

GSLV-F12 Navigation Satellite

❖ Context:

- ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) is set to launch the GSLV-F12 Navigation satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

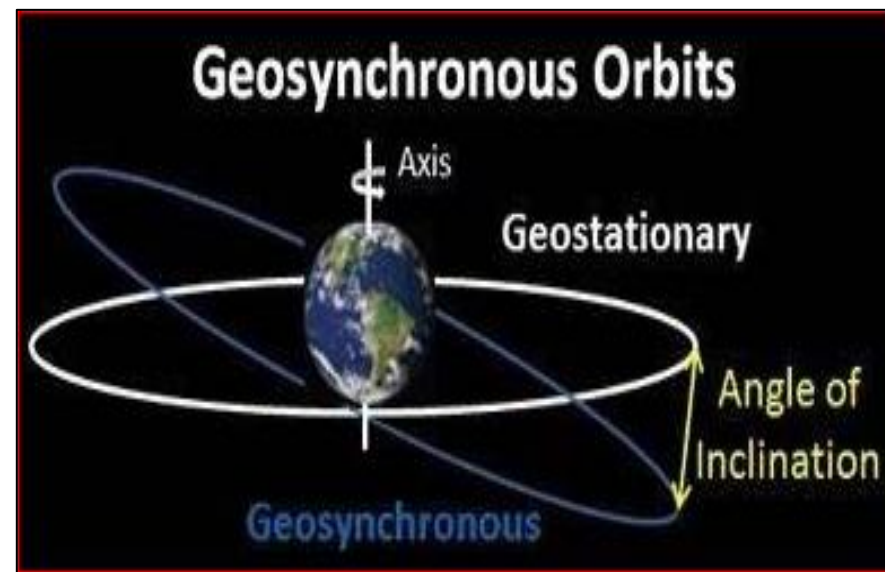


❖ Key Highlights:

- This mission marks a **return-to-flight** for ISRO and involves deploying the next generation NavIC satellite, which will replace the IRNSS-1G satellite launched in 2016.
- **NavIC is a constellation** of seven satellites that provides standard position service for civilian users and restricted service for strategic users.
- The constellation consists of **three satellites in geostationary orbit** and four satellites in inclined **geosynchronous orbit**.
- The ground network comprises a **control centre, range and integrity monitoring stations**, and two-way ranging stations.
- NavIC signals cover a range of **1500 kilometers around India and are designed** to offer user position accuracy better than 20 meters and timing accuracy better than 50 nanoseconds.
- **Geosynchronous Orbit:**
 - Geosynchronous orbit refers to any orbit around the Earth where a satellite completes one orbit in the same amount of time it takes for the **Earth to rotate once on its axis**.
 - Satellites in **geosynchronous orbit** may have different orbital inclinations, meaning they can have paths that are not directly above the equator.
 - Satellites in geosynchronous orbit move in a manner that appears stationary when viewed from the Earth, but they may **have some lateral movement**.
 - Geosynchronous orbit is a broader category that includes all orbits with the same orbital period as the Earth's rotation.

• Geostationary Orbit (GEO):

- GEO is a specific type of **geosynchronous orbit**.
- Satellites in GEO have an orbital inclination of **0 degrees**, meaning they are directly above the Earth's equator.
- Satellites in GEO appear stationary from the perspective of an observer on the Earth's surface, as they remain fixed relative to a specific point on the Earth's surface.
- These satellites provide continuous coverage over a specific geographic area.



Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

❖ Context:

- The Supreme Court has asked the Centre and the Assam government to respond to a plea seeking directions to declare the area around Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary an eco-sensitive zone and remove all encroachments.

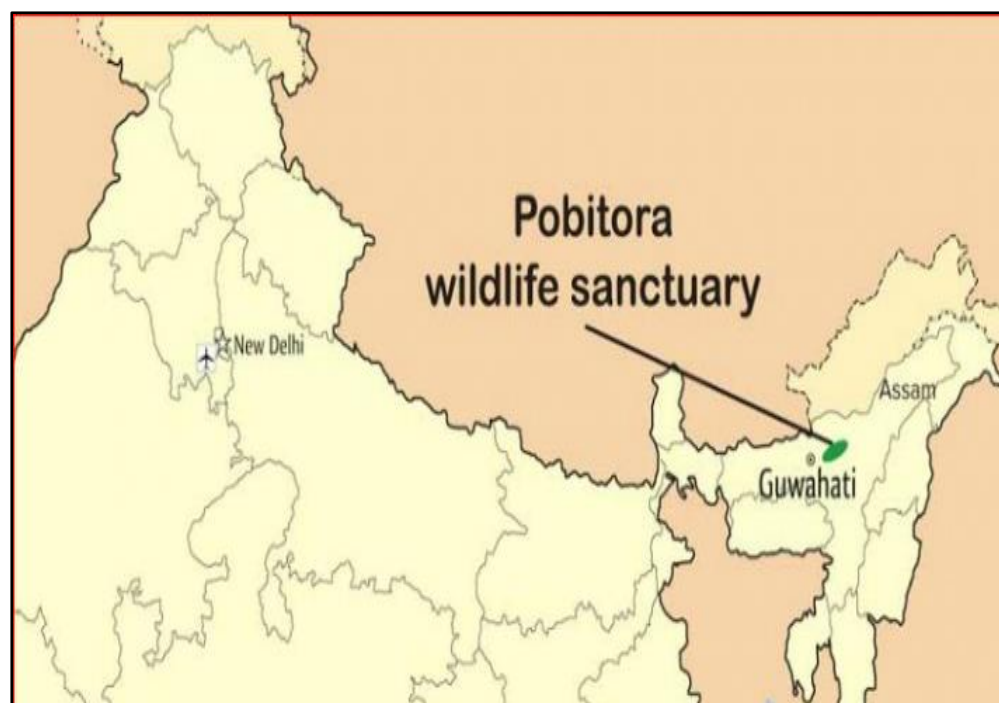
❖ Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs):

- Designated as ecologically fragile and crucial for wildlife conservation, **Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)** are defined areas surrounding national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, aiming to **preserve wildlife and their habitats**.
- **Under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986**, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has made it compulsory to declare land within a **10 km radius** of park or sanctuary boundaries as Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs).
- However, the application of the 10-km rule **can be flexible**, and areas beyond this distance can also be designated as ESZs if they encompass important ecological corridors.

❖ About Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary:

- Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is a renowned protected area located in the state of Assam, India.
- It is known for its significant population of the **Indian one-horned rhinoceros**, making it a critical conservation site for this endangered species.

- The sanctuary covers an area of approximately **38.8 square kilometers** and provides a favorable habitat for various other wildlife species, including elephants, wild boars, and migratory birds.





Supercomputers

❖ Context:

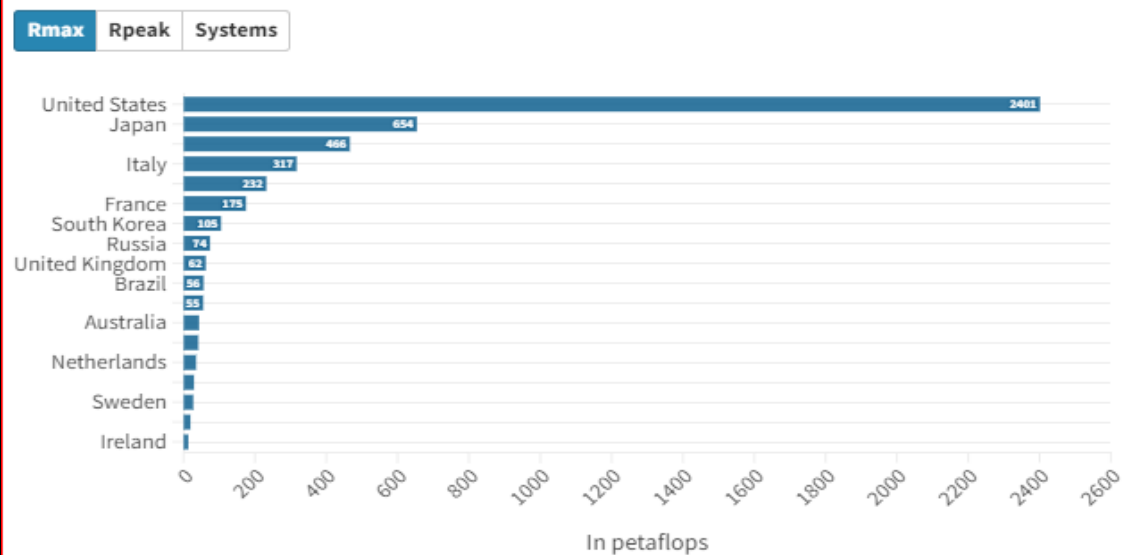
- India plans to significantly enhance its supercomputing capabilities by installing an 18-petaflop system this year, according to the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).

❖ Key Highlights:

- **Flops (floating point operations per second)** measure a computer's processing speed, and a petaflop refers to 1,000 trillion flops.
- The increased processing power will greatly facilitate complex mathematical calculations, including weather forecasting for the next few days and up to two-three months ahead.
- **Current Supercomputers:** Currently, India's most powerful civilian supercomputers, Pratyush and Mihir, have a combined capacity of **6.8 petaflops** and are located at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) in Pune and the National Centre for **Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF)** in Noida, respectively.
- The new computer can improve forecasting from **twelve to six kilometers**.
- Compared to the **Cray XC-40 supercomputer** 'Mihir', India's fastest supercomputer at present, the new supercomputer will have **nearly thrice** the capability.
- The increased resolution means more pixels can represent a given area, resulting in greater **clarity and more accurate local forecasts**.

- The ultimate goal is to represent an area using **1 km-square grids**, enabling the warning of rapidly evolving weather systems **such as cloudbursts**.
- The fastest high-performance computing system in the world is currently the **Frontier-Cray system** at **Oakridge National Laboratory** in the United States, with a peak speed of 1 exaflop (about 1,000 petaflops).
- Other top systems range from about **400 petaflops to 60 petaflops** based on speed.

Rmax is the maximum measure of processed operations per second that has been achieved. Rpeak is the theoretical maximum processed operations



Weakness in India's Imports and Exports

❖ Context:

- India's imports and exports experienced a further decline in April 2023, continuing a downward trend since June 2022.

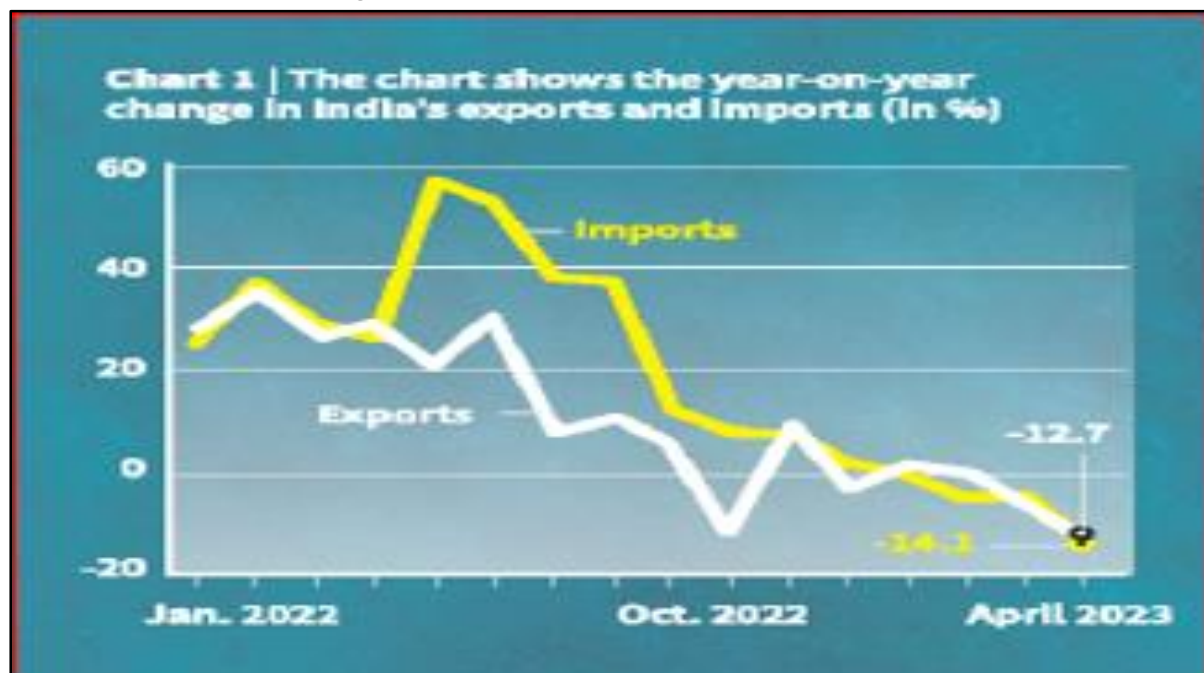


❖ Key Highlights:

- Imports declined more than exports, resulting in a narrower trade deficit.
- **Decline in Imports of Major Commodities**
 - Imports of major commodities in India experienced a decline across the board.
 - Commodities such as **fertilizers, gold, & vegetable oil** recorded significant shrinkage in April 2023.
 - The decline in imports was observed in commodities that form a significant portion of India's import basket.
- **Broad-Based Contraction in India's Merchandise Exports**
 - India's merchandise exports contraction has been widespread across various sectors.
 - Petroleum products, engineering goods, gems and jewellery, chemicals, and readymade garments and plastics experienced contraction or slower growth.

• Global Phenomenon of Export Decline

- The decline in exports is not limited to India but is a global phenomenon.
- Factors such as geopolitical tensions and the monetary tightening of global central banks have contributed to the contraction of imports and exports in various developed and developing nations.



News in Between the Lines

Fallback Liability



❖ Context:

- Fallback liability, introduced in the **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020**, holds e-commerce platforms responsible for the negligence or wrongdoings of sellers in product delivery or sale of defective products.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The implementation of **fallback liability** could have negative consequences, especially for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operating on e-commerce platforms.
- **E-commerce marketplaces** primarily act as intermediaries, facilitating transactions between sellers and consumers without direct control over the products.
- However, fallback liability shifts the burden of liability to the platforms, even if the registered seller is at fault.
- This clause **holds e-commerce entities accountable** for issues in logistics services, such as delivery failures, raising concerns about unfair treatment of e-retailers.
- The introduction of fallback liability adds regulatory burden and compliance costs for e-commerce platforms, impacting the growth of online retail and significantly affecting MSMEs and local sellers.
- Stricter quality control measures would be necessary for online marketplaces to avoid **liability claims, creating additional compliance requirements & costs** for MSMEs.
- This could lead to limited participation & reduced competitiveness on online platforms.
- Fallback liability exposes online marketplaces to **legal battles and potential financial losses**, resulting in the introduction of strict terms and conditions on sellers, such as higher commission fees and product insurance.

E-Office portal of PCIM&H



❖ Context:

- The E-Office portal of the **Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)** was inaugurated by the Union Minister of **Ayush and Ports, Shipping, and Waterways**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The **portal aims to revolutionize** the accessibility and sharing of pharmacopoeia monographs globally.
- The PCIM&H, operating under the Ministry of Ayush, plays a vital role in standardizing and ensuring the quality control of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, and Homeopathy (**ASU&H**) drugs.
- The **E-Office portal promotes** hassle-free access to pharmacopoeia standards, facilitating their dissemination to stakeholders worldwide.
- The portal **focuses on providing guidelines** for the standardization, quality control, and **proper use of ASU&H drugs**, promoting safety, efficacy, and uniformity in traditional medicinal practices.

International Booker Prize



❖ Context:

- **Time Shelter**, written by Georgi Gospodinov and translated into English by Angela Rodel, has won the International Booker Prize 2023.

❖ Key Highlights:

- This is the first time a **novel originally published in Bulgarian** has won the annual award.
- Last year, the prize went to Geetanjali Shree's **Tomb of Sand**, translated into English by Daisy Rockwell.

❖ About International Booker Prize:

- The International Booker Prize, formerly known as the **Man Booker International Prize**, is a prestigious literary award that recognizes outstanding works of fiction **translated into English**.
- It was established in 2005 and is awarded annually.
- The winning book and its translator receive **equal recognition**, with the prize money being divided equally between them.

Face to Face Centres

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)



❖ Context:

- Praveen Sood recently took charge as Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

❖ About the CBI:

- **Jurisdiction:** The CBI has jurisdiction across the country and can investigate cases that **fall under the central government's purview**, as well as those referred to it by **state governments** or the judiciary.
- **Structure:** The CBI is headed by a Director who is appointed by the Central Government. The agency is organized into various branches and specialized units, including the Anti-Corruption Division, Economic Offences Division, Special Crimes Division, and Central Forensic Science Laboratory.
- **Powers:** The CBI has the power to **conduct searches, make arrests, seize evidence**, and file chargesheets in courts. It can also request assistance from **state police departments** and seek cooperation from international agencies in cross-border cases.
- **Legal Authority:** The CBI derives its powers and authority from the **Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946**, which grants it the ability to investigate cases referred to it by the central government or upon the consent of a state government.

Offshore Fund



❖ Context:

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has issued a letter to custodian banks, instructing all foreign funds investing in India to disclose their parent financial institution.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Custodian banks are also required to **identify a senior officer** of the legal entity as a beneficial owner, in cases where no single investor holds more than **10 percent** of the fund.
- SEBI wants the **parent financial institution** to be a separate and identifiable legal entity, regulated by the appropriate regulator of a cooperative jurisdiction.
- Funds that fail to identify their parent institutions by September will be required to **wind up by March 2024**.
- SEBI's objective is to uncover the actual beneficial owners who ultimately own, control, or influence a **(Foreign Portfolio Investment) FPI** entity by breaking through opaque structures.

❖ About SEBI:

- SEBI, which stands for the Securities and Exchange Board of India, is the regulatory body responsible for overseeing and regulating the securities market in India.
- It was established in **1988 as an independent statutory body** to protect the interests of investors and promote the development and regulation of the securities market.

NHRC-India



❖ Context:

- The accreditation of the National Human Rights Commission, India (NHRC-India), an important institution for protecting human rights, has encountered difficulties in its recognition by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).

Key Highlights:

- The accreditation process is based on the **Paris Principles**, which serve as international benchmarks for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).
- GANHRI has raised concerns about NHRC-India's functioning, **including political interference**, poor cooperation with civil society, and insufficient action to protect marginalized groups.
- Reaccreditation occurs **every five years**, and NHRC-India currently retains its 'A' status accreditation and associated privileges.
- The Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) plays a crucial role in reviewing and **accrediting NHRIs**, evaluating their compliance with the Paris Principles.
- As part of the reaccreditation process, the SCA has recommended **legislative amendments** to enhance NHRC-India's compliance with the Paris Principles.
- These amendments aim to improve NHRC-India's independence, pluralism, diversity, and accountability, aligning it with international human rights norms.

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