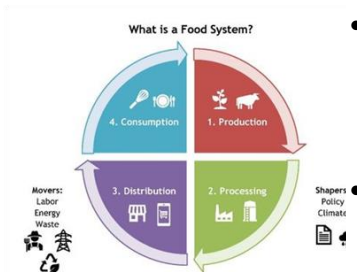


### AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECAST INDIA'S FOOD SYSTEM

#### Context

- On October 16, the world celebrated World Food Day, but food as a system is looked rarely. **Therefore**, there is a need to transform the food system.
- To achieve this and address the challenges, **India must invest, innovate, and create lasting solutions in sustainable agriculture contribution to equitable livelihood, food security, nutrition, and environmental security.**



#### • **Significance of Interlinked Nature of Livelihood, Nutritional and Environmental security**

• **To Make Economic Returns on Produce Resilient:** While the primary goal of a food system is to ensure nutrition security for all, it can only be achieved sustainably if the producers producing the food make reasonable economic returns that are resilient over time.

- **Essential to Make Food System Sustainable**
  - The resilient economic returns for producers are intricately linked with the resilience of natural ecosystem because the largest inputs to agriculture; soil, water and climatic conditions are all natural resources.
  - Therefore, **the interconnectedness of nutrition security with livelihood and environmental security is essential to making our food system truly sustainable.**

#### **Challenges to India's Livelihood, Nutritional and Environmental Security**

- **Burden of Malnutrition**
  - On the nutrition front **India faces a double burden of malnutrition.**
  - Despite making great progress over the years, **nutrient deficiencies are prevalent in a sizable proportion of Indian population.**
- **Insufficient Farm Incomes**

- On the production side, **farm incomes are insufficient to meet the ends of marginal and small farmers.**
- **Depleting Natural Resources**
- **Depleting natural resources and changing climate are making India's food production highly vulnerable.**
- As in the 2023 soil health survey, **almost half the cultivable land in India has become deficient in organic carbon**, which is an essential indicator of soil health.
- Groundwater, the largest source of irrigation, is rapidly declining.

### **Suggestions to Address these Interconnected Challenges**

- **Shift Consumer Demands Towards Healthier Diet**
- There is a need to shift to a food plate that is healthier for people and the planet.
- **Transition Towards Regenerative Agricultural Practices**
- To ensure resilient incomes, **the government must support farmers' transition towards remunerative and regenerative agricultural practices.**
- **Shift Agricultural Support from Input Subsidies to Direct Cash Support**
- Agriculture support should move from input subsidies to direct cash support to farmers per hectare of cultivation.
- **More Research on Sustainable Agricultural Practices:** Agricultural research and extension services should also earmark a proportion of their respective budgets to focus on sustainable agricultural practices.
- **More Value Addition of Agricultural Produce in Rural Areas**
- To improve farm incomes there is a need to **shift farm-to-fork value chains towards more sustainable and inclusive ones.**
- **Enable Trading Between Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**
- Since all farmer families in a farmer producer organisation (FPO) are consumers of other farming goods.
- If India acts fast, **India has a unique opportunity to showcase to the rest of the world how to get its food system right.**

## OPERATION NANHE FARISTEY

Under Operation 'Nanhe Faristey', the Railway Protection Force (RPF) plays an important role in reuniting the children lost/separated due to several reasons from their family.



### About Operation Nanhe Faristey:

- It was launched on Indian Railways, and under this drive, **Children in need of care & protection** who came into contact with Indian Railways were rescued and handed over to concerned authorities before being restored to their families.

### Key facts about the Railway Protection Force

- The history of the RPF dates back to 1882, when various Railway companies appointed their own guards for protection of Railway property.
- It was **declared a statutory force in 1957** by an enactment of Parliament and subsequently declared as an armed force of the Union of India in the year 1985.
- In 2003, the RPF partially took up the **duties of escorting passenger trains** and access control at the railway stations”.
- It is led by a **director-general**.
- It is an armed force under the operational and administrative control of **the Union Ministry of Railways**.
- It is tasked with **protecting and securing railway property**, the passenger areas, and the passengers themselves.

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## YUVA SANGAM (PHASE III)

Recently, the registration portal for Phase III of Yuva Sangam, under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB), was launched.



### About Yuva Sangam:

- It is an initiative by the Government of India to **strengthen people-to-people connections between youth** belonging to different States/UTs of India.

- Interested youth **in the age group of 18-30 years**, mainly students, NSS (National Service Scheme)/NYKS (Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan) volunteers, employed/self-employed persons, etc. may register through the YUVA SANGAM portal to participate in the forthcoming Phase.
- It was launched under EBSB, draws inspiration from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- It focuses on **experiential learning and imbibing knowledge** of the rich diversity of India on a first-hand basis.
- It is an on-going cultural exchange with the celebration of diversity at its core wherein participants gain an immersive experience of diverse facets of life, natural landforms, development landmarks, recent achievements, and youth connect in the host state.
- Twenty eminent institutions across India have been identified for Phase III of Yuva Sangam.
- During Phase III of Yuva Sangam, participants from 20 HEIs will be visiting 22 states and UTs.
- **Significance**
  - Under this, the youth will receive multi-dimensional exposure **in five broad areas** will be provided to them, which are **Paryatan** (Tourism), **Parampara** (Traditions), **Pragati** (Development), **Paraspar Sampark** (People-to-people connect), and **Prodyogiki** (Technology).

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## REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM

The Prime Minister of India will inaugurate the first leg of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), India's first mass rapid system dedicated to regional connectivity.



### About the Regional Rapid Transit System:

- It has **semi high-speed rail connectivity** at its core; the RRTS is an integrated mass transit network.
- It aims to ensure “balanced and sustainable urban development” through better connectivity and access across the National Capital Region (NCR).
- It is constructed by **the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC)**, which is a joint venture company of the **Central government** and the **governments of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh**.

- It is **modelled on systems** such as the **RER in Paris**, **Regional-Express trains in Germany** and **Austria**, as well as the **SEPTA Regional Rail in the United States**, among others.
- These trains will travel significantly faster than metro trains. These will operate at a speed of 160 km/hour but are designed to be able to run at speeds up to 180 km/hour.
- **Eight corridors will be developed** under the project, of which three are being constructed under phase I: the 82-km Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut, the 164-km Delhi-Gurugram-SNB-Alwar, and the 103-km Delhi-Panipat corridors.

### The significance of this system

- When compared with metros, the RRTS network is faster. It will cater to commuters who want to travel relatively longer distances across the NCR in a short time.
- Compared with the Indian Railways, though the RRTS train will cover relatively smaller distances, it will do so **at higher frequency and provide relatively more comfort** than the average railway coach.

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### SIENA GALAXY ATLAS (SGA)

Recently, astronomers have created a beautiful atlas of 400,000 galaxies in the cosmic neighbourhood of Milky Way and named it the Siena Galaxy Atlas.



#### About the Siena Galaxy Atlas:

- It is a **digital atlas** that was created to get to know our universe **better** through several of the known galaxies.
- It was created using data from three astronomical surveys collected between 2014 and 2017 at **Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory (CTIO)** and **Kitt Peak National Observatory (KPNO)**. Together, these surveys are known as the DESI Legacy Surveys.
- **How is it different from other atlases?**
  - It is **dependent on state-of-the-art digital images** captured by advanced technology, unlike previous atlases, which relied on antiquated equipment and photographic plates.



- As it is built on the images captured with highly sensitive instruments, it boasts the most accurate data.
  - It is also the **first cosmic atlas to feature the light profiles of galaxies**- a curve that describes how the brightness of the galaxy changes from its brightest point to its dimmest.
  - **Significance**
    - Cosmic atlases help astronomers **spot patterns that help categorise new discoveries**, such as stars that suddenly flare and then disappear (thus called ‘transients’).
    - These atlases also allow astronomers to identify which objects are contenders for detailed follow-up studies.
    - It helps in **investigating everything from the births and evolutions of galaxies** to the distribution of dark matter and propagation of gravitational waves through space.
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## CHANAKYA DEFENCE DIALOGUE

The Indian Army is planning to launch the Chanakya Defence Dialogue, a forum for discussing important security matters.



### About Chanakya Defence Dialogue:

- It will serve as a regular forum, bringing together **top minds from the global defense and strategic sectors to facilitate the exchange of insights** and ideas.
  - It aims to **integrate intelligence, strategy, and expertise, fostering discussions on topics such as Neighbourhood Forces, the significant Indo-Pacific frontier, and the evolving impact of emerging technologies on defense and security.**
  - The **Indian Army is collaborating with the renowned think tank, Centre for Land and Warfare Studies (CLAWS), to organise the event.**
  - This gathering will **draw participants from a diverse range of nations, including Australia, France, Japan, and the United States.**
  - **Scheduled as a two-day conference, the gathering will feature prominent speakers, military strategists, diplomats, and leading intellectuals in the fields of defense and strategic affairs.**
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- Discussions will revolve around a broad spectrum of security challenges and strategies, focusing particularly in the pivotal regions of South Asia and the Indo-Pacific.
- Additionally, cooperation in defence technology, military exercises, and nuclear proliferation concerns will be discussed.

## WHAT ARE HANG GLIDERS

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) recently issued a new set of regulations regarding the operation of powered hang gliders.



### About Hang Gliders:

- A hang glider is a type of aircraft that uses air currents to stay aloft.
- Unlike other aircraft, hang gliders have no engine or propeller.
- Instead, they rely on the wind to keep them in the air.
- How does it work?
  - Since a hang glider is unpowered, it can't take off from low ground. It has to be launched from somewhere high, like a hill or mountain.
  - Gravity is the main force on a hang glider. This is the weight of the pilot and the wing.
  - The weight produces the thrust that keeps the aerofoil moving through the air.
  - The aerofoil shape of the wing stops the hang glider from dropping like a stone. It produces lift.
  - The aerofoil forces the air flowing over the top of the wing to travel faster, thereby 'stretching' it to produce a low-pressure area.
  - Meanwhile, the downward and forward motion of the wing compresses the air flowing under the wing.
  - The aerofoil is then drawn up into the area of low pressure, producing lift.
  - During the flight, the pilot controls the aircraft by the trapeze, both to change the direction and to vary the speed.
- Powered Hang Gliders:

- A powered hang glider is an aircraft that **combines the features of a traditional hang glider with those of a powered aircraft.**
- They typically **have a small engine attached to the frame, which allows the pilot to take off and stay in the air without having to rely on thermals or other weather conditions.**
- This can make them a **good option for anyone who isn't experienced enough to take advantage of the winds** to stay in the air.

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## CENTRE ROLLS BACK ITS PLAN TO LICENCE LAPTOP, PC IMPORTS

### Why in News?

- The Union Government has rolled out an ‘Import Management System’ for IT hardware, including laptops and computers, modifying its initial stance of imposing physical restrictions.
- The notification comes just days after concerns were raised by US, China, South Korea and Taiwan at a recent World Trade Organisation meeting.

### Background:

- On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023, the Union Government imposed restrictions on import of laptops, tablets, all-in-one personal computers and ultra-small computers and servers with immediate effect.
- However, this decision was later suspended **till 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2023.**
- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) had to suspend the implementation as custom officials stationed at ports started holding up shipments of the specified electronic items.
- The issue had also come up in meetings between US and Indian officials after American companies including **Apple, Dell, and HP** urged the US government to ask Indian government to reconsider its policy.

### Government’s Plans of Introducing “Import Management System”:

- The Union government is conducting consultations on a new system through which it aims to monitor the sources from which IT hardware is being imported.
- Through a system known as “**Import Management System**”, the government will monitor the sources from which IT hardware is being imported.



- After the introduction of this system, finished IT hardware such as laptops, personal computers and servers can only be imported from “**trusted geographies**”.
- Beyond laptops, personal computers and servers, the directive could be applied on a large range of finished IT hardware equipment including 5G sensors, which are predominantly being imported from China.
- The Import Management System is currently in draft stage. Once finalised, it is expected to replace the licensing requirement.
- There is precedence to this idea of allowing imports only from trusted sources.

### News Summary:

- The Union Government has rolled out an ‘Import Management System’ for IT hardware, including laptops and computers, modifying its initial stance of imposing physical restrictions.
- Under the proposed IMS, **IT hardware companies will be required to register and disclose data related to their imports, and countries from which they import, among other things.**
  - Laptops, personal computers (including tablet computers), microcomputers, large or mainframe computers, and certain data processing machines have been covered under the new imports monitoring system.
  - The system will ensure that it will be faceless and contactless, and there will be no hassles for importers to fill in their details
- This comes as a big relief to the industry which feared that the previous licensing notification would lead to a kind of quota system.
- **There will be no restrictions on imports under baggage rules, and import of one laptop, tablet, personal computer or ultra-small form factor computer, including those purchased from e-commerce portals through post or courier, will also be exempted.**
- Exemption has also been provided for up to 20 such items per consignment for the purpose of R&D, testing, benchmarking, evaluation and product development.
- Government officials maintained that the changes have been made to make it an “end-to-end” online system to monitor imports and ensure such items come from trusted sources.