

FCRA (FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION REGULATION ACT)

Recently, the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), a leading Indian public policy think tank, had its FCRA license canceled, culminating in a series of government actions since IT raids in September 2022.



About FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act):

- **Purpose:** FCRA stands for **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act**, which is a law enacted by the Parliament of India to regulate the acceptance and utilization of foreign contributions by individuals, associations, and companies.
- **Prohibition:** The Act prohibits the receipt of foreign contributions "**for any activities detrimental to the national interest**".
- **Registration:** Organizations require the government's permission to receive funding from abroad.
- **Implementation:** The Act is implemented in convergence with various Union government Ministries and agencies, State authorities, and a network of formal and informal institutions and individuals.

Amendments: The Act has been amended over time, with the latest amendment being the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020.

Penalties: The Act provides for penalties for making false statements, delivering false accounts, and for contravention of any provision of the Act.

SULTANPUR NATIONAL PARK (HARYANA)



The Union government is promoting nature tourism at 16 Ramsar sites, including Chilika Lake and Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary, to support conservation and local economies.

- Formerly known as **Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary**, it spans **1.42 sq km** consisting primarily of **marshy lakes and floodplains**.
- **Location:** The Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary is located in the Gurgaon district of Haryana, **46 km** from Delhi.
- **Ramsar Site:** It was recognized as a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance in **2021**.
- **Biodiversity:** The vegetation is characterized by tropical and dry deciduous types such as **grasses, dhok, khair, tendu, jamun, neem, berberis, and species of Acacia**.
 - Over **320 bird species** have been recorded at Sultanpur, making it a vital wintering ground. Some iconic species found here are the **Common Hoopoe, Purple Sunbird, Black Francolin, Little Cormorant, Indian Cormorant, Siberian Crane, and Greater Flamingo**.
 - While large wild mammals are absent, the park's terrestrial fauna is represented by animals like the **nilgai**.
 - Sultanpur National Park is an ecologically significant protected wetland that provides habitat to an array of resident and migratory birds.
- **Conservation efforts:** The Haryana government has carried out some development works at the sanctuary like the construction of mounds, widening of paths, and digging four tube wells. Efforts are being made to improve vegetation in the area by planting more trees.
- **Alternative livelihood program:** As part of the Union government's **Amrit Dharohar initiative**, to promote tourism at Ramsar sites, the sanctuary has been included in a pilot project for skill development of facilitators, tourism service providers, and stakeholders.

GANGETIC DOLPHIN



Recently, A Gangetic dolphin was rescued in Odisha. It may be an indicator of more freshwater dolphins in the river.

About Gangetic Dolphin:

- **Common Name:** Susu
- **Scientific Name:** Platanista gangetica.
- **Population:** Less than 1800 (1200 to 1800).
- **Habitat:** Ganges river dolphins once lived in the **Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu** River systems of **Nepal, India, and Bangladesh.**
- **Some characteristics:**
 - The Ganges River dolphin can **only live in freshwater.**
 - It is essentially blind and they **hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds.**
 - It has a sturdy, yet flexible, body with large flippers and a **low triangular dorsal fin.**
 - Calves are chocolate brown at birth and then have grey-brown smooth, **hairless skin as adults.**
 - **Females are larger than males** and give **birth once every two to three years to only one calf.**
- **Conservation status:**
 - IUCN: **Endangered**
 - Wildlife (Protection) Act: **Schedule-I**
 - CITES: **Appendix I**

Government's conservation efforts:

- In 2009, Gangetic dolphins were **declared the national aquatic animal of India.**
- The Prime Minister announced 'Project Gangetic Dolphin' on **August 15, 2023**, for the conservation of the Gangetic dolphins.



NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM)

Recently, the 19th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit was held in Kampala, the capital of Uganda on 19 and 20 January.

About NAM Summit:

- The 19th NAM Summit was held under **Uganda's leadership in Kampala**. Uganda has taken over as chair from Azerbaijan, to run until 2027.
- **Theme:** 'Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence.'
- **Key discussions at the summit:**
 - Israel-Hamas war
 - India's "Vishwaa Mitra" initiative
 - A call for a multipolar world

About Non-Aligned Movement:

- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is **an alliance of developing nations** that refuses to identify with any major superpower.
- It was **established in 1961** at the height of the Cold War. It started with the **Bandung Conference held in Indonesia in 1955**.
- **Current members:**
 - **120 countries:** 53 from Africa, 39 from Asia, 26 from Latin America and the Caribbean, and two from Europe.
 - It also includes the non-UN member state of Palestine, 17 other observer countries, and 10 observer organizations.
 - India is one of the founding members.
- After the United Nations, NAM is the **second-largest grouping of nations**.
- NAM **does not have a permanent secretariat** or a formal founding charter, act, or treaty
- The summit usually **takes place every three years**.

[NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION \(NSDC\)](#)

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)

- It is a not-for-profit public limited company that was established in July 2008.

- The Ministry of Finance established NSDC as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.
 - The Government of India, through the MSDE (Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship), holds 49% of the NSDC's share capital, while the private sector holds the remaining 51%.
- Currently, the NSDC is under the MSDE.
- **Goal**
 - To improve the skills of people in India. It does this by encouraging private sector initiatives in skill development programs and providing funding.
 - To promote skill development by catalyzing the creation of large, quality, and for-profit vocational institutions.

News Summary: Labour rules for workers abroad

- The Uttar Pradesh and Haryana governments have started the process of recruiting about 10,000 workers to go to Israel, primarily for construction activities.
- There are 2,000 openings for plastering workers, 2,000 for ceramic tile workers, and 3,000 each for iron bending and frame workers with monthly salaries of about ₹1.37 lakh (6,100 Israeli shekels).

International practices

- The international practices for the protection of migrant workers are governed by two conventions of the International Labour Organisation:
 - the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949
 - and Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975.
- While **India has not ratified both conventions**, Israel ratified the 1949 convention in 1953.

INDIA-MYANMAR BORDER TO BE FENCED SOON

Why in the news?

- Union Home Minister announced at the 60th Raising Day ceremony of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), in Tezpur that the Centre has decided to fence the entire length of the currently porous India-Myanmar.
 - India and Myanmar share a 1,643-km border along the Northeastern states of Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh, **a porous border of which only 10 km is fenced in Manipur.**
- He also said that the Centre will consider ending its free movement regime (FMR) agreement with Myanmar.

Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

- **About**
 - Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) that come under the MHA's administrative control.
 - The other forces are:
 - Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF),
 - Border Security Force (BSF),
 - Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP),
 - Central Industrial Security Force (CISF),
 - Assam Rifles (AR), and
 - National Security Guard (NSG)
 - SSB is a border guarding force of India that is deployed along its borders with Nepal and Bhutan.
- **Background**
 - The SSB was established in 1963 as the Special Services Bureau, in the aftermath of the Chinese aggression in 1962.
 - It came under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs in January 2001.
 - In June 2001, the SSB was declared a Lead Intelligence Agency for Indo-Nepal and assigned to the Indo-Nepal border.
 - Later, SSB was also assigned Indo the Bhutan border (March 2004).

- **Main tasks**
 - Guarding India's international borders with Nepal and Bhutan
 - Preventing cross-border crime and smuggling
 - Dealing with other anti-national activities within the country and its territories

Free Movement Regime (FMR)

- **About**
 - FMR is a pact between India and Myanmar that allows tribes living along the border on either side to **travel up to 16 km inside the other country without a visa.**
 - The FMR was implemented in 2018 as part of the government's Act East policy at a time when diplomatic relations between India and Myanmar were on the upswing.
 - In fact, the FMR was to be put in place in 2017 itself but was deferred due to the Rohingya refugee crisis that erupted that August.

PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA – URBAN (PMAY-URBAN) SCHEME

The Prime Minister recently broke down in tears while addressing a crowd during an event to dedicate homes constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban Scheme.



About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U) Scheme:

- PMAY-U, been **implemented since June 2015**, is one of the major **flagship programs** being implemented by the Government of India under the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.

Objective: To provide all-weather pucca houses to all eligible beneficiaries in the urban areas of the country by the year 2022, through States/UTs/Central Nodal Agencies.

- The scheme covers the entire urban area of the country, i.e., all statutory towns as per Census 2011 and towns notified subsequently, including Notified Planning/ Development Areas.
- The scheme is being implemented through four verticals:
 - Beneficiary Led Construction/ Enhancement (BLC)
 - Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP)
 - In-situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR)
 - Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS).
- In August 2022, the Union Cabinet approved the continuation of PMAY-U up to 31st December 2024, with all verticals except CLSS, for the completion of already sanctioned houses till 31st March 2022.
- **Funding:** The credit-linked subsidy component will be implemented as a Central Sector Scheme while the other three components will be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).
- All houses under PMAY-U have basic amenities like toilets, water supply, electricity, and a kitchen.
- The Mission promotes women's empowerment by providing ownership of houses in the name of female members or a joint name.
- Preference has also been given to differently-abled persons, senior citizens, SCs, STs, OBCs, Minorities, single women, transgender, and other weaker & and vulnerable sections of the society.

ATAL BHUJAL YOJNA



Recently, the meeting for review of the progress of Atal Bhujal Yojna was held at Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

About Atal Bhujal Yojna:

- Atal Bhujal Yojana is a central sector scheme which was launched in 2019.
- **Duration:** Period of 5 years (2020-21 to 2024-25), Increased by 2 years in May 2023.

- **Objective:** The major objective of the Scheme is to improve the **management of groundwater resources in select water-stressed areas** in identified states.
- The scheme is being taken up in **8220 water-stressed Gram Panchayats** of seven states: Haryana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.
- **Scheme components:** It has two major components:
 - **Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building Component** for strengthening institutional arrangements for sustainable groundwater management in the States including improving monitoring networks, capacity building, strengthening of Water User Associations, etc.
 - **Incentive Component for incentivizing the States for achievements in improved groundwater management practices** namely, data dissemination, preparation of water security plans, implementation of management interventions through convergence of ongoing schemes, adopting demand side management practices, etc.
 - The scheme is being funded by the **Government of India and the World Bank on a 50:50 basis.**
 - **Total cost of the scheme is Rs. 6,000 crores**, out of this, Rs. 3,000 is loan from the World Bank and Rs. 3,000 crore is a matching contribution from the Government of India.
- **Implemented Ministry:** Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The key results areas are:

- Strengthened institutional framework and effective groundwater data monitoring and disclosure.
- Improved planning and implementation of groundwater management interventions.