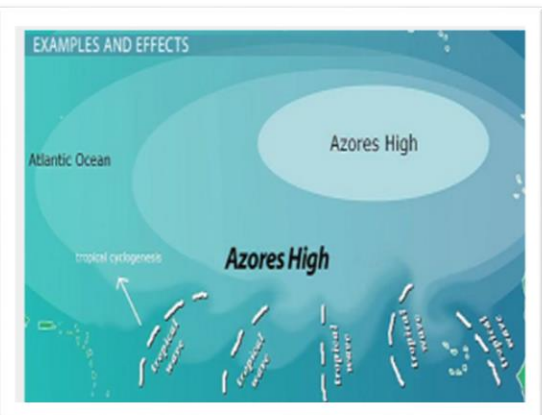
❖ **Context**

- Recently, the **Defense Minister unveiled 75 AI-based products** and technologies at the 'AI in Defense' symposium.
- The Mandarin translation device was one of the 75 AI-enabled products.

❖ **Key Highlights**

- It is an **offline handheld language translation system** which works based on AI.
- Its performance will improve as more data comes from the field.
- It is **bidirectional with a range of 5-10 feet** and **converts Mandarin to English**.
- They are also working on a Hindi version and trying to enhance the range to 20 feet.
- **Significance:**
  - **Troops of India and China come face to face** on various occasions during patrols and local commanders too interact at various levels as part of efforts **to maintain peace on the ground**.
  - **Language is a major hindrance** and interpreters need to be present during occasions like flag meetings.

## Azores High



❖ **Context**

- According to a new study, an **extremely large 'Azores High' has resulted in abnormally dry conditions** across the western Mediterranean, including the Iberian Peninsula, primarily occupied by Spain and Portugal,.

❖ **About Azores High**

- Azores high is also called **Bermuda high, Azores anticyclone, or Bermuda-Azores high**.
- It is a **large persistent atmospheric high-pressure center** that develops over the subtropical region of the eastern North Atlantic Ocean during the winter and spring seasons in the Northern Hemisphere.
- It is a **subtropical high-pressure cell** that **moves westward** during the summer and fall, when it is known as the Bermuda high.
- The Bermuda high is **often associated with warm humid weather** in the eastern United States during the summer months.

