

Corporate Social Responsibility

❖ Context

- The Corporate Affairs Ministry (MCA) has clarified that spending of funds towards the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign would be considered an eligible CSR activity under the Company law.

❖ What is Corporate Social Responsibility?

- Corporate social responsibility is a type of business self-regulation with the aim of social accountability and making a positive impact on society.
- Some ways that a company can embrace CSR include:



- being environmentally friendly & eco-conscious;
- promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace;

- treating employees with respect;
- giving back to the community; and
- ensuring business decisions are ethical.
- The Companies Act 2013 requires companies with a net worth of ₹500 crore or more, or turnover of ₹1,000 crore or more or a net profit of ₹5 crore or more during the immediately preceding three years to spend 2 per cent of the average net profit on CSR activities.
- **Har Ghar Tiranga:** It is a campaign under the aegis of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and is aimed to invoke a feeling of patriotism in the hearts of people.

India Adds Five More Ramsar Sites

❖ Context

- India has added five more Ramsar sites, or wetlands that are of international importance, bringing the number of such sites to 54.

❖ Key Highlights



- The newly added wetlands are: (1) The Karikili Bird Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, (2) Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest In Tamil Nadu (3) Pichavaram Mangrove in Tamil Nadu, (4) The Sakhya Sagar in Madhya Pradesh and (5) Pala Wetland in Mizoram.

❖ What Is a Wetland?



- Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil, or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season.

- **Criteria:** To be Ramsar site, however, it must meet at least one of nine criteria as defined by the **Ramsar Convention of 1961**, such as :
 - Supporting vulnerable,
 - Endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities or,
 - If it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds or,

- Is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks are dependent upon.

❖ About India's Wetlands:

- India's Ramsar wetlands are spread over **11,000 sq km** - around 10% of the total wetland area in the country - across 18 States.
- A little over **two-fifths** are inland **natural wetlands** and about a quarter are coastal wetlands.
- India has 19 types of wetlands whereas Gujarat has the maximum area followed by Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.
- Wetlands in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat serve as important spaces for migratory birds.

❖ Importance of Being Designated as Ramsar Site:

- **Tourism Potential:** Acquiring this label also helps with a locale's tourism potential and its international visibility.
- **Buffers carbon dioxide emissions:** Wetlands are also known to have among the highest soil-carbon densities and therefore play a major role in buffering carbon dioxide emissions.
- **Helps in conservation:** Being designated a Ramsar site does not necessarily invite extra international funds but that States and the Centre ensures that these tracts of land are conserved and spared from man-made encroachment.
- **Miscellaneous Fact:** The United Kingdom (175) and Mexico (142) - smaller countries than India - have the maximum Ramsar sites whereas Bolivia spans the largest area with 148,000 sq km under the Convention protection.

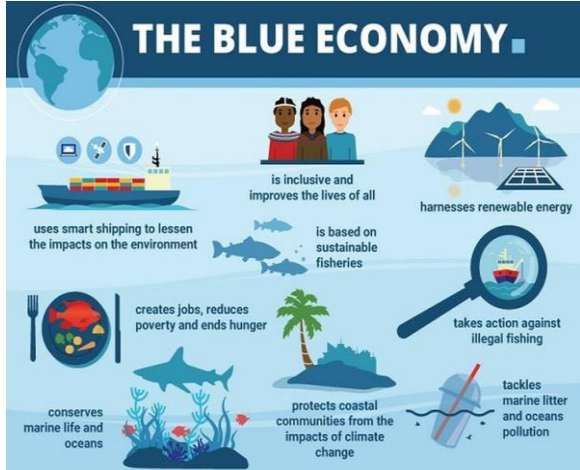
Blue Economic Policy

❖ Context

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences is finalizing the National Policy on Blue Economy for the country.
- A draft policy framework on India's Blue Economy has been prepared.

❖ Key Highlights

- This policy document contains :



- key recommendations on National Accounting Framework for Blue Economy and Ocean Governance,
- Coastal Marine Spatial Planning and Tourism Priority,
- Marine Fisheries,
- Aquaculture and Fish Processing.
- The proposed National Blue Economy Advisory Council (BEAC) will have the Secretaries of relevant Ministries/ Depts. as members.
- It would also include Chief Secretaries/Principal Secretaries of Coastal States and representatives from industry.

❖ What is Blue Economy?

- Blue economy essentially refers to the multitude of ocean resources available in the country that can be harnessed to **aid the production** of goods and services because of its linkages with economic growth, environmental sustainability, and national security.
- The blue economy is a vast socio-economic opportunity for coastal nations like India to utilise ocean resources for societal benefit responsibly.
- **Importance of Blue Economy:** With some 7,500 kilometres, India has a unique maritime position. Nine of its 29 states are coastal, and it's geography includes 1,382 islands.
- There are nearly 199 ports, including 12 major ports that handle approximately 1,400 million tons of cargo each year.

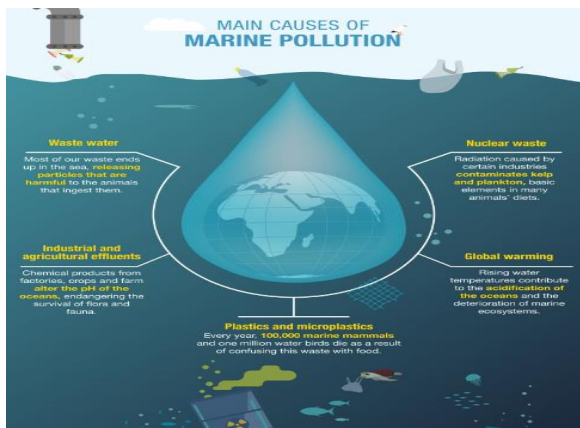
Marine Pollution

❖ Context

- **National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR)**, an attached office of MoES, is collecting the real-time information on coastal water quality by deploying water quality buoys at 10m water depth in coastal waters.

❖ Key Highlights

- The collected data is shared with the **State Pollution Control Boards**.



- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has instructed all the coastal State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and the Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) of the Union Territories for developing an action plan for prevention of coastal pollution.

- **NCCR** has taken up several initiatives to augment the scientific and research capabilities.
 - For continuous water quality observations, a network of water quality buoys is being deployed along the coast.
 - Along with the traditional methods of identification and analysis of biological samples,
 - Advanced techniques like use of molecular tools are being employed.
 - New research programs like Marine Spatial Planning, Marine Litter Monitoring, Coastal Flooding have been initiated.

Russia to Opt Out of International Space Station After 2024

❖ Context

- Russia's space chief said recently that the country will opt out of the International Space Station after 2024 and focus on building its own orbiting outpost.



❖ Key Highlights

- The announcement comes as tensions rage between the Kremlin and the West over Moscow's military intervention in Ukraine and several rounds of unprecedented sanctions against Russia.
- Russia and the United States have worked side by side on the ISS, which has been in orbit since 1998.

- **About International Space (ISS):** It is the largest modular space station currently in low Earth orbit.
- It is a multinational collaborative project involving five participating space agencies: **NASA** (United States), **Roscosmos** (Russia), **JAXA** (Japan), **ESA** (Europe), and **CSA** (Canada).

Face to Face Centres

Rule 377

❖ Context

- An MP raised the issue of the government to consult with experts and stakeholders before bringing any policy reform under the rule 377 of the **Rule and Procedure and Conduct of business in Lok Sabha**, made under **Article 118** of the Constitution.

❖ Key Points

- Matters, which are not points of order or which cannot be raised under the rules relating to questions, short notice questions, calling attention, motion etc. can be raised under the rule 377.
- This procedural device, framed in **1954**, provides opportunity to the members to raise matters of general public interest.
- **Notice** for raising the matter is to be given in writing to the **Secretary General** before 10 am on the day of the sitting. However, it is not necessary that matters will be permitted to be raised on the same day.
- No matter can be raised unless the **Speaker** has given his/her consent.
- At present, the **number of matters** that can be raised by members under rule 377 on a single day is 20.
- **A member can raise only one matter during a week under rule 377.**
- Matters are selected based on **party strength**.
- The **Minister** may reply in Parliament. The matter is sent by the Lok Sabha secretariat to the Minister who writes to the members informing of the government's view and/or action taken in the matter.
- Such matters raised in **Rajya Sabha** are known as **Special mentions under Rule 180A-E**.

News in Between the Lines

Har Ghar Jal Status



❖ Context

- The **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS)** informed that four more districts are on their way to achieving 'Har Ghar Jal' status soon.

❖ Key Highlights

- **Amritsar** (Punjab) currently stands at 99.49%, **Navsari** (Gujarat) at 99.89%, **Bilaspur** (Himachal Pradesh) at 98.54% and **Indore** (Madhya Pradesh) at 89.76%.
- **Burhanpur in Madhya Pradesh** recently became the **first district** to be awarded the status—which requires every rural household to have tap water.
- The district formed **water and sanitation committees** in all its 254 villages, accounting for over 100,000 households.
- Village water and sanitation committees are **responsible** for the :
 - Operation, maintenance and repair of the water supply infrastructure.
 - Collecting user-charges which are deposited in a bank and used for paying the pump operator's salary and carrying out minor repair work from time to time.

Light Mantled Albatross



❖ Context

- The bird **native to Antarctica**, has been sighted (recorded) for the **first time** in **Asia** at **Palk Bay side of Rameswaram island** in TN.

❖ Key Highlights

- The bird is known to be **on the move mostly**, use the wind and save its energy during flights. Even slight changes in the temperature can cause drastic changes in the wind pattern and birds could land in far-away places.
- The bird, with **broad pelagic habits**, maintains a **circumpolar distribution** in the Southern Ocean.
- It breeds on several sub-Antarctic islands, such as Macquarie Islands, Heard Island and McDonald Islands (Australia), South Georgia Island (British Overseas Territory), Prince Edward Islands (South Africa), Iles Kerguelen and Iles Crozet (France) & Auckland, Campbell, & Antipodes Islands (New Zealand).
- It is listed as a '**Near Threatened**' species by the IUCN.

Social Stock Exchange

❖ Context

- **SEBI** has notified a framework for the social stock exchange to provide social enterprises with an **additional avenue to raise funds**.

Face to Face Centres



❖ Key Highlights

- The idea of SSE was first floated by the FM in her Budget Speech 2019-20.
- It is meant to serve the **private and non-profit sectors**. It will be a **separate segment** of the existing stock exchanges.
- Social enterprises (SEs) eligible to participate in the SSE will be entities—**non-profit organisations (NPOs)** and **for-profit social enterprises**—having social intent and impact as their primary goal.
- The social enterprises will have to engage in a social activity out of 16 broad activities listed by the regulator.
- Corporate foundations, political or religious organisations or activities, professional or trade associations, infrastructure and housing companies, **except affordable housing, will not be eligible** to be identified as a social enterprise.
- Mode of fund raising:
 - **Eligible NPOs** : zero-coupon zero principal bonds and mutual funds.
 - **For-profit social enterprises** : issuance of equity shares on the main board, SME platform or equity shares issued to an alternative investment fund, including social impact fund.

SARAS



❖ Context

- **Union Bank of India** has developed an in-house solution, Saras (stressed asset recovery automated solution), with the help of an external vendor.

❖ Key Highlights

- It is a **non-performing asset (NPA) management tool**.
- Once an account turns non-performing, until the resolution is complete, the system will keep track of everything, send reminders to advocates on upcoming appearances, and progress reports to the top management.
- In addition, the tool is being integrated with 11 external websites, including the National Company Law Tribunal, Debt Recovery Tribunal, the Supreme Court of India, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Board of India & the Registrar of Companies.

UDID



❖ Context

- The **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities** informed that the generation of unique disability IDs (UDIDs) had increased from an average of 5,000 a day to an average of 7,000 to 9,000 daily during the 90-day Azadi Se Antodaya Tak campaign.

❖ Key Highlights

- The project was launched in 2016. The UDIDs project is being implemented with a view of creating a **National Database for PwDs**, and to issue a **Unique Disability Identity Card** to each person with disabilities.
- The project will help in stream-lining the **tracking of physical and financial progress of beneficiaries** at all levels of hierarchy of implementation – from village level, block level, District level, State level and National level.
- The department had made it **mandatory for states to issue the UDIDs through its online portal** from June 1, 2021 onwards.
- According to the 2011 Census, there were **2.68 crore people** with disabilities.

Rashtriya Puruskar Portal



❖ Context

- A common **Rashtriya Puruskar Portal** has been developed by the Government so as to bring together all Awards of various Ministries/Departments/Agencies of the Govt. of India under one platform.

❖ Key Highlights

- This Portal facilitates every citizen or organisation to nominate individuals/organisations for various Awards instituted by the Government of India. This will ensure transparency and public partnership (Jan Bhagidari).

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