

### WHAT IS THE UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT, 1967 (UAPA)?

At the request of petitioners, the Supreme Court recently allowed pleas challenging provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) to be withdrawn.



#### About Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA):

- The UAPA was introduced in 1967 as a legislation to set out reasonable restrictions on the fundamental freedoms under Article 19(1) of the Constitution, such as freedom of speech, the right to assemble peacefully, and the right to form associations.
- Over the years, terror-specific legislations like the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) and Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) were repealed after running into legal trouble, and the UAPA became the primary anti-terror legislation in India.
- In line with its stated objectives, the UAPA punishes the commission, funding, and support of “unlawful activities” and “terrorist acts”.
- It lays down the definitions and rules for designating an organisation as an "unlawful association" if it is engaged in certain types of activities.
- ‘Unlawful activity’ is defined as any action taken by an individual or association – through an act, words, spoken or written, or by signs or visible representation – which is intended to, or supports a claim to, bring about the cession of a part of the territory of India, or the secession of a part of the territory of India from the Union, or which incites any individual or group of individuals to bring about such cession or secession.
- It covers activities which disclaim, question, disrupt, or are intended to disrupt the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, and which cause or intend to cause disaffection against India.

- In 2004, the UAPA was amended, and 'terrorist activities' were brought within its fold, under which 34 outfits, including the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad, were banned.
- Under the Act, the central government may designate an organisation as a terrorist organisation if it:
  - commits or **participates** in acts of terrorism;
  - **prepares for terrorism**;
  - **promotes** terrorism;
  - is otherwise **involved in terrorism**;
- The 2019 Amendment gave the Home Ministry the power to designate individuals as terrorists.
- The Act extends to the whole of India.
- The UAPA applies to anyone who commits a UAPA crime in India or outside India. It applies to Indian citizens irrespective of where the crime is committed and also includes people in Government service and people on ships and aircraft registered in India.

## YOUNG SCIENTIST PROGRAMME (YUVIKA)

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to conduct its special 'Young Scientist Programme' or 'YUVIKA' for school children.



### About the Young Scientist Programme (YUVIKA):

- "Young Scientist Programme", or "YUva VIgyani KAryakram" YUVIKA, is a learning and awareness-creating programme of the ISRO to impart basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science, and Space Applications to younger students with a preference for rural areas.
- The programme is aimed at creating awareness about the emerging trends in science and technology amongst the youngsters, who are the future building blocks of our nation. ISRO has chalked out this programme to "Catch Them Young".

- The programme is also expected to encourage more students to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) based research /careers.
- **Eligibility:**
  - Those who have finished class 8 and are **currently studying in class 9** can apply for the programme.
  - **Three students from each state/Union Territory** will participate in this programme every year, covering **CBSE, ICSE, and state-board syllabus.**
  - The **selection is based on 8th Standard academic performance and extracurricular activities.**
  - **Students belonging to the rural area** have been **given special weightage** in the selection criteria.
  - **In case there is a tie** between the selected candidates, the **younger candidates will be given priority.**
- **What is being offered?**
  - It is a **two-week residential programme** offered by ISRO.
  - It will **include invited talks, experience sharing** by eminent scientists, facility and **lab visits**, exclusive sessions for discussions with experts and practical and feedback sessions.
  - A minimum participation will be ensured from each State / UT.

## WHAT IS THE GULF STREAM?

A recent scientific study estimates a timescale for the collapse of the Gulf Stream between 2025 and 2095, with a central estimate of 2050, if global carbon emissions are not reduced.



### About Gulf Stream:

- It is a swift and warm ocean current that flows along the eastern coast of North America and crosses the Atlantic Ocean towards Europe.
  - This extension towards Europe is **known as the North Atlantic drift.**

- The Gulf Stream transports more water than all the world's rivers combined.
- **Key characteristics:**
  - **Location:** It originates in the **Gulf of Mexico**. It then travels **northward** along the eastern coast of the United States. It follows a **north-eastward path** across the **western North Atlantic Ocean**.
  - **Sources:** The two equatorial sources of the Gulf Stream are the **North Equatorial Current (NEC)**, which flows generally westward along the Tropic of Cancer, and the **South Equatorial Current (SEC)**, which flows westward from southwestern Africa to South America and then northward to the Caribbean Sea. Together, **these two warm currents, along with waters from the Gulf of Mexico, form the Gulf Stream**.
  - **Warmth:** The current carries **warm water from the tropics** (around 25 to 28°C or 77 to 82°F) to **higher latitudes**.
  - **Width and Speed:** The Gulf Stream is **several hundred kilometres wide** and can flow at an average speed of about four miles per hour (6.4 kilometres per hour). However, its **speed can vary** depending on the location and other factors.
  - **Depth:** The current is also **very deep**, extending to depths of **up to 1,000 metres**.
- **Importance and Impact:**
  - **Climate Regulation:** It moderates the temperatures along the eastern coast of **North America**, keeping the coastal areas warmer in winter and cooler in summer compared to inland regions at the same latitudes. Since the Gulf Stream also extends toward Europe, it **warms Western European countries** as well.
  - **Weather Patterns:** The **warm and moist air** above the Gulf Stream can lead to the **formation of low-pressure systems**, which may **develop into storms or hurricanes**. It can also contribute to the **formation of fog** in certain areas.
  - **Maritime Navigation:** The Gulf Stream has been a crucial factor in maritime navigation for centuries. It provides a **fast and efficient route** for **ships travelling between North America and Europe**, as it aids in faster travel times due to its speed.

- **Ocean Circulation:** The Gulf Stream is an essential **part of the larger** oceanic circulation system known as the **Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)**. The AMOC plays a vital role in **redistributing heat around the Earth** and **regulating global climate patterns**.
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## EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION (EFTA)

India has rejected the demand of the four-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA) for ‘data exclusivity’ provisions in the free trade agreement that both sides are negotiating.



### **About the European Free Trade Association:**

- It is an **intergovernmental organisation** established in 1960 by the **Stockholm Convention**.
- **Objective:** Promotes free trade and economic integration between its members within Europe and globally.
- **Member Countries:** Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.
- The members of this organisation are all open, competitive economies committed to the progressive liberalisation of trade in the multinational arena as well as in free trade agreements.
- In contrast to the European Union (EU), it is **not a customs union**.
- **Governance:**
  - Its highest governing body is **the EFTA Council**. It generally meets 8 times a year at the ambassadorial level and twice a year at the ministerial level.
  - **EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA):** It monitors compliance with European Economic Area (EEA) rules in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
  - **EFTA Court:** It is based in Luxembourg and has the competence and authority to settle internal and external disputes regarding the implementation, application or interpretation of the EEA agreement.

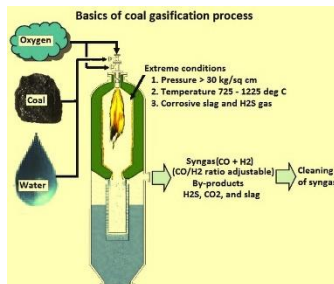
- The headquarters of the EFTA Secretariat is located in **Geneva**. It assists the EFTA Council in the management of relations between the 4 EFTA States and deals with the negotiation and operation of EFTA's FTAs.

## What is India's concern?

- Data exclusivity provisions **will bar generic drug producers from using data of preclinical tests and clinical trials** of former patent holders.
- If generic medicine makers wish to introduce their version of an off-patent drug then they will have to either generate their own clinical data or wait for the exclusivity period to end.

## COAL GASIFICATION

The Ministry of Coal, Government of India, is set to host an **Industry Interaction in Hyderabad** aimed at fostering the development and proliferation of coal/lignite gasification projects across the nation.



### About Coal Gasification:

- It is the process of **producing syngas**, a mixture consisting primarily of carbon monoxide (CO), hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and water vapour (H<sub>2</sub>O) - from **coal and water**, air and/or oxygen.
- Gasification occurs in a gasifier, generally a **high temperature/pressure vessel** where oxygen and steam are directly contacted with the coal or other feed material causing a series of chemical reactions to occur that convert the feed to syngas and ash/slag.
- Syngas can be used for **electricity production**, used in energy-efficient fuel cell technology, or as chemical “building blocks” for industrial purposes. The hydrogen can also be extracted for use in fuelling a hydrogen economy.
- **Benefits of coal Gasification**
  - Coal gasification can help address **local pollution problems**.
  - It is considered a cleaner option compared to the burning of coal.

- It will help in reducing reliance on imports of natural gas, methanol, ammonia and other essential products.
  - This holds the potential to alleviate the environmental burden by reducing carbon emissions and fostering sustainable practices, contributing to India's global commitments towards a greener future.
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## KANHA TIGER RESERVE

A male tiger from the Kanha Tiger Reserve has been relocated to Mukundpur Safari in Satna.



### About Kanha Tiger Reserve:

- Kanha Tiger Reserve, also called Kanha National Park, is the **largest national park of Madhya Pradesh.**
- **Location:**
  - It is located in the Mandla and Balaghat districts of **Madhya Pradesh.**
  - It is nestled in the **Maikal range of Satpuras**, the heart of India, that forms the **central Indian highlands.**
- Kanha National Park was created on June 1, 1955, and in 1973 was made the Tiger Reserve.
- It sprawls over an area of 940 square kilometres.
- **Habitat:** It is characterised mainly by **forested shallow undulations, hills** with varying degrees of **slopes, plateaus, and valleys.**
- The **forest depicted** in the famous novel by Rudyard Kipling, **The Jungle Book**, is thought by some to be based on jungles, including this reserve.
- It is also the **first tiger reserve in India to officially introduce a mascot, "Bhoorsingh the Barasingha".**
- **Flora:** It is primarily a **moist Sal and moist mixed deciduous forest** where Bamboo, Tendu, Sal, Jamun, Arjun, and Lendia flourish.
- **Fauna:**

- The park has a significant population of **Royal Bengal Tiger, leopard, sloth bear, and Indian wild dog.**
  - The Park is respected globally for **saving the Barasingha (the state animal of Madhya Pradesh) from near extinction** and has the unique distinction of harbouring the last world population of this deer species.
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## REGULATING POLITICAL FUNDING: RULES AROUND THE WORLD, INDIA'S CHALLENGE

### Why in News?

- In a judgement in the electoral bonds case, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) dwelt at length on the close association of money and politics, and the influence of money over electoral outcomes.

### Broader Issues in the Political Funding Framework:

- **The CJI summarised the two issues** raised by the petitions in the Electoral Bonds case as:
  - Whether unlimited corporate funding to political parties infringes the **principle of free and fair elections** and violates **Article 14** of the Constitution; and
  - Whether the **non-disclosure of information** on voluntary contributions are violative of the right to information of citizens under **Article 19(1)(a)**.
- Unlike in the US, where elections revolve around the campaign of individual candidates, in India (like most other parliamentary systems) **parties are central to electoral politics.**
- Thus, the primary focus of the campaign finance framework in India needs to be parties and the question of the **funding of political parties goes to the heart of India's democracy.**

### Political Funding Rules Around the World - The Chilean Experiment:

- Under the Chilean system of “reserved contributions”, **donors could transfer to the Chilean Electoral Service** the money they wished to donate to parties.



- **The Electoral Service would then forward** the sum to the party without revealing the donor's identity.
- If the complete anonymity system worked perfectly, **the political party would not be able to ascertain the sum donated by any specific donor.**
- However, various scandals revealed that Chilean politicians and donors had coordinated with each other to effectively erode the system of complete anonymity.

### Case of India:

- **In India**, there are no donation limits on individuals, also no legal expenditure limit on parties.
- Therefore, **a party can spend as much** as it wants for its campaign as long as this expenditure is not for the election of any specific candidate.
- **The Electoral Bonds Scheme** enabled large donors to hide their donations if they used official banking channels.
- Also, Indian electioneering is **no longer restricted to parties and candidates.**
  - Over the last decade, there has been a staggering rise in the involvement of political consultancies, campaign groups, and civil society organisations in online and offline political campaigns.

### Need of the Hour for India - Balancing Transparency, Anonymity:

- **Many jurisdictions strike this balance** by allowing anonymity for small donors, while requiring disclosures of large donations. For example,
  - **In the UK**, a party needs to report donations received from a single source amounting to a total of more than £7,500 in a calendar year.
  - The analogous limit in **Germany** is €10,000.
- **The argument in favour of this approach is:** small donors are likely to be the least influential in the government and most vulnerable to partisan victimisation, while large donors and parties are mutually benefited.