

## NATGRID

### ❖ Context

- CBDT has directed its officials that all information regarding requests received from investigating agencies must be submitted within 15 days.

### ❖ Background

- CBDT had earlier directed, in **July 2020**, **Principal Director General of Income tax (Systems)**, in exercise of its powers under Income tax Act, to **exchange information** (PAN, TAN, bank account, return, TDS etc.) **on request basis with 10 investigating agencies through NATGRID platform.**
- These 10 investigating agencies are:
  - Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
  - Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).
  - Enforcement Directorate (ED).
  - Central Board of Indirect taxes and customs (CBIC).
  - Cabinet Secretariat (CS).
  - Intelligence Bureau (IB).
  - Director General of GST (Intelligence) (DGGI).
  - Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).
  - Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU-Ind).
  - National Investigation Agency (NIA).
- This, along with the push towards the use of **digital payments, disincentivizing cash usage, & deducting tax at source**, have helped **boost tax compliance.**

### ❖ About NATGRID

- It is a **seamless and secure database** for information on **terrorists, economic crimes and similar incidents.**
- It has been envisaged as a robust mechanism to **track suspects** and **prevent terrorist attacks** with **real-time data** and **access to classified information** like immigration, banking, individual taxpayers, air and train travels.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security had given **approval** to the Rs 3,400-crore NATGRID project in **April, 2010.**

### ❖ Why Is It Needed?

- It was conceptualised in the wake of the 26/11 terrorist siege in Mumbai in 2008 which exposed the deficiency in the security system.
- **Lack of quick information** to intelligence and enforcement agencies was considered to be one of the major hurdles in **detecting a US terror suspect's movement across the country** during his **multiple visits between 2006 and 2009.**
- The suspect had provided key information and videos of terror targets to the Pakistan-based terrorist group who carried out the attack.

### ❖ How Will It Work?

- In the first phase, **10 user agencies and 21 service providers will be connected with the NATGRID** while in later phases about **950 additional organisations** will be brought on board.
- These data sources include records related to **immigration entry and exit, banking and financial transactions and telecommunications.**

## India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

### ❖ Context

- Recently, the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** between India and the United Arab Emirates **came into force on May 1, 2022.** It was signed between the two nations on **February 18, 2022.**

### ❖ Key Highlights of the Deal

- **Reducing Tariff:**
  - It will allow **90% of the country's exports duty-free access** to the Emirates.
  - The CEPA is likely to benefit about **\$26 billion worth of Indian products** that are currently subjected to **5% import duty by the UAE.**
  - It is set to reduce tariffs for **80 percent of goods.**
  - Indian exports are set to get zero duty access within a further 5 to 10 years, including electronic goods, chemicals and petrochemicals, cement etc
- **Expedite Market Access:** UAE has agreed to allow market access for medicines from Indian companies **within 90 days of approval** in the US and UK.

- **Investments:** It also focuses on expediting work on a dedicated investment zone for UAE companies and joint ventures, focusing on **setting up a food corridor and establishing a dedicated IndiaMart** in the Jebel Ali Free Zone.
- **Safeguard Mechanism:** The deal provides a safeguard mechanism for both countries' businesses against an unnecessary surge in the flow of products.

### ❖ Significance of the Deal

- It is expected to **boost bilateral trade to \$100 billion** in the next five years
- Indian exporters will also get access to the much **larger Arab and African markets.**
- India's **labor intensive and employment generating industries** expected to gain the most from the pact.
- This pact will create **investment opportunities** for Indian investors .

## Face to Face Centres



<p>❖ <b>India-UAE Economic Relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UAE is India's <b>third-biggest trading partner</b> behind the US and China.</li> <li>India was the <b>UAE's largest export destination</b> and second-largest trade partner in 2019.</li> <li><b>Bilateral trade</b> between both nations stood at \$43.3 billion as of 2020-21.</li> <li>India imported \$10.9 billion of <b>crude oil</b> from the UAE in 2019-2020.</li> </ul>
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<p>❖ <b>India's CEPA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apart from negotiations with the UAE, India has long-standing negotiations underway with Canada.</li> <li><b>India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.</b></li> <li>India has been looking to advance a CEPA with Bangladesh.</li> </ul>
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## Nilgiri Tahr

<p>❖ <b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recently, the survival rate of newly born <b>Nilgiri tahrs (up to one year)</b> is found to be the highest at Rajamala in the <b>Eravikulam National Park (ENP)</b>.</li> </ul>
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<p>❖ <b>Key Highlights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per an elaborate census of Nilgiri tahr conducted in Munnar from April 18 to 23, its <b>population is 1,039, including 157 newborns.</b></li> <li>The average survival rate of <b>Nilgiri tahr at Rajamala, is 15% to 18%,</b> while it is <b>4% in isolated habitats in the larger Munnar landscape.</b></li> </ul> <p>❖ <b>Nilgiri Tahr</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>About:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Nilgiri tahr is an ungulate that <b>lives high in the mountains of southern India.</b></li> <li><b>Males are larger</b> than females and of darker color when mature.</li> <li>It's <b>endemic to the Nilgiri Hills</b> and the southern portion of the Western and Eastern Ghats.</li> <li>It is the <b>state animal of Tamil Nadu.</b></li> <li>It is also known as <b>Nilgiri Ibex.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Habitat:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It <b>inhabits the open montane grassland habitat</b> of the South Western Ghats montane rain forests ecoregion.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Distribution:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Nilgiri tahr can be <b>found only in India.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Threats:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Habitat loss mainly due to <b>overgrazing of domestic livestock.</b></li> <li><b>Illegal hunting, and climate change.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Conservation Status:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IUCN Red List- <b>Endangered (EN).</b></li> <li>WPA 1972- <b>Schedule I.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>❖ <b>Eravikulam National Park (ENP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>About:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a 97 km<sup>2</sup> national park <b>located along the Western Ghats</b> in the Idukki and Ernakulam districts of <b>Kerala.</b></li> <li>It is the <b>first national park in Kerala.</b></li> <li><b>Anamudi, 2,695 meters,</b> the <b>highest peak</b> in South India is inside this park.</li> <li>Eravikulam National Park is also the <b>land of "Neelakurinji"</b>, A flower that blooms once every twelve years.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Legal Status:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eravikulam was <b>declared a wildlife Sanctuary in 1975</b> for the protection of the indigenous population of Nilgiri Tahr.</li> <li>In <b>1978, it was declared a National Park</b> considering its biodiversity.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Flora:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three major types of plant communities are found in the Park:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Grasslands.</b></li> <li><b>Shrublands.</b></li> <li><b>Forests.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>The terrain consists of high altitude grasslands interspersed with sholas.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Fauna:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Nilgiri Tahr</b>, half the world population of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr lives in Eravikulam.</li> <li><b>Lion-tailed macaques, gaur, Indian muntjac.</b></li> <li><b>Tiger and Leopard.</b></li> <li><b>Panthers</b> of the Park are spotted in open grasslands while <b>Civet cats and Jungle cats</b> live in the Sholas of the upper plateau.</li> <li><b>Sloth Bear, Nilgiri Langur, Giant etc.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### Face to Face Centres



## News in Between the Lines

### National Research Foundation (NRF)



#### ❖ Context

- NRF could be a game-changer by its intent of **democratization of the knowledge base**.
- The 2021-22 budget offered **₹10,000 crore (\$1.37 billion)** every year starting from 2021, over the next five years, for a new funding agency called the National Research Foundation (NRF).

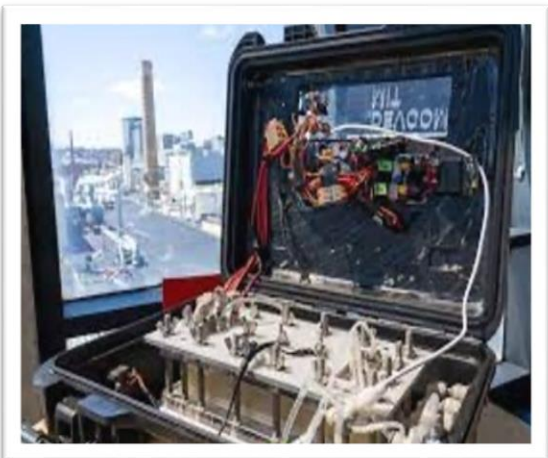
#### ❖ National Research Foundation

- It is a plan-to-be-set-up **autonomous body** envisaged under the **New Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
- It will be functioning as a structure that **will connect the industry, academia and the R&D of the country**.
- It will look after **funding, mentoring, and building 'quality of research'** in India.
- The NRF aims to **fund researchers working across streams in India**.
- In order to **bring non-science disciplines of research in its ambit**, NRF will fund research projects across four major disciplines:
  - Sciences; Technology; Social Sciences; and Arts and Humanities.
- **Significance:** Lack of fund allocation has often been cited as one of the biggest reasons behind the lack of researchers in India and NRF aims to cater to the same.

#### ❖ India's R&D Expenditure

- The funds allocated to research have declined from **0.84 percent of GDP in 2008 to 0.69 per cent in 2014**.
- India's global R&D expenditure remains static at 1-3% of the global total while the **U.S. and China accounted for 25% and 23%, respectively**.
- The World Bank statistics indicate that **India had 255 researchers per million people in 2017**.
  - In contrast to 8,342 per million in Israel, 7,597 in Sweden and 7,498 in South Korea.
- Compared to 111 in the U.S. and 423 in China, **India has only 15 researchers per 1,00,000 population**.

### Portable Desalination Unit



#### ❖ Context

- Recently, **MIT researchers have developed a portable desalination unit**, weighing less than 10 kg, that can **remove particles and salts to generate drinking water**.

#### ❖ Key Highlights

- The **suitcase-sized device requires less power to operate than a cell phone charger**.
- It can also be **driven by a small, portable solar panel**.
- The device automatically generates drinking water that **exceeds World Health Organization (WHO) quality standards**.
- While other portable desalination units require water to pass through filters, **this device utilizes electrical power to remove particles from drinking water**.
- **Significance:**
  - Eliminating the need for replacement filters **greatly reduces the long-term maintenance requirements**.
  - This could enable the unit to be **deployed in remote and severely resource-limited areas**.
  - It could also be **used to aid refugees fleeing natural disasters or by soldiers** carrying out long-term military operations.

### India's Pharma Exports

#### ❖ Context

- Indian pharma exports witnessed a **growth of 103% since 2013-14**, from Rs. 90, 415 Crores in 2013-14 to Rs. 1,83,422 Crores in 2021-22.

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### ❖ Key Highlights

- India ranks **third worldwide for production in terms of volume and 14th by value.**
- The **current market size** of the domestic pharmaceutical industry is **around \$50 billion.**
- The share of pharmaceuticals and drugs in the global exports is **5.92 per cent.**
- **60 percent of the world's vaccines and 20% of generic medicines come from India.**
- **Formulations and biologicals** continue to account for a major share of **73.31 per cent** of the country's total exports, followed by bulk drugs and drug intermediates.
- India's **top five pharma export destinations** are the **US, UK, South Africa, Russia and Nigeria.**

### National Open Access Registry (NOAR)



### ❖ Context

- The platform has gone successfully live.

### ❖ Key Highlights

- NOAR is part of the **Ministry of Power**, Government of India's initiative.
- It has been designed as an **integrated single window electronic platform** accessible to all stakeholders for **electronic processing of short-term open access application.**
- The stakeholders include open access participants, traders, power exchanges, national/regional/state load despatch centres.
- It aims to automate the administration of the short-term open access in the **inter-state transmission system.**
- **National Load Despatch Centre (NLDC)** operated by Power System Operation Corporation Limited (POSOCO) has been designated as the **nodal agency** for implementation and operation of NOAR.
- It will enable:
  - Integration of Renewable Energy (RE) resources into the grid.
  - Seamless market participation by the open access consumer.
  - Easier and faster access to the **short-term electricity market, comprising about 10% of all India demand.**

### Declaration for the Future of the Internet



### ❖ Context

- **India is not among the 60 countries** that have signed a global declaration to keep the Internet open, free, and neutral.

### ❖ Key Highlights

- The declaration is an **agreement to prevent digital authoritarianism.**
- Digital authoritarianism is where some states act to repress freedom of expression, censor independent news sites, interfere with elections, promote disinformation, and deny their citizens other human rights.
- Countries including the US, European Union, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia and Finland are among the signatories.
- **India, China and Russia** are among the large nations that are **not part of this declaration.**

### ❖ Principles of the Declaration

- Commitments to **protecting human rights** and fundamental freedoms of all people.
- Promote a global Internet that advances the **free flow of information, advancing "inclusive and affordable" connectivity.**
- Promote **trust in the global digital ecosystem**, including through protection of **privacy.**
- Protecting and strengthening the **multistakeholder approach to governance** that **keeps the Internet running** for the benefit of all

### Face to Face Centres





❖ **Findings Of Access Now, A Digital Rights Advocacy Group, Report**

- A total of **182 internet crackdowns** were reported globally in **2021**.
- The number of countries that shut down the internet in 2021 has increased to 34 from 29 in 2020. India was one of among 18 countries that blocked mobile internet during protests.

**Climate Smart Coffee**



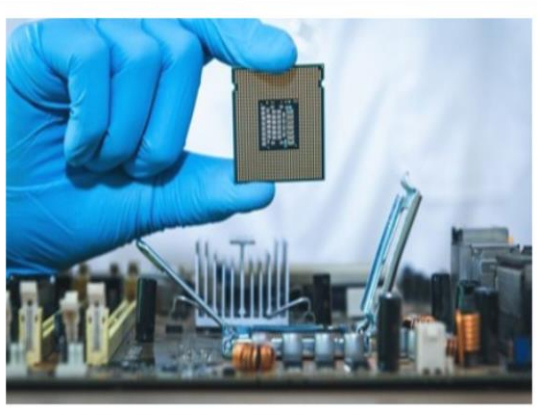
❖ **Context**

- In collaboration with the Netherlands, the Kerala government is looking at implementing the Climate Smart Coffee concept in Wayanad.

❖ **Key Highlights**

- A Netherlands-based study team would carry out a technical feasibility, commercial viability, social and ecological impact on the project before moving forward.
- Climate smart coffee plantations aim to **reduce climate change, increase climate resilience, protect biodiversity, increase farmer's income and create local state-of-the-art employment in agroforestry, food and energy productions**. The state government's aims to set up a **coffee park** and enhance exports from Wayanad.
- A broad coalition of Indian and Dutch companies, universities, and government agencies signed an ambition document in **July 2021**, that outlines the shared ambition to implement the Climate Smart Coffee concept in Kerala and beyond.

**India's First Semiconductor Fab Plant**



❖ **Context**

- **Karnataka** has signed an MoU with **Israel-based ISMC Analog Fab Private Limited** to set up a Semiconductor Fabrication plant in the State with an investment of **₹22,900 crore (\$3 Billion)**.

❖ **Key Highlights**

- This will be **India's first and largest semiconductor fabrication unit under Centre's Semiconductor Mission**.
- Under the mission, the Centre will provide fiscal support to semiconductor fabrication facilities:
  - 28nm or Lower - Up to 50% of the Project Cost.
  - Above 28 nm to 45nm - Up to 40% of the Project Cost.
  - Above 45 nm to 65nm - Up to 30% of the Project Cost.
- The company plans to complete the project in **Mysuru's Kochanahalli Industrial area** over the next 7 years with an employment potential for 1,500 persons. Karnataka is already a pioneer in the IT, BT, and R & D sectors.

**Jute Industry In West Bengal**



❖ **Context**

- **Member of Parliament (MP)** from Barrackpore constituency in West Bengal met the **Union Textile** about issues concerning jute farmers, workers and the overall jute industry.

❖ **About Issues**

- Mills are now procuring raw jute at prices higher than what they are selling them at after processing.
- The government has a fixed **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for raw jute procurement from farmers, which is ₹ 4,750 per quintal for the 2022-23 season.

❖ **What is Jute?**

- Jute is the only crop where earnings begin to trickle in way before the final harvest. The seeds are planted between April and May and harvested between July and August.

❖ **Jute Industry in India**

- The **jute industry in India is 150 years old**.
- India is the largest producer of Jute after Bangladesh and China.
- India is also the world's largest consumer of jute and jute products.
- Jute production in West Bengal accounts for nearly half of the country's total.
- West Bengal, Bihar, and Assam produce nearly 99% of India's total production.

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