

Seed Scheme

❖ Context

- Recently, The Minister of State Social Justice and Empowerment in the Lok Sabha said that the Ministry is implementing a **Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED)** for Development and Welfare of DNTs.

Seed Scheme

- It was **launched in February 2022** by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- The **four components of the SEED scheme are-**
 - **Educational empowerment-** Free coaching to students from these communities for Civil Services, entry to professional courses like medicine, engineering, management etc.
 - **Health Insurance** through PMJAY of National Health Authority.
 - Livelihoods to support income generation.
 - Housing (through PMAY/IAY).
- **Implementation**
 - The **Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNC)** has been tasked with the implementation of this scheme.
 - **DWBNDNC**
 - It was **set up in 2019** under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**
 - **Nodal Ministry** - Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
 - **Aim-** To implement the welfare programmes.
- **Funding**
 - The scheme will ensure expenditure of Rs.200 crore to be spent over five years beginning 2021-22.

De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes

- **Denotified tribes (DNTs)**
 - DNTs are communities that were '**notified**' as being '**born criminals**' during the British regime under a series of laws starting with the **Criminal Tribes Act of 1871**.
- **Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities**
 - They are defined as those **who move from one place to another** rather than living at one place all the time.
- These communities are the **most vulnerable and deprived**.
- The **Renke Commission** estimated their population at around **10.74 crore** based on Census 2001.
- A new Commission constituted in February 2014 identified **1,262 communities as de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic**.
- **NCDNT**
 - The National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) was **constituted in 2006**.
 - It was headed by Balkrishna Sidram Renke.
 - There is **no permanent commission for these communities**.

Line of Actual Control (LAC)

❖ Context

- Recently, Indian and Chinese soldiers suffered "minor injuries" after they were engaged in a **face-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)** in Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh on December 9.

Line of Actual Control

- The LAC separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- It is **divided into three sectors**
 - The Eastern Sector (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim).
 - Middle Sector (Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh).
 - Western Sector (Ladakh).
- India and China do not agree on the LAC.
- India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long; the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.
- There is the least disagreement in the Middle Sector.

Western Sector (Ladakh)





- In the western sector, India shares about a **2152 km border with China.**
- It is between the union territory of Ladakh (erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir) and the Xinjiang province of China.
- The territorial dispute in the western sector is over **Aksai Chin.**
- India claims it as part of erstwhile Kashmir, while China claims it is part of Xinjiang.
- During British rule in India **two borderlines were proposed** – Johnson’s line and McDonald line in 1865 and 1893 respectively.
- The **Johnson’s line shows Aksai Chin in Ladakh** i.e. under India’s control whereas **McDonald Line places it under China’s control.**
- India considers Johnson Line as a rightful national border with China, while on the other hand, China considers the McDonald Line as the correct border with India.

Middle Sector

- This comprises the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- This is the **least disputed sector** and covers 545 km of Indian borders.
- Except for the larger claim of China in the Barahoti sector in Uttarakhand, other claims and counterclaims are miniscule.

Eastern Sector

- The eastern sector conventionally **refers to Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh**, but both these states have Bhutan separating them.
- In the eastern sector, **India shares a 1140km boundary** with China.
- **China claims some 90,000 sq km of Arunachal Pradesh** – the entire state – as its territory.
- It calls the area “Zangnan” in the Chinese language and makes repeated references to “South Tibet”.
- China considers the McMahon line illegal.
 - McMahon Line is a frontier between Tibet and Assam in British India.
 - It was negotiated between Tibet and Great Britain at the end of the Shimla Conference (October 1913–July 1914)

News in Between the Lines

Agristack Project

WHAT IS THE AGRISTACK?

The Report of the Committee on Doubling Farmer's Income, NITI Aayog's Discussion Paper on National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, and the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 all mention the use of electronic database for farmers meant to collect data about agriculture and use this to provide services to farmers.



1 WHAT DETAILS DOES IT COLLECT?

The data to be collected by the AgriStack includes: personal details, profile of the land held, production details, and financial details.



2 WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED BENEFITS?

1. Improved access to formal credit
2. Better quality of input
3. Smooth mechanism for marketing and price discovery



3 POTENTIAL ISSUES

1. Lack of consultations with farmer organisations
2. Algorithm based decision making will impact farmers' rights without transparency or accountability.
3. Incentives to harvest and process farm data for financial gain rather than benefit of farmers



4 HOW WILL THE LOSS OF PRIVACY IMPACT FARMERS?

1. Financial lending models relying on technology towards farmers may offer exorbitant rates for those in dire need.
2. There exist risks of exclusion which has been well documented by studies on Aadhaar linked welfare delivery systems
3. Algorithm based decision making may further reduce the agency of farmers



5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Understanding issues emerging from the leadership of farmer groups to include farmers in the decision making process
2. Necessity of long term study and advocacy to engage farmers effectively
3. Study the impact of a data protection law to ensure digital security and privacy



❖ Context

- Recently, The Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in the Lok Sabha said that **The Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare commenced the work for creating Agristack in the country.**

❖ Key Highlights

- In order to create Agristack, the department has finalized the core concept of “**India Digital Ecosystem of Agriculture (IDEA)**” which lays down a framework for Agristack.
- The Department entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft Corporation to start a pilot project in 100 villages of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

❖ Agristack Project

- Agristack is a **collection of digital information and technology** aimed at farmers and the agricultural industry.
- AgriStack will **give farmers a standardized platform to offer end-to-end services** along the entire agriculture and food value chain.
- It seeks to give India a stronger push toward the digitization of data, from land titles to medical information.
- The digital repository will aid precise targeting of subsidies, services and policies, the officials added.
- Under the programme, **each farmer will get what is being called an FID, or a farmers’ ID**, linked to land records to uniquely identify them. India has 140 million operational farm-land holdings.



Kazind – 2022



❖ Context

➤ The **6th Edition of Indo - Kazakhstan** joint training exercise “**KAZIND-22**” is scheduled to be conducted at Umroi (Meghalaya) from **15 to 28 December 2022**.

❖ About Kazind – 2022

- Joint annual training exercise with the Kazakhstan Army was **instituted in 2016** as Exercise Prabal Dostyk, which was later upgraded to a company level exercise and renamed as Ex Kazind in 2018.
- Aim of the exercise is to **build positive military relations, imbibe each other’s best practices** and **promote the ability to operate together** while undertaking counter terrorist operations in semi urban / jungle scenario, under a UN peace enforcement mandate.
- This joint exercise will enable the two armies to train, plan and execute a series of combined tactical drills for neutralising of likely threats that may be encountered in UN peacekeeping operations.
- Exercise KAZIND” will **enhance the level of defence cooperation** between Indian Army and Kazakhstan Army which will further foster the bilateral relations between the two nations.

Yangtse & Tawang



❖ Context

➤ Soldiers of India and China clashed in an area called Yangtse, in the upper reaches of Tawang sector in Arunachal Pradesh.

❖ Key Highlights

- It is one of the more serious dispute points between India and China in the overall border question.
- Tawang is the birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama and an important pilgrimage centre for Tibetan Buddhists.

IDENTIFYING THE AREAS OF DISPUTE	
IN JWG TALKS (1990S)	north of Kugrang river, area of Kongka La, Spanggur Gap, east of Mount Sajum opposite Dumchele
■ WESTERN: Trig Heights, Demchok	
■ MIDDLE: Barahoti	
■ EASTERN: Namka Chu, Sumdorong Chu, Yangtse, Asaphila, Longju-Bisa	
MAP EXCHANGE (2000)	BY PLA ACTION
■ MIDDLE: Kaurik, Mumri Dogri, Shipki La	■ WESTERN: North bank of Pangong Tso, south bank of Pangong Tso, Chumar, Galwan, Hot Springs
MAP COMPARISON (2002)	■ EASTERN: Dichu area, Dibang Valley (Fish Tail I & II), Lamang
■ WESTERN: North Samar Lungpa, east of Point 6556,	

➤ The 14th Dalai Lama took refuge in Tawang after he crossed over from Tibet to India in 1959, spending some days in the monastery there before proceeding further.

➤ After the PLA incursions into eastern Ladakh in April-May 2020, the two sides held 16 rounds of talks for disengagement at the so-called “friction points”.

➤ These are those areas where the incursions had taken place, and Indian patrolling parties were being prevented from accessing places that they had patrolled earlier.

J&K Family ID Card



❖ Context

➤ The Jammu and Kashmir government has decided to introduce a **family pehchan patra (identity card)** for residents of the Union Territory.

❖ Key Highlights

- The card will use a unique **eight-digit alphanumeric number** as a single identifier for every family and individual in the UT.
- The card will contain details of all members of the family, including their names, ages, qualifications, employment status, etc.



- The card will be **linked with the Aadhaar and bank account number of the head of the family.**
- It will instantly confirm their eligibility for government welfare schemes and facilitate direct transfer of benefits to their bank accounts with minimum human interference.
- According to government officials, the primary objective is to create an authentic, verified, and reliable database of families in J&K to ensure speedy and **transparent doorstep delivery of welfare schemes.**
- The database will be created only **with the consent of the family.** But the families that do not consent to having the card will likely face practical difficulties because benefits will be linked with the family ID card.

Loan Write-offs



❖ Context

- The Finance Minister replied to a question in Parliament regarding write-offs and NPAs by scheduled commercial banks.

❖ Key Highlights

- SCBs (Scheduled Commercial Banks) wrote-off an amount of over **₹10.09 lakh crore during the last five financial years.**
- **Write-off** refers to taking out a loan from the book of account.
- **NPAs (non-performing assets)**, including those with full provisioning made on completion of four years, are removed from the balance-sheet of the bank as write-off.
- Banks write off NPAs to clean up their balance-sheet, get tax benefit and optimise capital, in accordance with RBI guidelines and policy approved by their boards.
- However, **write-off does not benefit the borrower.** Borrowers of written-off loans continue to be liable for repayment and the process of recovery continues.
- **Banks continue to pursue recovery actions initiated in written-off accounts** through various recovery mechanisms available, like filing cases in Debt Recovery Tribunals; the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002; National Company Law Tribunal under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
- SCBs have **recovered just 13 percent of the total write-off** in the last five years.

EU's candidate status



❖ Context

- The European Union countries have agreed to give **Bosnia and Herzegovina** the status of being a candidate to join the bloc.

❖ Key Highlights

- Currently, **Albania, Moldova, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine** are candidate countries.
- In October, the European Commission recommended granting candidate status to Sarajevo as part of its annual enlargement report but attached a list of eight reform priorities that it said would help bolster democracy in the country.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a **potential candidate** for EU membership since 2003.
- In 2008, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the European Union signed **the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.**
- The country formally applied for candidate status in February 2016.



- **Potential Candidates** are countries/entities which have a clear prospect of joining the EU in the future but have not yet been granted candidate country status.
- The **EU's Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP)** was launched in 1999 and is the EU framework policy for the countries of South East Europe (except Turkey).

Orcas



❖ Context

- Two cities in the United States' state of Washington, **City of Port Townsend** and **City of Gig Harbor**, have taken steps to formally declare their support for legal rights for a group of endangered orcas.

❖ Key Highlights

- Orcas (also known as **killer whales**) are **marine mammals**.
- They belong to the suborder of toothed whales (known as **odontocetes**).
- They are also the **largest member of the dolphin family**.
- They are incredibly popular as they are the **most widely distributed of all whales and dolphins**, found in every single ocean.
- They are very familiar with their black and white colouring.
- Orcas are **highly intelligent and able to coordinate hunting tactics**.
- Female orcas are thought to live to 80 years of age or more.
- Orcas are **extremely fast swimmers** and have been recorded at speeds of up to 54 kph.
- They were given the name "killer whale" by ancient sailors who saw them preying on large whales.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) assesses the orca's **conservation status as data deficient** because of the likelihood that two or more orca types are separate species.
- However, they are listed in **Appendix II of CITES**.

GLAAS Report



❖ Context

- The report, released by the **WHO and UN-Water**, provides the most up-to-date information on WASH systems in more than 120 countries, making it the biggest data collection ever.

❖ Key Highlights

- The increasing frequency and intensity of **climate-related extreme weather events** continue to impact **universal access to safe and sustainably managed water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)**.
- In many countries, progress must be accelerated to meet **United Nations-mandated (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) six** — ensuring universal access to water and sanitation by 2030.
- **45 percent of countries** are on track to achieve their nationally-defined drinking-water coverage targets.
- **Only 25 percent of countries** are on track to achieve their national sanitation targets.
- The new data from the report will inform the voluntary commitments the international community will make at the **UN 2023 Water Conference**.
- The UN 2023 Water Conference, officially known as the **2023 Conference for the Midterm Comprehensive Review of Implementation of the UN Decade for Action on Water and Sanitation (2018-2028)**, will take place in New York from March 22-24, 2023.

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Face to Face Centres

