

HINDI IN THE WORLD: IN THE ERA OF CULTURAL-FLATTENING, INDIA MUST STRENGTHEN ITS LINGUISTIC TRADITIONS

Context

- India's External Affairs Minister recently inaugurated the 12th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan (World Hindi Conference) in Nadia, Fiji, and emphasized to promote Hindi language across the world.
- He highlighted that the era of copying western languages and traditions is over and many languages and traditions which were suppressed during the colonial era are again raising their voice on the global stage.

World Hindi Conference

- The first World Hindi Conference was organised in **1975 in Nagpur** and since then 11 World Hindi Conferences have been organised in different parts of the world (last was held in Mauritius in 2018).
- During the Conference, Hindi scholars from India and other countries are honoured with “Vishwa Hindi Samman” for their special contribution to the field of Hindi.
- The current 12th World Hindi Conference is being organized from 15th to 17th February, 2023 by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, in association with the Government of Fiji.
- The main theme of the present conference is “**Hindi – Traditional Knowledge to Artificial Intelligence**”.
- It aims to focus upon **various aspects of the Hindi language, its global use, and its dissemination**.
 - Also, the issues like the status of Hindi in Fiji, the Pacific region and indentured countries will be pondered upon.
 - Hence, this conference highlighting Hindi language sends a strong message both as a **bonding across societies as well as being an expression of identity**.

What is the Hindi Language's Global Reach?

- The world language database – Ethnologue, brings out a yearly database of living languages of the world since its establishment in 1951.

- Hindi is the **3rd most spoken language of the world in 2019** with 615 million speakers after English and Mandarin.
- With 577.10 million native speakers worldwide, Hindi has the **highest prevalence in India** and the largest share of around 44 percent in the Fiji.

Why is Hindi Language Promotion Needed Worldwide?

- As more countries gained independence over the last 75 years, it resulted in a **rebalancing of the international system**, initially, from an economic aspect and later from a political facet as well.
- Thus, trend in the global order is gradually creating **greater multi-polarity** and also enhancing the need for a **cultural rebalancing**.
- In such a situation, the **world must be informed about all cultures and societies** and it can be promoted by broadening the teaching and usage of native languages, including Hindi.
 - **Mother Language Day** (February 21) is hence celebrated to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and **multilingualism**.
- In the pre-independence era, English befriended Hindi.
 - But in a globalised world, Hindi also needs to engage with other foreign languages, especially in the neighbourhood.
 - From Sinhala to Uzbek and Bhutani to Khmer, Hindi and other Indian languages have to build more **linguistic bridges**.

INDIA'S LITHIUM DISCOVERY AND ASSOCIATED RISKS

Why in news?

- News of the discovery of 5.9 million tonnes inferred resources of lithium by Geological Survey of India in the Salal-Haimana area of Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir has been received as a game-changer in India's impending transition to a green economy.
 - The term 'inferred' refers to the 'preliminary exploration stage', the second of a four-step process.
- However, analysts fear that if the local populace is not meaningfully engaged, the resulting tension could introduce new socio-environmental conflicts.

- With this discovery, India now has the third largest resource of lithium globally, but it will take time to convert it to reserves.

Why is this discovery significant?

- **Crucial for a green economy**

- Lithium-ion batteries are used in wind turbines, solar panels, and electric vehicles, all of which are crucial in a green economy.

- **Sustainable supply of critical metal amidst the increased global demand**

- A World Bank study suggests that the demand for critical metals such as lithium (Li) and cobalt is expected to rise by nearly 500% by 2050.
- The global electric vehicle market is projected to reach \$823.75 billion by 2030.
 - It will register a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 18.2% from 2021 to 2030.
 - At the same time, India's EV market is projected to register a CAGR of 23.76% by 2028.
- Hence, this discovery will enable India to secure its critical mineral supplies and build self-sufficiency in this sector.

- **Boost the domestic battery-manufacturing industry**

- India currently imports all of its Li from Australia and Argentina and 70% of its Li-ion cell requirement from China and Hong Kong.
- The lithium reserves in J&K could boost the domestic battery-manufacturing industry.
- If the perceived size of the mineral reserves in J&K is borne out by further exploration, India could jump ahead of China vis-à-vis its Li stockpile.

- **Support to India's ambitious plans**

- The J&K reserves will also help advance the Indian government's ambitious plan of 30% EV penetration in private cars, 70% for commercial vehicles, and 80% for two and three-wheelers by 2030 for the automobile industry.
- They will also strengthen India's **National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage** as well.
 - Launched in March 2019, this mission aims to formulate strategies for transformative mobility and Phased Manufacturing Programmes for EVs, EV Components and Batteries.

- **Geostrategic significance**

- Critical mineral dependencies constitute a major geostrategic concern in the transition to net-zero carbon energy systems.
- China currently controls 77% of the global lithium-ion battery manufacturing capacity and is home to six of the world's 10 manufacturing companies.
- The growing geopolitical rivalry with China complicates India's security considerations.
 - This is especially relevant in light of the longstanding, and recently escalating, territorial and border disputes.
- To reduce dependence on China, the Indian government and industry are pushing for a 'Rare Earths Mission' to exploit the country's critical mineral reserves.
 - Country's critical mineral reserves accounted for 6% of the world's rare-earths' reserves prior to the discovery of Li in J&K.
- In this context, the new discovery has more geostrategic implications considering the geopolitical sensitivity of its wider location.

What are the environmental effects of Li mining?

- **Environmental degradation**

- Extracting Li from hard rock mines entails open-pit-mining followed by roasting the ore using fossil fuels.
- Industry estimates suggest that this process consumes 170 cubic metres of water and releases 15 tonnes of CO₂ for every tonne of Li extracted.
- Open-pit-mining, refining, and waste disposal from these processes substantially degrades the environment.
- It also depletes and contaminates waterways and groundwater, diminishes biodiversity, and releases considerable air pollution.

- **Socio-environmental challenges**

- In Australia, Li-bearing pegmatite deposits are found in the ancient geological regions of Pilbara and Yilgarn cratons, whose continental rocks have been stable for over a billion years.

- The Himalaya on the other hand is the youngest mountain range in the world and is much more unstable.
- The ongoing land sinking tragedy in Joshimath is an example of this fact.
- Against this backdrop, the socio-environmental effects of mining are likely to be far worse considering the densely populated regions of India.
- Also, it is being feared that the mining would negatively affect the employment scenario in the region.
- Experts claim that employment in mining may not fully offset the consequences on local agriculture, animal husbandry, and tourism.

RAIL KAUSHAL VIKAS YOJANA

Recently, to empower youth by providing them entry-level skill training in Railway Training Institutes, “Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana” (RKVY) has been notified.



About Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana:

- It is a skill development scheme with a special focus on providing training for jobs that are relevant to the Railways.
- It is a sub-scheme under **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Railway.

Key Features of the scheme

- The training is imparted in fourteen (14) industry-relevant technical trades such as Electrician, Welder, Machinist, Fitter etc.
- The training is provided free of cost to the candidates and there is **no provision for providing employment** under this scheme.
- Participants will be selected from applications received online, following a transparent mechanism based on marks in matriculation.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Candidates, who had passed class X and are aged between 18 and 35 are eligible to apply.

- After the end of the program, trainees have to pass a standardized assessment followed by a certificate in the allotted trade by the National Rail and Transportation Institute.
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WHAT IS FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANAGEMENT ACT (FEMA)?

The Supreme Court has directed the Central Government and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to respond to whether Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) can be exempted from the Foreign Exchange Management Act's (FEMA) norms.



About Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA):

- FEMA is an enactment that deals primarily with the provisions relating to cross-border trade and payments
- It defines the procedures, formalities, and dealings of all foreign exchange transactions in India.
- It was introduced in 1999 as a replacement for the earlier Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA).
- FEMA's head office is known as Enforcement Directorate and is situated in Delhi.
- **Primary objective:** To help facilitate external trade and payments in India.
- **Other objectives:**
 - To help orderly development and maintenance of the foreign exchange market in India.
 - To facilitate transactions involving a foreign exchange or foreign security and payments from outside the country to India only through an authorized person.
 - To encourage dealings in foreign exchange under the current account through an authorized person.
 - To authorize the Reserve Bank of India to subject capital account transactions to a number of restrictions.
- **Applicability:**
 - It is applicable to all parts of India.
 - It is also equally applicable to the offices and agencies located outside India but managed or owned by an Indian Citizen.

- FEMA is applicable to the following entities and transactions
- Any citizen of India residing in the country or outside (NRI);
- **Any overseas company that is owned 60% or more by an NRI (Non-Resident Indian);**
- **Any Associate Branches or subsidiaries, outside India, of companies or bodies corporate, registered or incorporated in India;**
- **Exports of any goods and services from India;**
- **Imports of goods and services to India;**
- **Banking, financial, and insurance services provided outside India;**
- **Cross-border sale, purchase, and exchange of any kind (i.e. Transfer).**

Who are Overseas Citizens of India (OCI)?

- OCI Scheme was **introduced by amending the Citizenship Act 1955** in August 2005.
- The Scheme **provides for registration as OCI of all Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)** who were citizens of India on 26th January 1950 or thereafter or were eligible to become citizens of India on 26th January 1950, except those who were or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify.

[GLOBAL SEA-LEVEL RISE AND IMPLICATIONS REPORT: MUMBAI, DHAKA, LONDON, NEW YORK AMONG METROS IN LINE OF SEA-LEVEL RISE THREAT](#)

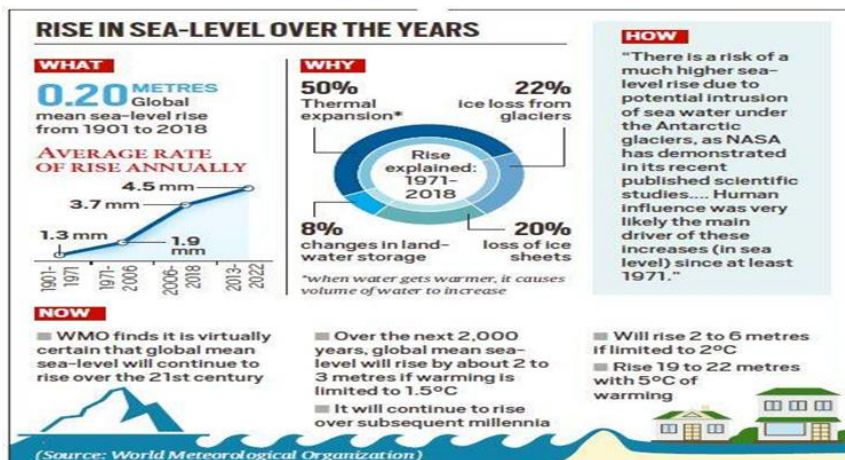
Why in News?

- According to a new report by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) - “Global Sea-level Rise and Implications” - India, China, Bangladesh and the Netherlands face the highest threat of sea-level rise globally.
- Almost 11% of the global population (896 million) in the Low Elevation Coastal Zone, increasing to beyond 1 billion by 2050 and associated development, coastal ecosystems face climate risks, including sea level rise.

What is the WMO?

- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an intergovernmental organisation with a **membership of 193** Member States and Territories.
- It originated from the **International Meteorological Organisation (IMO** - a NGO), the roots of which were planted at the 1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress.
- Established by the ratification of the **WMO Convention on 23 March 1950**, WMO became the **specialised agency of the UN**, responsible for promoting international cooperation on -
 - Meteorology (weather and climate),
 - Operational hydrology and
 - Related geophysical sciences.
- **The WMO's Strategic Plan includes -**
 - Disaster risk reduction,
 - The Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS),
 - The WMO Integrated Global Observing System (WIGOS),
 - Aviation meteorological services,
 - Polar and high mountain regions,
 - Capacity development and Governance.
- The Secretariat, headquartered in **Geneva**, is headed by the Secretary-General and its supreme body is the **World Meteorological Congress**.
- WMO publishes - **Greenhouse Gas Bulletin, Status of Global Climate**, etc., reports

What are the Key Findings of the “Global Sea-level Rise and Implications” Report?



- While sea-level rise is **not globally uniform and varies regionally**, continued and accelerating sea-level rise will encroach on coastal settlements and infrastructure and commit low-lying coastal ecosystems to submergence and loss.
- **Several big cities** (Shanghai, Dhaka, Bangkok, Jakarta, Mumbai, Maputo, Lagos, Cairo, London, Copenhagen, New York, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires and Santiago) in all continents are threatened by the rise in sea level.
- It is a **major economic, social and humanitarian challenge**, as the sea-level rise threatens coastal farmlands and water reserves and resilience of infrastructures as well as **human lives and livelihoods**.
- Climate change will increasingly **put pressure on food production and access**, especially in vulnerable regions, undermining food security and nutrition.
- **If trends in urbanisation in exposed areas continue**, this will exacerbate the impacts, with more challenges where energy, water and other services are constrained.
- **For example**, the impacts of average sea-level rise are **boosted by storm surges and tidal variations**, as was the situation during the landfall of hurricane **Sandy** in New York and Cyclone **Idai** in Mozambique.
- Urban systems are critical for **enabling climate resilient development**, especially at the coast.

DEFENCE MINISTERS' CONCLAVE

Why in news?

- The Defence Ministers' Conclave was held on the sidelines of Aero India 2023 in Bengaluru.
- At the conclave, Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh hosted the Defence & Deputy Defence Ministers of 27 countries.

Aero India 2023

- The 14th edition of the biennial show, Aero India 2023, was inaugurated by PM Modi at the Air Force Station in Yelahanka, Bengaluru on February 13.
- It is being organised on the theme '**The runway to a billion opportunities**' and the show seeks to display India's growth in aerospace and defence capabilities.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- Aero India 2023 is being organised by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) on behalf of the Department of Defence Production of the Ministry of Defence.

Significance

- **Export of indigenous air platforms**
 - The event aims to promote export of indigenous air platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)- Tejas, HTT-40 etc.
 - **Opportunities for domestic MSMEs and start-ups**
 - It will integrate domestic MSMEs and start-ups in the global supply chain and attract foreign investments including partnerships for co-development and co-production.
 - **Aims to strengthen India's relations with others countries**
 - Though Aero India is a business event, it additionally aims to strengthen India's relations with others countries.
 - This is evident from the participation of 98 countries, the Defence Ministers of 32 countries and Air Chiefs of 29 countries.
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