

A Draft Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Amendment) Bill, 2022

❖ Context

- A draft Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Amendment) Bill, 2022, prepared by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying, has been opened for public comments until December 7.

Key Highlights

- The Centre has proposed to **overhaul The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, of 1960**, introducing 61 amendments to the law.
- It includes three years' imprisonment for committing **"gruesome cruelty"** including **"bestiality"** with animals.
- Once the draft is final, the Bill could be brought either in the **Winter Session** or the Budget Session of Parliament.

Main Changes Proposed in the Law

- The draft bill proposes the insertion of a new section providing **five freedoms to animals**.
- "It shall be the **duty of every person having charge of an animal** to ensure that the animal in his care or under his charge has freedom from:
 - Thirst, hunger and malnutrition.
 - Discomfort due to environment.
 - Pain, injury and diseases.
 - Fear and distress.
 - Freedom to express normal behaviour for the species.
- **Defines Gruesome Cruelty**
 - The draft describes **"gruesome cruelty"** as any act involving animals which leads to **"extreme pain and suffering"** and is "likely to leave the animal in life-long disability".
 - It proposed to include **"Bestiality"** as a crime under "Gruesome cruelty."

• Cognizable Offences

- Several offences have been made cognizable, which means **offenders can be arrested without an arrest warrant**.

• Punishment

- The draft proposes **finest from Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000** "or the cost of the animal...whichever is more or with the imprisonment of one year which may extend up to three years or with both.
- **For killing an animal**, the draft Bill proposes a maximum punishment of **five years in jail**.

• Responsibility of Local Government

- In case of a **community animal**, the local government such as **municipality or panchayats shall be responsible** for taking care of the community animals in a manner developed by the State Government or by the Board".
- The draft **defines "community animal"** as "any animal born in a community for which no ownership has been claimed by any individual or an organization, excluding wild animals as defined under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (53 of 1972).

• Need for Strengthening the Law

- **Increasing instances of cruelty** to animals in India.
- **Poor deterrence for potential offenders**.
 - First-time offenders under the PCA Act are punished with a fine of Rs 10-50, otherwise a fine between Rs 25 – 100, a jail term of three months, or both.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

❖ Context

- Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is **open to taking pro-farmer changes in Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)** in response to the recent climate crisis and rapid technological advances.

Key Highlights

- Since farming is exposed directly to such climatic catastrophes, it is important and **critical to protect the vulnerable farming community** of the country from the vagaries of nature.
- As a result, **demand for crop insurance is likely to increase** and therefore govt needs much more emphasis on crop and other forms of rural/agricultural insurance products to provide sufficient insurance protection to the farmers in India.

• Premium

- There will be a uniform premium of only **2%** to be paid by farmers for all **Kharif crops**.
- **1.5% for all Rabi crops**.
- **5% for annual commercial and horticultural crops**.
- Rest is shared by Centre and States in 50:50 or 90:10 ratio (for NE states).
- There is **no upper limit on Government**
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Risks Covered Under the Scheme

Natural Fire and Lightning, Storm, Hailstorm, Cyclone, Typhoon, Tempest, Hurricane, Tornado. Risks due to

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)



● **About**

- PMFBY was **launched in 2016** to insure farmers against all non-preventable natural risks from pre-sowing to post-harvest.

● **Nodal Ministry**

- It is being administered by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.**

● **Objective**

- It aims at supporting sustainable production in agriculture sector by way of -
 - Providing **financial support** to farmers suffering crop loss/damage arising out of unforeseen events
 - **Stabilizing the income of farmers** to ensure their continuance in farming
 - Encouraging farmers to **adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices.**
 - Ensuring **flow of credit** to the agriculture sector.

Flood, Inundation and Landslide, Drought, Dry spells, Pests/ Diseases will be covered.

● **Significance**

- It will contribute to **food security, crop diversification and enhancing growth** and competitiveness of agriculture sector besides protecting farmers from production risks.

● **Side Note**

- The scheme was **once mandatory for loanee farmers**, but in 2020, the Centre changed it to make it optional for all farmers.
- The Centre decided in February 2020 to limit its premium subsidy to 30% for unirrigated areas and 25% for irrigated ones (from the existing unlimited). Previously, the central subsidy had no upper limit.

Leith's Soft-Shelled Turtle

❖ **Context**

- Recently, India's proposal for transferring **Leith's Softshell Turtle (Nilssonina leithi)** from **Appendix II** to **Appendix I** of **CITES** has been adopted by the Conference of Parties (CoP) to CITES in its 19th Meeting at Panama.

Key highlights

- The 19th meeting of the CoP to CITES is being held in Panama from 14th to 25th November 2022.
- **India's proposal for inclusion of**
 - **Jeypore Hill Gecko** (Cyrtodactylus jeyporensis) in Appendix II .
 - The **transfer of Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle (Batagur kachuga)** from Appendix II to Appendix I of CITES has also been adopted by the CoP in this meeting.
- Leith's Soft-Shelled Turtle species has been subject to **intensive exploitation** over the past 30 years.
- The **population** of this turtle species is estimated to have **declined by 90% over the past 30 years** such that the species is now difficult to find.
- **Listing in The CITES Appendix would ensure that**
 - Legal international trade in the species does not take place for commercial purposes.
 - International trade in captive-bred specimens only takes place from registered facilities.
 - Higher and more proportionate penalties are provided for illegal trade of the species.

About Leith's Soft-Shelled Turtle

- Leith's Softshell Turtle is a large freshwater soft-shelled turtle which is **endemic to peninsular India** and it **inhabits rivers** and reservoirs.
- **Distribution**
 - Restricted to southern peninsular India (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, and Tamil Nadu) in the Cauvery, Thungabhadra, Ghataprabha, Bhavani, Godavari, and Moyar drainages.
- **Threats**
 - It has been poached and illegally consumed within India.
 - It has also been illegally traded abroad for meat and for its calipee.
- **Protection Status**
 - **IUCN Red List**- Critically Endangered.
 - **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972**- Schedule IV.



News in Between the Lines

Mission Amrit Sarovar



❖ Context

- **Construction of more than 25,000 Amrit Sarovars** has been completed within 6 months of the launch of Mission Amrit Sarovar.

❖ Key Highlights

- A **target** has been set to **build 50,000 Amrit Sarovars** by 15th August, 2023.
- An **Amrit Sarovar portal** has been created to capture all the activities taking place in Mission Amrit Sarovar.

❖ About Mission Amrit Sarovar

- Mission Amrit Sarovar was **launched on 24th April, 2022** with the resolve to **build 75 Amrit Sarovars in every district** of the country during the 75th year of independence as a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- '**Jan Bhagidari**' is at the heart of Mission Amrit Sarovar, therefore, it involves people's participation at all levels.
- Its objective was to overcome the water crisis in rural areas of the country.
- **Nodal Ministries**
 - The Ministry of **Rural Development** along with the Ministry of **Jal Shakti**, Ministry of **Panchayati Raj** and **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
 - Bhaskaracharya National Institute of Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG-N) are providing technical assistance.
- **Significance**
 - The **rural economy** will also be strengthened by the construction of multi-purpose Amrit Sarovars.
 - It will enable fish farming, cultivation of Fox Nut in the lake and allow higher production of food grains due to an adequate irrigation system.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)



❖ Context

- Recently, **India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** countries announced their intention to **relaunch the free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations** with the group of nations.

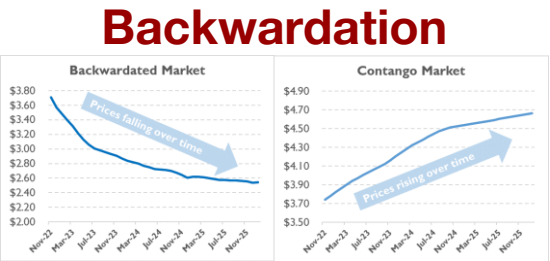
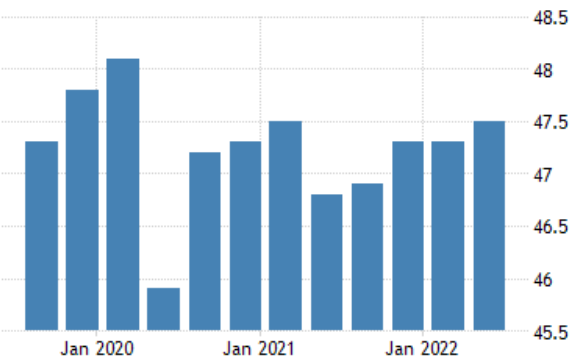
❖ Key Highlights

- The trade deal will be comprehensive, with substantial coverage of goods and services, including technology, food security, climate change, energy security, among others.
- **India and GCC** signed a framework agreement on economic cooperation to explore the possibility of an FTA between them — **more than 17 years ago**.
- Thereafter, **two rounds of negotiations** happened in 2006 and in 2008.
- However, after the two rounds, the economic union deferred its negotiations with all countries and economic groups.
- **GCC is currently India's largest trading partner bloc** with bilateral trade in 2021-22 (FY22) valued at over \$154 billion, with exports at \$44 billion.
- GCC countries **contribute almost 35% of India's oil imports and 70% of gas imports**.

About GCC



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GCC is a regional, intergovernmental political economic union comprising six countries — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). ➤ The Charter of the GCC was signed on 25 May 1981, formally establishing the institution. ➤ The council's main headquarters is located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
<p style="text-align: center;">International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)</p>  <p>International Electrotechnical Commission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recently, India won the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) Vice Presidency and Strategic Management Board (SMB) Chair for the 2023-25 term. ❖ Key Highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ India's representative Vimal Mahendru — a member of the Indian National Committee of the IEC and various technical committees of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS-India) — was elected as IEC vice president. ➤ BIS (India) is represented in various policy and governing bodies of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and IEC. ❖ About IEC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Formation- 26 June 1906 London, United Kingdom. ➤ Headquarters- Geneva, Switzerland. ➤ Membership- 89 Countries. ➤ International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) is an international standard setting body that publishes international Standards for all electrical, electronic and related technologies. ➤ IEC standards cover a vast range of technologies from power generation, transmission and distribution to home appliances and office equipment, semiconductors, fibre optics, batteries, solar energy, nanotechnology and marine energy as well as many others. ➤ The IEC cooperates closely with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). ➤ Standardization Management Board (SMB) is an apex governance body of IEC responsible for technical policy matters.
<p style="text-align: center;">Night Sky Sanctuary</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The work on India's first-ever Night Sky Sanctuary, in Ladakh's Hanle is going on in full swing and shall be complete in over a month's time. ❖ Key Highlights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is being set up by CSIR under Union Ministry of Science & Technology. ➤ The proposed Dark Sky Reserve will be located at Hanle in Ladakh as a part of Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary. ➤ It will boost Astro tourism in India and will be one of the world's highest-located sites for optical, infra-red, and gamma-ray telescopes. ❖ Night Sky Sanctuary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A dark sky or night sky sanctuary is a public or private land that has an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is protected for its scientific, natural or educational value, its cultural heritage and public enjoyment. ➤ Hanle has been chosen for the project as it is located in Ladakh's cold desert region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is away from any form of human disturbance and has clear sky conditions and dry weather conditions that exist throughout the year.

 <p>Backwardation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There are approximately 15 certified international dark sky sanctuaries across the world. <p>❖ Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is being estimated that the diesel shortage is going to affect the world within the next few months. <p>❖ Key highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One of the reasons for shortage is the constraint on refining capacity. The pandemic lockdowns destroyed demand and forced refiners to close some of their least profitable plants. ➤ The looming transition away from fossil fuels has also dented investments in the sector. ➤ Another reason is a market structure known as backwardation. ➤ It happens when premiums are higher for supplies with prompt deliveries than for longer-term ones or when spot prices are higher than future prices. This market structure incentivizes suppliers to sell now instead of holding onto the product to build inventories. ➤ Contango is just the reverse of it. ➤ Not only has that spread been unusually large, but the backwardation has lasted unusually long.
 <p>Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)</p>	<p>❖ Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Labour force participation rate in CWS (Current Weekly Status) in urban areas for persons aged 15 years and above increased to 47.9 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2022, from 46.9 per cent in the same period a year ago. It was 47.5 per cent in April-June 2022. <p>❖ About Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Labour force participation rate is defined as the section of the working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment. ➤ People who are still undergoing studies, housewives and persons above the age of 64 are not counted in the labour force. ➤ The Labour force participation rate helps to understand the unemployment rate in the economy. ➤ A higher labour force participation is a good sign for the economy whereas if it is on the lower side, it can also act as a warning sign for any economy. $\text{LFPR}(\%) = \frac{\text{Persons employed} + \text{persons unemployed}}{\text{Working-age population}} \times 100$