

Grievance Appellate Committee

❖ Context

- MeitY has proposed the draft amendment to the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021**.

❖ Key Highlights

- According to the draft rules, one or more **Grievance Appellate Committees** may be constituted.
- The committee will look into the appeals against the company's decision and **decide on them within 30 days. Its decision will be binding on the company.**
- The **complainant will continue to have the right to seek judicial remedy** against the decision of the company.
- The proposal, however, has triggered concerns about the government overriding social media companies' content decisions.

❖ Background

- The move comes after social media firms blocked, suspended or otherwise acted against several social media handles, some of them belonging to celebrities and other high-profile individuals, for alleged violation of community guidelines.
- **India's new rules for social media companies** took effect on 26 May 2021, mandating platforms to enable the identification of the **'first originator'** of the information that undermines the sovereignty of India, the security of the state, or public order.
- The rules mandate **intermediaries with over five million users to appoint a grievance officer, a nodal officer and a chief compliance officer**, for all Indian citizens.
- Intermediaries have to **acknowledge suspension, removal or blocking of any user or user account** or any complaint from its users for the removal of information or communication link **within 24 hours and dispose of the complaint within 15 days.**
- The complaint for the removal of information or communication link carrying defamatory, obscene, pornographic, invasive of another's privacy, libellous, false and untrue information, should be **redressed within 72 hours of the reporting.**
- Also, the intermediary concerned will be required to take all reasonable measures to **ensure accessibility of its services to users** along with a reasonable expectation of due diligence, privacy and transparency.

US to Provide HIMARS to Ukraine

❖ Context

- United States will send **M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems**, also known as HIMARS, to war-torn Ukraine.

❖ Key Highlights

- The US decision to provide the advance rocket systems tries to strike a **balance between the desire to help Ukraine** while not providing arms that could allow Ukraine to hit targets **deep inside Russia** and trigger an escalation in the war.
- With precision-guided munitions and a longer range than weapons currently deployed by Ukraine, the multiple rocket launchers represent an **important upgrade** at a time when the Ukrainians are battling Russian artillery in the east of the country.

❖ What is HIMARS?

- **HIMARS** as interoperable with the latest precision munitions that range from **15 to 499+ km.**

Himars launch rocket system

US providing Himars to Ukraine

HIMARS

(High Mobility Artillery Rocket System)

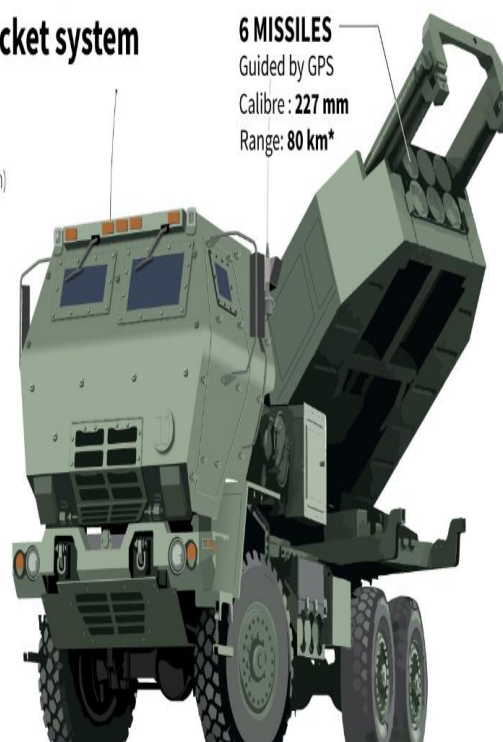
- Multiple rocket launcher mounted on light armed vehicle
- Repositions, recharges and fires in a few minutes
- Transportable by plane or boat

Crew: 3 people

Max. speed: 85 km/h

Weight: 10.9 tonnes

Dimensions Length: 5 m
Width: 2.2 m
Height: 2.3 m



- This includes the entire suite of **Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS)** munitions: Extended-Range Guided MLRS (ER GMLRS), GMLRS, the Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) and the **Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS).**
- It is a weapons system mounted on a truck.
- It can carry a container with six rockets.
- It is highly mobile, can fire and retreating in minutes, thus reducing the chance of being targeted by the enemy – known as 'scoot and shoot' capability.
- It can launch medium and long-range rockets.

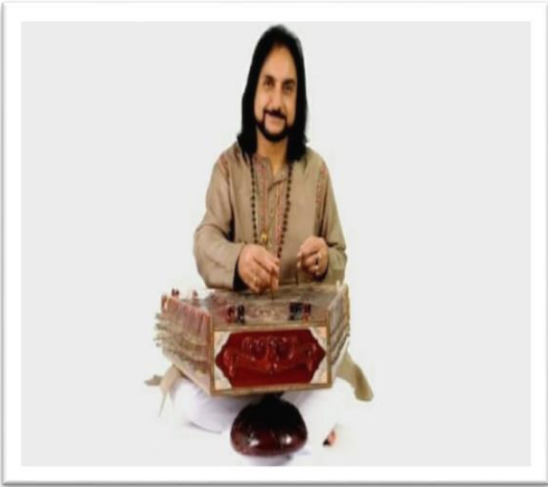
- Has been used by US forces in multiple conflicts since 2010, including in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.

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News in Between the Lines

Pandit Bhajan Sopori



❖ Context

➤ Recently saint of santoor Pandit Bhajan Sopori passed away.

❖ About Pandit Bhajan Sopori Musical Journey

- Hailing from a musician's family that nurtured the **Shaivite, Sufi, & Hindustani Classical traditions in Kashmir for generations**, Pt. Sopori led the revival of Sufi and folk music in the State to spread the message of humanism.
- Sopori envisioned his santoor music as a cultural bridge between the music of the Kashmir Valley and the rest of the country.
- Using music as a balm to heal the wounds and bring the youth in the Kashmir Valley to the mainstream, Pt. Sopori composed a collection of prayers and **'Tarana-e-Watan' (patriotic songs)**, sung by large public choirs as a common prayer in the Valley.
- His vast repertoire has compositions derived from **Naats** (Islamic devotional songs) and **Vedic chants**.
- Gradually, he developed a unique style, known as **the Sopori Baaj**.
- He increased the range of the santoor from the **conventional one-and-a-half to more than five octaves**, balanced the strikers, and enhanced the tonal quality by adding tarab and tumba.
- Putting his profound knowledge of music to practical use, he did extensive research on **Naad Yoga (sound therapy) and even came out with an album**.

Expressvpn Rejects Cert-in's VPN Rules



❖ Context

➤ VPN service provider ExpressVPN recently announced it will remove its servers from India, rejecting the **Computer Emergency Response Team's (CERT-In) new directions** requiring all VPN providers to store user data for **at least five years**.

❖ Key Highlights

- As per the directions - to come into effect on **June 27, 2022** — companies will need to store users' real names, IP addresses assigned to them, usage patterns, and other identifying data,
- **Still accessible:** Indian users will still be able access the company's virtual VPN servers, which will instead be physically located in Singapore and the UK. The users will continue to get Indian IP addresses through this network.
- **Purpose of the Law:** The new data law initiated by India's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), intended to help fight cybercrime,
- **Criticism of the Law:** It is incompatible with the purpose of VPNs, which are designed to keep users' online activity private.

India Inc's ECB Drops sharply in April



❖ Context

➤ Resources raised by India Inc **via External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs)** dwindled sharply to **\$361.6 million in April 2022** with interest rates in advanced economies going up.

❖ Key Highlights

- **ECBs** are commercial loans raised by eligible resident entities from recognised **non-resident entities**. These loans are required to conform to parameters such as minimum maturity, permitted and non-permitted end-uses, maximum all-in-cost ceiling, etc.
- Indian corporates had raised **\$2.368 billion in April 2021** and **\$5.029 billion in March 2022** via the ECB route due to relatively lower global interest rates.
- The sharp decline in resources raised via the ECB route comes even as banks registered a strong credit growth of **11.3 per cent y-o-y in April 2022** as compared to 4.7 per cent a year ago.
- India has seen a steady increase in resources mobilised through this route in the last few years.

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NTPC Releases Biodiversity Policy



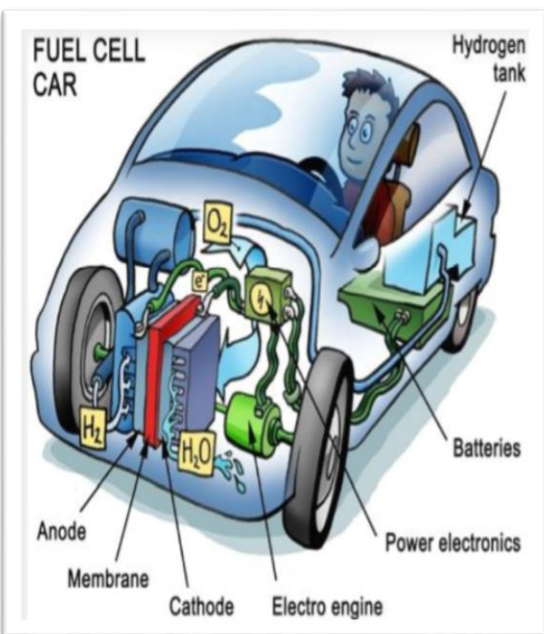
❖ Context

➤ NTPC Ltd, India's **largest integrated energy producer** has issued renewed Biodiversity Policy 2022 to establish a comprehensive vision and guiding principle for conservation, restoration, and **enhancement of biodiversity**.

❖ Key Highlights

- This Biodiversity Policy is an integral part of NTPC's Environmental Policy.
- Its objectives are **aligned with environmental and sustainability policies**.
- Moreover, the policy is also designed to support all the professionals of the NTPC Group to help them contribute toward the achievement of the targets set in this field.
- The company will further strengthen its current efforts to achieve a **'no net loss'** of biodiversity at all of its currently operating sites and ensure there is a **net positive balance wherever applicable**.
- NTPC was the first PSU to issue Biodiversity Policy **in 2018**.
- As part of its capacity building, NTPC is raising awareness among **local communities, employees, and its associates across the supply chain** about biodiversity through project-specific and national level trainings in collaboration with experts.
- NTPC is also collaborating with local communities, organizations, regulatory agencies and research institutes of national/international repute in the field of biodiversity.
- **Aim:** The power major aims to mainstream the concept of biodiversity across NTPC's value chain and adopt a precautionary approach for sustainable management of biodiversity in all the decision-making processes to ensure the Earth's variety of life in and around the business units of NTPC.
- The policy also aims to adopt **systematic consideration of local threats** to biodiversity beyond the company's business activities.

India's First Registration Of Hydrogen Car



❖ Context

➤ **Kerala** has registered India's first Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV), **Toyota Mirai**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The car is not expected to ply on roads and **will be kept at a research organisation** for studying India's first fuel-cell electric vehicle (FCEV) instead.
- The state government had announced that **hydrogen-fuelled cars will be exempted from taxes in Kerala**.
- **Travancore Cochin Chemicals, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd and Cochin International Airport Ltd** are involved in setting up a network of hydrogen-fuel stations in the state. **Kochi Airport's solar power facility** is one of the major projects where **production of green hydrogen** will take place.

❖ About the Car

- FCEVs produce electricity using a **fuel-cell powered by hydrogen**. Hydrogen from the fuel tank and oxygen in air creates electric power for the car to run.
- There is a small battery that stores the electricity and then this electricity is used to power the electric motors. The byproduct is water which is emitted from the vehicle's tailpipe.
- **The electric battery in Mirai is 30 times smaller** than what conventional electric vehicles use. It is lighter and charges faster. These factors give it an advantage over other EV varieties.

Painted Leopard Gecko

❖ Context

➤ A study published in the journal **Evolutionary Systematics** has described a new species of gecko, **Eublepharis Pictus**, found in India.

❖ Key Highlights

- A dead gecko was **found in a water tank in Visakhapatnam in 2017**. It was thought to be an East Indian Leopard Gecko.

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- Now, a phylogenetic study and morphological comparisons have distinguished it as a new species. It appears to be **common in the forests of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha**. It has also been found in **West Bengal and Jharkhand**.
- The gecko genus *Eublepharis* now has 7 species.
- The new species differs from all other members of the genus except for **E hardwickii**. Both are **geographically separated by the Brahmani River**.
- The species occur outside protected areas. Most geckos are killed when encountered even though they are harmless due to lack of awareness.
- The study has, thus, proposed IUCN status of Near Threatened for the species.

PM Shri Schools



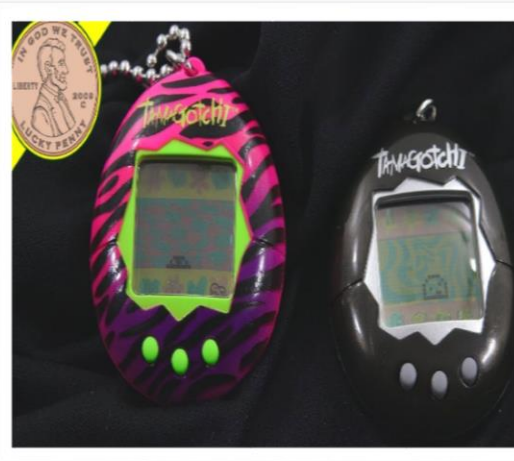
❖ Context

- The Union Education Minister informed during the **National Education Ministers Conference** in Gujarat that the central government is planning to set up "PM Shri Schools".

❖ Key Highlights

- **10,000 - 15,000 schools** will be opened. These will be **state of the art "NEP 2020 labs"** equipped to prepare students for 21st century education and skills.

Tamagotchi Generation



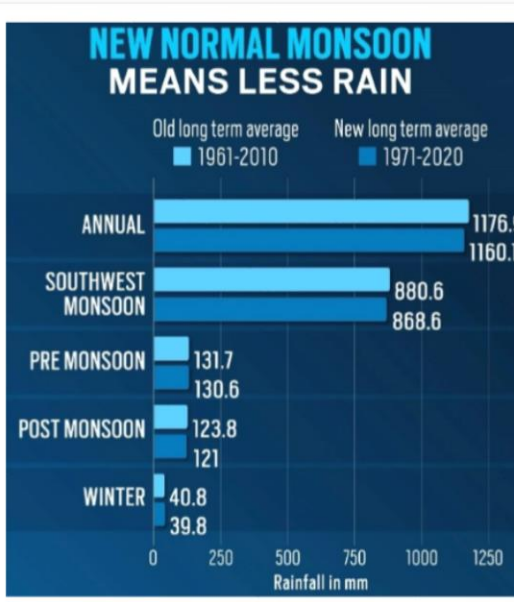
❖ Context

- A new book *AI by Design: A Plan for Living With Artificial Intelligence* by a British behavioural psychologist, has predicted that by the third quarter of the century, parents will have the choice of having **digital offspring**, known as **Tamagotchi generation**.

❖ Key Highlights

- These virtual children which will **exist in the metaverse (virtual reality)**, would be **indistinct from those in the real world**.
- They can be **built to look like their parents** and will be able to provide a **range of emotional responses**, including speech.
- Handling the kids may even **reproduce the physical sensations** of cuddling, feeding and playing with one's offspring. The **word Tamagotchi comes from the digital pet created by the Japanese toy manufacturer Bandai**, which was a global rage in the 1990s and early years of this century.
- A New Zealand's company is already working on "an interactive animated virtual infant prototype" called **BabyX**, with her own digital brain. It is a computer generated psychological simulation incorporating computational models of the basic neural systems that are involved in interactive behaviour and learning.

New 'Normal' Monsoon



❖ Context

- It has been predicted that India will have a 'normal' monsoon in 2022, even as the values for 'normal' rainfall have changed by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

❖ Key Highlights

- The **long-period average (LPA) rainfall** that is used as the standard for 'normal' precipitation, was earlier calculated as the average of rainfall from **1961-2010**. From this year, **it is being calculated for the period 1971-2020**.
- **The actual value for 'normal' has decreased by 12 millimetres**.
- If the earlier LPA was considered, this would be 101.6 per cent of the LPA.

❖ Impact of the New Definition

- Though the 894.7 mm of rain would still have been considered as a normal monsoon, as per IMD's definition (96-104% of LPA), the situation becomes different when individual regions are considered.
- **For some regions like Western UP, the volume of rainfall that would be categorised as 'deficient' till last year, will be recorded as 'normal' this year because of this shift**. The variation, in turn, will **lead to problems for farmers** who are dependent on the forecasts and the advisories issued by local agricultural departments for sowing their crops.

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