

Par-Tapi-Narmada Link Project

❖ Context

- Tribals in South Gujarat protest the river linking plan.

❖ Key Highlights

- The project will transfer **surplus water** from rivers in Dang and Valsad districts in **south Gujarat** to water deficit **Saurashtra and Kachchh** in the north along a **395 km** long link canal.



- The project proposes **total seven dams** - **6** in Valsad and Dang district of **Gujarat** and **one** (Jheri) in Nashik district of **Maharashtra** (on the border).



- The population in these two districts is predominantly tribal, and they are protesting against the project saying they do not want to part with their land and water.

❖ Par river:

- Originating in **Nashik district**, it flows through Valsad for 51 kms before falling into Arabian Sea.

❖ Benefits:

- The project will divert a total of **1,350 million cubic metre (mcm) of water** from these areas to the Narmada command area.
- This would save Sardar Sarovar water which will be used to extend irrigation in Saurashtra and Kutch region.
- 7,041 mcm water will go to Saurashtra and Kachchh and 460 mcm will be utilised to irrigate 1.63 lakh ha en route.

❖ Cost:

- **An area of 7,559 hectares (ha), of which 3,572 ha is forestland, would be submerged**, affecting around 14,832 people and 9,029 livestock.
- According to the feasibility report prepared in 2004-05, the total cost of the project is Rs 6,016 crore and the **cost-benefit ratio is 1.08**.

Transfer of resources Seven dams to irrigate drought-affected north Gujarat				
Reservoir	District	Submerged land in ha	Villages to be affected	People to be affected
Jheri	Nashik	836	7	1,122
Paikhed	Valsad	994	11	2,266
Chasmandva	Valsad	615	7	1,434
Chikkar	Dang	742	9	1,016
Dabdar	Dang	1,249	11	1,780
Kelwan	Dang	1,629	17	4,020
Mohan-kavchali	Valsad	1,495	13	3,194

Source: National Water Development Agency

Geneva Conventions

❖ Context

- As the Russian military continues to sweep through Ukraine there is growing concern surrounding the **issue of violations of human rights and Geneva Conventions**.

❖ Geneva Conventions Guidelines During Wartime

- It was **formalized in 1949**.
- It is a **set of four treaties**, and three additional protocols.
- It **codifies widely accepted ethical and legal international standards** for humanitarian treatment of those impacted by war.
- **Objectives:**
 - The focus of the Conventions is the treatment of **non-combatants and prisoners of war**.
 - **Not the use of conventional or biological and chemical weapons**.
 - The use of which is governed respectively by the **Hague Conventions and the Geneva Protocol**.

GENEVA CONVENTIONS: A COMMITMENT TO A COMMON HUMANITY

429 is the total number of articles in the 4 Geneva Conventions.

The Swiss citizen Henry Dunant first came up with the idea of creating an international convention to protect victims of war.

The Swiss city of Geneva shares its name with the Conventions and has become the global hub of humanitarian efforts.

12 AUGUST 1949 adoption of the 4 Geneva Conventions which protect wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of the armed forces (I & II), prisoners of war (III) and civilians (IV).

MILLIONS of lives have been saved in hundreds of armed conflicts in the last 7 decades thanks to the 4 Geneva Conventions.

The red cross is one of the distinctive emblems recognised by the First Geneva Convention and is formed by reversing the colours of the Swiss flag.

With 196 state parties, the 4 Geneva Conventions have been universally ratified.

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❖ Four Geneva Conventions

- **First Geneva Convention:**
 - This deals with **improving the conditions of the wounded and sick soldiers** in the field during the war. This convention contains 64 articles.
- **Second Geneva Convention:**
 - This protects wounded and sick combatants while on board ship or at sea during the war. This convention contains 63 articles.
- **Third Geneva Convention:**
 - This is associated with the treatment of Prisoners of War (POWs).
 - It states that prisoners of war (POWs) must be treated humanely, provided adequate houses, and receive sufficient food, clothing and medical care. This convention contains 143 articles.
- **Fourth Geneva Convention:**
 - This is related to the protection of civilians in areas of armed conflict during the time of war. It contains 159 articles.

❖ Signatories:

- The Geneva Conventions **have been ratified by 196 states, including all UN member states.**
- The three Protocols have been ratified by 174, 169 and 79 states respectively.

News in Between the Lines

EPF Interest Rate

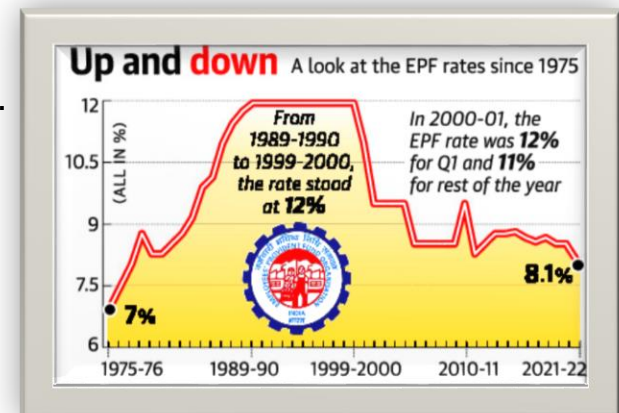


❖ Context

- **CBT has recommended interest rate** (return on retirement savings parked with EPFO) cut from 8.5% to 8.1% for 2021-22.

❖ Key Highlights

- The last time the EPF savings were paid an annual return this low was in 1977-78, when the rate was 8%, but that marked the highest EPF rate at the time since the EPFO's inception in 1952.
- The Central Board of Trustees is **chaired by Labour Minister** and has representatives from employers and employees
- The EPF corpus stood at Rs. 9.4 lakh crores for FY 2021-22, active subscriber base of 6.7 crores and 6.9 lakh contributing establishments
- The interest rate is:
 - **Recommended by :** CBT.
 - **Ratified by :** Finance Ministry.
 - **Notified by:** Labour Ministry.
 - **Interest credited by:** EPFO.
- The rate cut would leave the EPFO with a surplus of Rs. 450 crores. If the 8.5% rate would have been retained, it would result in deficit of Rs. 3500 crores.
- Over the years, Finance Ministry had been questioning the high rate retained by the EPFO and nudging it to reduce it to sub-8 percent level in line with the overall interest rate scenario.



❖ Other Decision

- Approved **constitution of a task force** to suggest measures to **widen the scope of pension benefits.**
- The Ministry is looking at allowing voluntary pension contribution under EPS 1995 even if the workers exit organised sector marking first step to ensure **universalisation of social security.**

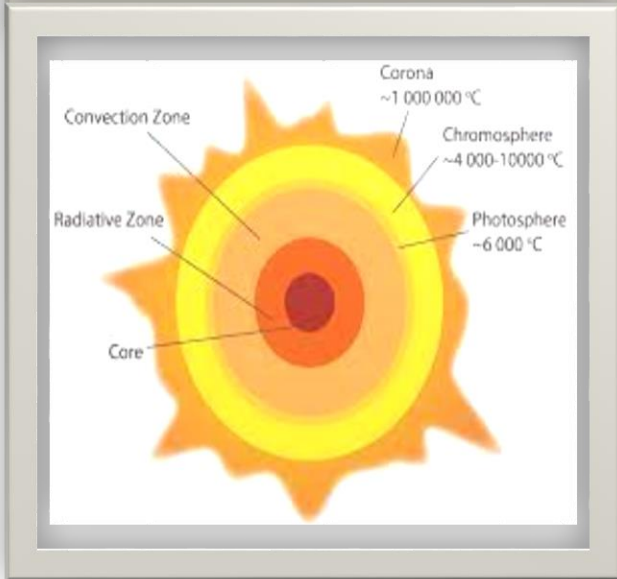
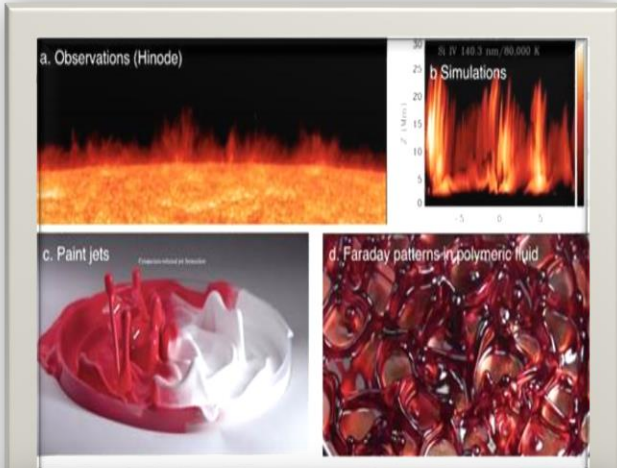
Solar Spicules

❖ Context

- A team of interdisciplinary **researchers from India and the U.K.** led by astronomers from the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru**, have explained the origin of 'spicules' on the Sun, using laboratory experiments as an analogy.

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❖ Key Highlights

- **Solar Spicules** are jets of plasma, shooting out from the **Sun's outermost layer – the Chromosphere** – and making incursions into its atmosphere, **corona**.
- A typical spicule may be **4,000-12,000 kilometres long** and **300-1,100 kilometres wide**.
- These are structures that are believed to **transport momentum to the solar wind and to provide heat to the solar Corona**, which can be a million degrees Celsius hotter than the Chromosphere.
- The plasma right below the **visible solar surface (photosphere)** is perpetually in a **state of convection** which is ultimately powered by the nuclear energy released in the **hot-dense core**.
- The **convection serves almost periodic but strong kicks to the plasma** in the solar **chromosphere**, the shallow semi-transparent layer right above the visible solar disk.
- The chromosphere is **500 times lighter than the plasma in the photosphere**. Therefore, these strong kicks from the bottom **shoot the chromospheric plasma outward at ultrasonic speeds in the form of thin columns or spicules**.
- The researchers used an analogous system – paint poured on the mouth of a speaker which was fed the music that caused it to break out in spicule-like jets, instead of drops, because the fluid's long polymeric chains gave it a directionality.
- The **solar plasma** can be imagined as **threaded by magnetic field lines**, much like the long chains in polymer solutions.

Revenue Documents at your Doorstep



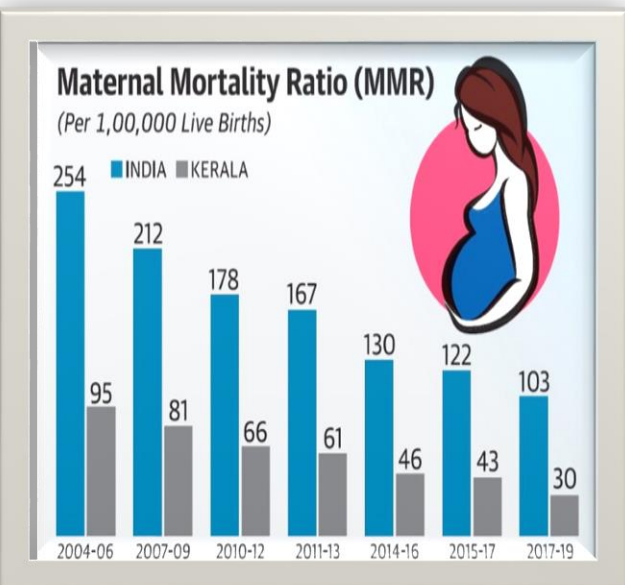
❖ Context

- **Karnataka** launched a scheme to door deliver basic revenue documents such as caste certificates, income certificates, and land records (RTCs).

❖ Key Highlights

- The **Raitha Shakthi programme** announced in the recent Karnataka's budget offers Rs 1050 for farmers with land holdings up to 5 acres as an aid to purchase diesel and hire farm equipment. A grant of Rs 600 cr has been provided for the programme in the budget.
- Another Rs 300 cr has been provided to reintroduce the **Yashasvini programme** under which Interest-free loans would be provided for 33 lakh farmers.

Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)



❖ Context

- According to the latest **Sample Registration System (SRS)** special bulletin on maternal mortality in India (2017-19), brought out by the office of the Registrar General of India, Kerala's MMR has dropped by 12 points.
- The last SRS bulletin (2015-17) had put the **State's MMR at 42 (later adjusting it to 43)**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The **National MMR is 103**.
- Another State which has made significant gains is **Maharashtra, whose MMR dipped from 55 to 38**.
- Kerala has already achieved the target it had set for itself, based on the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, of an MMR of 30 by 2020.

❖ About Maternal Mortality Ratio

- MMR is defined as the **number of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births**.
- The MMR is a significant **indicator that defines the public health of a State**.

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14 March, 2022

- The target 3.1 of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** set by the United Nations aims to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 1,00,000 live births.
- **Italy, Norway, Poland and Belarus** have the lowest MMR of two, while it is seven in both **Germany and the UK, 10 in Canada and 19 in the US.**
- Most of India's neighbors — **Nepal (186), Bangladesh (173) and Pakistan (140)** — have a higher MMR.
- However, **China and Sri Lanka are way ahead with MMRs of 18.3 and 36 respectively.**

Most Favored Nation (MFN) Status



❖ Context

- The United States, the European Union, Britain, Canada and Japan are considering **revoking Russia's "Most Favored Nation" (MFN) status over its invasion of Ukraine.**

❖ About 'Most Favored Nation' Status

- The **WTO 164 members** commit to **treating other members equally so they can all benefit from each other's lowest tariffs, highest import quotas and fewest trade barriers for goods and services.**
- This principle of non-discrimination is known as most favoured nation (MFN) treatment.
- There are some exceptions, such as when members strike bilateral trade agreements or when members offer developing countries special access to their markets.
- **Removal of MFN Status:**
 - There is **no formal procedure for suspending MFN treatment** and it is not clear whether members are obliged to inform the WTO if they do so.
 - **India suspended Pakistan's MFN status in 2019 Pulwama Attack.**
 - Pakistan never applied MFN status to India.
- **Significance of Revocation:**
 - Revoking Russia's MFN status sends a strong signal that the United States and its Western allies **do not consider Russia a economic partner in any way**, but it does not in itself change conditions for trade.
 - **Increase import tariffs or impose quotas** on Russian goods, or even ban them, and to restrict services out of the country.
 - They could also **overlook Russian intellectual property rights.**

Sahitya Akademi Awards



❖ Context

- Recently, as many as **twenty-four eminent writers, playwrights and novelists** have been conferred Sahitya Akademi Awards- 2021 in New Delhi.

❖ Key Highlights

- These awards have been provided for **best writings in twenty-four Indian languages.**
- Those awarded with the Sahitya Akademi Awards are- Eminent Assamese novelist Anuradha sarma for her novel- Iyat Ekhan Aronya Asil, Bengali writer Bratya Basu, Bodo Poet Dr. Devakanta Ramchiary, Dogri Fiction writer Raj Rahi, English writer Namita Gokhale, Gujrati Poet Yagnesh Dave, Hindi playwright Daya Prakash Sinha and many more.

❖ About Sahitya Akademi

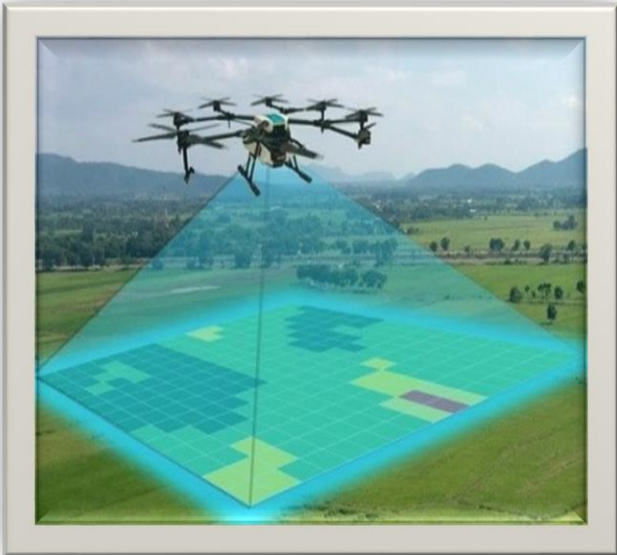
- Established in **1954**
- It is a **literary honor** that is conferred annually by Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of letters.
- Akademi gives **24 awards annually to literary works** in the languages it has recognized and an equal number of awards to literary translations from and into the languages of India.

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- Besides the 22 languages enumerated in the Constitution of India, the Sahitya Akademi has **recognised English and Rajasthani as languages in which its programme may be implemented.**
- The award comprises a **plaque and a cash prize of ₹ 1,00,000.**
- The award's purpose is to recognise and promote excellence in Indian writing and also acknowledge new trends.
- The annual process of selecting awardees runs for the preceding twelve months.
- The plaque awarded by the **Sahitya Akademi** was designed by the Indian film-maker **Satyajit Ray.**

SVAMITVA Scheme



❖ Context

- Panchayati Raj** and **Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh** launched SMS sending functionality to inform MPs and MLAs about the commencement of drone flying in their constituency under **SVAMITVA Scheme.**

❖ Key Highlights

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme.**
- Implemented by**-Ministry of Panchayati iRaj.
- It was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on **National Panchayati Raj Day, 24th April 2021** after successful completion of pilot phase of scheme (2020-2021) in 9 states.
- Aims:**
 - To provide rural people with the **right to document their residential properties** so that they can use their property for economic purposes.
 - It is a **scheme for mapping the land parcels in rural inhabited areas using drone technology and Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS).**
- Benefits:**
 - The outcome from the scheme would include **updating the 'record-of-rights' in the revenue/property registers and issuance of property cards to the property owners.**
 - This would **facilitate monetization of rural residential assets** for credit and other financial services. Further, this would also have the way for **clear determination of property tax**, which would accrue to the GPs leading to better civic amenities.

Women-Owned Industrial Park



❖ Context

- India's first 100 per cent women-owned industrial park began operations in Hyderabad. Promoted by the **FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO)** in partnership with the State government, the park has 25 units, representing 16 diverse green category industries, all owned and operated by women.

❖ Key Highlights

- With 25 women-owned and operated Green Projects, this industrial park has begun its operations. The **FLO Industrial Park**, covers 50 acres and cost Rs. 250 crore to build.
- An expansion of 100 acres of the FLO women industrial park has also been promised by the Industries Minister subject to the park's focus on various novel products.
- It is the nation's flagship as well as the first-of-its-kind project.
- FLO chapter members and national members are also welcome to participate. The park has **also established amenities**, such as creches and playschools, to provide a home-like atmosphere for women while keeping in mind the needs of working women entrepreneurs.
- In **Phase II**, the FLO wants to establish similar multi-industry women industrial parks across the country, as well as a **centre of excellence for skill development.**

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