Today's Prelims Topics

Vadhavan Port

Context

After completion of both phases by 2034, Vadhavan port will be among world's top 10 ports.

About Vadhavan Port

- It is developed as **an all-weather Greenfield deep draft major port.**
- **Location:** Near Dahanu town in Palghar (Maharashtra).
- It will be the **country's largest container port** (expected to handle 254 million tonnes of cargo annually).
- With a natural draft of **approximately 20 meters,**It will accommodate large container ships that are currently unable to dock at most Indian ports.
- It is constructed 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.

India's Port Sector

- India is the **16th largest maritime country in the world.**
- The Indian maritime sector contributes to **95% of India's trade by volume and 70% by value.**
- **Major Port:** Controlled by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways** controls major ports in India.
- **Minor Port:** Controlled by State Maritime Boards/Governments. There are 200 non-major ports.
- There are **12 Major Ports in India:** Chennai, Cochin, Deendayal (Kandla), Jawaharlal Nehru (Nhava Sheva), Kolkata, Mormugao, Mumbai, New Mangalore, Paradip, V. O. Chidambaranar (Tuticorin),Visakhapatnam and Kamarajar Port Limited.
    - **13th -Vadhavn Port (under construction).**
- India owns over **30% global market share in the ship breaking industry** and is home to the **largest ship-breaking facility in the world at Alang (Gujarat).**

Source:

- **The Hindu - 'Vadhavan port will be a game changer for India'**

138th birth anniversary of Raja Mahendra Pratap

Context

The Vice President of India attended the 138th birth anniversary of Raja Mahendra Pratap.

About Raja Mahendra Pratap

- He was an **Indian freedom fighter, journalist, writer & revolutionary.**
- He was born in **December 1886 in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh.**
- He belonged to the royal family of **Mursan Estate**.
- **In December, 1915,** he established the **1st Provisional Government of India at Kabul** in Afghanistan as a government-in-exile of Free Hindustan, with himself as President, Maulavi Barkatullah as Prime Minister, and Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi as Home Minister.
- He is popularly known as **"Aryan Peshwa".**
- He was nominated for the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 1932 for his role in promoting freedom and peace.
- He established the **Prem Mahavidyalaya** in **Vrindavan** in 1909—**One of India's first polytechnic institutes.**

Source:

- **The Hindu - Freedom Struggle has many unsung heroes**

Aleppo slips from government control

Context

Aleppo has fallen to Islamist rebel factions for the first time in over a decade since the conflict began

About Aleppo & Syria

- It is Syria's 2nd largest city located in Northern Syria.
- The UNESCO World Heritage site **Old City of Aleppo,** is located here.
- Aleppo is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world.
- **Qweik River** flows through Aleppo.
- **Syria Bordering Countries:** Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel.
- **Important rivers flowing through Syria:** Euphrates,Tigris, Orontes, Yarmouk, and El-Kebir.

Syrian Civil War

- The conflict began in **2011 during the Arab Spring,** with protests against **President Bashar al-Assad's rule.**
- Over time, the war evolved into a multi-faceted conflict involving domestic opposition groups, foreign powers and extremist organizations.
- **Major players:**
    - **Assad's regime:** Controls most of Syria, with support from **Russia, Iran and Hezbollah.**
    - **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS):** Controls Idlib province and is designated a terrorist group by the US, Russia, and Turkey.
    - **Turkey:** Historically backs Syrian rebels and controls trade and access in Idlib.

UPSC PYQ

Q. Consider the following pairs: **(2018)**

Towns sometimes mentioned in news Country

1. Aleppo - Syria
2. Kirkuk - Yemen
3. Mosul - Palestine
4. Mazar-i-sharif - Afghanistan

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 4
(c) 2 and 3
(d) 3 and 4

Answer: B

Source:

- **Th Hindu- Syria's second-largest city of Aleppo slips from government control**

Kisan Pehchan Patra: Farmer ID

Context

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has directed the states to organise camps to ensure a faster generation of Farmer ID.

About Farmer ID (Kisan Pehchaan Patra)

- It is an Aadhaar-linked unique digital identity for farmers, linked to the state's land records.
- It includes demographic details, crop sown information and ownership data.
- It forms the foundation of the Farmer Registry, a core component of the Agri Stack under the Digital Agriculture Mission approved by the Union Cabinet in 2024
- **Targets for Farmer ID Creation:** Create digital identities for **11 crore farmers by 2026-27.**

About Digital Agriculture Mission

- It is a government initiative aimed at developing **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** for the agriculture sector.
- **Objective:**
    - Improve Farm Management & Enhance Productivity.
    - Provide services to farmers by integrating data and digital tools.
- **Foundational Pillars:**
    - **Agristack:**
        - It is a repository of all farmer information, including their identity, land records, coverage, income, insurance, loans, crop details, and revenue history.
        - **Consists of 3 databases:** Farmers' Registry, Geo-referenced Village Maps, and Crop Sown Registry.

    - **Krishi Decision Support System:**
        - It is a unique geospatial platform for Indian agriculture.
        - It provides detailed data on fields, soil, weather, water levels and crop conditions accessible anytime & anywhere.
- **Other Components:**
    - **Soil Profile Maps:**

- Under this Mission, detailed Soil Profile Maps of about 142 million hectares of agricultural land will be prepared.
- A detailed soil profile inventory of about 29 million ha has already been completed.

- **Digital General Crop Estimation Survey (DGCES):**
  - It aims to enhance the accuracy of crop yield estimates.

Source:

- **Indian Express - Kisan Pehchaan Patra**

40 Years of Bhopal Gas Tragedy

Context

After 40 years after the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, hundreds of tonnes of toxic waste remain on the premises of Union Carbide India Ltd.

About Bhopal Gas Tragedy

- It occurred on December 3, 1984, in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), when **45 tons of toxic methyl isocyanate** gas leaked from a pesticide plant owned by **Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL).**
- It was **India's first major Chemical (industrial) disaster.**
- The **toxic waste** at the UCIL premises remains largely untreated, with minimal progress in both waste disposal and reassessment.
- Numerous studies over the years have shown that **groundwater** in areas surrounding the factory is contaminated with **heavy metals** and **toxic substances** posing significant health risks, like **cancer.**

About Methyl Isocyanate (CH3NCO)

- Tt is a colorless, flammable liquid that reacts with water to produce **methylamine (MIC)** and carbon dioxide, along with heat.
- It is toxic when inhaled, ingested or exposed to the skin or eyes. It's also highly flammable and can be explosive when mixed with air.

Other Major Chemical Disasters in India

- **Ammonia Gas Leak at Chennai (2024):** Due to damaged gas pipeline caused by cyclone Michaung.
- **Vizag Gas Leak (2020):** Styrene gas leak at LG Polymers in Visakhapatnam.
- **Tughlakabad Gas Leak (2017):** Chemical Chloro methylpyridine (used in pesticides manufacturing) leaked from container

Source:

- **The Hindu - 40 years after Bhopal gas tragedy, Union Carbide's toxic waste yet to be remove**

Prior Sanction to prosecute public servants Under PMLA

Context

Delhi's former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Congress MP P. Chidambaram have sought relief from their respective trials, citing a recent Supreme Court ruling as a precedent.

About Recent Supreme Court Ruling

- Recently the SC has ruled that prior government sanction is mandatory for prosecuting public servants under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act if the alleged offenses are linked to their official duties.
- This is based on **Section 197 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).**
- **Section 65 of the PMLA aligns with CrPC Section 197**, requiring prior sanction for public servants.

About Prior Sanction Provision under Section-197 of CrPC

- **Bars prosecution of public servants** (including judges, magistrates, or government officials) without **prior sanction** from the government for acts done in the **discharge of their official duties**.
- **Exceptions**: No prior sanction is needed for crimes like sexual harassment, rape, human trafficking, and similar serious offenses.
- **Application to Public Servants**: Only acts **related to their official duties** are protected; acts outside their duties do not receive this shield.
- **Related Case:** In the **Devinder Singh v. State of Punjab (2016)** case, the Supreme Court held that public servants cannot hide behind official duties if they are committing crimes.

Impact of the Prior Sanction Requirement:

- **Implications for ED Cases:**
    - Investigations under the PMLA will remain valid, but trial courts cannot take cognizance of chargesheets against public servants without prior sanction.
    - Public servants facing charges may use the absence of prior sanction as a defense, resulting in **stay orders** or **dismissals** of cases.
    - Public servants can raise this argument at any stage of the trial, even post-conviction **(P K Pradhan v. State of Sikkim, 2001).**
- **Challenges to Prosecution:** Prosecution agencies may face delays as they are required to secure government approval before proceeding with cases.

Source:

- **Indian Express - SC mandates prior sanction to prosecute public servants under PMLA**

News in Shorts

Exercise CINBAX

- The 1st edition of Joint Table Top Exercise, **CINBAX between India and Cambodia** commenced at Foreign Training Node, Pune.
- The exercise is aimed at wargaming **Counter Terrorism (CT)** operations under **Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter**.
- **Focus Areas:** Information operations, Cyber and Hybrid warfare, Logistics and casualty management, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.

Source:

- **PIB - EXERCISE CINBAX**

Exercise AGNI WARRIOR

- The **13th edition** of Joint Military Exercise **AGNI WARRIOR (XAW-2024)**- A bilateral exercise between the **Indian Army and Singapore Armed Forces**, concluded at Field Firing Ranges, Devlali (Maharashtra).
- The first edition of the exercise was conducted in **2004.**

Source:

- **PIB - AGNI WARRIOR - 2024**

India's Largest Open Jail - Shri Sampurnanand Khula Bandi Shivir

- It is situated in Sanganer, near Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- It was set up in **1963**, it is the longest-functioning and largest open-air jail in India.
- The Supreme Court is currently hearing a petition challenging the Jaipur Development Authority's (JDA) order allocating two plots of jail land for constructing a satellite hospital.
- **Features of the Open-Air Prison:**
    - It looks like a regular government colony with no high-security walls, cells or jail uniforms.
    - Inmates are allotted two-room-kitchen sets or single rooms.
    - Families can live with inmates, and inmates can renovate their homes at their own expense.

Source:

- **Indian Express - India's largest open air jail awaits verdict**

Editorial Summary

In our fight against climate change, could the seas turn the tide

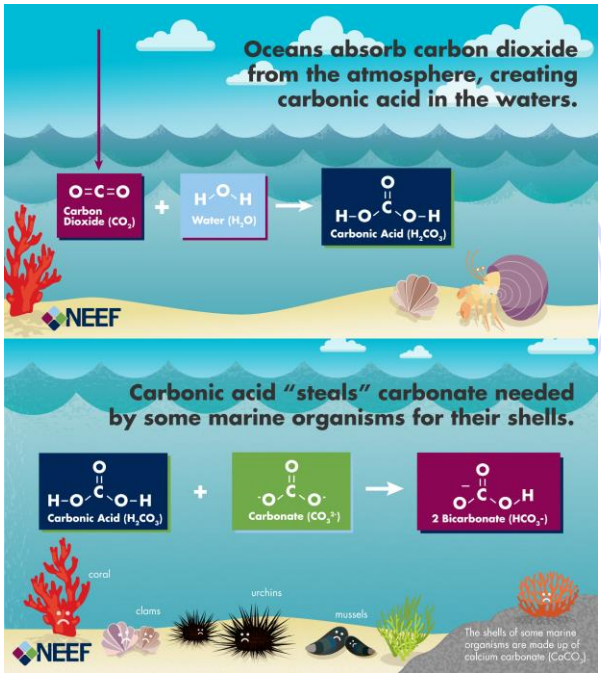
Context

- The ocean absorbs significant amounts of carbon dioxide (CO2) and excess heat generated by greenhouse gases.
- However, this capacity comes with severe ecological consequences, such as ocean acidification, disrupted biogeochemical cycles, pollution, and profound harm to marine ecosystems.
- Marine carbon dioxide removal (mCDR) provides a solution for climate resilience alongside decarbonization.

Facts

The ocean acts as the Earth's "**blue lung**," absorbing **25% of anthropogenic CO_2 emissions** and over **90% of the excess heat** generated by greenhouse gases.

Ocean Acidification



- It is the **gradual decrease in the pH** of the Earth's oceans due to the **uptake of carbon dioxide (CO2)** from the atmosphere.
    - **C02 Contributor:**
        - Human activities such as burning fossil fuels, driving, creating electricity, and deforestation.
        -
- When CO_2 dissolves in seawater, it forms **carbonic acid**, which **lowers the pH and reduces the carbonate ion concentration** essential for marine life.
- Since the Industrial Revolution, ocean pH has dropped by **0.1 units**, representing a **30% increase in acidity**.
    - Projections suggest a **pH drop of 0.3–0.4 units by 2100** under high-emission scenarios, potentially causing irreversible damage to marine ecosystems.

Impact on Marine Life

The effects of acidification are **not uniform**; some species may benefit while others suffer.

Negatively Affected	Positively Affected
● **Calcifying Organisms:** ○ **Coral Reefs:** Acidification impairs the ability of coral polyps to build their calcium carbonate skeletons. ■ This results in weaker and more vulnerable coral structures. ○ **Shellfish:** Species like oysters, mussels, and clams struggle to form their shells, which impacts their survival and aquaculture industries. ● **Fish Species:** Fish such as clownfish may lose their ability to detect predators or navigate properly due to altered brain function in acidic conditions. ● **Food Web Disruptions:** Species dependent on calcifying organisms (e.g., certain fish and marine mammals) face reduced food availability. ● **Humans:** Ocean acidification threatens marine resources that millions depend on for food and livelihoods.	● **Seagrasses:** Acidification may enhance the growth of some seagrasses as they thrive in CO_2-enriched waters, potentially providing habitat benefits for some marine species. ● **Non-calcifying Algae:** Some macroalgae and phytoplankton species could grow faster due to higher CO_2 concentrations, though this may also lead to harmful algal blooms in some regions.

Overall Impact

- While seagrasses and non-calcifying algae might benefit, the **overall impact on ecosystems is negative due to imbalances**.
- Because the increased seagrass growth **may not compensate for the loss of biodiversity** caused by the decline of calcifying organisms.

Solutions to Ocean Acidification

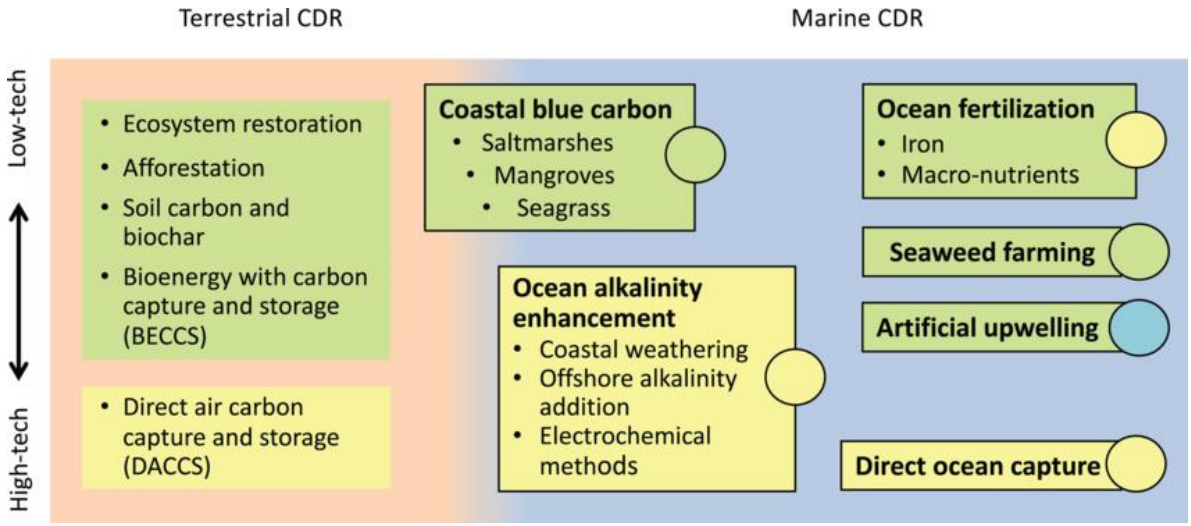
- **Reduce Carbon Emissions:** Limiting atmospheric CO_2 reduces ocean absorption rates.
- **Seaweed Farming:** Seaweed absorbs CO_2 and may locally mitigate acidification.
- **Growing Plankton:** Promoting plankton growth helps trap CO_2 in the ocean depths.
- **Geoengineering:** Innovative technologies like altering ocean chemistry to neutralize CO_2 can help address the problem.

Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal (mCDR) Strategies

- Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal (mCDR) refers to a set of techniques that aim to enhance the ocean's natural ability to absorb and store carbon dioxide (CO2) from the atmosphere.
- These strategies are increasingly considered as a necessary complement to land-based carbon removal efforts, particularly in the context of climate change mitigation.
- Harnessing these natural systems effectively could provide a critical advantage in combating climate change.

Fact

- The Indian Ocean could capture between 25-40% of marine CO2.



Categories of mCDR Approaches

- **Biotic Approaches:**
  - Utilize living systems such as mangroves and macroalgae for biomass burial at sea.
  - These methods have established potential but are limited in carbon sequestration capacity (less than 1 billion tonnes CO2/year).
  - **Limitations**: Modest capacity and storage duration capped at a few thousand years.
- **Abiotic Approaches:**
  - Involve manipulating physical or chemical properties of seawater, such as through **Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement (OAE).**
  - These techniques promise greater scalability and can potentially sequester between 1 to 15 billion tonnes CO2/year, significantly higher than biotic methods.
  - **Advantages**: Higher scalability and permanence (10,000+ years).
  - **Challenges**: Regulatory hurdles, public skepticism, and high energy demands.

- **Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement (OAE)**: Ocean alkalinisation is an approach to carbon removal that involves adding alkaline substances to seawater to enhance the ocean's natural carbon sink.
  - Adding alkalinity to the ocean removes carbon dioxide (CO2) from the atmosphere through a series of reactions that convert dissolved CO2 into stable bicarbonate and carbonate molecules, which in turn causes the ocean to absorb more CO2 from the air to restore equilibrium.

Importance of mCDR for Climate Goals

- Several studies tell us that the **land is saturated** because soils and rocks are so severely damaged that they no longer support efficient carbon capture.
- To cap global warming at **1.5°C**, emissions must stay under **570 billion tonnes of CO_2** and reach net-zero by 2050.
- Current trends predict this carbon budget will be exhausted by **2031**, underscoring the urgency of integrating mCDR with emission reductions.

Challenges to Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal (mCDR)

- **Environmental Risks and Uncertainty:** Techniques such as ocean iron fertilization may disrupt marine ecosystems, including oxygen depletion in deeper waters.
    - Unintended consequences, such as altering food webs or creating harmful algal blooms, remain poorly understood.
- **Energy and Resource Intensive:** Abiotic methods like Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement (OAE) require substantial energy inputs, particularly in mining and processing minerals.
    - Scaling these methods globally demands massive infrastructure and resources.
- **Economic and Financial Constraints:** High upfront costs for research, deployment, and ongoing management deter investment.
    - Limited financial incentives or carbon credit systems to support large-scale marine interventions.
- **Regulatory and Governance Issues:** International laws, like the London Protocol, restrict certain activities in marine environments, creating legal uncertainties.
    - Lack of a coordinated global framework for regulating mCDR techniques.
- **Public Perception and Acceptance:** Abiotic approaches are often viewed as unnatural or risky, leading to skepticism and resistance.
    - Insufficient public awareness about the potential benefits of mCDR exacerbates opposition.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen Research and Innovation:** Invest in understanding environmental impacts, scaling potential, and the technical feasibility of both biotic and abiotic methods.
    - Pilot programs in diverse marine settings to test new techniques like OAE or biomass burial.
- **Establish Governance Frameworks:** Develop international regulatory structures for mCDR aligned with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other agreements.
    - Promote collaboration among nations, scientists, and industries to standardize practices.
- **Integrate with Climate Strategies:** Treat mCDR as a complementary measure to emission reduction rather than a standalone solution.
    - Align mCDR initiatives with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.
- **Improve Monitoring Technology:** Leverage advancements in satellite imaging, autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), and machine learning to monitor carbon capture and storage.
    - Create cost-effective mechanisms to verify long-term carbon sequestration.
- **Public Engagement and Advocacy:** Conduct education campaigns to address public concerns and highlight the potential benefits of mCDR.
    - Engage stakeholders, including coastal communities and industries, in decision-making.
- **Incentivize Deployment:** Implement financial incentives, such as carbon credits or subsidies, to encourage private and public sector investment.
    - Support partnerships between governments, NGOs, and the private sector to fund large-scale deployment.

Source: **The Hindu: In our fight against climate change, could the seas turn the tide?**

Research Security Should Be A National Priority

Context

- India aims to lead in strategic and emerging technologies like space, defense, and AI by 2047.
- Significant investments are crucial to achieve global competitiveness and address societal challenges.

Global Context and Examples

- **International Incidents:** Several cases highlight the need for enhanced research security:
  - A senior professor at Harvard University and two Chinese students were arrested for not disclosing links to Chinese funding while receiving U.S. Department of Defense funding.
  - COVID-19 vaccine research facilities faced cyberattacks aimed at stealing sensitive data.
  - The European Space Agency (ESA) experienced cyberattacks that prompted partnerships with the European Defence Agency on cybersecurity.

Global Responses to Research Security

- **United States:** The US CHIPS and Science Act includes provisions for research security, supported by guidelines from the National Institute of Standards and Technology.
- **Canada**: Implemented National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships, identifying sensitive technologies and institutions from countries like China, Iran, and Russia.
- **European Union**: The European Council recommends self-governance principles and risk-based responses, emphasizing the establishment of a centre of expertise on research security.

Research Security in India

- **Current State**: Despite India's progress in strategic R&D, research security has not received adequate attention in academic or policymaking circles.
  - This leaves gaps that adversaries could exploit.
- **Key challenges include**:
  - Foreign influence on universities and research labs.
  - Vulnerabilities in strategic research infrastructure.
  - Insider threats through personnel hiring and access control practices.
  - Limited existing frameworks for securing sensitive data and technologies.

Proposed Measures for India

- **Mapping Vulnerabilities:** Assess foreign influence and funding in universities.
  - Review vulnerabilities in research labs and infrastructure.
  - Evaluate insider threats in critical facilities.
  - Audit foreign collaborations in strategic sectors.
- **Developing a Research Security Framework:** Categorise research based on strategic value, economic impact, and national security implications.
  - Adopt a risk-based and proportionate response, as recommended by the EU.
  - Develop a surveillance mechanism to monitor emerging risks.
- **Capacity Building and Collaboration:** Engage with trusted international partners for initial capacity-building efforts.
  - Foster collaboration between security agencies, researchers, and technical experts to draft guidelines.
  - Establish a Research Security Office under the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) to coordinate and implement security measures.

Addressing Challenges

- **Academic Freedom vs. Research Security:** Balancing restrictions on foreign funding/collaborations with the collaborative nature of science.
    - Ensuring that security measures do not stifle open science principles (e.g., open data, shared research infrastructure).
- **Administrative Burden:** Minimise bureaucracy to prevent additional administrative challenges for researchers.
- **Avoiding Overreach:** Prevent research security from becoming a tool for political interference in academia.
    - Ensure decisions are guided by technical expertise, not solely by intelligence/security agencies.

Implementation Strategy

- Secure funding and effective communication to create a cadre of research security professionals.
- Engage researchers at all decision-making levels.
- Adopt the principle: "As open as possible, as closed as necessary."
- Use the ANRF as a focal point for coordination among security agencies and academic institutions.

Source: **The Hindu: Research security should be a national priority**

What India's AI Safety Institute could do

Context

India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is exploring the establishment of an **AI Safety Institute** under the IndiaAI Mission.

More in News

- This reflects the rising importance of AI governance and safety in global and domestic policy discussions.
- Recent events like the **Quad Leaders' Summit**, **UN Summit of the Future**, and India's leadership roles in the **G20** and the **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)** underscore the timeliness of this initiative.

Strategic Context

- **Global Leadership**: India should leverage its recent leadership roles at the G20 and the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) to position itself as a unifying voice in AI governance.
- **Global Digital Compact:** The Summit of the Future resulted in the Global Digital Compact, emphasizing multi-stakeholder collaboration, human-centric oversight, and inclusive participation from developing countries as key pillars for AI governance and safety.
- **Next Steps**: The UN will initiate a **Global Dialogue on AI**, making it timely for India to establish an AI Safety Institute that engages with the Bletchley Process on AI Safety.

Global Trends in AI Safety Institutes

- **Bletchley Process**
    - Initiated by the **U.K. Safety Summit (November 2023)** and expanded at the **South Korea Safety Summit (May 2024)**.
    - Aims to establish an **international network of AI Safety Institutes** to address risks from advanced AI technologies.
    - The next summit is planned in France, continuing the collaborative trajectory.
- **United States and United Kingdom**
    - Both countries were early adopters, setting up AI Safety Institutes to manage risks from frontier AI models.
    - **MoUs between the U.S. and U.K.**:
        - Share knowledge, resources, and expertise.
        - Collaborate with AI labs for early access to large foundation models.
        - Implement mechanisms to share technical inputs with labs before public rollout.
    - Focus on **cybersecurity**, **infrastructure security**, **biosphere safety**, and **national security threats**.
- **China**: Established an **Algorithm Registry**, aiming to monitor and regulate algorithms for safety and alignment.
- **European Union**: Proposed an **AI Office** under its regulatory framework, combining oversight with compliance requirements.

Role and Functions of Safety Institutes

- Serve as technical government institutions, not regulators.
- Facilitate proactive information sharing and risk assessments.
- Promote external third-party testing and mitigation strategies for AI risks.
- Focus on transforming AI governance into an **evidence-based discipline**.

Key Objectives for India's AI Safety Institute

- Operate as a **technical research, testing, and standardisation agency**.

- Be independent of regulatory and enforcement authorities.
- Integrate into the **Bletchley network** to leverage global expertise and resources.

Key Recommendations for India

- **Lessons from Previous Initiatives:** Concerns were raised regarding MeitY's AI Advisory from March 2024, which suggested requiring government approvals prior to public rollouts of experimental AI systems.
    - Critics questioned the Indian government's capability to assess the safety of novel AI deployments adequately.
    - Issues regarding bias, discrimination, and a one-size-fits-all approach indicated that the advisory lacked technical evidence.
- **Regulatory Caution:** India should avoid adopting prescriptive regulatory controls similar to those proposed in the European Union (EU) and China, which could stifle proactive information sharing among businesses and governments.
    - Establishing specialized agencies like **China's Algorithm Registry or the EU's AI Office** is recognized; however, India should separate institution building from regulation-making to maximize effectiveness.

Domestic and Global Focus Areas

- **Domestic Priorities**: Address risks related to bias, discrimination, gender, social exclusion, labour markets, data privacy, and surveillance.
    - Build institutional capacity for harm identification, risk assessment, and mitigation strategies.
- **Global Engagement**: Collaborate with international safety institutes and stakeholders.
    - Amplify **global majority perspectives** on human-centric AI safety.

Potential Impact

If successfully implemented, India could emerge as a global leader in forward-thinking AI governance by:

- Championing diverse perspectives on risks associated with AI technologies.
- Deepening global dialogue around harm identification, risk mitigation strategies, red-teaming efforts, and standardization practices.
- Demonstrating a commitment to evidence-based policy solutions that are globally compatible

Source: **The Hindu: What India's AI Safety Institute could do**

Data & Facts

Bangladesh upheaval has not led to a spike in border interceptions: Data

Context

- The recent incident that led to Border security force (BSF) has tightened its **vigil along the border**.
- The recent arrest in Dhaka of Chinmoy Krishna Das, spokesperson of the Bangladesh Sammilito Sanatani Jagaran Jote in an alleged case of sedition.

Data

- **Sedition:** It involves **inciting discontent or rebellion against the government** through speech, writing, or other actions.
- **Need for Tighter Border Vigilance:**
- **Preventing Cross-border Unrest**: Political or religious tensions in Bangladesh could lead to an influx of migrants, including those seeking refuge or involvement in political activities.
  - Maintaining border control helps prevent destabilization in Indian border states like West Bengal and Tripura.
- **Curbing Smuggling and Illegal Activities**: Heightened tensions can increase smuggling of goods, narcotics, or arms, exacerbating law-and-order problems.
- **Security and Refugee Management**: India's borders with Bangladesh have seen prior instances of refugees entering following violence or unrest. Vigilance helps manage and document such entries.

- **Preventing Communal Spillover**: Cross-border ties between religious communities in India and Bangladesh necessitate vigilance to prevent communal tensions from escalating in India.
- **Strengthening Counter-Terrorism Efforts**: Enhanced vigilance is critical for preventing the movement of extremist groups or individuals seeking to exploit vulnerabilities along the porous border.

Source: **The Hindu: Bangladesh upheaval has not led to a spike in border interceptions**