

Right to Information (RTI) Act

❖ Context

- According to a report by **Satark Nagrik Sangathan**, the backlog of appeals or complaints is increasing in commissions every year.

KEY POINTS OF DIFFERENCE		
RTI Act, 2005	RTI (Amendment) Bill, 2019	
CHIEF information commissioner (CIC) and information commissioners will have a tenure of five years.	CIC pay equivalent to CEOs, Central ICs and state CIC to election commissioners and state ICs to chief secretary.	IF such officials are receiving pension or other retirement benefits, their salaries will be reduced by an amount equal to the pension.
CENTRE will notify the tenure of all information commissioners (ICs) at state and central level.	SALARIES and allowances of these officials will be determined by the Central government.	THESE provisions have been removed.

❖ Key Highlights of the Report

- **The number of appeals and complaints pending :**
 - In 2019, from data obtained from 26 information commissions was 2,18,347.
 - In 2020, the number climbed up to 2,33,384 with data obtained from 23 information commissions.
 - In 2021 the number was 2,86,325 with data from 26 commissions.
 - In 2022, it was 3,14,323.
- **The highest number of pending cases :** Maharashtra (99,722) > Uttar Pradesh (44,482) > Karnataka (30,358).
- Two information commissions, **Jharkhand and Tripura have been completely defunct** for 29 months and 15 months respectively.
- Only **5% of all positions** in commissions are being **occupied by women**.
- According to a report by **Transparency International :**
 - 1/4 of information commissioner posts are vacant.
 - Out of a total of 165 posts of information commissioners, 42 are vacant, including two chief State information commissioners.

❖ About RTI Act

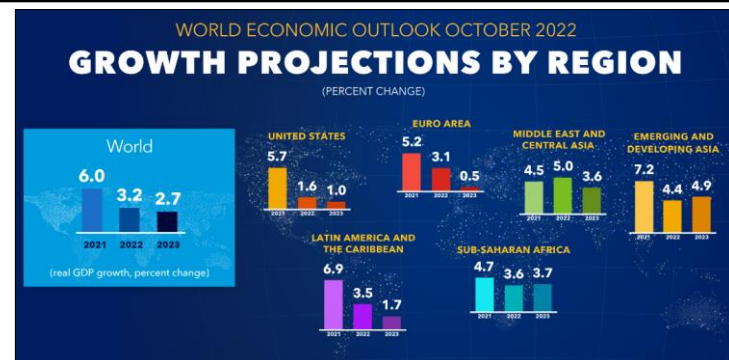
- It was enacted on **15 June 2005** and amended in **2019**.
- It is the law that gives an ordinary citizen the right to ask questions to the government.

- It dictates the government to provide a timely response to the citizen who seeks it.
- **Objectives :**
 - To empower the citizens.
 - To promote transparency and accountability.
 - To curb corruption.
 - To enhance people's participation in the democratic process..
- **Important sections of RTI Act :**
 - **Section 2 (f)**- Meaning of Information.
 - Any material in any form is considered information.
 - **Section 2 (h)**- Meaning of Public Authority.
 - Any authority, body, or institution of self-government established or constituted is referred to as a "public authority."
 - **Section 4 :** Requires suo motu disclosure of information by each public authority.
 - **Section 8 (1) :** It mentions exemptions against furnishing information under RTI Act.
 - **Section 8 (2) :** It provides for disclosure of information exempted under the Official Secrets Act, 1923 if a larger public interest is served.

World Economic Outlook (WEO) Report

❖ Context

- Recently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released the second of its two annual World Economic Outlook (WEO) reports.
- Each year, the IMF releases two WEO reports, one each in April and October.
- It also provides "updates" to these two WEOs in January and July.



❖ Key Highlights of the Report

- **India is projected to grow at 6.8%** in the current fiscal year, following **8.7% growth in the fiscal year that ended March 31**.
- The IMF has projected **6.9% consumer price inflation this year** and **5.1% next year**.
- It expects inflation in the country to return to the tolerance band in the fiscal year 2023-24
- **For the world as a whole**, growth will slow down from 6.0% in 2021 to 3.2% in 2022 and 2.7% in 2023.
- **Global inflation** is now expected to peak at 9.5% in late 2022.

❖ International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- **About**
 - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an **international financial institution**.
 - It was **set up along with the World Bank** at the **Bretton Woods Conference in 1944**
 - **Headquarter** - Washington, D.C.
 - It consists of **190 countries**.

- **Aims :**
 - To foster **global monetary cooperation**, secure financial stability.
 - To Facilitate **international trade**.
 - To Promote **high employment** and **sustainable economic growth**.
 - **To Reduce poverty** around the world.
- **Areas Of Involvement :**
 - Exchange rate, currency, liquid asset, Special Drawing Right
 - Plays a **central role in the management of balance of payments difficulties** and international financial crises.
- **Publications :**
 - Global Financial Stability Report
 - World Economic Outlook
 - Regional Economic Outlook
 - Managing Director's Global Policy Agenda





INTERPOL

Interpol

❖ Context

- Recently, **Interpol has rejected a second request by India** to issue a Red Corner Notice against Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

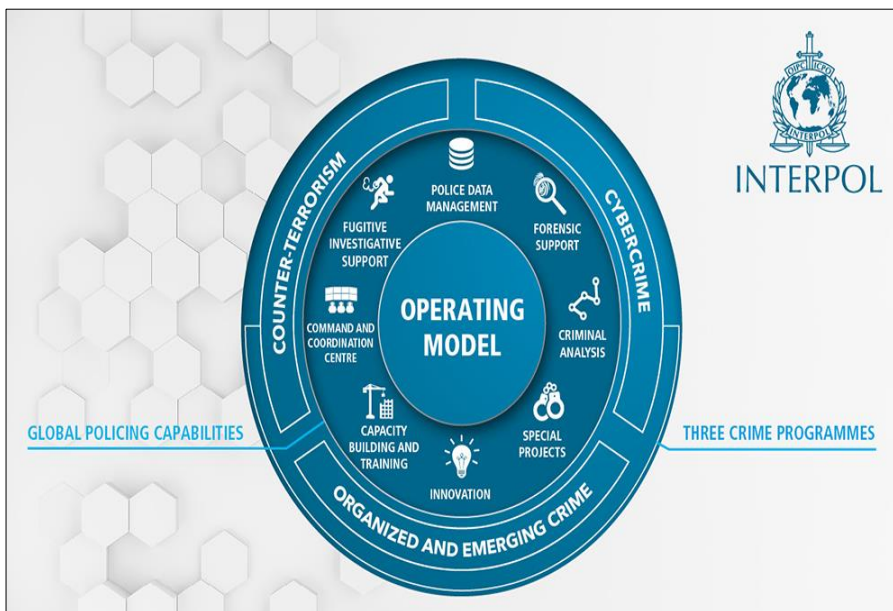
❖ Key Highlights

- Pannun is Canada-based founder and legal advisor of the pro-Khalistan outfit Sikhs for Justice (SFJ).
- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has listed him as a “terrorist” under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

❖ Interpol

• About :

- The Interpol, or **International Criminal Police Organization**, is an inter-governmental organization.
- It was **established in 1923**.
- **Headquarter-** in Lyon, France.



• Members :

- It comprises **195 member countries**, which helps police forces in all these countries to better coordinate their actions.
- **India** has been a **member since 1956**.
- **Objectives** : The organization enables member countries to **share and access data on crimes and criminals** and offers a range of **technical and operational support**.

• Functioning :

- The **Interpol general secretariat** coordinates the organisation’s day-to-day activities.
- Interpol has a National Central Bureau (**NCB**) in each member country.
- NCB is the **central point of contact** for both the general secretariat and the other NCBs around the world.



- The Interpol **colour-coded ‘notices’** in four languages – English, Spanish, French, and Arabic.
- The Interpol **doesn’t have law enforcement powers** such as arrest.

Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022

❖ Context

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022 recently.



❖ Key Highlights

- It seeks to amend the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.
- The decision will improve governance, enhance transparency and accountability in the Multi State Cooperative Societies.
- India has more than 1500 multi-State co-operative societies serving as an important tool to promote economic and social betterment of their members.

❖ Proposed Amendments

- **Provisions relating to representation of women** and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe members in the board of co-operative societies have been included to facilitate inclusiveness.
- **Co-opted directors** with experience in the field of banking, management, cooperative management and finance will be appointed to promote professional management.

Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022

Cabinet approves Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022

- Will incorporate the provisions of the 97th Constitutional Amendment
- Setting up of Cooperative Election Authority, Cooperative Information Officer, Cooperative Ombudsman, etc. have been proposed
 - Election Authority will ensure that elections are held in a fair, free and timely manner
 - Cooperative Ombudsman will provide for a mechanism for redressal of member grievances
 - Cooperative Information Officer will enhance transparency

- The amendment has also been proposed to enhance **ease of doing business** by reducing the period of registration with a provision for the applicants to seek additional time of two months for rectification of mistakes.

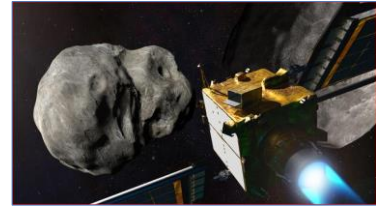
- It also provide for electronic submission and issuance of documents.
- Election authority will be set up to ensure fair, free and timely elections.
- The proposed amendments covering major areas of operation and management will go a long way in strengthening the co-operative movement in the country.



NASA's DART Mission

❖ Context

- NASA has confirmed recently that the DART spacecraft successfully managed to change the motion of the asteroid Dimorphos by crashing into it.

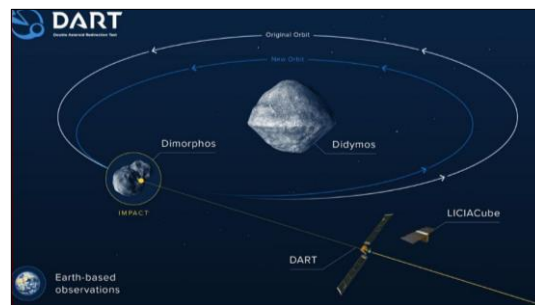


❖ Key Highlights

- This is the first time that humanity has changed the motion of a celestial object.
- This is also the first demonstration of the “kinetic impactor” method of asteroid mitigation.

❖ About DART Mission

- DART is a joint project between NASA & the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL).
- **Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART)** is a NASA space mission aimed at testing a method of planetary defense against near-Earth objects.



- It was designed to assess how much a spacecraft impact deflects an asteroid through a transfer of momentum by hitting the asteroid head on & attempting to slow it.

- The asteroid selected for the test poses no actual threat to Earth.
- **Dimorphos:** The minor-planet moon of the asteroid Didymos.

Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

❖ Context

- The Pobitora wildlife sanctuary, which is known for its Indian one-horned rhino population, recently reopened for tourists after being closed during the rainy season.



❖ Key Highlights

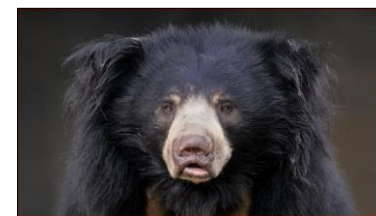
- **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary** is a wildlife sanctuary on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra in Morigaon district in Assam, India.
- It was declared in 1987 and covers 38.85 km² (15.00 sq mi), providing grassland and wetland habitat for the Indian rhinoceros.
- Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary holds one of the largest Indian rhinoceros populations in Assam.
- **IUCN Status of One Horned Rhino:** Vulnerable



Sloth Bears

❖ Context

- The first World Sloth Bear Day was observed recently to generate awareness and strengthen conservation efforts around the unique bear species endemic to the Indian subcontinent.



❖ Key Highlights

- Sloth bears are identified by their very distinct long, shaggy dark brown or black fur, distinct white V-shaped chest patch and four-inch long ivory-coloured curved claws used for digging out termites and ants from rock-hard mounds.
- Sloth bears are found in all parts of the country except Jammu and Kashmir and northeastern States.
- **Listed under Schedule I** of The (Wildlife Protection) Act of India, 1972 the species has the same level of protection as tigers, rhinos and elephants.
- **IUCN Red List.:** Vulnerable.



❖ Key Concerns

- **Conflict With Humans:** Over the past few years there has been a rise of incidents of human sloth bear conflict in States like Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra among other states.

- **Barbaric tradition:** For a long time sloth bears were exploited as dancing bears. Though the practice has been banned there are still a few cases of rescue.

News in Between the Lines

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme (BBBPS)

❖ Context

- Recently, the Central government announced the inclusion of skilling of girls in non-traditional livelihood (NTL) options in its BBBP scheme.

❖ Key Highlights

- The scheme will now also focus on increasing the enrolment of girls in secondary education, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) subjects.

Face to Face Centres





- **Objective :** To ensure adolescents complete their education, build skills, and enter the workforce in a diverse range of professions, including in STEM fields.
- **About BBBPS :**
 - It was launched in 2015.
 - The program is being implemented across 405 districts.
 - **Aim:**
 - Prevention of gender-biased sex selective elimination.
 - Ensuring survival & protection of the girl child.
 - Ensuring education and participation of the girl child.

CyberKnife



❖ Context

- Recently, the PM of India laid the foundation stone of various healthcare facilities in **Civil Hospital Asarwa, Ahmedabad**, and said this will be the first government hospital in the country where **state-of-the-art technology like Cyber-Knife will be available.**

❖ About CyberKnife

- The CyberKnife System is a **non-invasive treatment for cancerous and non-cancerous tumors** and other conditions where radiation therapy is indicated.
- It is **used to treat conditions throughout the body**, including the prostate, lung, brain, spine, head and neck, liver, pancreas and kidney.
- It can be an **alternative to surgery** or for patients who have inoperable or surgically complex tumors.
- CyberKnife treatments are **typically performed in 1 to 5 sessions.**
- The CyberKnife System has more than two decades of clinical proof and has **helped thousands of cancer patients.**

Slender Loris Sanctuary



❖ Context

- In a first in the country, Tamil Nadu government recently notified Kaduvur Slender Loris sanctuary covering 11,806 hectares in Karur and Dindigul districts.

Key Highlights

- Slender Lorises, are small nocturnal mammals are arboreal in nature as they spend most of their life on trees.

11,806 ha in Kadavur

- Sanctuary in Karur & Dindigul districts
- 1,176 Mysore grey slender loris & Malabar slender loris recorded in Karur & Dindigul districts, according to a SACON study
- Highest in reserve forests of Pannamalai, Thanneerkaradu, Palaviduthi, Thopaswamimalai, Mudimalai, D Edayapatti, Mullipadi, Sembianatham

- The species acts as a biological predator of pests in agricultural crops and benefits farmers.
- The survival of the species depends on its habitat improvement, conservation efforts and mitigation of threats, said Supriya Sahu, additional chief secretary, Environment, Climate Change and Forests, in a statement.
- **Significance:** Trespassing of people would be minimised, people who capture the poor animal for commercial purposes would be clipped.
- **IUCN Status :** Endangered

Kuafu-1



❖ Context

- China recently launched the **Advanced Space-based Solar Observatory (ASO-S)**, nicknamed Kuafu-1.

❖ Key Highlights

- It will provide insights into how the Sun's magnetic field causes **coronal mass ejections (CMEs)** and other eruptions.
- Scientists understand that the Sun's magnetic field is what causes the eruptions but understanding the exact nature of the relationship between the both has proven difficult so far.
- ASO-S has instruments that look across different wavelengths at once, which should make it easier to understand the connections.
- ASO-S has the unique ability to study the middle corona, an important region of the sun where solar storms brew.
- This has never been seen before in its entirety in the ultraviolet spectrum.

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