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## **1. Second Phase of National Carbon Market Launched with Inclusion of Steel and Cement Sectors, Source: The Hindu**

**Context:** The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), in collaboration with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), today officially launched the second phase of India's Carbon Market. In a significant expansion, the steel and cement industries have now been included under the mandatory compliance mechanism, joining the aluminium and petrochemical sectors from the first phase. This move aims to accelerate decarbonisation efforts in hard-to-abate sectors, crucial for meeting India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).



### **Significance**

- Under the expanded 'Carbon Credit Trading Scheme', a cap on carbon emissions will be set for designated large industries in these sectors. Companies that emit less than their cap can sell their surplus credits on the carbon exchanges to those who exceed their limits.
- The floor and ceiling prices for the Carbon Credit Certificates (CCCs) for this cycle have been announced by the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), which acts as the regulator.

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## **Analysis**

- The Environment Minister hailed the expansion as a key step towards creating a vibrant, self-sustaining carbon market in India.
- He stated that the "polluter pays" principle is at the core of this market-based mechanism, which incentivizes industries to invest in greener technologies and energy efficiency.
- The revenue generated from the auction of some credits will be channelled into a National Clean Energy Fund to support research and development in green hydrogen and carbon capture technologies.
- The inclusion of steel and cement is expected to double the volume of tradable credits within the next two years.

## **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 3:** Environment - Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment. Climate Change.

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## **2. Supreme Court Delivers Landmark Verdict on Governor's Discretionary Powers**

**Source: Hindustan Times**

**Context:** In a landmark judgment with profound implications for India's federal structure, a seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court today delivered a unanimous verdict clarifying and circumscribing the discretionary powers of the Governor. The ruling came on a batch of petitions filed by several state governments challenging the actions of Governors in withholding assent to bills, summoning or proroguing legislative assemblies, and recommending President's Rule.



### **Significance**

- The Court held that the Governor's discretion under Article 163 of the Constitution is not "absolute or arbitrary" and must be exercised within the constitutional framework and in a manner that promotes, not undermines, the democratically elected state government.
- The judgment laid down a 'triple test' for the use of discretionary power: it must be based on objective material, have a rational nexus with the purpose for which it is granted, and not be used to create a parallel administration.

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## **Analysis**

- Specifically on withholding assent to bills (Article 200), the Court ruled that a Governor must communicate his decision, with reasons, within a "reasonable timeframe," and cannot exercise a "pocket veto."
- If a bill is returned for reconsideration and passed again by the legislature, the Governor is bound to give assent.
- The verdict has been hailed by constitutional experts as a vital course correction that strengthens the pillars of federalism and parliamentary democracy by reining in the potential for partisan use of the Governor's office.

## **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 2:** Indian Constitution - Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels, and challenges therein. Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions, and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

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### **3. ONDC Crosses 1 Million Daily Transactions; Empowers MSMEs in Tier-2 and Tier-3 Cities, Source: The Economic Times**

**Context:** The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) has achieved a major milestone, crossing one million retail transactions in a single day, announced the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). This landmark highlights the rapid adoption of the decentralized e-commerce protocol, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, posing a significant challenge to the dominance of e-commerce giants like Amazon and Flipkart.



#### **Significance**

- Launched as an alternative to the platform-centric model, ONDC enables sellers to be discoverable on any compatible buyer-side app, democratizing access to the digital marketplace.
- An analysis of the transaction data reveals that over 60% of the sellers driving this growth are from non-metropolitan areas, with categories like groceries, food delivery, and local handicrafts showing the highest traction.
- The network has successfully unbundled the e-commerce value chain, allowing small businesses to choose their own logistics and payment partners, thereby reducing their operational costs and dependency on large platforms.

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## Analysis

- Industry leaders credit ONDC's success to its open-source nature and the government's push for interoperability, akin to the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- The next phase of ONDC's expansion aims to integrate financial services, such as small-ticket loans and insurance for sellers, directly onto the network.
- This will create a holistic ecosystem for MSMEs, providing them with not just market access but also the financial tools necessary for growth.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy - Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy, and their effects on industrial growth.

**GS Paper 3:** Science and Technology - Awareness in the fields of IT and Computers.

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#### **4. Jal Jeevan Mission Achieves 100% 'Har Ghar Jal' Target; 'Jal Jeevan 2.0' to Focus on Quality and Sustainability, Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB)**

**Context:** The Ministry of Jal Shakti has announced the successful completion of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), achieving its ambitious target of providing functional tap water connections to every rural household in the country. Launched in 2019, the mission has successfully provided over 16 crore new connections, transforming the landscape of rural sanitation and public health. A final report submitted to the Prime Minister's Office confirms that all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats have been certified as 'Har Ghar Jal' villages.



#### **Significance**

- Building on this monumental success, the government today announced the launch of the next phase, 'Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0: Quality and Sustainability'.
- While the first phase focused on access, the second phase will be dedicated to ensuring the quality, quantity, and sustainability of the water supply.
- Key components of JJM 2.0 include real-time, IoT-based water quality monitoring in every village, promoting greywater management and reuse, and strengthening community-based water management through Pani Samitis.

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## **Analysis**

- JJM 2.0 will also focus heavily on source sustainability, with mandatory rainwater harvesting and aquifer recharge projects to be integrated with MGNREGA.
- The mission aims to ensure not just 'Har Ghar Jal' (water in every home) but 'Har Ghar Shuddh Jal' (pure water in every home) on a long-term basis.
- This next phase will be crucial for building water security and resilience in the face of climate change.

## **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 2:** Governance - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**GS Paper 3:** Environment/Infrastructure - Conservation, Water resources.

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## **5. Government Launches New Doctrine for J&K: 'Vikas, Vishwas, aur Vāpsī'**

**Source: Hindustan Times**

**Context:** Following the first full term of the elected assembly in Jammu and Kashmir post-Article 370 abrogation, the Union Home Ministry today unveiled a new three-pronged doctrine for the Union Territory: 'Vikas, Vishwas, aur Vāpsī' (Development, Trust, and Return). The doctrine aims to consolidate security gains while accelerating economic development and fostering a climate of reconciliation.



### **Significance**

- The 'Vikas' (Development) pillar focuses on fast-tracking infrastructure projects, particularly in power and connectivity, and creating a vibrant startup ecosystem to address youth unemployment.
- The 'Vishwas' (Trust) pillar involves strengthening local governance through empowered Panchayati Raj Institutions and District Development Councils, alongside a commitment to political dialogue with all stakeholders who shun violence.
- This includes measures to increase local participation in the administrative and police forces.

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## Analysis

- The most sensitive and significant pillar is 'Vāpsī' (Return), which outlines a comprehensive and time-bound action plan for the safe and dignified return of the displaced Kashmiri Pandit community.
- The plan includes the completion of transit accommodation, enhanced security for minority pockets, and a new package of financial assistance and employment opportunities for returning families.
- The Home Minister, announcing the doctrine in Srinagar, emphasized that lasting peace in J&K can only be achieved when economic progress is paired with social justice and a sense of security for all communities.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper 3:** Internal Security - Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security. Linkages between development and the spread of extremism. Security challenges and their management in border areas.

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## **6. India-EU FTA Talks Enter Final Stage; IPR and Agriculture Remain Sticking Points, Source: The Indian Express**

**Context:** Negotiations for the long-awaited India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) have entered a crucial final phase, with negotiators from both sides holding marathon sessions in Brussels this week. Sources indicate that significant convergence has been achieved on key chapters, including trade in goods, services, and investment facilitation. However, critical differences persist over Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and market access for agricultural products.



### **Significance**

- The EU is pushing for a 'TRIPS-plus' regime, seeking stronger patent protection for its pharmaceutical and agri-tech products.
- India has resisted these demands, arguing that they could undermine its ability to produce affordable generic medicines and protect its farmers' interests. On agriculture, India is seeking greater market access for its products, including rice and fruits, while the EU has raised concerns about India's sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards and high tariffs on dairy and wine.

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## Analysis

- A breakthrough is being keenly watched, as a successful India-EU FTA would be a major strategic and economic victory for both sides.
- It would diversify supply chains, boost bilateral trade—currently over \$150 billion—and create a powerful economic bloc as a counterweight to other global powers.
- The Commerce Ministry in New Delhi stated that India is negotiating for a "balanced, ambitious, and mutually beneficial" agreement that does not compromise its core interests. The next few days will be critical in determining whether these final hurdles can be overcome.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper 2:** International Relations - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy - Issues relating to intellectual property rights

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## **7. India's First National Bio-manufacturing Hub Inaugurated in Hyderabad**

**Source: The Hindu**

**Context:** In a major boost to India's biotechnology sector, the Minister for Science and Technology today inaugurated the country's first National Biomanufacturing Hub (NBH) in Hyderabad's Genome Valley. The state-of-the-art facility is designed to help biotech startups and researchers scale up their production from the lab to a commercially viable level, addressing a key gap in the Indian biotech ecosystem.



### **Significance**

- The NBH, established under the National Biotechnology Development Strategy with a joint investment from the central government and the state of Telangana, provides access to cutting-edge, large-scale bioreactors, downstream processing units, and quality control labs on a shared, pay-per-use basis.
- This model drastically reduces the high capital investment required for startups to build their manufacturing facilities, a major entry barrier in the deep-tech biotech sector.
- The hub will focus on products like therapeutic proteins, monoclonal antibodies, vaccines, and cell and gene therapies.

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## Analysis

- Speaking at the inauguration, the minister emphasized that the NBH will be pivotal in achieving India's target of a \$300 billion bio-economy by 2030.
- By providing the necessary infrastructure for 'pilot-to-plant' scale-up, the hub will accelerate the 'lab-to-market' journey for innovative biologicals, strengthening India's position as the "pharmacy of the world" beyond generic drugs into complex biologics.
- The government has announced plans for two more such hubs in Pune and Bengaluru.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper 3:** Science and Technology - Awareness in the fields of Bio-technology. Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

**GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy - Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

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## **8. NITI Aayog Panel on Agriculture Submits Report; Recommends Price Stabilisation Fund, Moves Beyond MSP, Source: The Indian Express**

**Context:** A high-level panel constituted by NITI Aayog to recommend long-term reforms in agriculture submitted its final report to the Prime Minister today. The report, titled "Reimagining Indian Agriculture: A Framework for Income Security and Sustainability," has controversially suggested a gradual transition away from the open-ended procurement-based Minimum Support Price (MSP) system towards a more targeted income support and price stabilisation mechanism.



### **Significance**

- The cornerstone of the panel's recommendations is the creation of a massive 'Price Stabilisation Fund' (PSF).
- Instead of the government procuring vast quantities of grain, the PSF would be used to intervene in the market only when prices fall significantly below a pre-determined threshold, purchasing limited quantities to shore up prices.
- The report argues this would reduce the massive fiscal burden and storage costs associated with the current MSP regime and prevent market distortion.

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## **Analysis**

- To ensure farmers' income, the panel recommends strengthening and expanding the PM-KISAN scheme and linking it to the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and crop diversification.
- It proposes a 'deficiency payment' system for 23 crops, where farmers are compensated for the difference if the market price falls below the MSP, without government procurement.
- While farmer unions have expressed apprehension, the panel argues that this twin-pronged approach of market intervention via the PSF and direct income support will provide better income security and encourage farmers to cultivate crops based on market demand and agro-climatic suitability, rather than just MSP incentives.

## **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy (Agriculture) - Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

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## **9. Ministry of Tribal Affairs Launches 'Van Adhikar Abhiyan' to Fast-Track FRA Implementation, Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB)**

**Context:** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs today launched the 'Van Adhikar Abhiyan', a national mission to accelerate the implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, commonly known as the Forest Rights Act (FRA). The mission aims to process all pending claims for individual and community forest rights within the next two years and create a comprehensive digital record of all titles granted.



### **Significance**

- The Abhiyan will be driven by a new dedicated portal, the 'FRA Adhikar Portal', which will digitize the entire claim process from application to verification and final title issuance.
- This will bring transparency and accountability, reducing the scope for errors and deliberate delays at the local level.
- Special 'Van Adhikar Gram Sabhas' will be convened across forest-fringe villages to raise awareness and assist eligible families in filing claims.
- The mission also involves using advanced geospatial technology, including satellite imagery and drone surveys, to map claim areas accurately, resolving long-standing land disputes.

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## **Analysis**

- The Union Minister for Tribal Affairs stated that while the FRA has been transformative, its implementation has been slow and patchy.
- The 'Van Adhikar Abhiyan' represents a final, concerted push to secure the land and livelihood rights of millions of tribal and forest-dwelling communities, which is crucial for both social justice and forest conservation.
- The mission will work in close coordination with state revenue and forest departments to overcome administrative bottlenecks that have historically plagued the Act's implementation.

## **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper 2:** Social Justice & Governance - Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions, and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

**GS Paper 1:** Indian Society - Social empowerment.

**GS Paper 3:** Environment - Conservation.

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## **10. Chief of Defence Staff Announces Operationalization of India's First Maritime Theatre Command, Source: Hindustan Times**

**Context:** In a landmark military reform, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan announced today the formal operationalization of India's first integrated military command—the Maritime Theatre Command (MTC). This move marks the beginning of the most significant restructuring of the Indian armed forces in decades, aimed at achieving synergy and optimizing resource allocation for future conflicts.



### **Significance**

- The MTC, headquartered in Karwar, Karnataka, brings the operational assets of the Indian Navy's Eastern and Western Naval Commands, elements of the Indian Army's amphibious brigades, and specific air assets from the Indian Air Force under a single operational commander.
- This unified command will be responsible for the entirety of India's maritime domain, from the Persian Gulf in the west to the Malacca Strait in the east, ensuring a seamless and integrated response to any threat in the Indian Ocean Region.

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## Analysis

- General Chauhan stated that the creation of the MTC is a critical step towards enhancing India's combat capability and is in line with military structures adopted by major world powers.
- He clarified that service-specific commands will continue to handle 'raise, train, and sustain' functions, while the Theatre Commander will have full operational control for all missions within his geographical domain.
- The CDS also confirmed that the establishment of the Air Defence Command and two land-based theatre commands (for the western and northern borders) is in advanced stages and will follow in a phased manner.
- The move is seen as essential for effective multi-domain operations in a complex geopolitical environment.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper 3:** Internal Security - Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate. Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages of organized crime with terrorism. Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.