

## Current Affairs - 19 February 2025

### NAVIKA SAGAR PARIKRAMA II.



The Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini entered Port Stanley on 18 Feb 25 thus completing the third and most challenging phase of Navika Sagar Parikrama II.

- It underscores the Indian Navy's commitment to gender empowerment and maritime excellence.
- It is crewed by two women officers-Lieutenant Commander Dilna K and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A.

- It aims to promote ocean sailing, self-reliance, and India's rich maritime heritage.
- The historic expedition was flagged off from Goa by the chief of the Naval Staff on October 2, 2024.
- Navika Sagar Parikrama II covering more than 21,600 nautical miles (approx 40,000 km) will unfold in five legs with stop overs at four ports for replenishment and maintenance, as required. The broad contour of voyage will be as follows: -
  - Goa to Fremantle, Australia
  - Fremantle to Lyttleton, New Zealand
  - Lyttleton to Port Stanley, Falkland
  - Port Stanley to Cape Town, S. Africa
  - Cape Town to Goa

#### About INSV Tarini:

- It is a 56-foot sailing vessel built by M/s Aquarius Shipyard Ltd.
- The vessel has clocked more than 66,000 nautical miles (1,22,223 km) and participated in first edition of Navika Sagar Parikrama in 2017.
- The boat is equipped with advanced navigation, safety and communication equipment.

## Current Affairs - 19 February 2025

### ARBITRATION AND CONCILIATION ACT, 1996



**Arbitration and Conciliation Act** established a sound framework for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in India.

- The act updated and codified the laws about arbitration, mediation, and conciliation.
- It is vital for businesses and individuals alike; it allows them to have an easier, less adversarial, and less costly mode of dispute resolution as compared to those conducted outside traditional courts.

#### **Features of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act:**

- **Two-tiered system:** It offers arbitration and conciliation and thus differences in modes of conflict resolution.
- **Flexibility:** Parties can choose their rules of procedure and arbitrators for flexibility and convenience.
- **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality in the proceedings is required; it is important in cases of business disputes regarding issues that cannot easily be revealed.
- **Finality and Enforceability:** Arbitration awards become binding and enforceable by courts, so parties must adhere to them.
- **Judicial Support and Limited Intervention:** Courts could intervene under certain cases, which include the appointment of arbitrators or the enforcement of the award.
- **Global Applicability:** In regard to the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law, it is globally compatible, and therefore this act helps in international arbitration.

#### **Amendments to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act:**

- **Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2015:**

## Current Affairs - 19 February 2025

- **Introduced timelines** for the institution of **arbitral proceedings** so that it is completed within **12 months**.
- **Judicial interference** has been **curtailed to an extent to bring finality to arbitration**.
- **Cost control regulations** have been enhanced to make ADR cost-effective.
- **Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019:**
  - It has established the **Arbitration Council of India (ACI)** to regulate **arbitration standards** and promote institutional arbitration.
  - **Disclosure** of the existence of **conflicts of interest by the arbitrator** is made **mandatory**, thereby increasing transparency.
  - Focused on reducing delays by limiting stay orders on arbitral awards.
- **Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2021:**
  - **Done away with automatic stays on arbitral awards** for reasons such as fraud or corruption.
  - Streamlined the process of enforcing arbitral awards, thereby endorsing a pro-enforcement approach in this manner of the Act.

### BIENNIAL TRANSPARENCY REPORT (BTR)



India is in the final stages of preparing its first ever Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), part of its commitment as a signatory to the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.

- The BTR is a report prepared and submitted by Parties to the Paris Agreement under the **Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF)** that captures information on their progress in implementing the different aspects of the Agreement.
- The different aspects are covered in the five separate chapters of the BTR, some of which are mandatory and some of which are optional.
- Different chapters and components of the BTR:

## Current Affairs - 19 February 2025

- **National Inventory Report of GHG Emissions:** All Parties - **Mandatory**
- **Progress made in implementing and achieving the NDC:** All Parties - **Mandatory**
- **Climate change impacts and adaptation:** All Parties - **Optional**
- **Financial, technology transfer, and capacity building support provided:**
  - Developed country Parties - **Mandatory**
  - Other Parties that provide support - **Optional**
- **Financial, technology transfer, and capacity-building support needed and received:** Developing country Parties - **Optional**
- All Parties to the Paris Agreement, **except for small island developing states (SIDS) and the least developed countries (LDCs)**, are required to provide country-specific information on the implementation of the Paris Agreement in the form of **BTR every two years**.
- Recognizing the capacity constraints faced by SIDS and LDCs, and the need to provide flexibility in light of their national circumstances, **SIDS and LDCs may submit BTRs at their discretion**.
- As the reporting instrument of the Paris Agreement, BTRs **help facilitate mutual trust and confidence** between countries and allow parties and non-party stakeholders to understand the state of climate action in each country.

### INLAND WATER TRANSPORT TERMINAL



- The terminal is set to **transform the connectivity** in the region and bolster our **trilateral trade with Bhutan and Bangladesh**.
- The foundation stone for the terminal was laid in February, 2021.
- It has been set up at a cost of Rs 82 crore.
- It has the **potential to boost trade by reducing transportation expenditure and offering an eco-friendly and alternative mode of transport** via the Brahmaputra river.

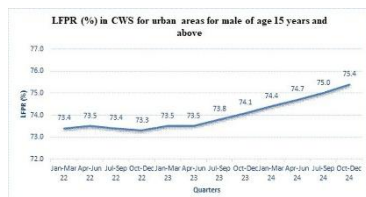
## Current Affairs - 19 February 2025

- By 2027, this terminal is expected to handle cargo of 1 million tonnes per annum.

### About Inland Waterways Authority of India:

- It is a statutory body established under the Inland Waterways Authority of India Act (IWAI), 1985.
- Purpose:** The Authority primarily undertakes projects for development and maintenance of IWT infrastructure on national waterways through grant received from the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- It presently has **five regional offices in Guwahati (Assam), Patna (Bihar), Kochi (Kerala), Bhubaneswar (Odisha) and Kolkata (West Bengal).**
- Headquarter: **Noida, Uttar Pradesh.**
- Nodal Ministry: **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.**

### PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (PLFS)



Unemployment rate in urban areas during the third quarter (October-December) of FY25 remained unchanged at 6.4 per cent compared to the preceding quarter, according to the latest quarterly Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data.

- Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in urban areas** among persons of age 15 years and above **has increased** from 49.9% during October - December, 2023 to **50.4%** in quarter October – December, 2024.
  - LFPR for male of age 15 years and above in urban areas increased from 74.1% during October – December, 2023 to 75.4% during October - December, 2024 reflecting overall increasing trend in male LFPR.
  - LFPR among female of age 15 years and above for urban areas** increased from 25.0% during October – December, 2023 to 25.2% during October - December, 2024.



## Current Affairs - 19 February 2025

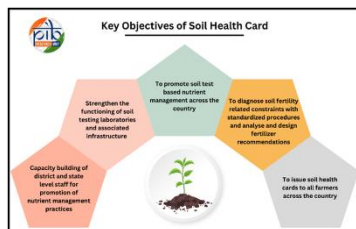
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR) in urban areas** among persons of age 15 years and above has **increased from 46.6%** during October - December, 2023 to **47.2%** in October - December, 2024.
  - WPR for male of age 15 years and above for urban areas increased from 69.8% in October - December, 2023 to 70.9% during October - December, 2024 reflecting overall increasing trend in male WPR.
- **Unemployment Rate (UR) in urban areas** among persons of age 15 years and above **decreased from 6.5%** during October - December, 2023 to **6.4%** during October - December, 2024.
  - UR among males of age 15 years and above remained same as 5.8% during October - December, 2023 and October - December, 2024. UR among female of age 15 years and above decreased from 8.6 % in October - December, 2023 to 8.1% in October - December, 2024.
- The survey further showed that the **jobless rate for the youth (15-29 age group) increased to 16.1 per cent in Q3FY25** from 15.8 per cent in the preceding quarter.

### About Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS):

- Considering the importance of availability of labour force data at more frequent time intervals, **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)** has been conducting the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) since 2017.
- **The objectives:**
  - Primarily to **estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators** (viz. Worker Population Ratio, Labour Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate) in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the 'Current Weekly Status' (CWS).
  - PLFS also estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both 'Usual Status' (ps+ss) and CWS in **both rural and urban areas annually**.
- This survey is conducted by **the National Sample Survey (NSO)**, working under **the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.

## Current Affairs - 19 February 2025

### SOIL HEALTH CARD SCHEME



- The soil health card scheme was launched in 2015 to assist State Governments to issue soil health cards to **all farmers**.

- It provides **information to farmers on nutrient status of their soil along with recommendation on appropriate dosage of nutrients** to be applied for improving soil health and its fertility.

#### Key features:

- It contains status of the soil with respect to **12 parameters, namely N, P, K, S (Macro-nutrients); Zn, Fe, Cu, Mn, Bo (Micro - nutrients); and pH (Acidity or Basicity), EC (Electrical Conductivity) and OC (Organic Carbon)**.
- Soil samples are taken **generally two times in a year**, after harvesting of Rabi and Kharif Crop respectively or when there is no standing crop in the field.
- A farmer will get the soil card **once in every 3 years**.
- **Village Level Soil Testing Labs** can be set up to provide test results by individual entrepreneurs i.e. rural youth and community based entrepreneurs, including Self Help Groups (SHGs), Schools, Agriculture Universities etc.
- **Benefits:**
  - The scheme monitors the soil of the farmers well and gives them a formatted report. So, they can **decide well which crops they should cultivate and which ones they should skip**.
  - The authorities monitor the soil on a regular basis. One in every 3 years, they provide a report to farmers. So farmers need not worry if the nature of the soil changes due to certain factors. Also, they always have updated data about their soil.
- **Nodal Agency:** Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in (DA&FW).

## Current Affairs - 19 February 2025

### THE DEEPER MEANING OF DECLINING SCHOOL ENROLMENT

- **India, the world's most populous country**, has long held hopes of reaping a demographic dividend, **sustained by its burgeoning youth population**.
- For decades, **demographers and policy planners have anticipated that this window of opportunity**, where the working-age population significantly outnumbers dependents, would remain open for a limited time.
- However, **recent trends suggest that this demographic advantage may be short-lived**.
- **Declining school enrolment rates over the past decade** signal the beginning of the end of this period, suggesting that India may age before it becomes wealthy.

#### The Data Behind the Decline

- The **Ministry of Education's release of the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (U-DISE+)** data for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years raised alarms.
- The data revealed a **15.5 million decrease in school enrolment** since the 2018-19 academic year, a 6% drop that has caused considerable concern.
- Official sources **attributed this decline to improvements in data collection**, particularly the integration of Aadhaar numbers to prevent multiple school enrolments.
- While this explanation may seem plausible, **a deeper analysis of enrolment data** spanning the past decade **paints a far more troubling picture**.
- The **decline is not merely a result of more accurate data**; it reflects a **systematic demographic shift**.
- Over the past ten years, **school enrolment has dropped by 24.51 million**, or 9.45%. Elementary education, which has been free and compulsory under the Right to Education (RTE) Act since 2009, has seen a particularly sharp decline of 18.7 million (13.45%).
- Conversely, **senior secondary enrolment has increased**, reflecting a shift in the educational landscape, **but the overall trend points to a demographic transition** that signals an end to the country's demographic dividend.



## Current Affairs - 19 February 2025

### SARISKA TIGER RESERVE (STR)



- It is located in **Rajasthan**.
  - It is spread over the **Aravallis**.
  - It covers an area of 800 sq.km.
- It was once a hunting ground of the Maharaja of Alwar before being proclaimed a natural reserve in 1955 and a national park in 1979.
  - It was the **first reserve in the world to successfully relocate tigers**.
  - It is also famous for **old temples, palaces, and lakes** such as **Pandu Pol, Bhangarh Fort, Ajabgarh, Pratapgarh, Siliserh Lake, and JaiSamand Lake**.

**Topography:** It possesses a rocky landscape, scrub thorn arid forests, grasses, hilly cliffs, and semi deciduous wood.

**Vegetation:** The vegetation of Sariska corresponds to **Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests and Tropical Thorn Forest**.

#### **Flora:**

- The area of this reserve is covered with **dhok trees**.
- Other species found include salar, kadaya, gol, ber, Banyan, gugal, bamboo, kair, adusta, etc.

**Fauna:** A variety of other wild animals, like the **leopard, sambhar, chital, nilgai, four-horned antelope, wild boar** etc are found in the reserve **apart from the tigers**.