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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

1. Caribbean connect

Context: PM Narendra Modi's concluded visit to Guyana, for the first time in 50 years, and in his summit meeting with the leaders of the Caribbean leaders point towards Delhi's focus on a long-neglected region. The image of "west indies" resonates in the Indian mind thanks to the intense cricketing connections, so does both countries diasporic links. Between the early 19th and 20th centuries, colonial Britain moved Indian labour to the Caribbean to farm the sugar plantations. Nearly a million people of Indian origin live in the Caribbean today and in some states like Guyana, Trinidad and Suriname, they form a sizable section of the population and contribute to nation-building.

Key points

- **Overview:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed seven key pillars to strengthen ties between India and 'CARICOM' (Caribbean Community). The PM joined the Caribbean partner countries for the second India-CARICOM Summit in Guyana.
- **7 Key Pillars:** *Capacity Building* - Announced 1,000 information technology scholarships and proposed expanding the technology centre India is establishing in Belize to CARICOM members.
  Agriculture and Food Security - India can share its advancements in agricultural technology, such as deploying drones, and promote millet cultivation to enhance nutrition.
  Renewable Energy and Climate Change - Invited CARICOM nations to join initiatives such as International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Mission Life for Sustainable Lifestyles, and the Global Biofuel Alliance.
  Innovation and Technology - India's technological advancements, such as the "Stack" infrastructure and the Universal Payment Interface (UPI) for digital payments, can be extended to CARICOM countries.
  Cricket and Culture - Proposed using cricket as a tool for women's empowerment by offering 11 scholarships to each CARICOM nation for women's cricket coaching.
  Ocean Economy - India can assist in developing untapped marine resources, enhancing regional connectivity, and supporting security initiatives.
  Medicine and Healthcare - Offers affordable solutions through its Janaushadi scheme.
- **CARICOM:** *Established* - It was formed in 1973 with the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas. It is the oldest surviving integration movement in the developing world. The Treaty was later revised in 2002 to allow for the eventual establishment of a single market and a single economy.
  Members - Caricom is a grouping of 21 countries including 15 member states and six associate members.
  Objectives Of CARICOM - The four pillars of CARICOM are economic integration, foreign policy coordination, human and social development, and security.
- **Importance of CARICOM for India:** *Enhancing Ties with Developing Nations* - For India, building stronger ties with CARICOM aligns with its broader strategic objective of enhancing partnerships with developing countries.
  Additional Global Platform for India - The Caribbean nations, many of which are also Commonwealth members, provide India with additional platforms for cooperation in international forums, particularly on issues of mutual interest such as trade, climate change, and disaster management.
  Common Concerns - India and CARICOM have common concerns about the effects of climate change. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation pose existential threats to many Caribbean nations, making climate action a priority in their foreign policy agendas.
  Indian Diaspora - The Indian diaspora in CARICOM countries plays a pivotal role in maintaining people-to-people ties between the two regions.
- **Conclusion:** As CARICOM nations look beyond their traditional alliances with North America and Europe, India emerges as a valuable partner for their pursuit of economic diversity and sustainable development. India is engaging with CARICOM for enhancing its relationship with developing countries along with becoming the voice of Global South. India acknowledges that countries need collective solutions to their common problems, especially since they remain economically interdependent.

2. New criminal laws need to be given a chance: SC

Context: The Supreme Court on Friday said the new criminal laws need to be given a chance and citizens have a right to live free of crime. The new laws came into effect from July 1. A petitioner, Azad Singh Kataria argued that provisions in the new penal laws, especially the ones dealing with organised crime, removed essential procedural safeguards, which protected citizens against arbitrary arrest and official abuse of rights by the police. Also, he added that those held for pickpocketing could be charged under organised crime under the new provisions. Organised crime needs to be controlled in the interest of the society. People have a right to live without fear and be free of crime.

Key points

- **Overview:** The three new criminal laws Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) are in effect from 1st July 2024, replacing the colonial-era Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and Indian Evidence Act.
- **Key Highlights of the New Criminal Laws:** *Objective* - The new laws aim to replace colonial-era punishments with a justice-focused approach, integrating technological advancements in police investigations and court procedures.
  New Offences - New offences include terrorism, mob lynching, organized crime, and enhanced punishments for crimes against women and children.
  Steps for Smooth Transition - States are free to bring in their own amendments to some provisions of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) may also be amended soon to incorporate a section on sexual crimes against men and transgender persons. First information reports (FIRs) can now be filed online through the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network Systems (CCTNS), allowing e-FIRs and zero FIRs in multiple languages without needing to visit a police station.
- **Related Initiatives Taken by Government:** National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms. AI Portal SUPACE. Modernisation of Police Scheme. Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023. Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023. Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, 2023. National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms.

Q. Mob violence is emerging as a serious law and order problem in India. By giving suitable examples, analyze the causes and consequences of such violence. (প্ৰশ্নঃ ভীৰৰ হিংসা ভাৰতত এক গুৰুতৰ আইন-শৃংখলাৰ সমস্যা হিচাপে উদ্ভৱ হৈছে। উপযুক্ত উদাহৰণ দি, এনে হিংসাৰ কাৰণ আৰু পৰিণামসমূহ বিশ্লেষণ কৰক।)

3. Democratising AI needs a radically different approach

Context: The growing power and influence of Big Tech companies is a concern for policymakers worldwide. To break Big Tech's hold over the Artificial Intelligence (AI) ecosystem and democratise AI development, India, like many other countries, is investing in sovereign cloud infrastructure, creating open data platforms and supporting local start-ups. However, these efforts are unlikely to be enough and may even deepen Big Tech's dominance. As of 2023, Gemini Ultra was the costliest model, costing about $200 million to train.

- **<u>Overview:</u>** The Indian government's commitment to advancing artificial intelligence (AI) technology is evident with its new budgetary allocation for the IndiaAI Mission.
- **<u>IndiaAI Mission:</u>** Objective - The mission aims to establish a robust AI computing infrastructure in India to support the development and testing of AI systems.

  Financial Support - The Union Cabinet approved the Rs 10,372 crore IndiaAI Mission in March to establish a computing capacity of over 10,000 GPUs and develop foundational models with a capacity of more than 100 billion parameters trained on datasets covering major Indian languages for priority sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and governance.

  Current Focus - Initial efforts will involve procuring 300 to 500 GPUs to kickstart the project.

  Importance of GPU Procurement - GPUs are critical for training and building large-scale AI models, essential for advanced AI applications.
- **<u>Some challenges:</u>** *Limited GPU Capacity and Infrastructure* - The mission's objective to build a high-end AI compute capacity of 10,000 GPUs is ambitious. Yet, there are concerns about the timely procurement and deployment of these GPUs to meet the growing demand for AI applications.

  Data Access and Quality - Training AI models on diverse datasets, particularly for Indic languages, is crucial. However, the current datasets are inadequate for developing effective indigenous AI models.

  Limited AI Expertise and High Costs - There is a shortage of skilled AI professionals in India. Efforts are being made to address this but bridging this gap remains a challenge.

  High Implementation Costs - The cost of deploying AI solutions, particularly in sectors like manufacturing, can be prohibitively high.

  Infrastructure Deficiencies - Effective AI deployment requires advanced cloud computing infrastructure. While efforts like AIRAWAT represent progress, India still lacks comprehensive AI and cloud computing facilities necessary for scaling AI applications.
- **<u>Way Forward:</u>** *Incentivize Hardware Manufacturing* - The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for IT hardware, notified in 2021, and for semiconductors offers incentives for increased investment in domestic manufacturing for eligible firms. Expanding this initiative could further stimulate growth in the sector.

  Start-up Support - Provide financial incentives, mentorship, and incubation facilities for AI startups. Establish AI-focused accelerators and incubators like T- Hub (India's largest incubation centre) of Telangana.

  Comprehensive Data Ecosystem - A National Data Platform can be developed as a centralised data repository with standardised formats and quality checks and promote data sharing while ensuring privacy. Invest in rozation and encryption techniques, as well as data labelling and curation to improve data quality.

  Prioritise Ethical AI - Develop comprehensive AI ethics guidelines and regulations, establish independent AI ethics boards, promote transparency and explainability in AI systems, and conduct regular AI audits to identify and mitigate biases.

  Promote Sustainable AI - Support sustainable AI by investing in energy-efficient AI algorithms and hardware, promoting the use of renewable energy sources for data centres, and creating AI-powered solutions for energy optimization and resource management.

Q. With the present state of development, Artificial Intelligence can effectively do which of the following?

1. Bring down electricity consumption in industrial units

2. Create meaningful short stories and songs

3. Disease diagnosis

4. Text-to-Speech Conversion

5. Wireless transmission of electrical energy

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only

(b) 1, 3 and 4 only

(c) 2, 4 and 5 only

(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

GS 3: ECONOMY, ECOLOGY, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, DEFENCE, SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT
4. Chattisgarh's new tiger reserve, at heart of animal's contagious home

Context: Earlier this month, the Chhatisgarh government notified the Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla in the state as India's 56th tiger reserve and will be the fourth tiger reserve in the state. The reserve is expected to help Chhattisgarh improve its tiger population, which has been dwindling in recent years. With an area of 2829 square kilometres, the Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla tiger reserve is the third largest in India. Currently, there are 30 tigers, including three sub-adults and two cubs, in the state. The state's tiger population fell from 46 in 2014 to 17 in 2022, the last official tiger status report by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

Key points

- **Overview:** Creation of the tiger reserve will lead to the development of eco-tourism and generate employment opportunities for villagers living in its core and buffer areas. Currently, the state has three tiger reserves - Indravati (in Bijapur district), Udanti-Sitanadi (Gariaband) and Achanakmar (Mungeli).
- **Guru Ghasidas National Park:** *About* - Named after the Satnami reformist, Guru Ghasidas, is the result of the carving of Chhattisgarh from Madhya Pradesh in the year of 2000. It is in the Koriya district of Chhattisgarh. The park has undulating topography, and it falls under the Tropical climate zone.
  Biodiversity - Flora: The vegetation consists mainly of mixed deciduous forest with teak, sal and bamboo trees. Fauna: Tiger, Leopard, Chital, Nilgai, Chinkara, Jackal, Sambar, Four-horned Antelope etc.
- **Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary:** *About* - It is in the Surajpur district of Chhattisgarh bordering Uttar Pradesh. It is named after Tamor hill and Pingla Nalla. Tamor hill and Pingla Nalla are the old and prominent features of the sanctuary area.
  Biodiversity - Flora: Mixed deciduous forests dominate the sanctuary. Sal and bamboo forests are seen all through. Fauna: Tigers, Elephants, leopards, bears, sambar deer, blue bulls, chital, bison and many such animals are found here.

5. VC funding in China drops 26.8 pc in Jan-Oct as India sees surge

Context: As India sees a surge in venture capital (VC) funding, China saw a steep 26.8 per cent decline in VC funding (by value) in the January-October period this year. A total of 2,116 venture capital (VC) funding deals worth $28.2 billion were announced in China during January-October which represents a year-on-year (YoY) decline of 22.5 per cent in VC deal volume, whereas the total disclosed funding value fell by 26.8 per cent. An analysis revealed that from January to October 2023, China witnessed the announcement of a total of 2,731 VC deals with disclosed funding value of $38.5 billion. The number of VC deals valued more than or equal to $100 million announced in China decreased from 70 during January-October 2023 to 50 during January-October 2024.

Key points

- **Overview:** The Union Cabinet's approval of the Rs 1,000 crore fund marks a decisive step towards positioning India as a leader in the global space economy.
- **Venture capital (VC):** Is a type of private equity financing that provides funds to startups and emerging businesses in exchange for equity. VC is a key source of funding for new ventures, and investors are called venture capitalists.
- **Features of Venture Capital:** *Finance New Ventures* - Venture capital is a convenient source of raising finance for startup and early-stage businesses.
  High Risk - These types of investments are very risky in nature. Venture capital investments involve putting funds by individuals into new ventures who are in their early stage and carry a lot of uncertainty of succeeding in their objectives. The return of investments is totally dependent upon the growth rate of companies.
  Long-Term Investments - Venture capital investments are illiquid in nature. These types of investment cannot be encashed by investors in the short term. Venture capital investments are long term investments which can be either in the form of loan or convertible securities.
  Equity Participation - It involves financing of ventures through equity participation. Venture capitalists make investments in startups by buying their equity capital. These investors aim at making a large amount of capital gain by selling all the shares held by them once they become profitable.
  Participation In Management - Venture capitalists by doing investment in equity capital of a company take part in management of the business. They do not merely provide finance to startup companies, but also provide management expertise.
- **Economic impact:** *Direct jobs* - Engineering, data analytics, software development, and space manufacturing sectors.
  Indirect jobs - Component manufacturing, logistics, supply chain management, and professional services.
  Bridging the Digital Divide - Satellite internet ensures access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities in underserved areas. Promotes social inclusion by enabling remote regions to participate in the digital economy.
- **Conclusion:** VC investors in India are focused on more traditional sectors for investment, including fintech, electric vehicles, and consumer technologies. Strong demographics, a robust economy and a vibrant capital market are the real drivers behind this optimism.