

CBI and ED

❖ Context

- Former Jammu and Kashmir Governor has been called by the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** to answer queries pertaining to an alleged Reliance insurance scam case.
- The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** attached properties to the tune of Rs 11.04 crore belonging to a political party member in the INX money laundering case.

TENURE EXTENSION

- Govt amends **Fundamental Rules, 1922**, to bring them in sync with amendments to the CVC Act and DPSE Act, which govern ED & CBI
- Acts, amended via ordinance, extend maximum tenure of CBI-ED chiefs to 5 yrs
- **Amended rules don't change matters for home secy, defence secy & chiefs of IB and R&AW** since earlier rules also provided for an extension of service for periods deemed proper by govt

❖ Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) :

- The CBI is a **premier investigating police agency** in India.
- Recommended by the **Santhanam Committee** on Prevention of Corruption.
- It serves as the **main agency of the Central Government** and is responsible for a wide variety of criminal and national security matters.
- Provides **assistance to the Central Vigilance Commission and Lokpal**
- Exempted from the provisions of the **Right to Information Act**
- **Established on April 1, 1963**, and draws its power from the Special Police Force (SPE), 1946.
- Operating under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (India)**
- It is also the **Interpol agency** in India.
- **Headquarter- New Delhi.**
- **Functions :**
 - Investigation of **cases related to corruption, scams, and misbehavior** of central government officials
 - Investigation of **serious crimes** having national and international ramifications.
- **Maintaining crime statistics** and disseminating criminal information, etc.

❖ Enforcement Directorate (ED) :

- ED is a **law enforcement agency and economic intelligence agency** responsible for enforcing economic laws and fighting economic crime in India.
- **On 1st May 1956**, an 'Enforcement Unit' was formed, in the Department of Economic Affairs, for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947.
 - In the year 1957, this **Unit was renamed as 'Enforcement Directorate'**
- **Functions :** It enforces the following two laws :
 - **Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA)**
 - **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).**
- **Parent Ministry :**
 - It is part of the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government Of India.**
- **Composition :**
 - It is headed by the **Director of Enforcement**, who is an **IRS officer** (Indian Revenue Service).
- **Headquarter :**
 - **New Delhi.**
 - It has many regional offices all over the country.

Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)

❖ Context

- Recently, **Bengal** has notified four more **Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)**, taking the tally in the state to **eight**.



❖ Key Highlights

- The government has notified **Char Balidanga (Nadia), Namthing Pokhari (Darjeeling), Amkhoi Wood Fossil Park (Birbhum)** and **State Horticulture Research and Development Station (Nadia)** as the four latest biodiversity heritage parks
- With this, Bengal now has the **highest number of biodiversity heritage parks in the country.**
- **Char Balidanga :**
 - It is located in Kaliganj block, comprises two islands spread across 115 acres.
 - It has tropical riverine vegetation with tall grasses and trees, along with swampy flat land covered with algal mats, which are periodically inundated with tidal ebbs.
 - It is home to almost 100 species of birds, apart from golden monitor lizards and golden jackals.

• Namthing Pokhari :

- It is a natural Himalayan wetland in the Kurseong block, covering an area of 11.9 acres, and home to the Himalayan Salamander.
- **Amkhoi Wood Fossil Park :**
 - It is situated near Illambazar, spread across 10 hectares, has unique geological and paleo-botanical features.
- **The State Horticulture Research and Development Station** at Krishnanagar in Nadia, covering 97.88 acres, hosts indigenous horticulture germplasm of orchard trees.

❖ Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)

- Biodiversity heritage sites are **well-defined areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems** with high diversity of wild and domesticated species, presence of rare and threatened species, and keystone species.
- The purpose of declaring BHS is to enhance the quality of life of the local communities through conservation measures.

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Electromagnetic Ion Cyclotron (EMIC)

❖ Context

- Scientists at the **Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG)** have identified Electromagnetic Ion Cyclotron (EMIC) waves at the **Indian Antarctic station Maitri** and studied their characteristics.

❖ Key Highlights:

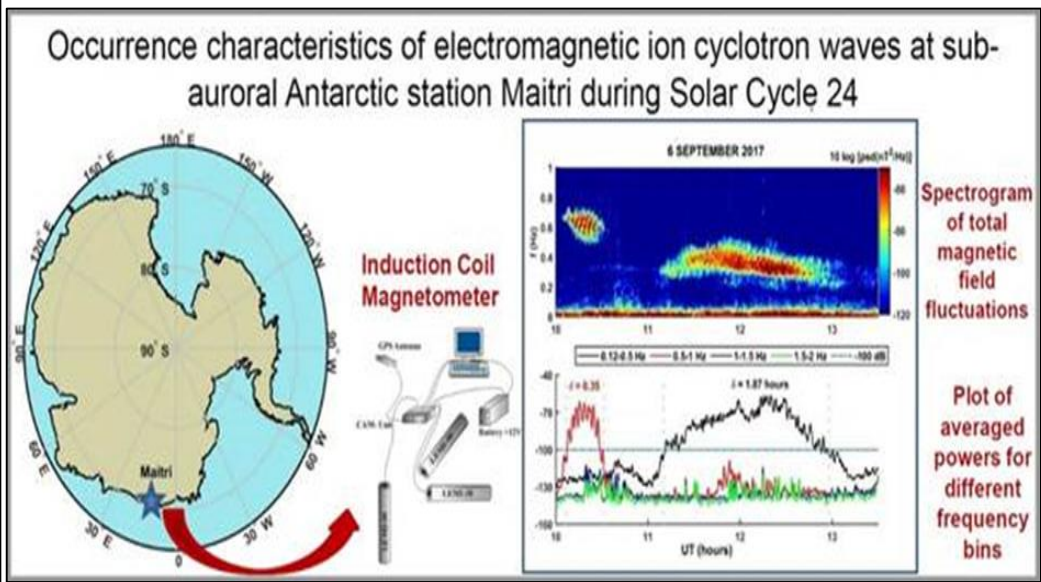
- The study of EMIC waves is crucial as they play a significant role in the precipitation of killer electrons, which form the radiation belt of planet Earth and are **hazardous to space-borne technology**.
- Understanding the impact of energetic particles in the radiation belts on low orbiting satellites is vital to improve satellite communication.
- Plasma, the fourth state of matter, **makes up over 99%** of the visible universe, including the **Sun, solar wind, the interplanetary medium, the magnetosphere, and the upper atmosphere**.
- The study of plasma waves provides information on regions that **are inaccessible** to humans, transports mass and energy across different regions, and controls the overall dynamics of the Earth's magnetosphere.
- The EMIC waves resonate with electrons with a wide energy range, **from 500 keV to hundreds of MeV**, and make them precipitate to the high-latitude atmosphere.

❖ Significance:

- This research is important to improve our understanding of EMIC wave modulation and its interaction with energetic particles that impact satellites and their communication.

❖ About Magnetosphere:

- The magnetosphere is a region of space surrounding Earth, which is dominated by the **planet's magnetic field**.
- It acts as a shield, protecting our planet from the harmful solar wind and cosmic radiation that constantly bombard our planet from outer space.
- The magnetosphere is shaped by the interaction of the **solar wind with the Earth's magnetic field, which creates a bow shock** and a magnetopause, where the solar wind is deflected around the Earth.



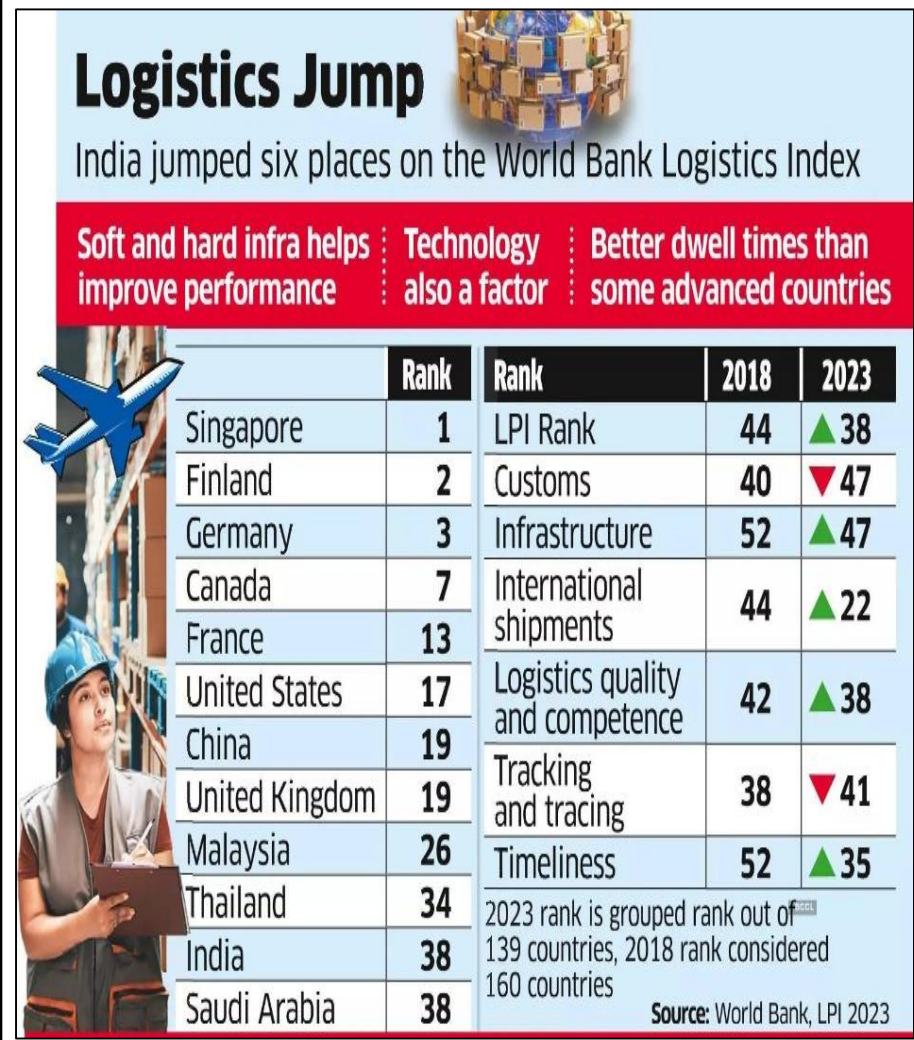
Logistics Performance Index 2023

❖ Context

- India has improved its ranking in the World Bank's Logistic Performance Index 2023 by six places.

❖ Key Highlights:

- According to the report, India's rank in the index of 139 countries has risen to 38 from 44 in 2018.
- The report highlighted that the Indian government has made investments in both **soft and hard infrastructure** related to trade, which has helped to connect port gateways on both coasts to the economic poles in the hinterland.
- In 2023, India's ranking for international shipments improved significantly, moving up from **44 in 2018 to 22**.
- The country also climbed four places to rank 48 in **logistics competence and equality**.
- In terms of **timelines**, India saw a significant improvement, moving up 17 places in the rankings.
- Additionally, India improved three places in **tracking and tracing**, now ranking at 38.
- End-to-end supply chain digitalisation, especially in **emerging economies**, is allowing countries to shorten port delays by up to **70% compared** to those in developed countries.
- Moreover, demand for **green logistics is rising**, with 75% of shippers looking for environmentally friendly options when exporting to high-income countries.
- While most time is spent in shipping, the biggest delays **occur at seaports, airports, and multimodal facilities**.



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Coking Coal

❖ Context

- India's coking coal imports increased **around 3 per cent** in FY23 to 54.33 million tonnes (mt).
- The increase came with the country's steel mills exploring cheaper alternatives, like **Russian coal**, as against costlier supplies from Australia – the largest supplier.

❖ About Coking Coal:

- Coking coal, also known as **metallurgical coal**, is a type of coal that is used in the production of steel.
- It is an essential component of the steel-making process, providing the necessary carbon content and energy required to melt and shape iron into steel.
- **Coking coal** is different from **thermal coal**, which is primarily used to generate electricity.
- Unlike thermal coal, which is **burned to create heat**, coking coal is used as a key ingredient in the production of coke, a high-carbon fuel that is used in blast furnaces to convert iron ore into steel.
- Coking coal is typically mined in underground mines, although some open-pit mines also produce this type of coal.
- It is typically classified according to its coking properties, with different grades of coal having varying levels of **carbon content, ash content, and volatile matter**.
- The largest producers of coking coal are **Australia, the United States, Canada, Russia, and China**, with Australia accounting for the majority of global exports.

	Coking Coal	Thermal Coal
DEFINITION	Coking coal is a type of coal that is important in making high quality coke	Thermal coal is a type of coal that is mainly used for the generation of power
HEAT TREATMENT	Produces high quality coal	Produces electrical energy
PRODUCTION	Highly used	Usage is limited due to environmental considerations
COST	Low	High

News in Between the Lines

Bill Allowing 12-hour Work in Factories



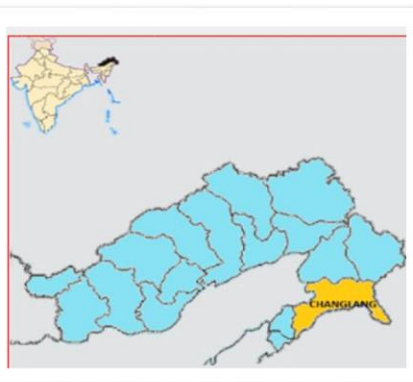
❖ Context

- The Tamil Nadu government recently passed a bill in the State Assembly to amend the **Factories Act, 1948**, which will increase the daily working hours for factory workers from **8 hours to 12 hours**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **The industry associations welcomed** the reform, citing benefits for workers, the economy, and compliance with foreign buyers' regulations.
- The bill does not change the clauses of **8-hour work, weekly holiday, and additional wages**.
- However, the provision for flexible working hours, which subsumes **13 labour enactments**, will enable better safety, health, working conditions, and remuneration for workers in the State, particularly women employees.
- **Key concerns:** It raises concerns about the impact on **workers' health, safety**, and work-life balance, which need to be addressed through adequate safeguards and regulations.

Award for Excellence



❖ Context

- Changlang in Arunachal Pradesh, India's easternmost district, recently received the Prime Minister's **Award for Excellence in Public Administration** for its innovative **New Age Learning Centre (NALC)**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Sunny K. Singh, the district's Deputy Commissioner who conceptualised the centre, received the award given in the category of **"innovation"**.
- NALC is a **flexible, futuristic, leisure learning space-cum-library** set up in a part of the Miao subdivisional office to enable people from all age groups to learn and improve every aspect of their personality.
- The space is designed according to the comfort, needs, and demands of the users.
- Anyone can access the facilities without any membership fee
- The NALC's focus is also **on e-learning through free Wi-Fi, online training through tablets, e-reading through Kindle, etc.**

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UDAN, Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik



❖ Context

- Recently, the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** has launched the 5th round of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - UDAN to further enhance the connectivity to remote and regional areas of the country and achieve last mile connectivity.

❖ About Udan (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) Scheme

- UDAN is an initiative by the government to **connect the country's under-served and unserved airports**. It was **launched in 2016 under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016**. The scheme envisages providing connectivity to-
 - **Under-served airports**- Those which do not have more than a flight a day.
 - **Unserved airports**- Those where there are no operations.
- UDAN is a market driven scheme : Interested airlines based on their assessment of demand on particular routes, submit their proposals at the time of bidding under UDAN.
- The scheme is being **jointly funded by the central government and state governments**. The scheme **will run for 10 years** and can be extended thereafter.
- Significance : UDAN scheme has **immensely benefited several sectors pan-India** including Hilly States, North-Eastern region and Islands.
 - It also allows for **reduction in traveling expenses**.

World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)



❖ Context

- According to annual State of Global Climate report by the **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)**, the unusual heat in Europe last year, contributed to the deaths of at least 15,000 people, more than any other single extreme climate event.

❖ About WMO :

- It is a **specialised agency** of the United Nations (UN).
- It is an **intergovernmental organisation** with 193 member states.
- It was **established by ratification of the WMO Convention in 1950**.
- Its supreme body is the **World Meteorological Congress**.
- Its secretariat is located in **Geneva**.
- It is responsible for promoting international cooperation on atmospheric science, climatology, hydrology and geophysics.
- The **World Meteorological Congress** is the supreme body of the WMO.
 - It is headed by its Secretary-General.
- The **Executive Council** implements its decisions, while six Regional Associations are responsible for the coordination of meteorological, hydrological and related activities within their respective regions.

Kamakhya Temple



❖ Context

- Recently, Prime Minister of India, appreciated Assam's "landmark" Maa Kamakhya initiative and hoped it would be like the Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi and Shree Mahakal Mahalok in Ujjain.

❖ About Kamakhya Temple :

- **Atop Nilachal Hills** in Guwahati adjoining the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River, the Kamakhya temple is one of the **oldest and most revered centres of Tantric practices**. It is believed that the ancient demon king, Narakasura had the temple built in honour of Goddess Kamakhya.
- The temple was rebuilt under the patronage of **Naranarayan**, the last ruler of the undivided **Kamata kingdom** that straddled present-day Assam, Bangladesh, and West Bengal. Structurally, the temple is **dated to the 8th-9th century** with many subsequent rebuildings. It is the site of the **Ambubachi Mela**, an annual festival that celebrates the menstruation of the goddess.
- It is also one of the oldest of the **51 pithas in the Shakta tradition**.
- In July 2015, the Supreme Court of India transferred the administration of the Temple from the Kamakhya Debutter Board to the Bordeuri Samaj
- **Temple Architecture** : It had been modelled out of a combination of two different styles namely, the traditional nagara or North Indian and Saracenic or Mughal style of architecture.
 - This unusual combination has been named the **Nilachala Style of Architecture**.
 - This is the only temple of Assam having a fully developed ground plan.

MCQ Quiz

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