

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NORD STREAM PIPELINES?

In News:

- Four leaks were reported at different points in the Nord Stream pipelines, linking Russia and Europe, since September 26.
- Two of the leaks were in **Swedish waters** while the other two were reported from Danish waters.

About



- Nord stream consists of **two pipelines**, which have two lines each.
- Nord Stream 1 was completed in 2011 and runs from Vyborg in Leningrad to **Lubmin near Greifswald, Germany**.
- Nord Stream 2 which runs from Ust-Luga in Leningrad to Lubmin was completed in September 2021.
- It has the capacity to handle 55 billion cubic meters of **gas** per year once it becomes operational.
- The twin pipelines together can transport a combined total of 110 billion cubic metres (bcm) of **gas** a year to Europe for at least 50 years.
- The Nord Stream crosses the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of several countries including Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, and the territorial waters of Russia, Denmark, and Germany.
- In Germany, the pipeline connects to the OPAL (**Baltic Sea Pipeline**) and NEL (**North European Pipeline**) which further connects to the European grid.

Importance of this pipeline

- **Increasing dependence of Europe on Russian gas**
- Europe requires more than 100 billion cubic metres (bcm) of natural gas each year and around 40% of its gas comes from Russia.
- This gas is used for heating homes, factories, and offices in the harsh, long European winters and also for power generation.

- Reducing dependence on Russian gas is difficult as there are no easy replacements. There is no infrastructure to import LNG from exporters like Qatar and the U.S.
- Germany's transition to cleaner fuels by phasing out nuclear power and cutting reliance on coal has increased its dependence on Russian gas.
- **Cost effective mode**
- Nord Stream 2 is important because it eliminates the risks related with sending gas through transit countries.
 - There is an existing land pipeline between Russia and Europe that runs through Ukraine.
 - Russia could bypass the Ukrainian pipeline, and deprive it of lucrative transit fees of around \$3 billion per year.
- It also cuts operating costs by doing away with transit fees and gives direct access to its most important European customer, Germany.
- It increases Europe's dependence on Russia while giving it a reliable customer.
- **Importance for Russia**
- As for Russia, which has the largest natural gas reserves in the world, around 40% of its budget comes from sales of gas and oil.

What has happened?

- Four leaks were reported at different points in the Nord Stream pipelines, linking Russia and Europe, since September 26.
- Both Danish and Swedish seismologists picked up undersea explosions near the locations of the first two leaks before they occurred.
- This has damaged the pipelines which resulted into the leaking of gas stored in the pipelines.

TRI-SERVICES MISSILE COMMAND

The central government is considering setting up of a tri-services missile/rocket command on the lines of the space and the cyber command as the first steps towards military theatre commands.



About:

- The proposed missile command will be responsible for deployment of missile and rocket regiments against any hostile adversary and will be manned by commanders of the three services in rotation.
- This means that conventional missiles like BrahMos and Akash as well as Pinaka rockets will be placed under one command for rapid deployment against any adversary.
- The proposal to set up a missile command has been moved in the aftermath of the May 2020 East Ladakh stand-off with the PLA and the use of rockets and missiles in the Ukraine theatre by the Red Army.
- The missile command will be on similar lines as the tri-services cyber command and the space command as the future wars will hardly have any contact between troops unless used for capturing enemy territory.

TAP WATER CONNECTIONS

Around 62% of rural households in India have fully functional tap water connections within their premises, according to a survey commissioned by the Union Ministry of Water Resources to assess the functioning of the government's marquee Jal Jeevan Mission.



About:

- Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, and Puducherry reported more than 80% of households with fully functional connections, while fewer than half the households in Rajasthan, Kerala, Manipur, Tripura, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim had such connections.
- A fully functional tap water connection is defined as a household getting at least 55 litres per capita per day of potable water all through the year.
- Close to three-fourths of households received water all seven days a week and 8% just once a week.

- On an average, households got water for three hours every day, and 80% reported that their daily requirements of water were being met by the tap connections.
- The report mentions a concerning problem of chlorine contamination. Though 93% of the samples were reportedly free of bacteriological contamination, “most of the anganwadi centres and schools, had higher than the permissible range of residual chlorine and indicated inappropriate local dosing.

MATDATA JUNCTION PROGRAM

Election Commission to launch Matdata Junction on All India Radio.



About:

- It is a year-long voter awareness program.
- The Matadata Junction program will be broadcast in 23 languages across the country.
- The weekly program covers all aspects of the Voter ecosystem and shall be broadcast every Friday on the All India Radio network.
- Each Program will be based on a particular Theme on the Electoral process.
- All the 52 Themes are aimed at encouraging all eligible citizens and especially the young and first time voters to vote and make an informed decision during the elections.
- The program includes a Citizen's Corner where any citizen can ask a query or suggest any aspects of the voting.

YUVA (YOUNG, UPCOMING AND VERSATILE AUTHORS) 2.0 SCHEME



Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors - YUVA 2.0 was launched recently.

About:

- It is a Prime Minister's scheme for mentoring young authors, and a programme to train young and budding authors below the age of 30 to promote reading, writing, and book culture in the country, and project India and Indian writings globally.
- The ministry of education (MoE) launched the YUVA 2.0 scheme in view of the significant impact of the first edition of the YUVA.
- The first edition witnessed a large-scale participation from young authors in 22 different Indian languages including English.
- It is in tune with the Prime Minister's vision to encourage the youth to understand and appreciate India's democracy.
- It will help to develop a stream of writers who can write on a spectrum of subjects to promote the Indian heritage, culture, and knowledge system.
- The National Book Trust, India, as the implementing agency under MoE will ensure the phase-wise execution of the scheme under well-defined stages of mentorship.
- The young authors will be trained by eminent authors and mentors from 1st March to 31st August 2023.

LIGHT COMBAT HELICOPTER

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to induct its first batch of indigenously-developed Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) in a major boost to its combat prowess.



About:

- The indigenous Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) is set to be formally inducted into the Indian Air Force (IAF) at the Jodhpur air base.
- It is the only attack helicopter in the world which can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 meters with a considerable load of weapons and fuel, meeting the specific requirements laid out by the Indian Armed Forces.

- It has the maximum take-off weight of 5.8 tonnes, maximum speed of 268 kilometers per hour, range of 550 kilometers, endurance of over three hours and service ceiling — the maximum density altitude to which it can fly — of 6.5 kilometres.
- The helicopter uses radar-absorbing material to lower radar signature and has a significantly crash-proof structure and landing gear.
- A pressurised cabin offers protection from nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) contingencies.
- The helicopter is equipped with a countermeasure dispensing system that protects it from enemy radars or infrared seekers of the enemy missiles.
- As far as weapons systems are concerned, a 20 mm turret gun, 70 mm rockets and air-to-air missile systems are onboard.
- LCH is powered by two French-origin Shakti engines manufactured by the HAL.

TELANGANA CLEANEST, ASSAM WORST IN RURAL AREA SWACCHTA SURVEY

In News:

- According to the Swachh Survekshan Gramin (SSG) 2022, Telangana, Haryana and Tamil Nadu emerged the cleanest among all large states on parameters of rural sanitation.
- On the other hand, Assam, Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir were the three worst performers.

Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin):

Background:

- To accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation, the Government of India had launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on 2nd October 2014.
- The Mission was split into two components - rural (SBM-Gramin) and urban (SBM-Urban, overseen by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)).
- Under these components, all villages, Gram Panchayats, Districts, States and Union Territories (UTs) in India have to declare themselves "open-defecation free" (ODF) by 2 October 2019 - the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

About:

- The SBM-G was implemented as a jan andolan which aimed at eliminating open defecation in rural areas during the period 2014 to 2019 (Phase I) through -
 - Mass scale behaviour change,
 - Constructing over 100 million household-owned and community-owned toilets in rural India and
 - Establishing mechanisms for monitoring toilet construction and usage.
- It is monitored by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- To ensure that open defecation-free behaviours are maintained, no one is left behind and that solid and liquid waste management facilities are accessible, the Mission is progressing to the Phase II of SBM-G, namely ODF-Plus.
 - ODF Plus activities under Phase II of SBM-G will reinforce ODF behaviours and focus on providing interventions for safe management of solid and liquid waste in villages.
 - Phase II will be implemented from 2020-21 to 2024-25.

Performance of SBM-G:

- According to the Sub-Group of Chief Ministers (2015), more than half of India's 25 crore households did not have access to toilets close to places where they live.
 - Notably, during the 2015-19 period, a major portion of expenditure under the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation was towards SBM-G.
- As per the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 43.8% of the rural households had access to toilets in 2014-15, which increased to 100% in 2019-20.
- However, the 15th Finance Commission (2020) noted that the practice of open defecation is still prevalent, despite access to toilets and highlighted that there is a need to sustain the behavioural change of people for using toilets.

News Summary:

About the Swachh Survekshan Gramin (SSG):

- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation had commissioned SSG earlier in 2018 and 2019.

- It is pertinent to mention that SSG is not just a ranking exercise but has been a vehicle for creating a jan andolan (people’s movement).
- A detailed protocol has been developed to guide the ranking of states and districts on the basis of their performance attained on qualitative and quantitative parameters and engagement of the rural community in improvement of their sanitation status.

The SSG 2022:

SANITATION SURVEY RESULTS (RURAL) 20:

CATEGORY	1st	2nd	3rd
Big states	Telangana	Haryana	Tamil Na
Small states/ UTs	A&N Islands	DNH & Daman & Diu	Sikkim
Districts	Bhiwani (Haryana)	Jagtial (Telangana)	Nizamab (Telangar

Other highlights

- > 84% respondents sanitation improved since 2014
- > 68.4% satisfied with solid & liquid management in village
- > 88% have access to household toilets
- > Observers found 95.4% h access to household toilets
- > Observers found 74.6% public places have access to toilets

Jal Jeevan Awards
(overall functionality of water from household taps)

More than 60% coverage category | Puducherry (1st) & Goa (2nd)

Less than 60% coverage category | Tamil Nadu (1st) & Meghalaya (2nd)

> Burhanpur (MP) 1st Har Ghar Jal certified district

- The 2022 survey was recently released by the President of India on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, which is now also celebrated as Swachh Bharat Diwas.
- Golaghat district of Assam finished at the bottom of 709 districts, ranked in this survey. The two other worst performers were from **Bihar** - Banka and Katihar.
- Since **Delhi and Chandigarh are fully urbanised** UTs, these were not ranked.
- On the occasion, the President also released the status report on “Functionality Assessment of Tap Connections” under the **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)**.
- **Burhanpur** (Madhya Pradesh) receives a special award for being the first "Har Ghar Jal" certified district.