

### FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (FSSAI)

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has specified a comprehensive group standard for millets under Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Second Amendment Regulations, 2023.



#### Why in news?

- The Authority has now framed a comprehensive group standard for **15 types of millets** specifying eight quality parameters to ensure the availability of good quality millets in domestic and global markets.
- The group standard applies to the millets including Buckwheat (Kuttu), Kodo Millet (Kodo), Little Millet (Kutki), Brown top (Korale) and Job's tears (Adlay).

#### What are millets?

- Millets are a group of **small-grained cereal food** crops that **are highly tolerant to drought and other extreme weather** conditions and require low chemical inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides.
- Most of the millet crops are native to India and provide most of the nutrients required for the normal functioning of the human body.

#### Key facts Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

- It is a statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSS Act).
- FSS Act, of 2006 consolidated various acts & orders that had earlier handled food-related issues in various Ministries and Departments.
- **Nodal ministry:** Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

### KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change recently sought a “factual report” on the rhino population enumeration conducted in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in March 2022.



## About Kaziranga National Park:

- **Location:** It is located in the Golaghat and Nagaon districts of Assam.
- It was declared a **national park in 1974**.
- It is also a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and houses **two-thirds** of the total world population of greater one-horned rhinoceros.
- It is the **largest undisturbed area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplains**.
- **Vegetation:** It is a mix of eastern wet alluvial grasslands, semi evergreen forests and tropical moist deciduous forests.
- **Flora:**
  - It is primarily famous for its **dense and tall elephant grasses** intermixed with **small swamplands**.
  - It also includes an **abundant cover of water lilies, water hyacinths and lotus**.
  - **Rattan Cane**, a type of climbing palm, is also found here.
- **Fauna:**
  - Important wildlife found are **One-horned rhinoceros, Leopard, Fishing Cat**, other Lesser cats, **royal Bengal tiger**, Large Indian Civet, Small Indian Civet, Sambar, **Barking deer, Hog deer**, Gaur, Hog Badger, Capped Langur, etc.
  - It is also one of the **last remaining homes** of the **endangered and endemic western hoolock gibbon**, the **only species of apes found in India**.
  - It is home to approximately **478 species of both resident and migratory birds**.
  - It is one of the last homes of the **critically endangered Bengal florican**.

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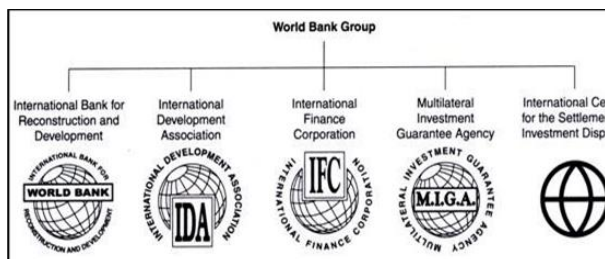
## [WORLD BANK GROUP: BIDEN PICKS AJAY BANGA FOR PRESIDENT OF WORLD BANK](#)

- Recently, the US President (Joe Biden) announced that the US is nominating Ajay Banga to lead the World Bank (WB).

- He said that the Indian-American business leader is uniquely equipped to lead the global institution at this critical moment in history.
- **If confirmed** by the WB board of directors, Banga would be the **first Indian-American** to head either of the two top international financial institutions - International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the WB.

## What Exactly Constitutes the World Bank Group?

- The WB is an **international financial institution** that **provides loans and grants** to the governments of low and middle-income/developing countries for the purpose of pursuing capital projects.
- It was established along with the IMF at the **1944** Bretton Woods Conference.
- **The WB is the collective name** for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA), **two of five international organisations** owned by the WB Group.



- The WB Group, which is the **parent organisation of the WB**, includes -
  - **IBRD:** It provides loans, credits and grants.
  - **IDA:** It provides low or no-interest loans to low-income countries.
  - **International Finance Corporation (IFC):** It provides investment, advice and asset management to private companies and governments.
  - **Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA):** It insures lenders and investors against political risk such as war.
  - **International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID):** It settles investment-disputes between investors and countries.
- These all serve the **dual objectives of the WB Group**, which are to end extreme poverty by 2030 and increase shared prosperity for the bottom 40% of the population worldwide.

- As of 2022, the WB is run by a President and 25 executive directors. IBRD and IDA have **189 and 174 member countries**, respectively, and the S., Japan, China, Germany and the U.K. have the largest voting power.

## What is the Leadership of the WB?

- **The President of the WB**, who is the President of the entire WB Group, is responsible for chairing meetings of the boards of directors and for **overall management** of the Bank.
- **Traditionally**, the President of the Bank **has always been a U.S. citizen nominated by the US**, the largest shareholder in the bank.
- The nominee is subject to confirmation by the board of executive directors **to serve a five-year**, renewable term.
- **The boards of directors** consist of the WB Group President and 25 executive directors. The President is the **presiding officer and ordinarily has no vote** except to break a tie.
- The executive directors as individuals cannot exercise any power or commit or represent the Bank unless the boards specifically authorised them to do so.

## News Summary Regarding the Nominee of the WB President:

- Banga (63) currently serves as vice chairman at General Atlantic and was awarded the **Padma Shri in 2016**.
- Banga is honorary chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce, serving as chairman from 2020-2022.
- He is a **member of the Trilateral Commission**, a founding trustee of the **US-India Strategic Partnership Forum**, etc.
- Previously, he was president and CEO of Mastercard, leading the company through a strategic, technological and cultural transformation.



## WHAT IS MESSIER 92?

Astronomers have recently released an image of the globular cluster Messier 92 (M92) captured by the James Webb Space Telescope.

## About Messier 92:

- It is a **bright and large globular cluster** in the constellation of Hercules.
- It is located at a distance of **26,700 light-years** from Earth.
- It was **first discovered** by the German astronomer Johann Elert Bode in 1777.
- The **predominant elements** within Messier 92 are hydrogen and helium.
- Messier 92 has an **estimated mass of up to 330,000 solar masses**.
- The cluster is **approaching the Milky Way galaxy at a speed of about 112 km/s** (403,200 km/h; 250,500 mph).

## What is a Globular Cluster?

- Globular clusters are **spherical aggregates of several thousand to millions of stars bound by gravity**.
- They **orbit mostly in the extended stellar halos** surrounding most spiral galaxies.
- They **contain some of the oldest stars in a galaxy**.
- These systems are thought to have **formed early on in the Universe** and can serve as perfect astrophysical laboratories for astronomers to understand how stars evolve through various phases.

## What is Solar Mass?

- It is the **mass of the sun**, which is  **$1.989 \times 10^{30}$  kilograms** — about **333,000 Earths**.

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## TERM OF LAW COMMISSION EXTENDED TILL AUGUST 2024

### Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet approved extension of the term of **22<sup>nd</sup> Law Commission** up to August 31, 2024.
- The Commission is currently looking into several significant issues, including implementation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC).
- The Commission is also looking into the issue of holding simultaneous elections.

### About Law Commission of India:

- The Law Commission of India is a **non-statutory body** constituted by the Union government.
- It is a commission established to ensure that the laws formed are just and fair which work towards its proper implementation.
- It can be referred to as an ad hoc body, which is constituted for the fulfilment of a particular purpose.
- Basically, it works as an advisory body to the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- However, it is not defined under the Indian Constitution. It is constituted as part of **Article 39A**.

### History of Law Commission in India:

- The first pre-independence law commission was established in **1834** by the British Government in India.
  - It was established by the **Charter Act of 1833** and was chaired by **Lord Macaulay**.
- The first Law Commission of independent India was established in the year 1955 which was headed by **C. Setalvad**.
- Since the independence of India, there have been 22 Law Commissions. The current Law Commission (22<sup>nd</sup>) is chaired by **Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi**.

### How is the Law Commission Created?

- A law commission is **created when the Union government passes a resolution for the formation a new commission after the expiry of the last one**.
- After the resolution is passed, and the President gives assent to it, the government has the liberty to choose the chairperson for the new commission.

### Important Recommendations of the Commission:

- The Law Commission has taken up various subjects on references made by Department of Legal Affairs, Supreme Court and High Courts and **submitted 277 reports**.
- The Commission provides thought provoking and vital review of the laws in India.
- Important Recommendations include –
  - The **170<sup>th</sup> report** of the Law commission on Electoral reforms, 1999 had suggested **simultaneous Lok Sabha and State Assembly Elections**. It recommended that this is for the improvement of governance and stability of the states.

- The Law Commission in its 262<sup>nd</sup> report recommended the **abolition of death penalty** for all crimes except terror-related offences and waging war against the state.

### **Article 39A of the Constitution:**

- Ensure that the legal system functions to **promote justice based on equal opportunity for all**;
  - Shall offer **free legal assistance** through appropriate legislation or programs;
  - To guarantee that **no citizen is deprived of the opportunity to get justice** due to a lack of resources or other impediments.
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### **RISHIKESH-KARNPRAYAG RAIL LINE PROJECT**

**Prime Minister recently unveiled the ambitious Rishikesh-Karnprayag Rail Line Project with 17 tunnels covering 125 kilometers.**



#### **About Rishikesh-Karnprayag Rail Line Project:**

- It is an **under-construction railway line**, which will run from **Yog Nagari Rishikesh railway station in Rishikesh to Karnaprayag in Uttarakhand.**
  - It is Indian Railways' **proposed route for the Char Dham Railway** to connect the Char Dham pilgrimage of Uttarakhand.
  - It will help **improve connectivity to the Char Dham shrines of Yamunotri, Gangotri, Badrinath, and Kedarnath** in the **Garhwal region** of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand.
  - The rail line is about **20 km long** and will have **12 stations, 35 bridges, and 17 tunnels** along with 105.47 km (84.24%) of the track.
  - It includes a **1 km tunnel between Devprayag and Lachmoli.**
  - The rail line is also part of an **Indian geostrategic initiative to build infrastructure along the India-China border.**
  - The project is being **monitored on the Government of India's PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) portal.**
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## CHENAB RAILWAY BRIDGE

Track laying work has commenced on the Chenab railway bridge recently.



### About Chenab railway bridge:

- The Chenab Rail Bridge, also known as the **Chenab Arch Bridge**, is a **concrete arch bridge** being built over the **Chenab River** in the Reasi district of **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- It will be the **highest railway bridge in the world**, with a **height of 359 meters** above the **riverbed**.
- The **length** of the Chenab bridge will be **1,315 meters** with 17 spans, of which the **span of the main arch across the Chenab river will be 467m**.
- The bridge will have a **design speed of 100 Km/hr** and a **lifespan of 120 years**.
- It is **designed to withstand Zone-V earthquakes, 266 Km/hr wind speed, and high-intensity blasts**.
- It forms a crucial link on the 111km stretch from Katra to Banihal, which is **part of the ₹21,653 crores Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL)** project intended to provide **all-weather rail connectivity to the Kashmir Valley**.

## JAMES WEBB TELESCOPE

Recently, the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has discovered six extraordinarily massive first-generation galaxies, formed roughly 500-700 million years after the Big Bang,



### About James Web Telescope:

- This telescope was built in collaboration between **NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Canadian Space Agency** and was launched in December 2021.
- It is presently at a point in space known as the **Sun-Earth L2 Lagrange point**, approximately **1.5 million km** beyond Earth's orbit.
- **Lagrange Point 2** is one of the five points in the orbital plane of the Earth-Sun system.



- It's the largest, most powerful **infrared space telescope** ever built.
  - **Objectives:** It will examine every phase of cosmic history; from the Big Bang to the formation of galaxies, stars, and planets to the evolution of our Solar System.
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## EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S POSITION ON THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

### Why in news?

- As the Russia-Ukraine war completes a year, the United Nations General Assembly is discussing a resolution calling for the need to reach, as soon as possible, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.
- Various countries, including Ukraine, have urged India to support a UNGA resolution timed for the first anniversary of the war.

### Evolution of India's position on the Russia-Ukraine War

- **Strategic autonomy**
  - For India, the Ukraine war has been an opportunity to practice strategic autonomy.
  - Adopting nuanced neutrality, Delhi has maintained its relationship with Moscow and worked around Western sanctions to buy oil from Russia.
  - As much as 25% of India's oil purchase is now from Russia, from less than 2% before the war.
- **India's voting at UN and its bodies**
  - In the last year, the UN and its bodies have voted on resolutions pertaining to the Russia-Ukraine war at least 39 times: 38 times since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24 and once in January 2023.
  - India, which has maintained a diplomatic balancing act and has walked the tightrope between US-led West and Russia, has abstained on most occasions.
- **More calibrated stance adopted by Delhi in the past one year**
  - So far, India has taken a calibrated stance based on its own national interests.
    - It had said it was deeply disturbed, but did not name Russia at all.
    - It called for cessation of violence and hostilities, which is permanent in nature.

- It maintained that dialogue and diplomacy is the path forward.
  - During the early phase of the war, India relied on balancing act since it needed cooperation from both Russian and Ukrainian sides to evacuate its citizens from the conflict zone.
  - After its last batch of students were airlifted by the second week of March 2022, the Indian position focused on the other elements: respect for UN charter, territorial sovereignty and integrity.
  - Although, after the Bucha massacre - in which innocent civilians were killed - India joined the western chorus in condemning the incident.
  - It even asked for an international probe.
  - **Nukes must be off the table**
  - As Russian President Putin and other Russian leaders made nuclear threats, India expressed concern.
  - **India and the issue of food grains**
  - New Delhi was approached by Ukraine and other partners to intercede when the issue of food grains being blocked by Russia was raised.
  - India stepped in to convey its message to Moscow.
  - **India: SCO & G-20 declaration**
  - PM Modi's said to Russian President in Samarkand in September 2022 on the sidelines of the SCO: that "this is not an era of war".
  - This became India's mantra, which even found its way into the G-20 declaration in Bali.
  - **India and the upcoming G-20 summit**
  - With a year of geopolitical turmoil due to the Russia-Ukraine crisis, India — as the chair of G-20 — will face the challenge of negotiating a declaration while balancing between Russia and the West.
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