

NEW PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL

Why in news?

- **Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'** has been appointed Nepal's new prime minister for a third time.

Electoral system of Nepal

Background:

- The new constitution passed in 2015 declared Nepal a federal state with three levels of government: federal, provincial and local.
- Adult franchise and periodic election have been categorically stated in the preamble to the Constitution.
- The Constitution provisioned different types of electoral system at local, provincial and federal level:
 - **first past the post (FPTP) system** for the election of Local Level, and
 - In FPTP system, the candidate with the highest number of votes in a constituency is declared the winner.
 - The system of allocation of seats on the basis of the votes secured by political parties is the proportional electoral system.
 - **the mixed electoral system** of first past the post and proportional representation for the election of State Assembly and House of Representatives.
 - The use of two different electoral systems at the same time is known as mixed electoral system.
 - This system has mixed the merits of plurality/ majority or other electoral systems and proportional representation electoral system.

Federal election

- There are 334 members in the Federal Parliament, out of which the **House of Representatives (HoR)** has 275 members and the **National Assembly (NA)** has 59 members.

News Summary

- Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of Nepal.
- He joined hands with rival K P Sharma Oli, chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), and other smaller parties.
 - Prachanda has claimed the support of 170 parliamentarians in the 275-member House.
- Prachanda and Oli have reached an understanding to lead the government on rotation basis, and Oli agreed to make Prachanda Prime Minister in the first round.

Background:

- Elections in Nepal, held on November 20, failed to produce a clear winner. It saw the ruling coalition of prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba (of Nepali Congress) lose its majority.
- After the election, the Nepali Congress became the single largest party with 89 seats, while CPN-UML and CPN-MC got 78 and 32 seats respectively.

What does this mean for India?

- Both Prachanda and Oli are seen as pro-China.
- Prachanda has in the past said a new understanding with India needed to be developed on the basis of “changed scenario” in Nepal and after addressing all outstanding issues.
 - Outstanding issues between the two countries include revision of the 1950 Friendship Treaty and resolving Kalapani and Susta border disputes among others.
- On the other hand, Oli, in 2021, claimed that efforts were being made to oust him after his government redrew Nepal’s political map by incorporating three strategically key Indian territories.
 - Nepali Parliament, in 2020, unanimously approved the new political map of the country featuring **Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura** areas which India maintains belong to it.

DARK PATTERNS

Recently, it is been found that some Internet based firms have been tricking users into agreeing to certain conditions or clicking a few links.



About Dark Patterns:

- **What it is?** It is a user interface that has been crafted to trick or manipulate users into making choices that are detrimental to their interests.
- The term 'Dark Patterns' was coined by user experience designer **Harry Brignull in 2010**.
- Dark patterns endanger the experience of internet users and make them more vulnerable to financial and data exploitation by BigTech firms.
- Dark patterns confuse users, introduce online obstacles, make simple tasks time-consuming, have users sign up for unwanted services or products and force them to pay more money or share more personal information than they intended.
- In the U.S., the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has taken note of dark patterns and the risks they pose. In a report released in September, 2022, the regulatory body listed over 30 dark patterns.
- The FTC report outlined its legal action against Amazon in 2014, for a supposedly free children's app that fooled its young users into making in-app purchases that their parents had to pay later for.

Types of dark patterns

In India, The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has recognised four dark patterns and these are the proposed areas of extension to the ASCI code on misleading ads.

- **Drip pricing:** It is a pattern when the total price is only revealed at the very end of the buying process.
- **Bait and switch:** It is a pattern that occurs when a user takes an action expecting one outcome, but instead is served an outcome they didn't want.
- **False urgency:** It is a dark pattern that refers to misleading information on quantities of a particular product.
- **Disguised advertising:** It is a pattern when an advertisement mimics editorial content.

How does this affect users?

- Dark patterns endanger the experience of Internet users and make them more vulnerable to financial and data exploitation by Big Tech firms.
- Dark patterns confuse users, introduce online obstacles, make simple tasks time-consuming, have users sign up for unwanted services/products, and force them to pay more money or share more personal information than they intended.
- In the U.S., the Federal Trade Commission [FTC] has taken note of dark patterns and the risks they pose.
- In a report released in September this year, the regulatory body listed over 30 dark patterns, many of which are considered standard practice across social media platforms and e-commerce sites.
 - These include “baseless” countdowns for online deals, conditions in fine print that add on to costs, making cancellation buttons hard to see or click, etc.

Way Ahead:

- Dark and deceptive patterns don’t just stop with laptops and smartphones.
- The FTC report has warned that as **augmented reality** (AR) and **virtual reality** (VR) platforms and devices grow in usage, dark patterns will likely follow users to these new channels as well.
- Internet users who are able to identify and recognise dark patterns in their daily lives can choose more user-friendly platforms that will respect their right to choose and privacy.
- The ASCI has formed a task-force to look into the issue.

NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME

Why in News?

- The Prime Minister of India recently highlighted the global appreciation for the country’s flagship **Namami Gange Programme** for Ganga rejuvenation, giving credit to people’s participation in the programme.
- The United Nations (UN) has recognised the initiative as one of the top 10 World Restoration Flagships and awarded it on 14th December 2022 - **the World Restoration Day**, at the COP15 to the CBD in Montreal, Canada.

About Namami Gange Programme:

★ Main pillars of the Namami Gange Programme are:-

| | |
|---|---|
|  Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure |  River-Front Develop |
|  River-Surface Cleaning |  Bio-Diversity |
|  Afforestation |  Public Awareness |
|  Industrial Effluent Monitoring |  Ganga Gram |

- It is an **integrated conservation mission**, approved as 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in 2014 with budget outlay of Rs.20,000 Crores.

- It is administered by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti's**

Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, to accomplish the twin objectives of -

- Effective abatement of pollution,
- Conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.
- The program would be implemented by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**, and its state counterpart organisations i.e., State Program Management Groups (SPMGs).
- NMCG is the implementation wing of National Ganga Council (NGC, which replaced the National Ganga River Basin Authority).
- NGC was created in 2016 under the River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order, 2016, and is headed by the PM.
- In order to implement the programme, a **three-tier mechanism** has been proposed for project monitoring comprising of:
 - A high-level task force chaired by **Cabinet Secretary** assisted by NMCG at the national level,
 - State level committee chaired by **Chief Secretary** assisted by SPMG at the state level and
 - District level committee chaired by the **District Magistrate**.
- Its implementation has been divided into -
 - Entry-Level Activities (for immediate visible impact),
 - Medium-Term Activities (to be implemented within 5 years of time frame) and
 - Long-Term Activities (to be implemented within 10 years).

Why is the Namami Gange programme needed?

- Rising in the Himalayas and flowing to the Bay of Bengal, the river **traverses a course of more than 2,500 km** through the plains of north and eastern India.
- The Ganga basin - which also extends into parts of **Nepal, China and Bangladesh** - accounts for **26% of India's landmass**.
- Thus, River Ganga has significant **economic, environmental and cultural-spiritual value** (one of India's holiest rivers), whose significance transcends the boundaries of the basin.

The key achievements under the programme are:

- **Creating Sewage Treatment Capacity:** 98 sewage projects have been completed in the states of UK, UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, etc.
- **Creating River-Front Development:** The projects for the construction, modernisation, and renovation of 267 Ghats/Crematoria and Kunds/Ponds have been initiated.
- **River Surface Cleaning:** River Surface cleaning for collection of floating solid waste from the surface of the Ghats and River and its disposal are afoot and pushed into service at 11 locations.
- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Cadre of volunteers (**Ganga Praharis**) have been developed and trained to support conservation actions in the field
- **Public Awareness:** Ganga Praharis and Ganga Doots are engaged in spreading awareness through planting trees, cleaning ghats, Ganga Aarti, painting and poems.
- **Industrial Effluent Monitoring:** Regulation and enforcement through regular and surprise inspections of Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs) is carried out for compliance verification against stipulated environmental norms.
- **Deploying best available knowledge and resources across the world:** Countries such as Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Israel, etc., have been collaborating with India for Ganga rejuvenation

SRIMUKHALINGAM TEMPLE



Recently, the Srimukhalingam temple chief priest urged the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to get the historic Siva temple included in UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites

About Srimukhalingam Temple:

- Some architectural masterpieces were created by the rulers of **the Eastern Ganga dynasty** in the then-capital of the Kalinga kingdom.
 - Srimukhalingam temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, known as Sri Mukha Lingeswara Swamy, housing 3 Ancient Temples at one Location.
 - The Trinity of Madhukeswara, Someswara and Bheemeswara Temples are a testimony to the magnificent architectural skills of Kalinga Kings.
 - This temple is built in **Kalinga architectural style** on the banks of the **Vamsadhara river**.
-

VEER BAL DIWAS

Prime Minister of India had recently announced that 26th December will be observed as 'Veer Bal Diwas', to mark the martyrdom of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's sons.



About Veer Bal Diwas:

- On December 26, 1707, Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh attained martyrdom when they were executed on the orders of Aurangzeb.

Who is Guru Gobind Singh?

- He was the **10th Sikh guru**.
 - He became the Sikh guru at the age of nine, following the demise of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru.
 - Also known for his significant contributions to the Sikh religion, including the introduction of the turban to cover hair.
 - He is renowned for founding the principles of Khalsa or the Five 'K's i.e kesh (uncut hair), kanga (wooden comb), kara (iron or steel bracelet), kirpan (dagger) and kachera (short breeches).
 - He fought against the Mughals later in the **battle of Muktsar in 1705**.
-

- Guru Gobind Singh was killed by a Mughal assassin in 1708, a year after the death of Aurangzeb.
-

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA (NAI)

Director-General of National Archives of India (NAI) recently said that it does not have records of the 1962, 1965, and 1971 wars as well as those related to the Green Revolution.



About National Archives of India (NAI):

- The National Archives of India is the **custodian of the records of enduring value of the Government of India.**
 - Established on 11 March, 1891 at Calcutta (Kolkata) as the **Imperial Record Department**, it is the biggest archival repository in South Asia.
 - It has a vast corpus of records viz., public records, private papers, oriental records, cartographic records and microfilms, which constitute an invaluable source of information for scholars-administrators and users of archives.
 - **The Director General of Archives**, heading the Department has been given the mandate for the implementation of the **Public Records Act, 1993** and the rules made there under, the Public Records Rules, 1997 for the management, administration and preservation of public records in the **Ministries, Departments, Public Sector undertakings etc. of the Central Government.**
 - Located at the heart of New Delhi, the Department functions as an **Attached Office of the Ministry of Culture.**
 - The NAI keeps and conserves records of the government of India and its organisations. **It does not receive classified documents.**
-

KALA AZAR DISEASE

Prime Minister recently said that India will completely eradicate Kala Azar disease soon.



What is Kala Azar Disease?

- Kala Azar or black fever is a disease caused by **infection with Leishmania parasites**. It is transmitted by female sandfly - *Phlebotomus argentipes*. It is also known as visceral leishmaniasis or black fever or Dum-Dum fever.
- **Types:**
 - **Cutaneous leishmaniasis:** This is another form of Kala-azar which results in skin lesions – mainly ulcers on the exposed parts of the body, which creates scars and serious disability. The lesions usually are painless but can be painful, particularly if open sores become infected with bacteria. Types of Cutaneous leishmaniasis:
 - **Mucosal Leishmaniasis:** In this type of Cutaneous leishmaniasis, the infection results from the dissemination of parasites from the skin to the naso-oropharyngeal mucosa.
- **Symptoms**
 - Initially, leishmania parasites cause skin sores or ulcers at the site of the bite. If the disease progresses, it attacks the immune system.
 - Kala azar presents after two to eight months with more generalized symptoms including prolonged fever and weakness.
- **Treatment:** Treatment of Kala Azar is done through liposomal AmB – this is the drug of choice for immunocompetent patients. There are other treatment options available such as paromomycin, miltefosin and multidrug therapy treatment.

PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

The Prime Minister recently paid tribute to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on his jayanti at a function at Parliament.



About Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:

- Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya was born on December 25, 1861, in Allahabad, **Uttar Pradesh**. He is known for his contribution to **India's education system and his role in the Indian Independence movement**.
- Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya was **given the title of 'Mahamana' or great soul by Mahatma Gandhi**, who considered him as an elder brother.

- In 2014, Pandit Malviya was posthumously conferred with **Bharat Ratna**, the country's highest civilian award.
- In 2016, the Indian Railways started the Varanasi-New Delhi Mahamana Express in the leader's honour.

Major contributions:

- **Banaras Hindu University:** He played a key role in the **Indian independence struggle** against British rule and founded **the Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** in 1916. At the BHU, he served as **Vice-Chancellor from 1919 to 1938**.
- **Hindu Mahasabha:** Malaviya was one of the early leaders of the **Hindu Mahasabha**, and **helped found it in 1906**. He was a social reformer and a successful legislator, serving as a member of the **Imperial Legislative Council for 11 years (1909–20)**.
- **Scout and Guide:** He was also one of the **founders of Scout and Guide in India**.
- **'Satyamev Jayate':** One of the most famous slogans, **'Satyamev Jayate' was said by Pandit Malviya in the session of 1918** when he was the President of the Indian National Congress.
- **President of INC:** Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya was the President of Indian National Congress for four sessions (1909, 1913, 1919 and 1932). Pandit Malviya played a big role in the Civil Disobedience and Non-cooperation movement which were led by Mahatma Gandhi.
- **Role in media:** He was the **chairman of Hindustan Times** from 1924 to 1946 and he also founded many Hindi and English newspapers, namely: **The Leader, Hindustan Dainik, Maryada etc.**
- Malaviya espoused free and compulsory primary education, opposed the system of indentured labour in the British Empire, and supported the nationalisation of railways.