Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

❖ **Context**
➢ The Union government plans to launch the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) this year, aiming to democratize e-commerce and offer alternatives to proprietary e-commerce platforms.

❖ **What is the ONDC?**
- The government wants to change the fundamental structure of the e-commerce market from the current "platform-centric model to an open-network model".
- The ONDC is modelled after the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) project which is seen as a success by many.
- The UPI project allows people to send or receive money irrespective of the payment platforms on which they are registered.
- Similarly, the government wants to ensure that buyers and sellers of goods in the e-commerce market can transact regardless of the platforms on which they are registered.
- So under ONDC, a buyer registered on Amazon, for example, may directly purchase goods from a seller who sells on Flipkart.
- To make such transactions a reality, the government has ordered companies to list themselves on the ONDC.
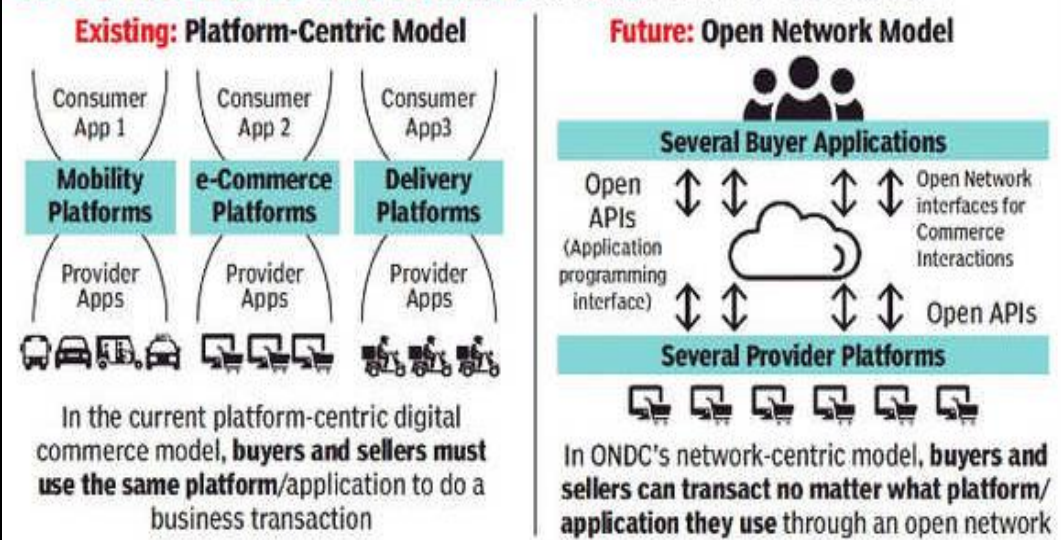
❖ **Why is the Centre pushing for it?**
- **End domination:** The government believes that the ONDC will put an end to the domination of the e-commerce market by a few large platforms.
- It says that the e-commerce market is currently broken into "silos" operated & dominated by private platforms.
- Amazon and Flipkart, for instance, have been accused of promoting certain seller entities in which they hold indirect stakes.

❖ **Significance:**
- With an open network like ONDC that connects buyers and sellers across platforms, the government hopes to **level the playing field** and make private platforms redundant.

GOVT HOPES TO REPLICATE UPI MODEL'S SUCCESS

Existing: Platform-Centric Model — Consumer App 1, Consumer App 2, Consumer App3 — Mobility Platforms, e-Commerce Platforms, Delivery Platforms — Provider Apps, Provider Apps, Provider Apps

In the current platform-centric digital commerce model, **buyers and sellers must** use the same platform/application to do a business transaction

Future: Open Network Model — Several Buyer Applications — Open APIs (Application programming interface) — Open Network interfaces for Commerce Interactions — Several Provider Platforms — Open APIs

In ONDC's network-centric model, **buyers and sellers can transact no matter what platform/application they use** through an open network

ONDC's core aim is to enable ecommerce for small sellers and businesses.

Parallels have been drawn with UPI, meaning it could do for ecommerce what UPI did for digital payments.

CUSTOMERS CAN ACCESS SELLERS ON ONDC THROUGH ANY APP THAT IS INTEGRATED WITH THE NETWORK.

Sellers will handle deliveries through tie-ups with logistics firm.

ONDC will also have embedded services like ledgers and a payment processor.

ONDC & its potential
Grow India's digital consumption to $340 bn by 2030 with 500 mn transacting users

- Bring the next **500 mn** consumers & 100 mn sellers to trade online
- Scope to connect **80-90 mn** self-employed workers
- Get **6-7 times** more MSMEs into a diverse ecosystem
- Increase a farmer's net income by **25-35%**, enhance the agricultural ecosystem

Further inclusion in digital commerce which is only 7% of total market with **165 mn users**

Ganga's Geo-Tagged Drains

❖ **Context**
➢ All drains carrying waste from villages along the Ganga river will be geo-tagged to prevent solid waste from entering the river.

❖ **Key Highlights:**
- The information about the geo-tagged drains will be shared **with urban local bodies, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs,** and the rural Swachh Bharat Mission (G) to take immediate action.
- The construction of a tunnel in **Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand**, has led to the dumping of debris along the Ganga river banks, causing an increase in solid waste pollution in the river water.
- Solid waste is being dumped in various locations along the Ganga river banks, which is finding its way into the river water.
- The presence of solid waste in the river water is causing difficulties in treating wastewater at **sewage treatment plants (STPs).**
- The Secretary of the Ministry of Jal Shakti suggested using funds from AMRUT 2.0 to install screens and prevent solid waste from entering the river water.

❖ **What is Geotagging?**
- Geo-tagging refers to the process of adding **geographic metadata, such as coordinates or location information,** to various forms of media, including photographs, videos, or textual data.
- It enables the precise identification and association of a specific geographical location with the media content.
- Geo-tagging typically utilizes **Global Positioning System (GPS)** technology or other location-based services to determine the exact coordinates of a particular point of interest.
- These coordinates are then embedded or linked to the media, allowing it to be geographically referenced.

Face to Face Centres
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Defence Production

❖ **Context**
  ➢ India has announced that the value of defence production in the country has crossed ₹1 lakh crore for the first time, indicating significant growth in the sector.

❖ **Key Highlights:**
- In the financial year 2022-23, the value of defence production reached **₹1,06,800** crore, compared to **₹95,000 crore in the previous year** and ₹54,951 crore five years ago.
- India has focused on the defence manufacturing sector, implementing measures such as
  - import bans,
  - a separate budget for domestic procurement,
  - increased foreign direct investment,
  - and improved ease of doing business.
- The government's policies have led to **increased participation of industries,** including micro, small & medium enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups, resulting in a significant rise in defence licenses issued.
- The **corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board** (OFB) in 2021 has also contributed to boosting defence production **efficiency and competitiveness.**
- India's focus extends to boosting defence exports, which have seen significant growth in recent years, with **military hardware** exports reaching a record high of ₹15,920 crore in FY 2022-23.

- India is exporting a range of weapons and systems to numerous countries, including **missiles, artillery guns, rockets, vehicles, radars, surveillance systems, and ammunition.**

INDIAN DEFENCE EXPORTS ALL TIME HIGH!

Rise in Defence Exports by more than **10 times**

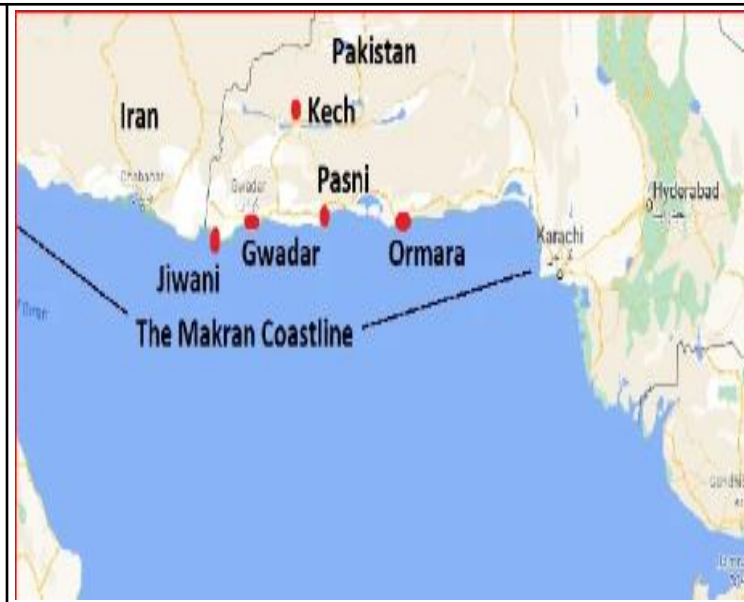| Year	Export Value (in ₹s crore)
2016-17	1,521
2017-18	4,682
2018-19	10,745
2019-20	9,115
2020-21	8,434
2021-22	12,814
2022-23	15,920

As on 31st March 2023

Methamphetamine

❖ **Context**
  ➢ The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Indian Navy conducted a joint operation off the Kerala coast.
  ➢ The operation resulted in the seizure of **approximately 2,500 kg** of methamphetamine, valued at around ₹15,000 crore.

❖ **Key Highlights:**
- Methamphetamine, commonly known as meth, is a highly addictive central nervous system stimulant drug.
- It belongs to the **amphetamine class of drugs** and is chemically similar to **amphetamine.**
- Methamphetamine is typically **produced in illegal laboratories** and comes in the form of a white crystalline powder that can be **snorted, smoked, injected, or taken orally.**
- This drug seizure is claimed to be the largest ever in terms **of monetary value** by any anti-drug enforcement agency in India.
- The drugs originated in Pakistan and were loaded onto a mother ship from the **Makran coast.** The operation is part of **Operation Samudragupt**, aiming to eliminate maritime drug trafficking in the Indian Ocean region.

News in Between the Lines

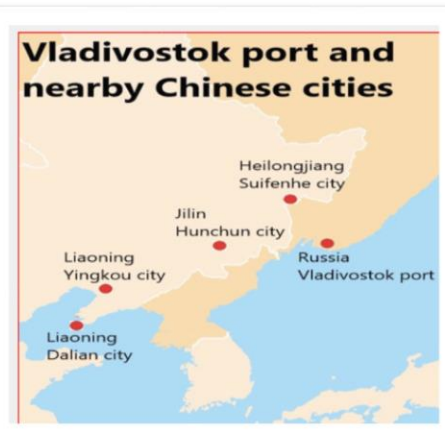|	

Wetland Authority of Delhi	❖ **Context**
	  ➢ The Wetland Authority of Delhi (WAD) has received requests from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to delete 232 waterbodies, accounting for **22.2% of the total 1,045 waterbodies in its records.**
	❖ **Key Highlights:**
	  • Requests for deletion are made by some of the 16 agencies that own waterbodies in the city, citing reasons such **as encroachment or drying up.**
	  • The WAD has prepared "brief documents" for 710 waterbodies, while the rest are either encroached upon or their owners are yet to be identified.

Face to Face Centres

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02

- The number of waterbodies in Delhi has significantly decreased over the years, with a 1997 survey indicating over 1,000 waterbodies and the current count being less than 700.
- The Najafgarh lake, for example, has shrunk from 80 sq. km in 1883 to just 5 sq. km at present.
- **Wetlands play** a crucial role in :
  - supporting diverse plant and animal life,
  - mitigating urban flooding,
  - purifying and storing water,
  - recharging groundwater,
  - controlling erosion,
  - and regulating microclimate.

Vladivostok Port

- ❖ **Context**
  - ➢ China and Russia have reached an agreement to enhance economic cooperation and strengthen bilateral ties.
- ❖ **Key Highlights:**
  - The agreement focuses on utilizing the Russian port **of Vladivostok as a transit** hub for domestic shipments from China, aiming to reduce transport costs and support the revitalization of Northeast China's industrial base.
  - China has designated **Vladivostok as a transit hub** for its domestic shipments, streamlining the transport process and reducing costs.
  - The agreement provides China with **a shorter and more cost-effective route** for transporting goods from its northeastern region to Zhejiang Province, resulting in substantial cost savings.
  - The agreement is set to take effect in June 2023, positioning Vladivostok as a domestic port for Jilin Province and facilitating seamless transportation of goods without tariffs or taxes.
  - This arrangement aligns with China's national strategic plan to revitalize its industrial base in Northeast China, promoting cross-border trade, economic growth, and strengthening ties between China and Russia.
  - Vladivostok, located in the Primorsky Krai region, serves as the **administrative center and is strategically** located around the **Golden Horn Bay,** approximately 45 kilometers from the China-Russia border.

Patch Reporting App

- ❖ **Context**
  - ➢ The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand recently inaugurated the **"Patch Reporting App"** developed by the **Public Works Department** to address the issue of potholes on the state's roads.
- ❖ **Key Highlights:**
  - The user-friendly app empowers individuals to report **potholes and monitor** the actions taken to make Uttarakhand's roads safe and pothole-free.
  - The app enhances **accountability and efficiency by providing** a convenient platform for citizens to register complaints and provide detailed information, including photographs of the potholes.
  - It ensures transparency by offering regular **updates on the actions** taken to resolve the **complaints, accompanied by visual evidence.**
  - The app has an interactive and location-based design that displays **precise location information** using latitude and longitude coordinates, enabling prompt action by the Public Works Department.
  - Both complainants and higher-ranking officials receive **comprehensive details** of the work done, accompanied by **photographs, ensuring transparency and accountability.**
- ❖ **Significance:**
  - The Patch Reporting App aims to engage the public and promote road safety by actively involving citizens in contributing to the **maintenance of road infrastructure.**
  - It serves as a vital channel for reporting potholes on roads managed by the Public Works Department in Uttarakhand.

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Gaganyaan

❖ **Context**
> Indigenously Developed Parachutes for India's **Gaganyaan Programme** to Undergo Fitment Tests.

❖ **Key Highlights:**
- These parachutes are being designed to ensure the safe return of the capsule **carrying astronauts during the Gaganyaan mission**.
- The parachutes will undergo fitment tests at an **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** facility in Bengaluru.
- The parachute system consists of 10 parachutes, each serving a specific purpose during the descent of the crew module.
- The sequence of deployment includes **apex cover separation parachutes,** drogue parachutes for stabilization, pilot parachutes for extraction, and main parachutes for a safe landing.

❖ **Significance:**
- The success of such demonstrations will determine the readiness for an unmanned mission. The **Test Vehicle Demonstration (TVD-1)** flight will mark a significant milestone toward the realization of India's **ambitious Gaganyaan program.**
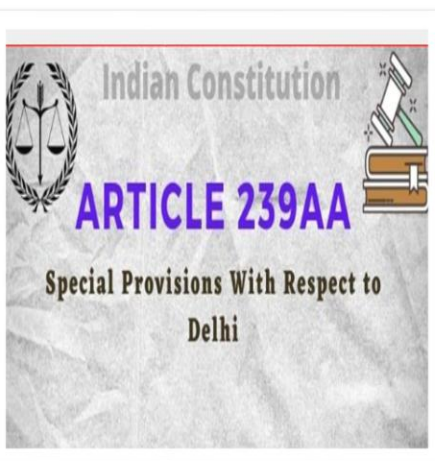
Calcium-41

❖ **Context**
> Calcium-41 has been suggested as a **new tool for radiometric dating.**

❖ **Key Highlights:**
- Calcium-41 has a half-life of about 1.04×10^5 **years**, which is significantly longer than the **half-life of Carbon-14 (5730 years).**
- The longer half-life allows calcium-41 to be used for dating geological events that occurred within the last few hundred thousand years, whereas Carbon-14 is limited to dating materials up to **about 50,000 years old.**
- The nucleus of **calcium-41 contains 20 protons and 21 neutrons,** giving it a mass number of 41.
- By studying the distribution and movement of calcium-41, researchers can gain insights into various processes, such as **bone formation, calcium transport, and calcium dynamics in marine and terrestrial systems.**

Article 239AA

❖ **Context**
> The Centre has issued an ordinance granting extended powers to the **Delhi Lieutenant Governor**, including authority over the **transfer and appointment of bureaucrats in the capital.**

❖ **Key Highlights:**
- The Ordinance is **aimed** at nullifying the effect of the **CJI DY Chandrachud-led Constitution Bench's verdict,** which gave the **Delhi government power over administrative services in the capital.**

❖ **What is Article 239AA of the Constitution?**
- Inserted into the Constitution by the **69th Amendment Act, 1991,** Article 239AA conferred **special status on Delhi** following the recommendations of the **S Balakrishnan Committee.** According to this provision, the **NCT of Delhi will have an administrator and a Legislative Assembly.**
- The **Legislative Assembly of Delhi** has the authority to **make laws for the city, except in matters related to police, public order, and land.**

❖ **Supreme Court Judgments:**
- In a **majority ruling in 2018**, the court held that while Delhi cannot be granted statehood, the concept of federalism still applies to it.
- The court stated that **Article 239AA provides** for a representative form of government for Delhi, with a directly elected Legislative Assembly and legislative powers over State and Concurrent List matters.
- The **Lieutenant Governor (LG)** is required to act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, except in exceptional circumstances where the matter is referred to the President for a decision.

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