

WHAT IS THE DART MISSION?

Scientists have recently released the observations made during the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission.



About Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission:

- NASA's DART mission was a spacecraft designed to test a method of deflecting an asteroid for planetary defense, using the "kinetic impactor" technique (in simplest terms means smashing a thing into another thing).
- DART was the **first-ever** space mission to demonstrate asteroid deflection by kinetic impactor.
- The **target** of the spacecraft was a **160-meter-wide** asteroid known as **Dimorphos**, which is a moonlet in orbit around the larger asteroid, Didymos.
- It was **launched in November 2021**.
- DART spacecraft **successfully** **collided** with **Dimorphos** on **26 September 2022**, altering the asteroid's orbit by **33 minutes**.
- It is the **first time** humanity intentionally changed the motion of a celestial object in space.

WHAT IS FRINJEX-23?

The India-France joint exercise FRINJEX-23 is scheduled to be held at the Pangod military center in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.



About FRINJEX-23:

- It is the **first joint military exercise** between the **Indian Army** and **French Army**.
- This is the **first time** the two countries have engaged in a **military exercise** in a team format consisting of a company group.

- **Objective:** Enhancing interoperability, coordination, and cooperation between both forces at the tactical level.
- The theme for the exercise is based on “Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations in a Contested Environment”.

Indian-France Military Exercises:

- Exercise **Garuda:** Air Force
- Exercise **Varuna:** Navy
- Exercise **Shakti:** Army

WHAT IS NANO UREA?

The Prime Minister recently lauded the benefits of Nano Urea in bringing long-term positive changes in the lives of Indian farmers.



About Nano Urea:

- It is a **nanotechnology-based** revolutionary **Agri-input** that **provides nitrogen** to plants.
- It is **developed** and **patented** by the **Indian Farmers**

Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO).

- IFFCO Nano Urea is the **only nano fertilizer** approved by the **Government of India** and included in the Fertilizer Control Order (FCO).
- **Features:**
 - Compared to conventional urea prill, Nano Urea has a **desirable particle size of about 20-50 nm** and **more surface area** (10,000 times over 1 mm urea prill) and **number of particles** (55,000 nitrogen particles over 1 mm urea prill).
 - It contains **4.0 % total nitrogen** (w/v).
- **Benefits:**
 - It is produced by an **energy-efficient, environment-friendly production process** with less carbon footprints.
 - **Increased availability to crop by more than 80%**, resulting in **higher nutrient use efficiency**.

- It is expected to **improve crop productivity, soil health, and nutritional quality** of produce and address the "imbalanced and excessive use" of conventional fertilizer.

Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO):

- It is **India's largest multi-state cooperative society** that is **entirely owned by Indian cooperatives**.
 - IFFCO is primarily engaged in the **production and distribution of fertilizers**.
 - **Headquarters: New Delhi, India.**
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SMART-PDS SYSTEM

Recently, the Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution asked the states to make earnest efforts to implement the SMART-PDS system.



About SMART-PDS System:

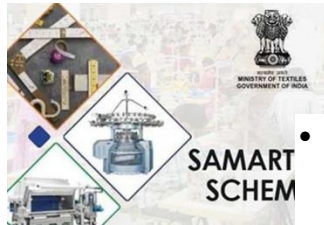
- The Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) is envisaging a new and unified scheme to strengthen the PDS technology components by standardization of its operation and implementing data-driven decision-making through data analytics.
- **Full-Form:** Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System.
- This scheme aims to transform the entire PDS IT ecosystem by **leveraging the usage of Cloud and new-age technology**.

Components of SMART-PDS.

- **Smart Ration Card:** SMART-PDS is a system where smart ration cards are issued to beneficiaries of the public distribution system, and ration is given through fair price shops on the production of the smart ration card by any member of the beneficiary family.
 - **Fingerprint Template:** The fingerprint template of the beneficiary is recorded in these smart ration cards, which record all transactions.
 - **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
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SAMARTH SCHEME

The government of India is planning to rope in more industry partners to increase the pace of training under its flagship SAMARTH scheme for skill development in the textile sector.



About SAMARTH Scheme:

- Samarth (Scheme for Capacity Building in Textiles Sector) is a demand-driven and placement-oriented umbrella skilling programme.
- The implementation period of the scheme is up to **March 2024**.
- It aims to incentivize and supplement the efforts of the industry in creating jobs in the organized textile and related sectors, covering the entire value chain of textiles, excluding Spinning and Weaving.
- In addition to the **entry-level skilling**, a special provision for upskilling/ re-skilling programme has also been operationalized under the scheme towards improving the productivity of the existing workers in the Apparel & Garmenting segments.
- It also caters to the upskilling/ re-skilling requirement of the traditional textile sector such as handloom, handicraft, silk and jute.
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Textiles.**

PM-ABHIM: WORLD BANK TO LEND \$1 BILLION TO SUPPORT INDIA'S HEALTH SECTOR

Why in News?

- The World Bank (WB) is lending up to \$1 billion (divided into two complementary loans of \$500 million under PHSP and EHSPP each) to help India with preparedness for future pandemics as well as to strengthen its health infrastructure.
- Through this combined financing, the bank will support India's flagship Pradhan Mantri-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (**PM-ABHIM**).

What is PM-ABHIM?

- The PM Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana (PMASBY), which has now been renamed as PM-ABHIM, was announced in the **Union Budget 2021-22**.
- The PM-ABHIM scheme was launched in October 2021 by the Union **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, and will run in addition to the National Health Mission (NHM).
- It is one of the largest Pan-India health schemes **for strengthening healthcare infrastructure** to accomplish the vision of comprehensive healthcare across the country.
- **Objectives:**
 - To strengthen grass root public health institutions.
 - To expand and build an IT enabled disease surveillance system.
 - To expand research on COVID-19 and other infectious diseases and to develop the core capacity to deliver the **One Health Approach**.
- **Components:** It consists of Centrally Sponsored Scheme Components [like Ayushman Bharat - Health & Wellness Centres (**AB-HWCs**) in rural and urban areas] and some Central Sector Components (like Critical Care Hospital Blocks).

What is PHSP and EHSDP?

- The \$500-million **Public Health Systems for Pandemic Preparedness Program** (PHSPP) will support the government's efforts to prepare India's surveillance system to detect and report epidemics of potential international concern.
- Another \$500 million **Enhanced Health Service Delivery Program** (EHSDP) will support government's efforts to strengthen service delivery through a redesigned primary healthcare model, which includes -
 - Improved household access to primary healthcare facilities,
 - Stronger links between each household and its primary care facility through regular household visits and
 - **Risk assessment of noncommunicable diseases.**
- Both the PHSPP and the EHSDP utilise the **Program-for-Results financing instrument** that focuses on achievement of results rather than inputs.

- Both the PHSP and EHSDP loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) of WB have a final maturity of 18.5 years including a grace period of five years.
- **The PHSP and EHSDP will leverage** the unique strengths of both the Center and the States to support the development of more accessible, high-quality, and affordable health services.
- This strengthening of health systems, combined with attention to strong disease response, will **improve preparedness and response to future disease outbreaks.**

News Summary Regarding WB Lending:

- **India's performance in health has improved over time.**
 - According to WB, India's life expectancy has increased from 58 in 1990 to 69.8 in 2020.
 - The under-five mortality rate (36 per 1,000 live births), infant mortality rate (30 per 1,000 live births), and maternal mortality ratio (103 per 100,000 live births) are all close to the average for India's income level.
- This reflects significant achievements in **access to skilled birth attendance**, immunisations, and other priority services.
- Despite these advances in the health of the Indian population, **COVID-19 brought to the fore the urgent need** for pandemic preparedness (a global public good) and health system strengthening around the world.
- The current WB loans will prioritise health service delivery in seven States including Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, TN and UP.

QUAD MINISTERIAL MEETING

Why in news?

- India hosted the Quad foreign ministers' meeting, which discussed the overall situation in the Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of increasing Chinese assertiveness in the region.

What is Quad Grouping?

- The grouping of **four democracies**—India, Australia, US and Japan— is known as the quadrilateral security dialogue or quad.

- The aim of this grouping is to **ensure a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo- Pacific.**

What are the objectives of the Quad?

- The group's **primary objectives include**
 - maritime security,
 - combating the Covid-19 crisis, especially vis-à-vis vaccine diplomacy,
 - addressing the risks of climate change,
 - creating an ecosystem for investment in the region and
 - boosting technological innovation.

Evolution of Quad

- Following the Indian Ocean tsunami, India, Japan, Australia, and the US created an **informal alliance to collaborate on disaster relief efforts.**
- Quad as a formal group was **first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.**
 - However, due to Chinese resistance and reluctance shown by India, it could not move ahead.
- Later, during the **2017 ASEAN Summits**, all four former members re-joined negotiations to revive the quadrilateral alliance.
- The Quad was **upgraded to the ministerial level in September 2019.**
- In March 2021, the first-ever summit of QUAD leaders took place virtually.
 - It was participated by the PMs/Presidents of all the member countries. The summit was hosted by US.
- Later, in September 2021, the first in-person meeting of Quad leaders was hosted by the US.

News Summary: Quad Ministerial Meeting

- The meeting of the Quad Foreign Ministers was hosted by India on 03 March 2023 in New Delhi.
- The meeting was chaired by EAM, S. Jaishankar, and saw the participation of Foreign Ministers of Australia and Japan and the Secretary of State of the USA.
- At the end of the meeting, the participating leaders issued a joint statement.

Key highlights of the joint statement issued at the end of Quad Ministerial Meeting

- **Highlighted the situation in Ukraine**

- The joint statement underscored the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine in accordance with international law.
- It called for respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, transparency and peaceful resolution of disputes.
- This is the first reference to the Ukraine war in a joint statement of the Quad Foreign Ministers.
- It means the grouping, which had so far been concentrating mostly on the aggressive Chinese behaviour in the Indo-Pacific, has broadened its scope to include Russia.

- **Called for greater Quad collaboration**

- The statement called for greater Quad collaboration in support of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.
- It opposed any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo or increase tensions in the area.
 - This statement is understood to indicate recent tensions over Taiwan.

- **Mentioned South and East China Seas**

- The joint statement expressed serious concern at the militarization of disputed features, the dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia, and efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities.
- This was mentioned in reference to actions in the South and East China Seas.
- It also hit out at China for blocking listing of terrorists at the UN.

- **Criticised both Russia and China**

- India joined other Quad members in calling for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, and respect for a rules-based order in the South and East China Seas.
- This is the first such statement by the grouping that is seen to criticise both Russia and China.

- **About Quad Maritime Security Working Group**

- The statement announced that the “Quad Maritime Security Working Group” would meet in Washington later this month.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- This Working Group is a collaborative effort between the members of Quad to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region by promoting security and stability in the maritime domain.
 - The group was established in 2020 as part of Quad.
 - It focuses on a range of issues related to maritime security, including maritime domain awareness, maritime security architecture, and interoperability among the four navies.
 - **New working group on counter-terrorism**
 - The participating leaders also agreed to set up a new working group on counter-terrorism.
 - This working group will explore cooperation amongst the Quad, and with Indo-Pacific partners, to counter new and emerging forms of terrorism, radicalisation to violence and violent extremism.
 - Its first meeting is expected to be held in the United States in 2023.
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