MADE EASY

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

OCTOBER, 2022

Week-1

1-7 Oct., 2022

★★ *Useful for* ★★

CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams, SSC and Banking Exams

1st OCTOBER, 2022

Russia annexed four regions of Ukraine

Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed four territories in Ukraine controlled by Russian army at a grand ceremony in the Kremlin and urged Kyiv to lay down its arms and negotiate an end to seven months of fighting.

Key Highlights

- Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk regions were partially seized by Moscow's forces during a seven-month conflict with Ukraine.
- Russia declared the annexations after holding what it called referendums in occupied areas of Ukraine.
- The event in the Kremlin's opulent white-and-gold St. George's Hall was organised for Putin and the heads of the four regions of Ukraine to sign treaties for the areas to join Russia, in a sharp escalation of the seven-month conflict.
- Head of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, meanwhile, said that the annexation was illegal and that occupied land would remain part of Ukraine.
- Putin and his lieutenants have bluntly warned Ukraine against pressing an offensive to reclaim the regions, saying Russia would view it as an act of aggression against its sovereign territory and wouldn't hesitate to use "all means available" in retaliation, a reference to Russia's nuclear arsenal.
- Putin warned the West that the people of four Moscow-occupied Ukrainian regions were "our citizens forever".
- The separatist Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine have been backed by Moscow since declaring independence in 2014, weeks after the annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. The southern Kherson region and part of the neighboring Zaporizhzhia were captured by Russia soon after Putin sent troops into Ukraine on February 24.

AFSPA

- **Context:** The Central Government has extended for another six months the application of the disturbed area under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, AFSPA in 12 districts of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

Key Highlights

- Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, AFSPA has also been extended in certain parts of five other districts of the two northeastern states to facilitate the armed forces to continue the anti-insurgency operations.
- The clouds of uncertainty over the Nagaland peace process have diminished the hopes of the Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA) being lifted from several northeastern states anytime soon.
- In fact, the delay in peace talks is one of the reasons that led to the extension of AFSPA for another six months in some parts of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
- In Assam, the AFSPA has been retained in areas that are adjacent to the Nagaland border.
- The Centre is in talks with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Mulvah) and seven Naga National Political Groups (NNPGS) to find a solution to the Nagaland issue.
- AFSPA was revoked from seven of the 16 districts in Nagaland while in Assam, it will be completely removed from 23 of the 33 districts and partially from one district. In Manipur, the special powers will be lifted from six out of 16 districts.

5G Services launched in India

PM Narendra Modi recently launched the first phase of 5G services in 13 cities across India in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The launch took place during the four days inauguration of India's biggest technology festival India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2022.

Key Highlights

- The launch took place during the four days inauguration of India's biggest technology festival India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2022.

- PM Modi also inaugurated the sixth edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC) with the theme of "New digital Universe". It will bring together leading thinkers, entrepreneurs, innovators, and government officials to discuss and showcase unique opportunities emerging from the rapid adoption and spread of digital technology.
- In first phase, prominent cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad etc. are likely to experience 5G services first.
- Telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has claimed that as government will expand the rollout of the network and people will not be charged premium for 5G services.
- In July, Government of India auctioned 51,236 MHz of 5G airwaves and allocated by the telecom department to telcos and the government garnered a gross revenue of Rs 1,50,173 crore.
- On the occasion, the three major telecom operators of the country demonstrated one use case each in front of the Prime Minister to show the potential of 5G technology in India.
- The cumulative economic impact of 5G on India is expected to reach $450 billion by 2035.
- An inter-ministerial committee on 5G use cases has been functioning since 2021 in coordination with 12 central ministries, enabling the setting up of 5G use-case labs.

2nd OCTOBER, 2022

RBI's Card Tokenization Rules

- **Context:** From October 1, the Reserve Bank of India's card-on-file (CoF) tokenisation norms have become applicable, which aim at improved safety and security of card transactions.

Key Highlights

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has made it mandatory for all credit and debit card data used in online, point-of-sale, and in-app transactions to be replaced with unique tokens
- This added layer of security by way of tokenisation is expected to enhance users' digital payment experience.

- After multiple extensions, the RBI decided not to give any further relaxation in implementing these norms.
- Now, for any purchases done online or through mobile apps, merchants, payment aggregators and payment gateways will not be able to save crucial customer credit and debit card details such as three-digit CVV and expiry date.
- RBI made 1st October as last deadline for merchants, payment aggregators and payment gateways for switchover.
- Close to 35 crore tokens have already been created.
- Earlier, the facility for card tokenisation was available only for mobile phones and tablets of interested card holders. Subsequently, with an uptick in tokenisation volume, the RBI decided to extend the scope of tokenisation to include consumer devices – laptops, desktops, wearables (wrist watches, bands, etc.) and Internet of Things (IoT) devices.

About Tokenization

- Tokenization refers to the replacement of actual card details with a unique alternate code called the 'token', which shall be unique for a combination of card, token requester, (i.e. the entity which accepts requests from the customer for tokenisation of a card and passes it on to the card network to issue a corresponding token) and the device.
- A debit or credit card holder can get the card tokenized by initiating a request on the app provided by the token requester. The token requester will forward the request to the card network which, with the consent of the card issuer, will issue a token corresponding to the combination of the card, the token requester, and the device.
- In case of an online transaction, instead of card details, a unique token will be stored on the server. The merchant or transaction platform sends out a message to Visa or Mastercard or a payment gateway, who asks for a token against that card number and will then pass it on to the bank for allowing the transaction.

- The customer will not be charged for availing the tokenization service.

Significance

- A tokenised card transaction is considered safer as the actual card details are not shared with the merchant during transaction processing.
- Actual card data, token and other relevant details are stored in a secure mode by the authorised card networks.
- The token requestor cannot store Primary Account Number (PAN), or any other card details. Card networks are also mandated to get the token requester certified for safety and security that conform to international best practices/globally accepted standards.

Indore: The Cleanest City in India

- **Context:** Indore was recently awarded the cleanest city in India for the sixth year in a row and Madhya Pradesh awarded the cleanest state in the country.

Key Highlights

- Indore was declared the cleanest city in India for the sixth consecutive year, and Madhya Pradesh the best performing state in the Swachh Survekshan 2022.
- President Draopadi Murmu gave away awards to top performing urban local bodies and states.
- Indore is also India's first 7-star garbage-free city, which is one of the key objectives of the second iteration of the Swachh Bharat Mission launched last year.
- Eleven cities, including Surat, Bhopal, Mysuru, Navi Mumbai, Visakhapatnam and Tirupati, earned 5-star garbage-free certifications, according to the housing and urban affairs ministry.
- While Surat retained its second position for the third year in a row, Navi Mumbai climbed up one spot from 4th to 3rd among cities with more than 100,000 population in the survey.

- Agra in Uttar Pradesh was at the bottom of the list of the top 100 cities in this category.
- The New Delhi Municipal Council area was adjudged the cleanest small city with a population of between 1-3 lakh.
- Gujarat's Ahmedabad and Karnataka's Mysuru were given the award for cleanest mega city and medium city, respectively.
- Among the big cities with 10-40 lakh population, Visakhapatnam was given the clean big city award, while Rajkot was adjudged as the best self-sustainable city.
- Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra ranked second and third, respectively, among states with more than 100 urban local bodies (ULB).
- Among states with less than 100 ULBs, Tripura was rated as the best performing, followed by Jharkhand and Uttarakhand. Meghalaya once again was at the bottom of the list.
- Among cities with more than one million population, Indore was at the top, while Madurai was at the bottom of the list.
- Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh received the best city award in the Safai Mitra Suraksha category.
- Swachh Survekshan is the central government's annual cleanliness survey of urban areas under the Swachh Bharat Mission.
- From just 73 cities surveyed during the first Swachh Survekshan in 2016, the number has increased to 4,354, including 62 cantonment boards and 91 Ganga towns, in eight years, housing and urban affairs minister Hardeep Singh Puri said.
- This year, 22 states and five Union Territories received awards under various categories, of which eight states, including Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, received more than 10 awards each.
- Under Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0, all Indian cities will be made garbage-free by 2026, the minister said. A three-week long campaign will start from October 2 to encourage people to do garbage segregation at source.

Professors of Practice

- **Context:** Universities and colleges may hire industry experts under a new category of faculty positions called 'Professors of Practice' as per the University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines.

Key Highlights

- The objective behind introducing this new faculty category is to bring in distinguished experts from various fields such as engineering, science, technology, entrepreneurship, commerce, social sciences, media, literature, fine arts, civil services, armed forces, legal profession and public administration into academia, according to the draft rules.

- The provision is a part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 implementation, which focuses on skill- based education to meet needs of industry and economy.

- Experts with proven expertise of at least 15 years will be eligible for the posts. No formal academic qualification will be taken into consideration if the candidate has "exemplary" professional practice, the guidelines suggest.

- The posts will not be open for those already in the teaching profession.

- The professors of practice will be engaged under three categories – funded by industries, funded by higher education institutions, or honorary.

- Under the first category, the institutions may collaborate with industry to support the positions. They will have to pay the professors from their own resources under the second category. Under the third category, the institutions may decide on the amount of honorarium from their own resources.

- The professors of practice will be hired for a fixed term of not more than four years, and their strength cannot exceed 10% of the sanctioned faculty posts at any given time.

3rd OCTOBER, 2022

Nobel Prize for Physiology, 2022

Swedish scientist Svante Pääbo has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology for the year 2022 "for his discoveries concerning the genomes of extinct hominins and human evolution."

Key Highlights

- Through his pioneering research, Svante Pääbo – this year's Nobel Prize laureate in physiology or medicine.

- He accomplished sequencing the genome of the Neanderthal, an extinct relative of present-day humans.

- Techniques that Pääbo spearheaded allowed researchers to compare the genome of modern humans and that of other hominins - the Denisovans as well as Neanderthals.

- While Neanderthal bones were first discovered in the mid-19th century, only by understanding their DNA - often referred to as the code of life - have scientists been able to fully understand the links between species.

- This transfer of genes between hominin species affects how the immune system of modern humans reacts to infections, such as the coronavirus. People outside Africa have 1-2% of Neanderthal genes. Neanderthals were never in Africa, so there's no known direct contribution to people in sub-Saharan Africa.

- The prizes carry a cash award of 10 million Swedish kronor (nearly $900,000) and will be handed out on December 10. The money comes from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, who died in 1895.

Prachand

- **Context:** Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh formally inducted the indigenously-developed Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) 'Prachanda' in the Indian Air Force at a ceremony held at Air Force Station, Jodhpur in Rajasthan.

Key Highlights:

- This helicopter will be inducted into the 143 Helicopter Unit. LCH not only adds to the combat capability of the Air Force but is also a great leap towards the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- The need for a combat helicopter was seriously felt during the Kargil War and LCH is a culmination of two decades of effort to address this need.
- "Prachanda' has been developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. It is a state-of-the-art modern combat helicopter, primarily designed for deployment in high-altitude regions.
- LCH is the only attack helicopter in the world which can land and take-off at an altitude of 5,000 meter with a considerable load of weapons and fuel.
- This helicopter is powered by two Shakti engines and is equipped with stealth features, all-weather combat capability, armour protection, night attack capability, and crash-worthy landing gear.
- The helicopter is armed with air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles, 70 milimeter rockets and a 20 milimeter gun.
- It boasts of a full glass cockpit, Electronic Warfare suite and helmet-mounted display for the flying crew.

India's Unemployment Rate drops: CMIE Report

In September 2022, the unemployment rate has fallen significantly with an increase in labour participation in both urban and rural areas, according to data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).

Key Highlights:

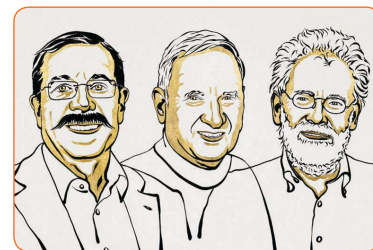- India's unemployment rate has drastically dropped to 6.43 per cent in September due to an increase in labour participation in the rural and urban areas, according to data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).
- During August, India's unemployment rate surged to a one-year high of 8.3 per cent as employment sequentially fell by 2 million to 394.6 million.
- According to the CMIE data, the unemployment rate was the highest in Rajasthan at 23.8 per cent in September, followed by Jammu and Kashmir at 23.2 per cent, Haryana at 22.9 per cent, Tripura at 17 per cent, Jharkhand at 12.2 per cent and Bihar at 11.4 per cent.

4th OCTOBER, 2022

Nobel Prize in Physics, 2022

The Nobel Prize in Physics for 2022 was awarded to **John F. Clauser**, **Alain Aspect** and **Anton Zeilinger** for their work in quantum mechanics.

Key Highlights

- Alain Aspect from Université Paris-Saclay in France, John Clauser from J.F. Clauser & Associates in the US, and Anton Zeilinger from University of Vienna in Austria, will share the prize sum of 10 million Swedish kronor (US$915,000).
- The award was presented to trio scientists "for experiments with entangled photons, establishing the violation of Bell inequalities and pioneering quantum information science".
- The three conducted a series of experiments on something called entangled quantum states, where two separate particles behave like a single unit. Their pathbreaking results will have implications in the fields of quantum computers, quantum networks and secure quantum encrypted communication. Put simply, quantum computers use quantum mechanics to solve problems too complex for regular computers.

- Quantum entanglement is a phenomenon by which a pair of subatomic particles are allowed to exist in a shared state where they have complementary properties, such that by measuring the properties of one particle, one can automatically know the properties of the other particle.

M777 Ultra-Light Howitzer

- **Context:** The Indian Army has deployed M-777 ultra-light howitzers in mountainous regions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Key Highlights

- The Indian Army has deployed a significant number of easily transportable M-777 ultra-light howitzers in mountainous regions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Army's bolstering of firepower in the forward locations of Arunachal Pradesh comes after the howitzers were deployed in several sensitive areas in the Ladakh sector amid the lingering border standoff with China.
- India has been ramping up its overall military might in all strategically key areas along the nearly 3,500-km-long LAC after the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020 that triggered a major escalation in tensions between the Indian and Chinese armies.
- Deployment of M-777 howitzers coupled with additional air assets including unmanned aerial vehicles, military aircraft and surveillance equipment has enhanced India's military preparedness in the Arunachal Pradesh sector.
- The ultra-light M-777 can be transported quickly in Chinook helicopters. Thus, giving flexibility of quickly moving them from one place to another based on operational requirements,
- The Army deployed M-777 guns in Bum-La last year but now the howitzers are being pressed into service in Arunachal Pradesh's RALP area, comprising several key mountainous regions.
- India ordered 145 M-777 guns from the US under a USD 750 million deal in 2016.

- The addition of upgraded L70 air defense guns to the existing Bofors guns in the forward locations in Arunachal Pradesh also added additional might to the Army's combat prowess.

Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF)

- **Context:** Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), a body under the Department of Telecommunications, officially launched the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) Scheme.

Key Highlights

- The scheme is aligned with Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's clarion call of adding Jan Anusandhaan in the new phase of Amrit Kaal.
- Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) aims to fund R&D in rural-specific communication technology applications and form synergies among academia, start-ups, research institutes, and the industry to build and develop the telecom ecosystem.
- Additionally, the Scheme aims to promote technology ownership and indigenous manufacturing, create a culture of technology co-innovation, reduce imports, boost export opportunities and creation of Intellectual Property.
- Under the scheme, USOF is also targeting to develop standards to meet countrywide requirements and create the ecosystem for research, design, prototyping, use cases, pilots, and proof of concept testing, among others.
- The scheme entails grants to Indian entities to encourage and induct indigenous technologies tailor-made to meet domestic needs.

Second Coup in Burkina Faso in a year

For the second time this year, a military coup has occurred in the African nation of Burkina Faso.

Key Highlights

- A group of army officers led by Captain Ibrahim Traoré seized power, ousting another military officer, Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba, who had led the country since a coup in January.

- Protesters attacked the French Embassy, where some had believed the ousted president was hiding.
- The rebelling military also announced the closure of borders from midnight, as well as the suspension of the constitution and the dissolution of the government.
- They proclaimed Captain Ibrahim Traore as the country's new strongman.
- Some supporters of the coup flew Russian flags in the streets while calling for Moscow to help Burkina Faso confront its security crisis.

5th OCTOBER, 2022

Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 2022

Carolyn Bertozzi, Morten Meldal, and Barry Sharpless won the 2022 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the development of click chemistry and bioorthogonal chemistry.

Key Highlights

- While Barry Sharpless and Morten Meldal laid the foundation for a functional form of click chemistry in which molecular building blocks snap together quickly and efficiently. Carolyn Bertozzi took it to a new dimension and started utilizing it in living organisms. Her bioorthogonal reactions are now contributing to more targeted cancer treatments, among many other applications.
- With the announcement, Barry Sharpless became the fifth individual to be awarded two Nobel Prizes.
- This year's Prize in Chemistry deals with not overcomplicating matters, instead working with what is easy and simple.
- Barry Sharpless started his work on click chemistry when in the year 2000, he coined the concept of click chemistry.

- Click chemistry refers to a form of simple and reliable chemistry where reactions occur quickly while unwanted by-products are avoided.
- The Chemistry Nobel is awarded by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences as per the will of Alfred Nobel. So far, the committee has chosen 113 laureates in the field, of which seven have been women. Meanwhile, 25 chemistry prizes have been shared by two laureates.

UNCTAD Report on India's Economic Growth

As economic activity is hampered by higher financing cost and weaker public expenditures, GDP growth is projected to decelerate to 5.7 per cent in 2022, as per recent UNCTAD report.

Key Highlights:

- India's economic growth is expected to decline to 5.7 per cent this year from 8.2 per cent in 2021, citing higher financing cost and weaker public expenditures, according to the forecast by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Trade and Development Report 2022.
- The country's GDP will further decelerate to 4.7 per cent growth in 2023, the top UN agency projected. India experienced an expansion of 8.2 per cent in 2021, the strongest among G20 countries. As supply chain disruptions eased, rising domestic demand turned the current account surplus into a deficit, and growth decelerated, the report stated.

Gram Seva Program

- **Context:** On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, the State Bank of India announced that it will adopt 30 remote villages across India under the 4th phase of the 'SBI Gram Seva' program.

Key Highlights:

- The bank will adopt remote villages across Aspirational Districts in Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal.
- The Gram Seva Program was launched under the Corporate Social Responsibility of the bank.
- The program emphasizes a comprehensive development of villages by active intervention in areas like education, healthcare, livelihoods, and infrastructure.
- Till now, the program has adopted 100 villages across 16 states in 3 phases.

6th OCTOBER, 2022

Nobel Prize in Literature, 2022

French author Annie Ernaux has won this year's Nobel Prize in Literature.

Key Highlights

- Annie Ernaux was recognized for "the courage and clinical acuity" of her writing.
- Annie was born in 1940 and brought up in the small town of Yvetot in Normandy (France).
- Ernaux has seen a sharp increase in popularity in the English-speaking world since 2019, after her seminal work 'The Years', translated by Alison L Strayer, was shortlisted for the Man Booker international prize.
- Her exemplary literary career started with the publication of her first book, Cleaned Out, in 1974.
- Her other major work includes "A Women's Story", "Happening", "A Girl's Story", "Getting Lost".
- Her books talk about the body and sexuality, intimate relationships, social inequality and the experience of changing class through education, time and memory, and the overarching question of how to write these life experiences.

Floods on Mars

- **Context:** China's Zhurong rover has found evidence of two catastrophic floods that shaped the Utopia Planitia region of Mars.

Key Highlights

- China's Zhurong rover has peered under the surface of Mars and has found evidence of two huge floods that shaped the landscape.
- The probe peeked under the surface using its radar imager to understand the geology and hydrological evolution of the planet.
- The rover has traveled around 1.9 kilometers on the planet.
- The rover conducted a ground-penetrating radar survey of the Martian subsurface in the southern marginal area of Utopia Planitia. The rover has been exploring the southern part of Utopia Planitia, which was also the landing site for Nasa's Viking-2 mission.
- The new radar image suggests the occurrence of episodic hydraulic flooding sedimentation that is interpreted to represent the basin infilling of Utopia Planitia.
- However, no direct evidence for the existence of liquid water was found within the radar detection depth range, the presence of saline ice in the subsurface of the landing area can't be ruled out.
- The rover, which is in the large plain area within the largest known impact basin in the solar system, is the core component of the Tianwen-1 mission.
- In May this year, it found new evidence of water on the planet revealing liquid flowing on the surface in the ancient past and confirmed the presence of hydrated minerals that could be exploited by future crewed missions sent by Earth.

Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

- **Context:** The Central Government has released the guidelines for listing of regional rural banks on the stock exchange.

Key Highlights

- The draft norms set certain basic criteria, including a net worth of at least Rs 300 crore during the previous three years.

- These banks should also have capital adequacy above the regulatory minimum level of 9 per cent in each of the preceding three years.

- The draft norms lay the responsibility of identifying suitable lenders for issuing initial public offering (IPO) with the respective sponsor banks.

- Moreover, the RRBs should have a track record of profitability and earned operating profit of minimum Rs 15 crore for at least three out of the previous five years.

- here should not be any accumulated loss and the lender should have given a return on equity of a minimum of 10 per cent in three out of the preceding five years, according to the draft guidelines issued by the finance ministry recently.

- RRBs, which play an important role in agriculture credit, are sponsored by Public Sector Banks (PSBs). Currently, the Center holds 50 per cent in RRBs, while 35 per cent and 15 per cent are with the concerned sponsor banks and state governments, respectively.

- The sponsor bank would take into account (SEBI) and reserve Bank of India (RBI) regarding capital raising and disclosure requirements while identifying RRBs for IPO.

- There are 43 RRBs supported by 12 public sector banks in the country at present. They have 21,856 branches across 26 states and 3 Union Territories -- Puducherry, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. These banks have 28.3 crore depositors and 2.6 crore borrowers.

YUVA (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors) 2.0 Scheme

- **Context:** The Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education, launched YUVA 2.0 - Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors.

Key Highlights

- This is an author mentorship programme to train young and budding authors (below 30 years of age) in order to promote reading, writing and book culture in the country, and project India and Indian writings globally.

- In view of the significant impact of the first edition of YUVA with large scale participation from young and budding authors in 22 different Indian languages and English, YUVA 2.0 is now being launched.

- The launch of YUVA 2.0 is in tune with the Prime Minister's vision to encourage the youth to understand and appreciate India's democracy.

- YUVA 2.0 is a part of India@75 Project (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav) to bring to the fore the perspectives of the young generation of writers on the Theme: 'Democracy (institutions, events, people, constitutional values – past, present, future)' in an innovative and creative manner.

- This scheme will thus help to develop a stream of writers who can write on a spectrum of subjects to promote Indian heritage, culture and knowledge system.

- The National Book Trust, India, under the Ministry of Education as the Implementing Agency will ensure phase-wise execution of the Scheme under well-defined stages of mentorship.

- The books prepared under this scheme will be published by National Book Trust, India, and will also be translated into other Indian languages ensuring the exchange of culture and literature, thereby promoting 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

- The selected young authors will interact with some of the best authors of the world, participate in literary festivals etc.
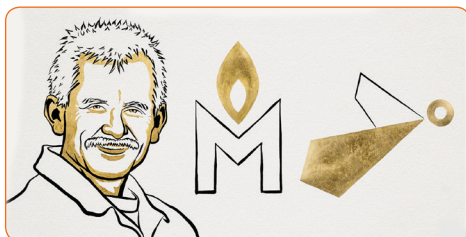
7th OCTOBER, 2022

Nobel Peace Prize, 2022

The Nobel Peace Prize 2022 is awarded to human rights advocate Ales Bialiatski from Belarus, the Russian human rights organization Memorial and the Ukrainian human rights organization Center for Civil Liberties.

Key Highlights

- Memorial, Russia's most prominent and oldest human rights organisation, was one of the three recipients that received this year's Nobel Peace Prize.
- The other winners are Belarusian human rights advocate Ales Bialiatski and Ukrainian human rights organisation Center for Civil Liberties.
- Russia's Supreme Court had ordered the closure of Memorial International in December 2021 and it was shut down earlier this year, but despite the orders they have refused to stop their work.
- Established in 1987, Memorial sought to ensure that the victims of state-led oppression during the rule of the USSR would never be forgotten. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became Russia's largest human rights organisation, compiling information not only about the victims of the past, but also becoming the foremost source of information of political prisoners in Russian detention centres, the Nobel Peace Prize press release notes.
- It has opposed combat militarism, promoted human rights and played a crucial role in collecting information about war crimes committed by Russian forces and their supporters during Chechen Wars from the 1990's to the 2000's.

Digital Services Act (DSA)

- **Context:** The European Union (EU) has given final approval to online safety-focused legislation, which is an overhaul of the region's social media and e-commerce rules.

Key Features

- Known as the Digital Services Act (DSA), the law tightly regulates the way intermediaries, especially large platforms such as Google, Meta, Twitter, and YouTube, function in terms of moderating user content.
- Faster removals and provisions to challenge: Social media companies will have to add "new procedures for faster removal" of content deemed illegal or harmful.
- Bigger platforms have greater responsibility: Law puts increased accountability on the Big Tech companies. Under the DSA, 'Very Large Online Platforms' (VLOPs) and 'Very Large Online Search Engines' (VLOSEs), that is platforms, having more than 45 million users in the EU, will have more stringent requirements.
- Direct supervision by European Commission: More importantly, these requirements and their enforcement will be centrally supervised by the European Commission itself l.
- More transparency on how algorithms work: VLOPs and VLOSEs will face transparency measures and scrutiny of how their algorithms work, and will be required to conduct systemic risk analysis and reduction to drive accountability about the society impacts of their products.
- Clearer identifiers for ads and who's paying for them: Online platforms must ensure that users can easily identify advertisements and understand who presents or pays for the advertisement. They must not display personalized advertising directed towards minors or based on sensitive personal data.

Draft Resolution on Xinjiang in UNHRC

- **Context:** India abstained on a draft resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) calling for a debate on the human rights situation in China's Xinjiang region.

Key Highlights

- India also abstained on a resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) promoting human rights in Sri Lanka but urged the government in Colombo to deliver on commitments towards the Tamil minority.
- The Indian side didn't offer an explanation for its decision to abstain from the draft resolution seeking a debate on the human rights situation in China's Xinjiang region.
- The ultimate vote went in favor of China, with 19 members of the UNHRC opposing the resolution and 11 members, including India, Malaysia and Ukraine, abstained.
- The resolution was supported by France, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands. Twelve of the 17 OIC member states with representation in the UNHRC also voted in favour of China on the resolution on Xinjian.
- The draft resolution on the situation in Xinjiang was presented by a group comprising Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the UK and the US, and was co-sponsored by other countries such as Turkey.
- The resolution was a follow-up to a recent report by former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet that exposed a wide range of human rights violations in Xinjiang.

About UNHRC

- The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe.
- It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva.
- The Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council.
- Universal Periodic Review: UPR serves to assess the human rights situations in all United Nations Member States.
- It is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
  - **African States:** 13 seats
  - **Asia-Pacific States:** 13 seats
  - **Latin American and Caribbean States:** 8 seats
  - **Western European and other States:** 7 seats
  - **Eastern European States:** 6 seats

India: The World's largest producer and consumer of sugar

India has emerged as the world's largest producer and consumer of sugar as well as the world's second largest exporter of sugar.

Key Highlights

- By producing more than 5000 Lakh Metric Tonne (LMT) sugarcane, India has become the world's largest producer.
- Out of the total produce, 3574 LMT of sugarcane was crushed by sugar mills to produce about 394 LMT of sugar (Sucrose).
- Out of this, 35 LMT sugar was diverted to ethanol production and 359 LMT sugar was produced by sugar mills.
- The sugar season broke all records of sugarcane production, sugar production, sugar exports, cane procured, cane dues paid and ethanol production were made during the season.
- India also recorded its highest exports of about 109.8 LMT with no financial assistance, which was being extended up to 2020-21.
- These exports earned foreign currency of about Rs 40,000 crore for the country.