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WHAT IS INDIA SEMICONDUCTOR MISSION (ISM)?

The Union Cabinet recently gave the green light to Kaynes Semicon Pvt Ltd to establish a new semiconductor unit in Sanand, Gujarat, which is the fifth semiconductor unit to be approved under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM).



- ISM is a specialized and independent Business Division within the **Digital India Corporation**.
- It aims to build a **vibrant semiconductor and display ecosystem** to enable India's emergence as a global hub for electronics manufacturing and design.
- ISM has all the administrative and financial powers and is tasked with the responsibility of catalysing the **India Semiconductor ecosystem in manufacturing, packaging, and design**.
- ISM has an advisory board consisting of some of the leading global experts in the field of semiconductors.
- ISM has been working as a nodal agency for the schemes approved under the Semicon India Programme.

Key Facts about the Semicon India Programme:

- The ISM was launched in 2021 with a total financial outlay of Rs. 76,000 crores under the aegis of the **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), Government of India**.
- It is part of the comprehensive program for the development of sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystems in the country.
- The programme aims to **provide financial support to companies** investing in semiconductors, display manufacturing and design ecosystem.
- It also promotes and facilitates Indigenous **Intellectual Property (IP)** generation and encourages, enables, and incentivizes the **Transfer of Technologies (ToT)**.
- The following **four schemes** have been introduced under the aforesaid programme:



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- Scheme for **setting up of Semiconductor Fabs** in India.
- Scheme for **setting up of Display Fabs** in India.
- Scheme for **setting up of Compound Semiconductors/Silicon Photonics/Sensors Fab and Semiconductor Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP)/OSAT facilities** in India.
- **Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme.**

LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA



The President of India recently sanctioned the formation of the 23rd Law Commission for a three-year term.

Law Commission of India is a non-statutory body and is constituted by a notification of the Government of India, Ministry of Law & Justice.

- It is constituted with definite **terms of reference to carry out research in the field of law**, and the Commission makes recommendations to the Government (in the form of Reports) as per its terms of reference.
- It functions to the **Ministry of Law and Justice** as an advisory body.

History:

- The first pre-independence law commission was established in **1834** by the British Government in India.
- It was established by the **Charter Act of 1833** and was chaired by **Lord Macaulay**.
- The **first Law Commission of independent India** was established in **1955** under the chairmanship of the former Attorney General for India, **C. Setalvad**.
- This Commission was created for a **period of three years**, and this practice has persisted ever since then, resulting in the reconstitution of Law Commissions every three years via executive orders.

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How is the Law Commission Created?

- A law commission is created when the **Union government** passes a **resolution** for the formation a new commission after the expiry of the last one.
- After the resolution is passed, and the **President gives assent to it**, the government has the liberty to choose the chairperson for the new commission.

Functioning:

- The Commission works on projects based on the references received from the Central Government and/or from the **Supreme Court and High Courts**.
- At times, keeping in view the importance of the subject matter, the Commission initiates studies on specific subjects, **suo moto**.
- The Commission is aided in its work on the legal side by the law officers of the Indian Legal Service and on the administrative side by the officers of the Central Secretariat Service.
- The Commission always welcomes suggestions from any person, institution, or organization on the issues under consideration of the Commission.

Reports:

- The **Reports of the Law Commission** are laid in Parliament from time to time by the **Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice**, and forwarded to the concerned administrative Departments/Ministries for implementation.
 - They are acted upon by concerned Departments/Ministries depending on the Government's decision.
 - Invariably, the reports are cited in Courts, Parliamentary Standing Committees, and academic and public discourses.
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DIGITAL AGRICULTURE MISSION

Digital Agriculture Mission is conceived as an umbrella scheme to support digital agriculture



initiatives, such as creating **Digital Public Infrastructure**, implementing the Digital General Crop Estimation Survey (DGCEs), and taking up other IT initiatives by the Central Government, State Governments, and Academic and

Research Institutions.

- Three major components of DPI are envisaged under the Digital Agriculture Mission: **AgriStack, Krishi Decision Support System (DSS) and Soil Profile Maps**.
- Each of these DPI components will provide solutions that will allow farmers to access and avail of various services.
- **AgriStack:** The farmer-centric DPI AgriStack consists of three foundational agri-sector registries or databases: **Farmers' Registry, Geo-referenced Village Maps and Crop Sown Registry**, all of which will be **created and maintained by state/ UT governments**.
 - **Farmers' Registry:** It will be given a digital identity ('Farmer ID') similar to Aadhaar, which will be **linked dynamically to records of land**, ownership of livestock, crops sown, demographic details, family details, schemes and benefits availed, etc.
 - Pilot projects for the creation of Farmer IDs have been carried out in six districts — Farrukhabad (Uttar Pradesh), Gandhinagar (Gujarat), Beed (Maharashtra), Yamuna Nagar (Haryana), Fatehgarh Sahib (Punjab), and Virudhunagar (Tamil Nadu).
 - **Crop Sown Registry:** It will provide details of crops planted by farmers. The information will be recorded through Digital Crop Surveys — mobile-based ground surveys — in each crop season.
 - **Geo-referenced Village Maps:** It will link geographic information on land records with their physical locations.



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- **Krishi DSS:** It will create a **comprehensive geospatial system** to unify remote sensing-based information on crops, soil, weather and water resources, etc.
 - This information will support crop map generation for identifying crop sown patterns, droughts/flood monitoring and technology/model-based yield assessment for settling crop insurance claims by farmers.
 - **Soil Profile Maps:** Under the Mission, detailed Soil Profile Maps (on a 1:10,000 scale) of about 142 million hectares of agricultural land are envisaged to be prepared. A detailed soil profile inventory of about 29 million ha has already been completed.
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RBI TO LAUNCH THE UNIFIED LENDING INTERFACE (ULI)

Unified Lending Interface (ULI), the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) technology platform to enable frictionless credit, will be launched nationwide soon.

Similar to Unified Payment Interface (UPI), which has revolutionised the retail payment system in the country, ULI will transform the lending landscape.

What is Unified Lending Interface (ULI)?

- **About:** The ULI platform will facilitate a seamless and consent-based flow of digital information, including land records of various states, from multiple data service providers to lenders.
- **Objectives:**
 - **It will cut down the time** taken for credit appraisal, especially for smaller and rural borrowers.
 - **It is aimed to bring about efficiency** in the lending process in terms of reduction of costs, quicker disbursement, and scalability.
- **Working:**
 - The ULI architecture has common and standardised **APIs** (Application Programming Interface), designed for a 'plug and play' approach to ensure digital access to information from diverse sources.

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- **For instance**, taking the example of a dairy farmer seeking a loan. The lender can find data from the milk cooperative to know about -
 - Cash flows;
 - Land ownership status from land records of States; and
 - Insights into his financial condition through farming patterns.
 - Thus, with the help of ULI the lenders can **immediately know the income of the loan applicant and credit eligibility**.
 - **Thus, decision making would be automated** and loans could be sanctioned and disbursed within minutes.
 - **Significance:**
 - **The platform will reduce the complexity** of multiple technical integrations by digitising access to customer's financial and non-financial data that otherwise resided in disparate silos.
 - **It is expected to cater to large unmet demand** for credit across various sectors, particularly for agricultural and MSME borrowers.
 - **Tenant farmers** who often find it difficult to access agricultural credit can also avail loans by establishing their identity not through his land holding but through the end use of funds being disbursed.
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THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL IS KNOTTY

- **The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill**, introduced by the central government on August 1, 2024, in the Lok Sabha.
- However, **while it aims to address the challenges** posed by climate-induced disasters, **the Bill appears to worsen several issues** already present in the Disaster Management Act of 2005.
- Therefore, **there is a need to critically analyse the proposed amendments** and their implications for disaster management in India, particularly in the context of an escalating climate crisis.

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Concerns Surrounding the Proposed Amendment Bill

- **Highly Centralised Structure**
 - The proposed Bill seems to intensify the centralisation by granting statutory status to pre-existing bodies such as the National Crisis Management Committee and a High-Level Committee.
- **Questions on Response Mechanisms**
 - It is matter of concern especially in a country as diverse as India, where regional variations in disaster patterns require localised responses.
 - The top-down approach may not adequately account for the unique needs of different states, leading to inefficiencies and potentially worsening the outcomes of disasters.

Critical Gap: The Restricted Definition of 'Disaster'

- The Disaster Management Act, 2005, and the proposed Bill both fall short in their definition of what constitutes a disaster.
- The restricted list of notified disasters eligible for assistance under the NDRF and SDRF includes cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, hailstorms, landslides, and similar events.
- However, this definition does not account for the emerging reality of climate-induced disasters, particularly heatwaves, which have become increasingly frequent and severe in India.

Conclusion

- The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024, while well-intentioned, falls short of addressing the critical challenges posed by climate change and the evolving nature of disasters in India.
 - To truly enhance disaster management in India, there is a need to revisit the existing framework, with a focus on decentralisation, financial autonomy, and a more inclusive definition of disasters that reflects the realities of climate change.
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THANJAVUR VEENA



Thanjavur Veena is the first musical instrument in the country to get the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

- The **Thanjavur veena** is an **Indian instrument** and has an interesting construction.
- They are of two types viz. the "**Ekantha Veena**" and "**Sada Veena**".
- "Ekantha Veena" is carved from a single block of wood, while "Sada Veena" has joints and is carved in three sections namely resonator, neck and head.
- The veena has 24 fixed frets (Mettu) so that all ragas can be played.
- It is made of fresh bark **from a Jack Fruit Tree**. The tree bark is forced to undergo several rounds of testing before being finalized for usage.
- The work involves making the **resonator** (kudam), **the neck** (dandi) and a tuning box — the three integral parts of a veena.
- It takes up to 15-20 days, to get the finished product. The wood gets cut, intricately carved, shaped, and assembled.

Types

- There are four types of veena. While **Rudra veena** and **Vichitra veena** are popular in Hindustani classical music, **Saraswati veena** and **Chitra veena** are used in Carnatic classical music.
 - Thanjavur is the only place where Saraswati veena is made. Saraswathi, the goddess of learning and arts, is portrayed with a veena.
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COCOA TREE



Scientists and entrepreneurs are working on ways to make more cocoa that stretch well beyond the tropics.



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About Cocoa Tree:

- It is an important **plantation crop** grown for chocolates around the world. It is known as a crop of humid tropics and is native to the Amazon basin of South America.
 - Cocoa trees grow **about 20 degrees north and south of the equator** in regions with warm weather and abundant rain, including West Africa and South America.
 - **Required climatic conditions:**
 - It can be grown up to 300 m above mean sea level.
 - **Rainfall:** It requires an annual rainfall of **1500-2000 mm**.
 - **Temperature:** The temperature range of **15°-39°C** with optimum of 25°C is considered ideal.
 - **Soil:** It requires deep and well-drained soils. The majority of the area under Cocoa cultivation is on **clay loam and sandy loam soil**.
 - It grows well in the pH range of 6.5 to 7.0.
 - **Shade requirement:** It evolved as an under-storey crop in the Amazonian forests. Thus commercial cultivation of cocoa can be taken up in plantations where 50 per cent of light is ideally available.
 - **Major producing regions in the world:** About 70 per cent of the world's cocoa beans come from four West African countries: **Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon**.
 - In India, it is mainly cultivated in **Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu** mainly as intercrop with Arecanut and Coconut.
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