

## Current Affairs - 01 October 2024

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### HAVING PRIVATE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA'S NUCLEAR ENERGY

#### Context

- The Union Budget for FY 2024-25 included a proposal for partnerships with the private sector to research and develop Bharat Small Reactors (BSR), Bharat Small Modular Reactors (BSMR), and other nuclear energy technologies.
- This move is aligned with India's broader goal of generating 500 Gigawatts of non-fossil fuel energy by 2030, as pledged at the COP26 Summit in 2021.
- However, **this ambitious plan faces numerous legal, regulatory, and financial hurdles** that must be addressed for the successful involvement of private entities in the nuclear sector.

#### Existing Legal Framework Governing the Nuclear Sector and SC's Judgement on Private Sector Participation

- **Existing Legal Framework**
  - India's nuclear energy sector operates under a stringent regulatory framework, primarily governed by the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 (AEA).
  - The AEA grants exclusive control over nuclear energy activities to the central government, which executes these through designated authorities or companies, such as the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL).
  - This centralised control has historically limited private sector involvement to specific roles, primarily in engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) services, while excluding private entities from core activities like research and development (R&D).

#### SC's Decision on Private Sector Participation

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- In a significant legal development, the **Supreme Court of India** recently upheld the provisions of the AEA in the case **Sandeep T.S. vs Union of India** (September 2024).
- The judgement dismissed a petition challenging the law's restrictions on **private sector participation** in nuclear power licensing.
- The **Court emphasised the importance of stringent safeguards** due to the potential risks associated with atomic energy.
- This **ruling reinforces the central government's dominance over nuclear energy activities**, which complicates efforts to introduce private players in a meaningful capacity.
- **Need for Private Sector Participation: Capital Investment**
  - The **nuclear sector is highly capital-intensive**, and the scale of investment required for further expansion, especially with advanced technologies like BSR and BSMR, is enormous.
  - The **NITI Aayog has estimated that nearly \$26 billion of private investment will be needed** to develop the nuclear sector to meet India's energy goals.
  - **Given the financial burden on the government, involving private firms in more substantial roles could provide the necessary capital**, technical expertise, and innovation.

### Conclusion

- **India's nuclear energy ambitions** are both **admirable and challenging**.
  - The **introduction of private sector participation, especially in the context of BSRs and BSMRs, could provide the financial and technological boost** necessary to achieve the country's decarbonization goals.
  - However, **this shift must be accompanied by comprehensive legislative and regulatory reforms**, particularly in areas such as liability, safety, and transparency.
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### WHAT ARE WHITE GOODS?



The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recently asked white goods manufacturers to participate in large numbers to avail fiscal benefits under the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the sector.

- White goods traditionally refer to **large home appliances** such as stoves, refrigerators, freezers and washing machines.
  - **Originally**, such goods **were only available in white**, hence the designation.
  - Today, the same goods are offered in an array of colors but are still collectively referred to as white goods.
  - White goods are also used in a different connotation within other categories.
  - **In fabrics**, white goods can refer to **home products made from linen, cotton**, or other **white base materials**. This includes curtains, towels, and sheets.
  - White goods can **also refer to colorless spirits**.
  - In the alcoholic beverage industry, white goods are often used as a collective designation for colorless spirits such as **vodka and gin**.
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### EXERCISE KAZIND



The 8th edition of Exercise KAZIND is scheduled to be conducted from 30th September to 13th October 2024 at Surya Foreign Training Node, Auli, Uttarakhand.

- It is a joint **military Exercise** held every year between **India and Kazakhstan**.
  - The Indian Armed Forces, comprising 120 personnel, are being represented by a battalion of the **KUMAON Regiment of Indian Army**, along with other arms and services, as well as personnel from the **Indian Air Force**.
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- The Kazakhstan contingent will be represented mainly by personnel from Land Forces and Air Borne Assault Troopers.
- **Aim:** To enhance the joint military capability of both sides to undertake **counter-terrorism operations** in a sub-conventional scenario under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.
- It will focus on operations in the **semi-urban and mountainous terrain**. Objectives to be achieved from the Joint Exercise are a high degree of physical fitness, rehearsing and refining drills for operations at the tactical level and sharing of best practices.
- Tactical drills to be rehearsed during the Joint Exercise include joint response to terrorist action, establishment of a Joint Command Post, establishment of an Intelligence and Surveillance Centre
- Joint Exercise KAZIND-2024 will enable both sides to share best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures of conducting joint operations.
- It will facilitate the development of inter-operability, bonhomie and camaraderie between the two armies. The Joint Exercise will also enhance defence cooperation, further augmenting bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

### DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARD



Legendary actor Mr. Mithun Chakraborty will be honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award for the year 2022.

- It is India's highest award in the **field of cinema**.
- It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals, an organisation set up by the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
- The recipient is honoured for their "**outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema**".
- The award prize consists of a golden lotus, a **cash prize of ₹10 lakh and a shawl**.



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- The award was introduced by the Government of India to commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke's contribution to Indian cinema, who is popularly known as and often regarded as **"the father of Indian cinema"**.
- It was first presented in 1969. The first recipient of the award was actress **Devika Rani**, "the first lady of Indian cinema."

### Who was Dhundiraj Govind 'Dadasaheb' Phalke?

- He was born in 1870 at Trimbak in Maharashtra.
  - He studied engineering and sculpture and developed an interest in motion pictures after watching the 1906 **silent film The Life of Christ**.
  - Before venturing into films, Phalke worked as a photographer, owned a printing press, and had even worked with the **famed painter Raja Ravi Varma**.
  - In 1913, Phalke wrote, produced, and directed India's first feature film, **the silent Raja Harishchandra**. A commercial success, it propelled Phalke to make 95 more films and 26 short films in the next 19 years.
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### OVERSEAS CITIZEN OF INDIA



- The **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)** scheme was introduced in **August 2005** which provides for registration of **all Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)** who were citizens of India on January 26, 1950, or thereafter, or were eligible to become citizens of India on the said date.

### Who cannot be an OCI?

- An applicant is **not eligible** to get an OCI card if his/her parents or grandparents have ever been a **citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh**.
- **Foreign military personnel** either in service or retired are also not entitled to grant of OCI.



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- However, the spouse of foreign origin of a citizen of India or spouse of foreign origin of an OCI, whose marriage has been registered and subsisted for **not less than two years**, can apply for an OCI card.

### Advantages of OCI cardholders:

- An OCI card holder — essentially a foreign passport holder — gets a multiple entry, **multi-purpose life-long visa for visiting India**, and is exempt from registration with local police authority for any length of stay in the country.
- **The OCI cardholder is**
  - **Not entitled to vote**; to be a member of a Legislative Assembly or of a Legislative Council or of Parliament; to hold Indian constitutional posts such as that of the President, Vice President, Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court.
  - **He or she cannot normally hold employment in the government.**

### Latest rules regarding OCIs

- On March 4, 2021, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a gazette notification amending the rules regarding OCI card holders.
  - These rules required OCI card holders to **seek permission or a permit to visit protected areas in India**.
  - The same restrictions apply to foreign nationals visiting Jammu & Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh.
  - They need to secure a **special permit** to undertake “**any research**”, to undertake any “missionary” or “Tablighi” or “**journalistic activities**” or to visit any area in India notified as “protected”, “restricted” or “prohibited”.
  - They are at par with “foreign nationals” in respect of “all other economic, financial and educational fields” for the purposes of the **Foreign Exchange Management Act, 2003** although past circulars by the Reserve Bank of India under FEMA continued to hold ground.
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### TELECOM MINISTRY TO DISCONNECT 2.17 CRORE MOBILE CONNECTIONS AMID 'CYBER SLAVERY' CONCERNS

#### Why in news?

The Union Ministry of Telecommunications has informed a high-level inter-ministerial panel that it will disconnect 2.17 crore mobile connections obtained through forged documents or used in cybercrime, and block 2.26 lakh mobile handsets.

#### Cyber Slavery

- Cyber scams and fraud are increasingly common in India, often involving spam calls where scammers pose as government officials to steal sensitive information like Aadhaar and ATM details.
- To avoid detection, these scammers now operate from foreign countries but use Indian mobile numbers to make their calls seem legitimate.
- This shift has given rise to a dangerous trend called '**cyber slavery**,' where individuals are lured abroad under false job promises and forced to participate in cybercrime operations.
- **About**
  - Cyber slavery refers to a modern form of exploitation where individuals are lured, often through deceptive job offers, and forced to engage in cybercrimes.
  - Victims are usually promised lucrative jobs, such as data entry or tech roles, in foreign countries, particularly in Southeast Asia.
  - Upon arrival, their passports and identification documents are confiscated, trapping them in a form of digital servitude.
  - These individuals are coerced into performing illegal online activities, such as cyber fraud, phishing, and scamming.
  - They may be forced to create fake social media profiles or lure people into fraudulent investment schemes, like fake cryptocurrency platforms.

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- **Cause of worry**
    - Cyber slavery is part of a broader pattern of **human trafficking** and is increasingly prevalent due to the rise of **digital crimes**.
    - It highlights the intersection of human rights violations and online criminal networks, requiring international cooperation to combat.
    - A report revealed that over 5,000 Indians were believed to be ensnared in Cambodia, allegedly held against their will and compelled to commit cyber fraud.
  - **Steps taken by Indian government**
    - The Union Ministry of Telecommunications has announced to:
      - disconnect approximately 2.17 crore mobile connections obtained through forged documents or used in cybercrime and
      - block 2.26 lakh mobile handsets.
    - DoT has also directed telecom companies to block all incoming international spoofed calls that display Indian mobile numbers.
    - Additionally, the DoT is working to identify roaming phone numbers involved in scams in Southeast Asia.
    - Telecom service providers (TSPs) are required to submit weekly data on Indian mobile numbers utilizing roaming services in countries like Hong Kong, Cambodia, Laos, Philippines, and Myanmar.
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### KEY FACTS ABOUT KOSI RIVER



- It is a **transboundary river** which flows through **China, Nepal and India**.
- It is a prominent **tributary of the Ganges**.



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### Course:

- **Origin:** The river Kosi is formed by the **confluence of three streams**, namely the Sun Kosi, the Arun Kosi, and the Tamur Kosi, all of which have their origin in the **Himalayan region of Nepal and Tibet**.
  - About 30 miles (48 km) north of the Indian-Nepalese frontier, the Kosi is joined by several major tributaries and breaks southward through the **Siwalik Hills** at the narrow **Chatra Gorge**.
  - The river then emerges on the **great plain of northern India** in Bihar state on its way to the Ganges River, which it enters south of Purnea after a course of about 450 miles (724 km).
  - The Kosi drains an area of 74,500 sq.km, of which only 11,070 sq.km lie within Indian Territory.
  - The **Kosi River valley is bounded by steep margins that disconnect it from the Yarlung Zangbo River** to the north, the **Mahananda River** to the east, the **Gandaki** to the west, and the **Ganga** to the south.
  - Because of its great outflushing of debris, the Kosi has **no permanent channel** in its course **through the great plain of northern India**.
  - It is well known for its **tendency to change course** generally in a westward direction. During the last 200 years, the river has shifted westwards for a distance of about 112 km and has laid waste large tracks of agricultural land.
  - Kosi is known as the "**sorrow of Bihar**", as it has caused widespread human suffering in the past due to flooding and very frequent course changes when it flows from Nepal to Bihar.
  - **Tributaries:** It has seven major tributaries: **Sun Koshi, Tama Koshi or Tamba Koshi, Dudh Koshi, Indravati, Likhu, Arun, and Tamore or Tamar**.
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