

### DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

#### Why in news?

- Lebanon was thrown into mass confusion after its government at the last minute delayed the start of daylight saving time by a month.

#### What is daylight saving time (DST)?

- According to Norway-based Time and Date, DST is the practice of setting the clocks forward one hour from the standard time during the summer and back again in the autumn.
- This is done to make better use of natural daylight as it extends daylight into the evening.
- India does not follow daylight saving time as countries near the Equator do not experience high variations in daytime hours between seasons.

#### Why Daylight Saving Time practiced by countries?

- **To save energy**
  - DST involves resetting clocks ahead by an hour in spring, and behind by an hour in autumn.
  - Hence, those in favour of DST argue that it means a longer evening daytime.
  - Individuals will complete their daily work routines an hour earlier, and that extra hour of daylight means — or is supposed to mean — a lower consumption of energy.
  - In April 1916, during World War I, Germany and Austria introduced DST to minimise the use of artificial lighting.
- **Economic benefits**
  - Longer daylight hours may encourage people to spend more time outside, which can have positive effects on local economies, such as increased sales for retailers and restaurants.
- **Improved public safety**
  - With more daylight hours in the evening, there may be fewer accidents and crimes committed in the dark.

#### What is the problem with Daylight Saving Time?

- **Disruption of sleep patterns**

- The time change associated with DST can disrupt people's sleep patterns and circadian rhythms, leading to negative health effects.
- **Increased energy consumption**
- Some studies suggest that the energy savings associated with DST are minimal or non-existent, and that the time change can actually increase energy consumption in certain regions.
- **Inconsistencies across time zones**
- DST is not universally adopted, which can lead to confusion and inconsistencies across different time zones.
- This can cause problems for businesses, travel, and communication.
- **Other negatives**
- Different studies found a higher rate of workplace injuries after the switch, leading to lost days of work; a slight drop in stock market performance etc.

### **What happened in Lebanon?**

- Lebanon usually sets its clocks forward an hour on the last Sunday in March.
- However, this year, its caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said that the clocks would be reset on April 21.
- The confusion was created as some institutions, including Christian churches, reset their clocks despite Mikati's decision.
- Thus, airlines, cell phone operators, schools, workplaces, etc., are no longer following the same time.

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## **HEATWAVES: WITHOUT ACTION PLANS, INDIA'S POOREST WILL CONTINUE TO BEAR BRUNT OF HEATWAVES**

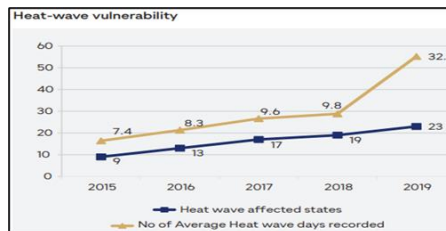
### **Why in News?**

- According to a new report titled "How is India Adapting to Heatwaves?" by the think-tank Centre for Policy Research, the country is ill-prepared to face the heat.
- The report **analysed all the 37 heat action plans (HAPs)** across 18 States, to evaluate how policy action is keeping up with the warming weather in India.

## What is the phenomenon of Heatwaves?

- Qualitatively, a heat wave is a **condition of air temperature** which becomes fatal to the human body when exposed.
- Quantitatively, it is defined based on the **temperature thresholds** over a region in terms of actual temperature or its departure from normal.
- Heat wave is considered if the maximum temperature of a station reaches at least **40 degree Celsius** or more for Plains and at least **30 degree Celsius** or more for Hilly regions (37 degree Celsius or more for coastal stations).

### ○ Based on Departure from Normal:



- **Heat Wave:** Departure from normal is 4.5 - 6.4 degree Celsius.
- **Severe Heat Wave:** Departure from normal is > 6.4 degree Celsius.

### ○ Based on Actual Maximum Temperature:

- **Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature  $\geq 45$  degree Celsius.
- **Severe Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature  $\geq 47$  degree Celsius.

## WHAT IS PUBLIC PROVIDENT FUND (PPF) SCHEME?

A top government official recently indicated that investors in the popular small saving schemes Public Provident Fund (PPF) and Sukanya Samriddhi Account (SSA), whose rates have not been hiked since January 2019, are unlikely to get higher returns anytime soon.



### About Public Provident Fund (PPF) Scheme:

- The PPF Scheme is a very popular **long-term savings scheme** in India because of its **combination of tax savings, returns, and safety**.
- The PPF was **first offered** to the public in the year 1968 by the Finance Ministry's National Savings Institute.
- **Objective:** To help **individuals make small savings and provide returns** on the savings.

- It is one of the **safest investment products**. i.e., the **government of India guarantees** your investments in the fund
- **Tenure: 15 years** (Can be renewed in blocks of 5 years).
- **Interest rate:** Interest rates currently payable on such accounts **stand at 7.1%**.
- **Investment Amount: Minimum Rs.500, Maximum Rs.1.5 lakh p.a.**
- **Who is eligible for a PPF account? Any Indian citizen** can open a PPF account.
- The PPF accounts **cannot be held jointly**, though you can **make a nomination**.
- **Investment in PPF is tax-exempt under section 80C of the Income Tax Act (ITA)**, and the returns from PPF are also not taxable.

## What is Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana?

- It was **launched on 22 January 2015**.
- **Aim: Betterment of the girl child in the country** by abolishing sex determination, gender discrimination, protection of girls, and higher participation of girls in education and other fields.
- **Features of Sukanya Samriddhi Account:**
  - **Minimum deposit ₹ 250/- Maximum deposit ₹ 1.5 Lakh** in a financial year.
  - Account can be opened **in the name of a girl child** till she **attains the age of 10 years**.
  - **Only one account can be opened** in the name of a girl child.
  - The account can be **opened in Post offices and in authorised banks**.
  - **Withdrawal shall be allowed for the purpose of higher education** of the Account holder to meet education expenses.
  - The account can be **prematurely closed in case of marriage of girl child** after her **attaining the age of 18 years**.
  - The account **can be transferred anywhere in India** from one Post office/Bank to another.
  - The account shall **mature on completion of a period of 21 years** from the date of opening of the account.
  - **Deposit qualifies for deduction under Sec.80-C of I.T.Act.**
  - **Interest earned** in the account is **free from Income Tax** under Section -10 of I.T.Act.

## WHAT ARE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAS)?

The Union minister of state for science and technology and earth sciences recently said that India will continue to support setting up two Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in Antarctica to protect marine life and its ecosystem services.



### About Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):

- MPAs are areas of the ocean set aside for long-term conservation aims.
- They support climate change adaptation and mitigation while providing other ecosystem services.
- The specific purposes, legal authority, level of protection, management approaches, and use allowance of individual marine protected areas (MPAs) can vary greatly from site to site
- Many MPAs allow people to use the area in ways that do not damage the environment. Some ban fishing. A few do not allow people to enter the area at all.
- MPAs currently cover about 6.35% of the ocean. However, only just over 1.89% of that area is covered by exclusively no-take MPAs that do not allow any fishing, mining, drilling, or other extractive activities.

### What is the United Nations High Seas Treaty?

- It is the first-ever treaty to protect the world's oceans that lie outside national boundaries.
- It is also known as the 'Paris Agreement for the Ocean.'
- It is a legally binding treaty to protect marine life in international waters.
- It aims to place 30% of the seas into protected areas by 2030 (a pledge made by countries at the UN biodiversity conference in 2022).
- It will provide a legal framework for establishing vast marine protected areas (MPAs) to protect against the loss of wildlife and share out the genetic resources of the high seas.

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## WHAT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM?

The Supreme Court recently held that the principles of "audi alteram partem" must be read into the circular issued by the Reserve Bank of India on the classification of bank accounts as fraud accounts.



## About Audi Alteram Partem:

- The **literal meaning** of Audi Alteram Partem is to “**hear the other side**”.
- It denotes that **every party shall get an opportunity of hearing** and no one shall go unheard in a case.
- Under this doctrine, **every party shall get an opportunity to plead and assert evidence to support his case.**
- This ensures a **fair hearing and fair justice to both the parties.**
- **No decision can be declared without hearing both the parties.** The aim of this principle is to give an opportunity to both the parties to defend themselves.
- The doctrine is the **basic concept of the principle of natural justice.**
- The following are the **key components of this doctrine:**
- **Notice:**
  - Before any action is taken, the **affected party must be given a notice to show cause** against the proposed action and seek his explanation.
  - A notice must contain the **time, place and date of hearing, jurisdiction** under which the case is filed, the **charges**, and **proposed action** against the person.
  - Any **order passed without giving notice** is against the principles of natural justice and **is void.**
- **Hearing:**
  - The **order passed** by the authority **without providing** the reasonable **opportunity of being heard** to the person affected by it adversely **will be invalid and must be set aside.**
- **Evidence:**
  - It is an important part which is to be **brought properly before the Court in the presence of both the parties** and a judicial or quasi judicial **authority must have to act on the evidence produced** as in the case.
- **Cross-Examination:**
  - Every person has the **right to contest or object to the evidence** presented by the other party.
- **Legal Representation:**



- Every person is not able to present his case assertively. Thus, he needs some assistance from a specialised legal attorney to present his case.
  - The **Indian Constitution** also provides that every person has a right to get legal assistance.
  - **Exceptions to the doctrine of Audi Alteram Partem:**
    - The word exception doesn't mean the principles of natural justice and fair play will not be there.
    - These exceptions only **denote those conditions in which nothing unfair will occur, even if certain conditions** of this maxim **are relaxed**.
    - **Some conditions for exceptions are:**
      - Emergency;
      - Confidentiality;
      - Impracticability;
      - Statutory Exclusion;
      - Legislative Function
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## IMF BAILOUTS

### Why in news?

- Recently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) confirmed a \$3 billion bailout plan for Sri Lanka's struggling economy.
- IMF officials are also in negotiations with Pakistan for a \$1.1 billion bailout plan as the country faces a severe economic crisis marked by a falling currency and price rise.

### Why do nations face currency crisis?

- **Generally, results from Gross mismanagement of nation's currency by its central bank**
  - Usually, this happens under the covert influence of the ruling government.
    - Central banks may be forced by governments to create fresh money to fund **populist spending**.
    - Such spending eventually results in a rapid rise of the overall money supply, which in turn causes prices to rise across the economy and the exchange value of the currency to drop.

- A rapid, unpredictable fall in the value of a currency can destroy confidence in said currency and affect economic activity.
- **A country's domestic economic policies**
- Economic policy that imperils productivity can affect a country's ability to attract the necessary foreign exchange for its survival.
- **Other factors**
- In the case of Sri Lanka, various factors contributed to a decrease in foreign tourists visiting the country.
- This led to a steep fall in the flow of U.S. dollars into the nation.

### **Why do nations seek an IMF bailout?**

- **When a country faces a major macroeconomic risk**
- Countries seek help from the IMF usually when their economies face a major macroeconomic risk, mostly in the form of a currency crisis.
- For instance, in the case of Sri Lanka and Pakistan, both countries have witnessed domestic prices rise rapidly and the exchange value of their currencies drop steeply against the U.S. dollar.
- **To meet external debt requirements and other obligations**
- Generally, foreigners do not invest in an economy where the value of its currency gyrates in an unpredictable manner.
- In such a scenario, many countries are forced to seek help from the IMF to meet their external debt and other obligations, to purchase essential imports, and also to prop up the exchange value of their currencies.

### **Are there any strings attached to an IMF bailout?**

- The IMF usually imposes conditions on countries before it lends any money to them.
- For example, a country may have to agree to implement certain structural reforms as a condition to receive IMF loans.

### **Why IMF attaches conditions on its bailout programme?**

- **Essential for the success of IMF lending**



- Countries that seek an IMF bailout are usually in a crisis due to certain policies adopted by their governments.
- It may thus not make sense for the IMF to throw money at a country when the policies that caused its crisis remain untouched.
  - Eg., the IMF may demand a country affected by high price inflation to ensure the independence of its central bank.
- Promotes institutional reforms and brings check on corruption
  - The IMF lending to troubled economies, may turn out to be a wasted effort because these economies have poor institutions and suffer from high corruption.

### Why has IMF's conditional lending been controversial?

- **Too tough on the public**
  - The IMF's conditional lending has been controversial as many believe that these reforms are too tough on the public.
- **Influenced by international politics**
  - Critics have also accused the IMF's lending decisions to be influenced by international politics.
  - These decisions are taken by officials appointed by the governments of various countries.

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### WHAT ARE TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

**Russian President Vladimir Putin recently said he would deploy tactical nuclear weapons in neighbouring Belarus.**



#### About Tactical Nuclear Weapons:

- Nuclear weapons, just like other weapons, can be categorised into two types — strategic and tactical.
  - **Strategic Nuclear Weapons:** They refer to nuclear weapons that have **bigger objectives**, such as **destroying cities or larger targets**, with **larger war-waging objectives** in mind.
  - **Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs):**
    - They are nuclear weapons **used for specific tactical gains on the battlefield.**

- They are intended to **devastate enemy targets in a specific area without causing widespread destruction and radioactive fallout.**
  - These are designed for **use in battle** as part of an attack **with conventional weapon forces.**
  - These **warheads can be delivered via a variety of missiles**, torpedoes and gravity bombs from naval, air or ground forces. They could even be simply **driven into an area and detonated.**
  - **The explosive yield** of tactical nuclear weapons can **range from under one kiloton to about 100 kilotons**, whereas strategic nuclear weapons can have a yield of up to one thousand kilotons.
  - **Delivery systems** for tactical nuclear weapons also tend to **have shorter ranges, typically under 310 miles (500 kilometres)**, compared with strategic nuclear weapons, which are typically designed to cross continents.
  - They are the **least-regulated category of nuclear weapons covered in arms control agreements.**
  - **Countries possessing TNWs:**
    - **Nine countries** have tactical nuclear weapons, according to the Federation of American Scientists.
    - They are **Russia, the United States, China, France, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea.**
    - **Russia** has a stockpile of an estimated **2,000 tactical nuclear missiles.**
    - The U.S. has an estimated **200 tactical nuclear bombs**, half of which are **at bases in Europe.**
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