

DEFENCE ACQUISITION COUNCIL (DAC)

The Defence Acquisition Council recently accorded approval for Acceptance of Necessity (AoNs) for various capital acquisition proposals amounting to ₹2.23 lakh crore.



About the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC):

- DAC is the highest decision-making body of the Defence Ministry on procurement.
- **Objective:** To ensure expedited procurement of the approved requirements of the armed forces.
- **Formation:** It was formed after the Group of Ministers' recommendations on 'Reforming the National Security System', in 2001, post-Kargil War (1999).
- **Composition:**
 - The Defence Minister is the chairman of DAC.
 - Its members include the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and chiefs of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Functions:

- Give in-principle approval of a 15-year Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP) for defence forces.
- Accord of acceptance of necessity to acquisition proposals.
- Categorization of the acquisition proposals relating to 'Buy', 'Buy & Make', and 'Make'.
- Look into issues relating to single vendor clearance.
- Take decisions regarding 'offset' provisions in respect of acquisition proposals above Rs 300 crore.
- Take decisions regarding the transfer of technology under the 'Buy & Make' category of acquisition proposals.

THE GDP SURPRISE: INDIA ON THE UP AND UP

Context

- The Indian economy **expanded by a staggering 7.6 per cent in the second quarter of the ongoing financial year.** The economy has now grown at **7 per cent plus for two straight quarters.**
- This **raises a serious question over the accuracy of forecasts that have been continuously casting doubt** on India's macroeconomic resilience post the pandemic.

Major Factor Behind the Growth Rate: Manufacturing Sector

- The manufacturing sector grew at a robust **13.9 per cent** in the second quarter, compared to 4.7 per cent in the first quarter.
- Growth in the second quarter was **at a nine-quarter high.**
- **Noteworthy Growth in FMCG Sector:** The FMCG sector, often considered a barometer of rural consumption, **reported a noteworthy 5% revenue growth.**
- **Stellar Turnaround in Rural Demand**
 - The **positive performance of the FMCG sector is indicative of potential improvements in rural demand and consumption trends.**
 - **This shift is a positive signal for the broader economy,** as rural areas are crucial contributors to overall economic activity.
- **Continued Investment Momentum:** In the first half of the year, **investment momentum persisted, with approximately Rs 15 lakh crore in new announcements, reflecting an 8% increase** compared to the previous year.
- **Improved Corporate Balance Sheets**
 - Sectors such as auto components, gas distribution utilities, telecommunication services, hotels, restaurants, leisure, retailing, and NBFCs are **experiencing higher credit rating upgrades compared to downgrades.**
 - **This trend suggests that corporate balance sheets are showing improvement** across these sectors, fostering a positive economic environment.
- **Agricultural Sector**

- Despite steady growth during the pandemic, **the agricultural sector expanded by only 1.2% in the second quarter.**
- **Subdued growth is anticipated due to factors such as a weak monsoon,** leading to lower-than-normal kharif crop output and delays in harvesting, impacting rabi crop sowing.
- **However, the share of allied activities within the farm sector, including dairy and fisheries, has increased from 34.6% in 2011-12 to 46.1% in 2021-22.**
- This diversification is seen as a **positive sign, providing a counter-cyclical buffer, and reducing dependence on farm income.**
- **Transformation in Agri Financing by Banks: Banks have started financing the entire agri value chain,** with agri loans increasing by 15.4% in 2022-23, compared to around 10% in the previous two years.
- **Services Sector Growth**
 - **The services sector growth moderated to 5.8%, primarily due to low growth in trade, hotels, transport, and communication.**
 - However, on a sequential basis, the sector expanded by 9%, exceeding the average 1.3% decline in the second quarter of every fiscal year until the pandemic, indicating a healthy performance.
- **Private Consumption Performance**
 - Private consumption **decelerated to 3.1%, potentially influenced by higher inflation.**
 - On a sequential basis, **growth increased by 2%, countering the typical 1% decline in the second quarter** of every fiscal year until the pandemic.

Conclusion

- Despite global challenges, **the Indian growth story is viewed as a beacon of hope.**
- The upward revision in GDP growth forecasts and the anticipation of strong momentum in the third and fourth quarters indicate a positive economic trajectory.

WHAT ARE SUB-NEPTUNE PLANETS?

Recently, astronomers have identified six sub-Neptune planets orbiting in a rare synchronised dance around a distant star.



Key findings:

- The star, known as **HD110067**, is located approximately **100 light-years** away in the **constellation Coma Berenices** and is about 20% less massive than our Sun.
- The six planets were detected by observing minute dimming of the star's brightness as each planet transited, or passed in front of, the star from our perspective on Earth
- The orbital resonance of these planets, i.e., **their orbits, is synchronised** in such a way that they have remained stable for about 4 billion years.

About sub-Neptune planets:

- These are the most **commonly observed types of planets in our galaxy**.
- They could be **rocky worlds with thick atmospheres of hydrogen and helium** gas, or perhaps composed of rock and ice with warm, water-rich atmospheres.
- These planets have **radii between those of the Earth and Neptune**.

Key points about Neptune

- It's the **last of the planets in our solar system**.
- It's more than 30 times as far from the sun as Earth is.
- Neptune is very similar to Uranus. It's made of a thick fog of water, ammonia, and methane over an earth-sized solid centre.
- Its atmosphere is **made of hydrogen, helium, and methane**.
- **Structure and Surface**
 - Neptune is **encircled by six rings** and is an ice giant.
 - It is made of a thick soup of water, ammonia, and methane flowing over a solid core about the size of Earth.
 - It has a thick, windy atmosphere.

- **Time on Neptune**
 - One day on Neptune goes by in 16 hours.
 - Neptune has such a long journey around the sun that it takes 165 Earth years to go around once.
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WHAT IS A STAY ORDER?

The Supreme Court recently agreed to review its 2018 judgement on the expiry period of stay orders to expedite trial proceedings.



About the Stay Order:

- A 'stay' or 'stay order' is defined as the **act of temporarily stopping or postponing any judicial proceeding through the court or legal authorities in India to secure the rights of a citizen.**
 - It could lead to the **suspension of a case or even the suspension of any specific proceeding within an ongoing case.**
 - So, **till a stay order is in effect, the operation of the Court's proceedings is made standstill**, and the party who seeks it can cause the operation of the other party (against whom the order is given) to cease.
 - In the case of any key development that may require it, **a judge may decide to issue a stay order without even formally prompting the other party** or even a request being made to them in this regard.
 - There are **two types of stay orders: 'stay of proceedings' and 'stay of execution'**.
 - A **stay of proceedings** is issued by the court in case there are **parallel proceedings** that take place, **which may affect either one.**
 - A **stay of execution** refers to the **complete halting of the enforcement of a verdict or judgement against someone**, for example, when it is believed that a person is innocent and is given a pardon.
 - This means that **stay orders can persist conditionally or even absolutely.**
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NAGARJUNA SAGAR DAM

Andhra Pradesh recently took control of half of the Nagarjuna Sagar dam on the Krishna River, sparking a dispute with Telangana.



About Nagarjuna Sagar Dam:

- It is **built** between the Nalgonda district of Telangana and the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.
- It is built **across the River Krishna**.
- It is the largest and **highest masonry dam in the world**.
- The dam is **150m tall** and 1.6 km long.
- It **derives its name** from a nearby **hillock** and island called **Nagarjunakonda**, where an ancient Buddhist monk once lived.
- It is also **one of the earliest projects built in post-independence India** for irrigation and hydroelectricity generation.
- The construction of the dam commenced in 1956 and was completed by 1967.
- This dam **supports the national grid with its electric power** and provides irrigation water to five districts, including Khamman District, Nalgonda District, Guntur District, Prakasam District, and Krishna District.
- **As per** the provisions of the **Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014**, Nagarjunasagar Dam is controlled and supervised by Telangana.

GREEN CREDIT SCHEME

Why in the News?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched an initiative focusing on generating Green Credits through plantation on degraded wasteland.
- During a high-level event at the ongoing climate talks - **COP28** in Dubai (UAE), he highlighted that the Green Credits Initiative surpasses the commercial nature of carbon credits.

What are Carbon Credits?

- Carbon credits, also known as carbon offsets, **are permits that allow the owner to emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide** or other greenhouse gases.
- One credit permits the emission of **one ton of carbon dioxide** or the equivalent in other greenhouse gases.
- Companies that pollute are awarded credits that allow them to continue to pollute up to a certain limit, which is reduced periodically.
 - Meanwhile, the company may sell any unneeded credits to another company that needs them.
- **Private companies are thus doubly incentivized to reduce greenhouse emissions:**
 - First, they must spend money on extra credits if their emissions exceed the cap.
 - Second, they can make money by reducing their emissions and selling their excess allowances.

What is Green Credits Initiative?

- In a landmark announcement at the COP28 (1st December 2023), the Indian PM launched the 'Green Credit Initiative,' a pathbreaking program aimed at reshaping global environmental policies.
- He also launched the official portal of the Green Credit Initiative at COP28.

About Green Credit Programme:

- To take ahead the 'LiFE' - 'Lifestyle for Environment' movement announced by the Prime Minister in 2021, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change introduced Green Credit Programme (GCP) in 2023.
- GCP is **an innovative market-based mechanism** designed to incentivize voluntary environmental actions across diverse sectors, by various stakeholders like individuals, communities, private sector industries, and companies.
- The GCP's governance framework is supported by an inter-ministerial Steering Committee.

- The **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)** serves as the GCP Administrator, responsible for program implementation, management, monitoring, and operation.
- **The GCP will cover 8 types of activities:**
 - **Tree plantation** which is meant to promote activities for increasing the green cover across the country.
 - **Water management** is meant to promote water conservation, water harvesting, and water use efficiency or water savings, including treatment and reuse of wastewater.
 - **Sustainable agriculture** is meant to promote natural and regenerative agricultural practices and land restoration to improve productivity, soil health, and nutritional value of food produced.
 - **Waste management** is meant to promote circularity, sustainable and improved practices for waste management, including collection, segregation, and environmentally sound management.
 - **Air pollution** reduction is meant to promote measures for reducing air pollution and other pollution abatement activities.
 - **Mangrove conservation and restoration**, which is meant to promote measures for conservation and restoration of mangroves.
- In its initial phase, the GCP focuses on two key activities:
 - **Water conservation** and
 - **Afforestation**

[WOMEN IN INDIAN ARMED FORCES: IN A FIRST, A WOMAN OFFICER TO TAKE OVER COMMAND OF WARSHIP INS TRINKAT](#)

Why in News?

- The Indian Navy has appointed the first woman commanding officer in a naval ship in line with the Navy's philosophy of "all roles-all ranks" to deploy women in the service.

- The officer (Shaliza Dhami), a Lieutenant Commander, would be commanding **INS Trinkat**, a fast attack craft based in the western seaboard.

About INS Trinkat:

- INS Trinkat is a **patrol vessel of the Indian Navy** designed and constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- The patrol vessel **carries out fisheries protection, anti-poaching**, counter-insurgency and search-and-rescue operations in coastal areas and in the exclusive economic zone.
- The vessels of the class are named after **Trinkat Island** - one of the 24 islands that make up the Nicobar Islands chain, located in the northeast Indian Ocean between the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea.

About Shaliza Dhami:

- Group Captain Shaliza Dhami is an officer in the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- She is the **first woman** officer in the IAF to receive a **permanent commission** and the **first woman to become a Flight Commander**.
- She became the **first woman IAF officer to get selected in a front-line combat unit**.

Women in Indian Armed Forces:

- There are **10,493 women officers** serving in the Indian Armed Forces, including its medical services.
- **The Army**, being the largest of the three services, **has the largest number of women officers** at 1,705, followed by 1,640 women officers in the IAF and 559 in the Navy.
- **The Navy's submarine arm** was also open to women, for which they would need to volunteer to join, clear an aptitude test and undergo rigorous training prior to deployment.
- **The overall strength of women Agniveers** has now crossed the 1,000 mark, adding that these statistics **stand testament to the philosophy of 'all roles, all ranks' approach** to deployment of women in the service.