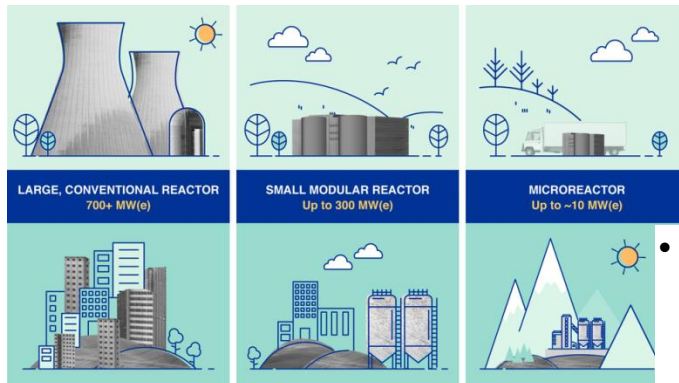


SMALL MODULAR REACTORS

Union Minister of State of the Ministry of Science & Technology recently said, India is taking steps for development of Small Modular Reactors (SMR), with up to 300 MW capacity to fulfill its commitment to Clean Energy transition.



About:

What are Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)?

- SMRs are advanced nuclear reactors that have a power capacity of up to 300 MW(e) per unit, which is about

one-third of the generating capacity of traditional nuclear power reactors. SMRs, which can produce a large amount of low-carbon electricity, are:

- **Small** – physically a fraction of the size of a conventional nuclear power reactor.
- **Modular** – making it possible for systems and components to be factory-assembled and transported as a unit to a location for installation.
- **Reactors** – harnessing nuclear fission to generate heat to produce energy.

Advantages of SMRs

- SMR, with up to 300 MW capacity by nature are **flexible in design and require smaller footprint**. Given their smaller footprint, SMRs can be sited on locations not suitable for larger nuclear power plants.
- Being mobile and agile technology, **SMR can be factory-built unlike the conventional nuclear reactors** that are built on-site. Thus, SMRs offers significant savings in cost and construction time.
- SMR is a **promising technology in industrial de-carbonization** especially where there is a requirement of reliable and continuous supply of power. It is said that SMR is **simpler and safer as compared to large nuclear plants**.

WHAT IS BLUEBUGGING AND HOW IS IT USED TO HACK BLUETOOTH-ENABLED DEVICES?

In News:

- Several smartphones have their Bluetooth settings on discovery mode as it is a default setting, making it easy for hackers to access the phones when they are within 10 metres from the device.

Background:

- Cybersecurity experts note that apps that let users connect smartphones or laptops to wireless earplugs can record conversations, and are vulnerable to hacks.
 - Even the most secure smartphones like iPhones are vulnerable to such attacks.
- Any app with access to Bluetooth can record users' conversations with Siri and audio from the iOS keyboard dictation feature when using AirPods or Beats headsets, some app developers say.
- Through a process called **bluebugging**, a hacker can gain unauthorised access to these apps and devices and control them as per their wish.

What is Bluebugging?

- It is a form of hacking that lets attackers access a device through its discoverable Bluetooth connection.
- Once a device or phone is bluebugged, a hacker can listen to the calls, read and send messages and steal and modify contacts.
- It started out as a threat for laptops with Bluetooth capability. Later hackers used the technique to target mobile phones and other devices.
- It is a process of exploiting a loophole in the Bluetooth Protocol, enabling the hacker to download phone books and call lists from the attacked user's phone.

Working:

- Bluebugging attacks work by **exploiting Bluetooth-enabled devices**.
- The device's Bluetooth must be in discoverable mode, which is the default setting on most devices.

- The hacker then tries to pair with the device via Bluetooth. Once a connection is established, hackers can use brute force attacks to bypass authentication.
- They can install malware in the compromised device to gain unauthorised access to it.
- Bluebugging can happen whenever a Bluetooth enabled device is within a 10-metre radius of the hacker.

Which devices are more susceptible to such attacks?

- Any Bluetooth-enabled device can be bluebugged.
- Wireless earbuds are susceptible to such hacks. Apps that enable users to connect to their TWS (True Wireless Stereo) devices or earbuds can record conversations.
- The apps of these TWS devices can record conversations.
- Once hacked, the attacker can make and listen to calls, read and send messages, and modify or steal your contacts

Prevention Techniques:

- Turning off Bluetooth and disconnecting paired Bluetooth devices when not in use,
- Updating the device's system software to the latest version,
- Limited use of public Wi-Fi and
- Using VPN as an additional security measure.

SMALL IS GOOD: MUDRA LOAN NPAS AT JUST 3.3% IN 7 YEARS

In News:

- An RTI enquiry revealed that bad loans under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana for all banks since the launch of the scheme, added up to Rs 46,053.39 crore as on June 30, 2022.
- This is just 3.38 per cent of the total disbursements of Rs 13.64 lakh crore under the scheme during the period.

About

- The Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency (MUDRA) was launched on April 8, 2015 to provide loans up to Rs 10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm, small and micro enterprises.

- MUDRA loans are extended by banks, NBFCs, MFIs and other eligible financial intermediaries as notified by MUDRA Ltd.
- The overdraft amount of Rs 5000 sanctioned under PMJDY has been also classified as MUDRA loans under Prime Minister MUDRA Yojana (PMMY).
- The MUDRA loans are extended under following three categories:
 - Loans upto ` 50,000/- (Shishu)
 - Loans from ` 50,001 to ` 5 lakh (Kishore)
 - Loans from ` 5,00,001/- to ` 10 lakh (Tarun)
- With an objective to promote entrepreneurship among the new generation aspiring youth, it is ensured that more focus is given to Sishu category loans followed by Kishore and Tarun categories.

Features:

Eligible borrowers: Individuals/ Proprietary concern/ Partnership Firm/ Private Ltd. Company/ Public Company Any other legal forms.

- **Purpose:** Need based term loan/OD limit/composite loan to eligible borrowers for acquiring capital assets and/or working capital/marketing related requirements.
- **Security:** In terms of RBI guidelines, banks are mandated not to accept collateral security in the case of loans upto Rs 10 lakh extended to units in the Micro Small Enterprises (MSE) Sector.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Banking the Unbanked, Securing the Unsecured and Funding the Unfunded are being achieved through leveraging technology and adopting multi-stakeholders' collaborative approach.
- **Tenor:** MUDRA loan can be availed for 5 years or maximum 7 years.

Performance so far

- More than 34.42 crore loans for an amount of Rs 18.60 lakh crore have been sanctioned since launch of the scheme (as on 25.03.2022).
- Approximately 22% of the total loans have been sanctioned to New Entrepreneurs.
- Approximate 68% loans of the total number of loans have been sanctioned to Women Entrepreneurs

News summary

- The data obtained under the Right to Information Act revealed that non-performing assets (NPAs) of banks for Mudra loans – including those extended during the Covid-19 pandemic are lower than the average NPAs of the sector as a whole.
- The gross NPAs of the banking sector as a whole stood at 5.97 per cent for the year-ending March 31, 2022.
- A non-performing asset (NPA) is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of 90 days.
- The NPAs for Shishu loans were the lowest at 2.25 per cent of disbursements and the highest for Kishore loans at 4.49 per cent. For Tarun loans bad loans were 2.29 per cent of disbursements.



EGYPT PRESIDENT TO BE CHIEF GUEST AT REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS

In News:

- As per the Ministry of External Affairs, Egyptian President **Abdel Fattah Al Sisi** will be the chief guest at the Republic Day in January 2023.
- This is the first time that the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt will be the Chief Guest at our Republic Day.
- Sisi will be the first such guest since 2020, as plans for guests in 2021 and 2022 were cancelled due to COVID-19.

Year	Guest
2023	Egyptian President Abdel Fateh el-Sisi
2020	Brazilian President Jair Messias Bolsonaro
2019	South African President Cyril Ramaphosa
2018	10 heads of state of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members
2017	UAE Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
2016	French President Francois Hollande

India – Egypt Bilateral Relation

Background:

- India and Egypt, two of the world's oldest civilizations, have enjoyed a history of close contact from ancient times.
- Ashoka's edicts refer to his relations with Egypt under Ptolemy-II.

- In modern times, the relationship between the countries flourished under President Nasser and Prime Minister Nehru, which were close friends.
- Both countries had signed a Friendship Treaty between in 1955.

Political Relations

- Both countries have cooperated closely in multilateral fora and were the founding members of Non-Aligned Movement.
- The year 2022 marks the **75th anniversary of diplomatic relation** between India and Egypt.
- Egypt has been invited as a 'Guest Country' during India's Presidency of G20 in 2022-23.

Economic Relations

Bilateral trade

- Egypt has traditionally been one of India's most important trading partners in the African continent.
- The India-Egypt Bilateral Trade Agreement has been in operation since March 1978 and is based on the Most Favoured Nation clause.
- Bilateral trade has expanded rapidly in 2021-22, amounting to 7.26 billion registering a 75% increase compared to FY 2020-21.
- India's exports to Egypt during this period amounted to US\$ 3.74 billion, registering a 65% increase over the same period in FY 2020-21.
- At the same time, Egypt's exports to India reached US\$ 3.52 billion registering an 86% increase.
- During this period, India was 3rd largest export market for Egypt, 6th largest trading partner and 7th largest exporter to Egypt.

Investment

- Around 50 Indian companies have invested in various sectors in Egypt with a combined investment exceeding US\$ 3.15 billion.
- In July 2022, Egypt signed a MoU with India's ReNew Power for \$8 billion to build a clean hydrogen facility in the Suez Canal Economic Zone.
- The Indian entity, backed by the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and Goldman Sachs, is expected to produce 2,20,000 tonnes of clean fuel annually at the Egyptian facility.
- Egyptian investments in India are to the tune of US\$ 37 million.

- **Grant-in-aid projects include:**

- Pan Africa Tele-medicine and Tele-education project in Alexandria University,
- Solar electrification project in Agaween village
- Vocational Training Centre for textile technology in Shoubra, Cairo.

Wheat export from India

- Russia-Ukraine conflict has threatened Egypt with a shortage for wheat, 80% of which is imported from Russia and Ukraine.
- In April 2022, Egypt announced inclusion of India in the list of accredited countries which can supply wheat to Egypt, thus ending a long pending Non-Tariff Barrier.
- Though the ban on wheat exports in India posed a difficulty in concluding the shipment, an initial shipment of 61,500 metric tons of wheat was cleared by India for Egypt in May 2022.

Defence Relations

- **Courses**

- Both sides offer courses on a regular basis, in which Egyptian officers are given training in India and Indian defense officers are trained in Egypt.

- **Exercises**

- Egypt participated in the Multinational Training Exercise for friendly African countries held at Pune in March 2019.
- The first ever IAF-EAF Joint Tactical Air Exercise, Desert Warrior, was held in October 2021.
- The first ever Special Forces exercise “Cyclone 1” between India and Egypt planned in Jodhpur in January 2022 stands postponed.
- Egypt has shown interest in acquiring arms produced by India, including the Akash missile systems capable of intercepting hostile aircraft, helicopters, drones and subsonic cruise missiles at a range of 25-km.

Indian Community

- At present, the Indian community in Egypt numbers at around 3200, most of whom are concentrated in Cairo.
- There are also a small number of families in Alexandria, Port Said and Ismailia.

- About 400 Indian students are studying in Egypt, mainly in Al Azhar University with around 275 students, and the rest in Ain Shams Medical University (around 80 students) and Cairo University.
-

IMPHAL'S IMA MARKET

External Affairs minister S Jaishankar recently tweeted pictures of his visit to Manipur's Ima market, calling it a "great example of nari shakti (women's power) powering economic growth".



About:

- Ima Keithel, or Mothers' Market, is an all-women market, said to be the largest such shopping complex in Asia.
- It is a unique all women's market, having 3,000 "Imas" or mothers who run the stalls, it is split [into] two sections on either side of road.
- Vegetables, fruits, fish and household groceries are sold on one side and exquisite handlooms and household tools on the other. Not far away is a street where beautiful wicker works and basketry are sold.
- Male vendors and shopkeepers are barred here.
- In 2018, the state government announced that legal action would be taken under the Manipur Municipalities Act, 2004 if any male vendor was found selling goods at the market.

History:

- The Ima Market is centuries-old, and has its origins in Lallup Kaba, an ancient bonded labour system.
- Under the system, Meitei men had to compulsorily serve some time working in the military and on other civil projects, keeping them away from home.
- The women, thus, were left to manage on their own, and they developed a market system which is today the Ima Keithel.
- While the system is centuries-old, it had continued till the time of the British.

- Policies of the British government had interfered with the functioning of the Ima market too, but were met with stiff resistance from the women.
-

DHAMMA DIPA INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST UNIVERSITY (DDIBU)

Shakya Gasan, chief monk of the World Buddhist Pope Association of South Korea, will lay the foundation stone for the International Buddhist University at Manu Bankul in Sabroom of South Tripura district on November 29.



About:

- The Dhamma Dipa International Buddhist University (DDIBU) is expected to become the first Buddhist-run university in India to offer Buddhist education along with courses in other disciplines of modern education as well.
 - This university will set a precedent in the history of Indian-Buddhism in promoting and reviving Buddhist culture in India, the birthplace of Buddhism.
 - It will be the first Buddhist University in India to be headed by Buddhist monastics and run and monitored by Buddhists.
 - The word, Dhammadipa, describes both a core principle and a guiding force, which seeks the light of Dharma, its international scope and measure.
 - The University contributes to the highest level of knowledge and education.
 - DD IBU hopes to better engage the contemporary world through the insight and depth of Buddhist words.
 - At the same time, it is keen to prepare students and youth with knowledge and skills, so that they can live healthy, peaceful and contented lives, able to lead the way of life.
 - Students from 31 countries will get a chance to study as well as carry out research on Buddhist literature, culture and tradition in the proposed varsity.
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INDIAN OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION

PT Usha is set to become the first woman President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). She will also become the first Olympian and first international medallist to head the IOA in its 95-year-old history.



About:

- The Indian Olympic Association is the governing body for the **Olympic Movement and the Commonwealth Games in India.**
- As an affiliated member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC), the IOA administers various aspects of sports governance and athletes' welfare in the country.
- In this regard, the IOA oversees the representation of athletes or teams participating in the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and other international multi-sport competitions of IOC, CGF, OCA and ANOC.
- The Indian Olympic Association is recognised by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.**

History:

- The IOA was established in the year **1927 with Sir Dorabji Tata and Dr. A.G. Noehren** as the Founding President and Secretary General respectively. It is registered as a Non-Profit Organisation under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.

Governance:

- The Indian Olympic Association is currently governed by a **32-member Executive Council**, headed by President.
- The election for the Executive Council is held once in **every 4 years.**