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## Current Affairs - 02 December 2024

### URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FUND

Recently, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs informed in Lok Sabha that the government has set up the Urban Infrastructure Development Fund



(UIDF) through use of priority sector lending shortfall for creating urban infrastructure in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

- It was established through the use of **priority sector lending shortfall**.
- It will be used by public agencies to create urban **infrastructure in tier-2 and tier-3 cities**.
- It aims to **supplement the efforts of the State Governments / UTs** for urban infrastructure development works implemented through Public/ State Agencies, Municipal Corporations and Urban Local Bodies, by providing a stable and predictable source of financing for providing basic services like **Sewerage and Solid Waste Management, Water Supply and Sanitation**, construction and improvement of drains/ storm water drains, etc.
- It is managed by the **National Housing Bank**.
- The initial corpus for **this Fund is ₹10,000 crore**.
- It is established on the lines of the **Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF)**.
- States will be encouraged to leverage resources from the grants of the 15th Finance Commission, as well as existing schemes, to adopt appropriate user charges while accessing the UIDF.
- It currently covers 459 tier-2 cities and 580 tier-3 cities.
- **UIDF Loans:**
  - The interest rate on UIDF loans has been **kept at Bank Rate minus 1.5 per cent**.
  - The loan (Principal) will be repayable in **five equal annual instalments** within seven years from the date of draw, including a moratorium period of two years.
  - Interest will be payable on a quarterly basis.



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### EXERCISE CINBAX

The 1st edition of Joint Table Top Exercise, CINBAX commenced at Foreign Training Node, Pune.

- It is conducted between the **Indian Army and the Cambodian Army**.
  - It is aimed to **conduct of a joint Counter Terrorism (CT)** operations.
  - It will focus on discussions pertaining to establishment of Joint Training Task Force for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance besides planning of operations in CT environment.
  - The exercise will also involve discussion on information operations, **cyber warfare, hybrid warfare, logistics and casualty management, HADR operations**
  - It will be conducted in three phases.
    - **Phase-I** will focus on preparations and orientation of participants for CT operations during UN peace keeping missions.
    - **Phase-II** will involve conduct of the Table Top exercises
    - **Phase-III** will involve finalisation of plans and summing up. This will bring out practical aspects of the theme-based training and aims to enable the participants to comprehend the procedures through situation-based discussions and tactical exercises.
  - The exercise will also showcase weapons and equipment of the Indian origin promoting 'Atmanirbharta' and indigenous capabilities in defence production.
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### WHAT IS A SOLAR STORM?



- A solar storm is a **sudden explosion of particles, energy, magnetic fields, and material blasted into the solar system by the Sun.**

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- **What causes a solar storm?**
    - The sun's tangled **magnetic fields** get **twisted up** as the Sun rotates — with its equator rotating faster than its poles.
    - Solar storms typically begin when these **twisted magnetic fields** on the Sun get **contorted and stretched** so much that they snap and **reconnect** (in a process called magnetic reconnection), **releasing large amounts of energy**.
  - These powerful eruptions **can generate any or all of the following:**
    - a bright flash of light called a **solar flare**
    - a **radiation storm**, or flurry of solar particles propelled into space at high speeds
    - an enormous cloud of solar material, called a **coronal mass ejection**
  - **Effects on Earth:**
    - When directed toward Earth, a solar storm can create a major disturbance in Earth's magnetic field, called a **geomagnetic storm**, that can **produce effects** such as **radio blackouts, power outages, and beautiful auroras**.
    - They do **not cause direct harm to anyone** on Earth, however, to our planet's magnetic field and atmosphere that protect us from the worst of these storms.
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### VADHAVAN PORT



- The Vadhavan Port will be developed as an **all-weather Greenfield deep draft major port** in Vadhavan, Palghar District, **Maharashtra**.
- The project will be implemented by **Vadhavan Port Project Limited (VPPL)**, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) formed by **Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA)** and **Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB)** with a shareholding of **74% and 26%**, respectively.
- The total project cost, including the land acquisition component, is **76,220 Crore**.

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- Scheduled to be finished by 2034, it is projected to be among the top 10 ports in the world.
  - The port will comprise **nine container terminals**, each 1000 meters long, four multipurpose berths, including the coastal berth, four liquid cargo berths, a Ro-Ro berth, and a Coast Guard berth.
  - By 2029, four terminals will be completed and five terminals will be added by 2034.
  - The Project will create a cumulative capacity of 298 million metric tons (MMT) per annum, including around 23.2 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalents) of container handling capacity.
  - It will also aid **EXIM trade flow through IMEEC (India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor) and INSTC (International North South Transportation Corridor)**.
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### PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT (PMLA)

- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 was enacted in January, 2003.
- **The Act seeks to combat money laundering in India and has three main objectives:**
  - To prevent and control money laundering
  - To confiscate and seize the property obtained from the laundered money; and
  - To deal with any other issue connected with money laundering in India.
- **Sec. 3** of the Act defines offence of money laundering.
- The Act was amended by the **Prevention of Money Laundering (Amendment) Act, 2009** and by the **Prevention of Money Laundering (Amendment) Act, 2012**.

### **Major Provisions of the Act:**

- The Act prescribes obligation of banking companies, financial institutions and intermediaries for verification and maintenance of records of the identity of all its clients and also of all transactions.

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- PMLA empowers the **Directorate of Enforcement (ED)** to carry out investigations in cases involving offence of money laundering and also to attach the property involved in money laundering.
  - ED is a law enforcement agency and economic intelligence agency responsible for enforcing economic laws and fighting economic crime in India.
  - It was formed as an Enforcement Unit, in the Department of Economic Affairs, for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947**.
- PMLA envisages setting up of an **Adjudicating Authority** to exercise jurisdiction, power and authority conferred by it essentially to confirm attachment or order confiscation of attached properties.
- It also envisages setting up of an **Appellate Tribunal** to hear appeals against the order of the Adjudicating Authority
- PMLA envisages designation of one or more courts of sessions as **Special Court** or Special Courts to try the offences punishable under the Act.
- PMLA also allows **Central Government to enter into an agreement with Government of any country outside India for enforcing the provisions of the PMLA**.
- **Understanding the Legal Framework:**
  - **Prior Sanction Provision:**
    - **CrPC Section 197:** Courts cannot take cognizance of offenses committed by public servants in their official capacity unless prior government approval is obtained.
    - **Exceptions:** No sanction is required for certain grave offenses like sexual harassment, trafficking, or rape.
    - **Landmark Case:** In **Devinder Singh v. State of Punjab (2016)**, the SC clarified that this provision does not shield corrupt activities disguised as official duties.



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### DEVELOPING NATIONAL POLICY TO INCREASE FEMALE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

The Indian government is set to unveil a **comprehensive national policy** aimed at increasing female labour force participation, focusing on creating an enabling environment through a robust care economy framework.

#### What is a Care Economy?

- It refers to the **sector of economic activity that encompasses the provision of care and support services**, particularly those related to **health, education, childcare, eldercare, etc.**
- It encompasses paid and unpaid care work crucial for **human survival, welfare, and labor force participation.**
- It helps to address material, emotional, and developmental requirements but is sometimes unrecognised or undervalued, resulting in a "**hidden care economy**".
- This dilemma prompted the **Beijing Platform for Action in 1995**, which pushed for identifying and appreciating women's contributions in caregiving, domestic work, and volunteerism.

#### Key Issues Related to the Care Economy in India:

- **High percentage outside workforce:** Over half of India's women (53%) remain outside the labour force, largely due to unpaid caregiving duties, in stark contrast to only 1.1% of men.
- **Unpaid domestic and household work:** According to India's Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2023-24, around 36.7% of females and 19.4% of the workforce are involved in unpaid household work.
- **Gender disparities in domestic work:** The National Statistical Office (NSO) Time Use Survey 2019 shows that 81% of Indian females aged 6 and above spend over five hours daily on unpaid domestic activities.

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- **Caregiving time differences:** Among those 6 years and older, 26.2% of females spend over two hours daily on caregiving versus 12.4% of males, indicating the disproportionate share borne by women.

### Key Barriers to Women's Workforce Inclusion, Government Initiatives and Way Ahead:

- According to ILO report, **low educational attainment, limited job opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure** are critical factors keeping women out of the workforce.
- **Cultural norms** around caregiving heavily restrict women's labour market access, especially in **rural areas**, reinforcing existing gender inequalities.
- **Existing initiatives - Palna scheme:**
  - The Ministry of Women and Child Development operates the 'Palna' scheme, which provides **Anganwadi-cum-crèche facilities** for children aged 6 months to 6 years.
  - Key highlights of the scheme include:
    - **Services offered:** Nutritional support, health monitoring, immunisation, cognitive development, and education.
    - **Current status:** As of now, 1,000 Anganwadi creches are operational.

### Way ahead:

- To address the high percentage of women outside India's workforce due to care responsibilities, **substantial investments in the care economy** - especially in early childhood care and education (ECCE) - are essential.
  - Such initiatives cannot only **foster gender equality** but also **unlock economic potential** by enabling more women to enter and thrive in the workforce.
  - Nations like **Belarus, Bulgaria, and Sweden** maintain lower proportions of women outside the workforce (less than 10%) by investing in ECCE, roughly 1% of their GDP.
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### 59<sup>th</sup> ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF DIRECTOR GENERALS/INSPECTOR GENERALS OF POLICE

- The three-day Conference, from November 29 to December 1, 2024, was held in hybrid format at Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
    - The conference was attended by the Union Home Minister, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, the National Security Advisor, Ministers of State for Home, and the Union Home Secretary.
    - DGsP/IGsP from all States/UTs and heads of CAPF/CPOs participated physically, while over 750 officers of various ranks joined virtually in the hybrid-format event.
  - The conference is the culmination of extensive deliberations involving police and intelligence officers from the district, state and national levels on identified themes.
  - **Hosted by:** Intelligence Bureau (IB).
  - **Outcomes**
    - Best practices from States and Union Territories was presented at the Conference so that States can learn from each other.
    - In depth discussions were held on existing and emerging challenges to national security, including counter terrorism, left wing extremism, cyber-crime, economic security, immigration, coastal security and narco-trafficking.
    - Deliberations were also held on emerging security concerns along the border with Bangladesh and Myanmar, trends in urban policing and strategies for countering malicious narratives.
    - Further, a review was undertaken of implementation of newly enacted major criminal laws, initiatives and best practices in policing as also the security situation in the neighborhood.
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### MADHAV NATIONAL PARK



- **Location:** It is located in the State of **Madhya Pradesh**. It is situated on the northern fringe of the Central Highlands of India forming a part of the **Upper Vindhyan Hills** inter-mixed with plateaus and valley sections.
  - **Lakes:** Sakhya Sagar and Madhav Sagar are the two lakes in the southern part of the park, providing the aquatic biodiversity and lifeline for the terrestrial species.
- Rivers:**
- The drainage pattern is towards **north and northeast** in the northern area of the park forming **catchment of Amarnadi**.
  - The park area forms **catchment of the Sind river** which flows along the **eastern boundary** of the park.
  - The **eastern part** of the park has sedimentary **rocks of Vindhyan system**, which are mostly sandstone, shale and limestones.

**Vegetation:** The forests of the park fall within the category of Northern tropical dry deciduous mixed forests as well as Dry Thorn Forests typical of North – Western Madhya Pradesh.

**Flora:** Kardhai, Salai, Dhaora and Khair. The understory comprises almost entirely of Ber, Makor and Karonda. The jamun and mahua are found along the nullahs.

**Fauna:** Nilgai, Chinkara and Chowsinga and Deer including Chital, Sambar and Barking Deer. Animals like the Leopard, Wolf, Jackal, Fox, Wild Dog etc.

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