

INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK FOR PROSPERITY (IPEF)

The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) recently signed an agreement to strengthen its supply chain and ensure adherence to labour rules.



About Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF):

- It is a regional arrangement to build cooperation and economic integration in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It was launched by United States President Joe Biden on May 23, 2022.
- This framework is intended to advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness for member economies.
- IPEF will seek to complement and build on existing regional architecture and support the global rules-based trading system.
- It currently includes 14 partner countries: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam.

The economic framework broadly rests on four pillars:

- Trade
- Supply chain resilience
- Clean Energy, Decarbonization, and Infrastructure
- Taxes and anti-corruption measures
- The IPEF is not a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), but it allows members to negotiate the parts they want to.
- India and IPEF:
 - India has been actively participating in the IPEF, but not in all pillars.
 - India has decided to opt out of the trade pillar of the IPEF as most issues promoted by the IPEF do not align with India's trade policies.

WHAT IS KAVRO DOMA 360?

Kanpur-based MKU Limited recently unveiled the Kavro Doma 360 at Milipol Paris.



- It is the **world-first rifle-rated ballistic helmet**.
- It was indigenously developed by **Kanpur-based MKU Limited**.
- **Features:**

- **The world's first uniform rifle protection helmet:** It offers **uniform protection in all 5 zones of the head** (front, back, left, right, and crown) **against** threats like the AK-47 MSC, M80 NATO BALL, and M193 **rifle bullets**.
- **The only boltless rifle protection helmet to date:**
 - It's the **first anti-rifle helmet** in the world **that does not have bolts or any metal parts**.
 - When a helmet is bolted, the **risk of the bolt penetrating the skull** on impact is **higher** due to weakened areas.
 - Furthermore, **there are no rifle-rated bolts at the moment**.
 - **It has a boltless shell**, which means it **provides 40% more protection area** against even AK-47 assault rifles **than standard helmets**.
 - It's the **first rifle-rated helmet** that can **maintain a resulting Back Face Signature/Trauma of less than 20 mm**, against bullet impact from AK-47 bullets.
 - The 'Back Face Signature' is a way to **measure how much a protective helmet deforms or indents on the inside due to the impact** of a high-energy bullet.
 - The **Kavro Doma 360 absorbs impact**, substantially **reducing the risk of injury due to resulting trauma** to the wearer's head.
- **Advanced Harness System with Dynamic Impact Technology:**
 - **It provides protection** from not just straight impacts but also **rotational/angular impacts**, which are **known to cause concussions** or brain injuries.
 - In addition, it comes with **top-to-chin and side-to-side harness adjustment functionality for the highest stability** and a snug fit.
- **Maximum Compatibility (with MACS):** It allows **seamless integration** with all **advanced head-mounted devices** and combat equipment.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL

The 9th edition of the India International Science Festival (IISF) 2023 will be held at Faridabad, Haryana from January 17th-20th, 2024.



About India International Science Festival:

• It will be held at the Campus of Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) and Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB) of the **Department of Biotechnology in Faridabad.**

Theme: 'Science and Technology Public Outreach in Amrit Kaal'.

- IISF 2023 aims to provide a platform for inspiring the public at large and individuals with diverse levels of interests, like students, educators, scientists, researchers, industry professionals, entrepreneurs, and science communicators.
- IISF 2023 will have a **total of 17 themes** to showcase scientific achievements, offering diverse benefits to participants and the general public.
- The IISF is dedicated to fostering creativity in Science, Technology and Innovation for the advancement of prosperous India.
- It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Science and Technology** and the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** in association with Vijnana Bharati.
- Since 2015, the IISF has hosted eight editions in different geographical regions of India and expanded as a mega science festival.
- In 2021, the Department of Space and the Department of Atomic Energy became an integral part of IISF.

NATIONAL HEALTH CLAIM EXCHANGE (NHCX)



The National Health Authority (NHA) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) have joined hands to operationalize the National Health Claim Exchange (NHCX).



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



About National Health Claim Exchange (NHCX)

- It is a digital health claims platform developed by the **National Health Authority**.
- It will serve as a gateway for exchanging claims-related information among various **stakeholders in the healthcare and health insurance ecosystem**.
- It is designed to be interoperable, machine-readable, auditable and verifiable, as well as help ensure the information exchanged is accurate and trustworthy.

Key points about the National Health Authority (NHA)

- It is the apex body responsible for implementing Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY).
- It has been entrusted **with the role of designing strategy**, building technological infrastructure and implementation of “National Digital Health Mission” to create a National Digital Health Eco-system.
- It is the successor of the National Health Agency, which was functioning as a registered society. According to the Cabinet decision for full functional autonomy, the National Health Agency was reconstituted as the National Health Authority in January 2019.
- It is an **attached office** of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with full functional autonomy.
- It is governed by a **Governing Board chaired by the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare**.
- It is headed by a **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**, an officer of the **rank of Secretary to the Government of India**, who manages its affairs.
- The CEO is the Ex-Office Member Secretary of the Governing Board.
- To implement the scheme at the State level, State Health Agencies (SHAs) in the form of a society/trust have been set up by respective States.

JANJATIYA GAURAV DIWAS: PM LAUNCHES RS 24,000-CRORE SCHEME FOR VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS

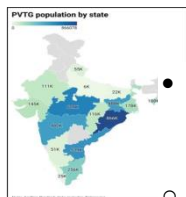
Why in News?

- The PM of India launched a Rs 24,000-crore project for vulnerable tribal groups on the **birth anniversary of tribal icon Birsa Munda** ('Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas' - Nov 15) from Jharkhand's Khunti district.
- **The PM Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan** is meant to ensure last-mile welfare scheme delivery and protection for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

Birsa Munda and his Contributions:

- Birsa Munda (15 Nov 1875 - 9 June 1900) was a **freedom fighter and a tribal leader**, whose spirit of activism in the late 19th century, is remembered to be a strong mark of protest against British rule in India.
- He belonged to the **Munda tribe** (of Chotanagpur plateau) and his revolt mainly concentrated in the Munda belt of Khunti, Tamar, Sarwada and Bandgaon of Jharkhand.
- Having gained awareness of the British colonial ruler and the efforts of the missionaries to convert tribals to Christianity, Birsa started the faith of '**Birsait**'.
- Soon members of the **Munda and Oraon community** started joining the Birsait sect and it turned into a challenge to British conversion activities.
- **He also aided societal reform** by confronting religious superstition, earning him the titles 'Bhagwan' (God) and 'Dharati Aba' (Father of the Earth) from his followers.
- Thus, Birsa Munda is known to have **mobilised the tribal community** against the British and had also forced the colonial officials to introduce laws protecting the land rights of the tribals.
- **In recognition of his impact on the national movement,**
- **Janjatiya Gaurav Divas** is celebrated (since 2021) on November 15th.
- The state of Jharkhand was created on his birth anniversary in 2000.

Who are the PVTGs?



- According to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), **India has 75 PVTGs**, who are characterised by -
 - Pre-agriculture level of technology,

- Stagnant or declining population,
- Extremely low literacy, and
- Subsistence level of economy.
- PVTGs were recognised as a separate category based on the findings of the **1961 Dhebar Commission**.
- In 1975, there were 52 PVTGs and, by 1993, the list had been expanded to 75 out of 705 Scheduled Tribes (STs) across 18 states and Union Territories.
- Data from the MoTA and the 2011 Census shows that **Odisha** has the largest population of PVTGs at 8.66 lakh, followed by **MP** at 6.09 lakh and **Andhra Pradesh** (including Telangana) at 5.39 lakh.
- **The total PVTG population is more than 40 lakh** and the largest PVTG is **Odisha's Saura** community, numbering 5.35 lakh.

WHAT IS APEC & WHY INDIA IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE GROUPING

Why in the News?

- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) grouping is meeting in San Francisco in the United States.

About Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC):

- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation is a regional economic forum and was formed in 1989.
- **Aim of the grouping** - “leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific and create greater prosperity for the people of the region through regional economic integration”.
- The focus of APEC has been on trade and economic issues and hence, it terms the countries as “economies”.
- It has been operating on the basis of non-binding commitments with decisions taken through commitments and consensus undertaken on a voluntary basis.
- **Member Countries:**
 - Currently, APEC has **21 members**.
 - The criterion for membership, however, is that each member must be an independent economic entity, rather than a sovereign state.

- The grouping's current members are Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Indonesia, China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Canada, the United States, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan.

Significance of APEC:

- Since its formation, the grouping championed the lowering of trade tariffs, free trade, and economic liberalisation.
- As per the US State Department, during its first five years of operation, APEC established its core objectives.
- In the **Seoul Declaration (1991)**, APEC member economies proclaimed the creation of a liberalised free trade area around the Pacific Rim as the principal objective of the organisation.
- APEC accounts for nearly **62 per cent of global GDP and nearly half of global trade**.

Why is India not a Part of the APEC Grouping?

- Although many members have been in favour of the inclusion of India, some opposed the idea citing the economic reforms which took place in the country and claiming that it has '**protectionist instincts**'.
- APEC's guiding motive was to resist protectionist policies by individual member states, and the promotion of trade liberalisation and economic cooperation within the affiliated Asia-Pacific economies.
- By that description, India did not seem to fit in.
- The main impediment, apparently, has been the opposition of some participants who have held India's record on economic reforms and WTO engagement to be unsatisfactory and unworthy of meriting inclusion as a member in the grouping.
- Another reason for not making India part of the grouping was a **membership freeze which came into force in 1997**. However, it was not extended in 2012.
- There has been a renewed push to grant membership status to India.
- A **majority of members now believe that India must be brought into the fold for it has shown progress in reforming and liberalising its economy**.

REGULATING OTT: DRAFT BROADCASTING REGULATION BILL MAY BE AN ATTEMPT TO CONTROL DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Context

- Recently, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) released the draft **Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill**.
- **The Bill proposes to scrap the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act of 1995**, which regulates the broadcast sector, **in favour of unified regulation for broadcasting, OTT, Digital Media, DTH, IPTV**.

Objectives and Important Provisions of Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995

- **Objective:** The Act was **introduced to curb the menace of illegal cable television networks and regulate the programming and advertising content** on television.
- **Important Provisions**
 - No person shall operate a cable television network unless he is registered as a cable operator under this Act.
 - It is obligatory for cable operators to transmit programmes of any channel in an encrypted form through a digital addressable system when the centre asks them to do so.
 - Under the Act, district magistrates, sub-divisional magistrates and police commissioners are the **‘authorised officers’** to ensure that the Programme Code is not breached.
 - Authorised officer has power to prohibit transmission of certain programmes in public interest if it promotes disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, linguistic, or regional groups or castes or communities.
 - Parliament has power to prohibit operation of cable television networks in public interest.
 - Whoever contravenes any of the provisions of this Act shall be punished.

WHAT IS THE NIRBHAY CRUISE MISSILE?

The Indian armed forces will be inducting the long-range attack cruise missile Nirbhay into their inventory to strike targets at ranges over 1,000 km.



About Nirbhay Cruise Missile:

- It is a **long-range sub-sonic cruise missile**.
- It is **India's first indigenously-produced cruise missile**.
- The missile was developed by the **Bengaluru-based Aeronautical Development Establishment, a lab under India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- It is **capable of deep penetration into adversary territory** to strike high-value targets with precision.

Features:

- The Nirbhay measures **6.0 m in length, 0.5 m in body diameter, and weighs 1,500-1,600 kg at launch**.
- It can **strike land targets** at a distance of **up to 1,000 kilometres**.
- It uses a **solid propellant booster motor** that is **jettisoned shortly after launch, switching over to a turbojet engine**.
- It is **capable of loitering and cruising at Mach 0.7 (sub-sonic)** at altitudes as low as 100 metres.
- It can be armed with a 200-300 kilogram warhead. It can carry **both conventional and nuclear warheads**.
- It can be **launched from multiple platforms**.
- It is **guided by INS/GPS with an active-radar terminal seeker**.