

WHY INDIA MUST PUT AFRICA AT THE HEART OF ITS GLOBAL SOUTH VISION

Context

- During her visit to Mauritius, **President Droupadi Murmu emphasised the importance of India's relations with African countries**, highlighting Mauritius as a key partner in the Indian Ocean Region.
- **This visit underscores India's growing engagement with Africa**, marked by collaborative efforts in community development and the inauguration of essential projects.
- **As India aims to strengthen its position within the Global South, it is crucial to understand the multifaceted relationship between India and Africa**, examining the opportunities it presents and the imperatives for deeper engagement.

The Strategic Importance of India's Advocacy for Africa's Representation in Global Forums

- **To Amplify Africa's Representation and Voice**
 - India's advocacy for Africa's representation in global governance structures **underscores its commitment to amplifying the voices of developing nations.**
 - With Africa housing a significant portion of the world's population and contributing a substantial share of global GDP, ensuring its representation is essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable international order.
 - **India's support for initiatives like the African Union's representation in the G20 demonstrates its recognition of Africa's importance** in shaping global agendas and policies.
- **A Push for Reform and Adaptation**
 - As the international landscape undergoes rapid transformation, **there is a growing recognition of the need to adapt governance mechanisms to address emerging challenges** and promote sustainable development.

- India's advocacy for Africa's inclusion in global forums **reflects its commitment to reforming institutions like the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank** to better represent the interests of developing nations.
- **To Build Strategic Partnerships**
 - **India's advocacy for Africa's representation** in global governance is **not merely altruistic but also strategic.**
 - Recognising Africa's growing influence in international affairs, India seeks to cultivate strategic partnerships with African nations to advance its own interests on the global stage.
 - **By supporting Africa's participation in decision-making processes, India enhances its diplomatic leverage** and strengthens its position as a leading voice within the Global South.
- **Development Agenda**
 - India's advocacy for Africa's representation in global governance is **closely aligned with its broader development agenda**, which prioritises poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and inclusive growth.
 - **By advocating for Africa's interests in global forums, India seeks to address systemic inequalities and promote policies** that benefit the most vulnerable populations.
 - This advocacy **encompasses a wide range of issues, including trade, finance, climate change, and peace and security**, reflecting India's commitment to fostering a more just and equitable world order.

Conclusion

- **India's multifaceted relationship with Africa offers significant opportunities** for economic, political, and social cooperation.
- As India seeks to assert its leadership within the Global South, **prioritising engagement with African nations is essential.**
- As the world undergoes rapid changes, **the synergy between India and Africa holds the promise of a mutually beneficial and prosperous future.**

WHAT IS A NON-PERFORMING ASSET (NPA)?

The Gross Non-performing Assets (GNPA) of the Indian banks are projected to see further improvement, potentially reaching up to 2.1 per cent by the end of the fiscal year 2025.



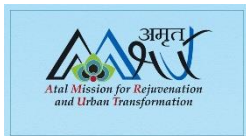
- A NPA is a loan or advance for which the **principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of 90 days**. They can include various types of loans, such as personal loans, business loans, mortgages and credit card debt.
- When the ratio of NPAs in a bank's loan portfolio rises, its income and profitability fall, its capacity to lend falls and the possibility of loan defaults and write-offs rise.
- **Types of NPAs:** Different types of NPAs depend on how long they remain in the NPA category
 - **Sub-Standard Assets:** An asset is classified as a sub-standard asset if it remains as an NPA for a period less than or equal to 12 months.
 - **Doubtful Assets:** An asset is classified as a doubtful asset if it remains as an NPA for more than 12 months.
 - **Loss Assets:** An asset is considered a loss asset when it is “uncollectible” or has such little value that its continuance as a bankable asset is not suggested. However, some recovery value may be left in it as the asset has not been written off wholly or in parts.
- **NPA Provisioning:**
 - Provisioning means an **amount that the banks set aside** from their profits or income in a particular quarter **for non-performing assets**, such as assets that may turn into losses in the future.
 - It is a method by which banks provide for bad assets and maintain a healthy book of accounts. It is done according to which category the asset belongs.
- **Gross non-performing assets (GNPA) and Net non-performing assets (NNPA):** Banks are required to make their NPA numbers public and to the RBI from

time to time. There are primarily two metrics that help us understand any bank's NPA situation.

- **GNPA:** GNPA is an absolute amount. It tells you the **total value of gross non-performing assets** for the bank in a particular quarter or financial year, as the case may be.
- **NNPA:** NNPA **subtracts the provisions made by the bank from the GNPA.** Therefore, net NPA gives you the exact value of non-performing assets after the bank has made specific provisions.
- The NNPA is a **measure of the actual losses** that a bank has **incurred on its NPAs.** A high NNPA indicates that a bank has incurred large losses on its NPAs.

WHAT IS ATAL MISSION FOR REJUVENATION AND URBAN TRANSFORMATION (AMRUT) SCHEME?

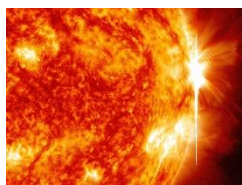
Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has sanctioned 39 more sewage treatment plants (STPs) under the AMRUT scheme.



AMRUT Scheme was launched by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** in 2015, in 500 selected cities and towns across the country. It has been **subsumed under AMRUT 2.0** in 2021.

- It focuses on development of **basic infrastructure** in the selected cities and towns in the sectors of water supply, sewerage and septage management, storm water drainage, green spaces and parks, and non-motorized urban transport. A set of **Urban Reforms and Capacity Building** have been included in the mission.
- **AMRUT 2.0**, which was launched for a period 2021-26, is designed to **provide universal coverage of water supply** through functional taps to all households in all the statutory towns in the country and coverage of sewerage/septage management in 500 cities covered in the first phase of the AMRUT scheme.

- AMRUT 2.0 will **promote a circular economy of water** through the development of **City Water Balance Plan (CWBP)** for each city focusing on recycle/reuse of treated sewage, the rejuvenation of water bodies, and water conservation.
- It will **help cities to identify scope for projects** focusing on universal coverage of functional water tap connections, water source conservation, rejuvenation of water bodies and wells, recycle/reuse of treated used water, and rainwater harvesting.
- It also has a reform agenda on ease of living of citizens through reduction of non-revenue water, recycle of treated used water, rejuvenation of water bodies, augmenting double entry accounting system, urban planning, strengthening urban finance etc.
- **Other components of AMRUT 2.0 are:**
 - **Pey Jal Survekshan** to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater, mapping of water bodies and promote healthy competition among the cities /towns.
 - **Technology Sub-Mission for water** to leverage latest global technologies in the field of water.
 - **Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign** to spread awareness among the masses about conservation of water.
- The **total indicative outlay** for AMRUT 2.0 is **₹2,99,000 crore** including Central share of ₹76,760 crore for five years.



WHAT ARE X-CLASS SOLAR FLARES?

Earth was recently hit by an X-class solar flare strong enough to ionize part of the planet's atmosphere.

Solar flares are **large explosions** that occur at the **sun's surface** when twisted magnetic field lines suddenly snap, emitting large bursts of electromagnetic radiation. They are seen as bright areas on the sun and they can last from **minutes to hours**.

- In a matter of just a few minutes, they heat the material to many millions of degrees and **produce a burst of radiation** across the electromagnetic spectrum, including from radio waves to x-rays and gamma rays.

- Although solar flares can be **visible in white light**, they are often more readily noticed via their bright X-ray and ultraviolet emissions.
- **Effect of Solar Flare on Earth:**
 - The intense radiation emitted during a solar flare can **affect satellite communications**, disrupt **radio signals** and even pose a risk to astronauts in space.
 - Additionally, the increased solar radiation can lead to **geomagnetic storms**, which may impact power grids and cause auroras (northern and southern lights).

About X-Class Solar Flares:

- Flares are **classified according to their strength**. The smallest ones are **B-class**, followed by **C, M and X, the largest**.
- Similar to the Richter scale for earthquakes, **each letter represents a ten-fold increase** in energy output. Within each letter class, there is a finer scale from 1 to 9.
 - So, an X is 10 times an M and 100 times a C.
- C-class flares are too weak to noticeably affect Earth. M-class flares can cause brief radio blackouts at the poles and minor radiation storms that might endanger astronauts.
- The biggest X-class flares are by far the largest explosions in our solar system. X-class flares are most **common during solar maximum**.



C-VIGIL APP

Since the announcement of General Elections 2024, over **79,000** complaints have been received on C-Vigil app.

C-Vigil app is a mobile application developed by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** to enable citizens to **report violations** of the **Model Code of Conduct (MCC)** during elections.

- **Features of the app:**
 - It is user-friendly and easy to operate application, which connects vigilant citizens with the **District Control Room, Returning Officer and Flying Squads Teams**.

- By using this app, the citizens can immediately report on incidents of political misconduct within minutes and without having to rush to the office of the returning officer.
 - As soon as the complaint is sent on the cVigil app, the complainant will **receive a unique ID** through which the person will be able to track the complaint on their mobile.
 - Users capture audios, photos or videos in real-time, and a “100-minute” countdown for time-bound response to complaints is ensured.
 - The app automatically enables a **geo-tagging feature** as soon as the user switches on their camera in the cVIGIL to report a violation. This means that flying squads could know the precise location of a reported violation and the image captured by citizens could be used as evidence in the court of law.
 - It uses **GPS to track the location** of the violation. It allows users to capture **the live incidents only**. It has a feature to report the case of MCC violation **anonymously**.
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GREAT INDIAN BUSTARDS

Why in news?

Recently, the Supreme Court said it will review its April 2021 order to bury underground all power lines in the habitat of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB). This was after the Centre found the order practically impossible to implement over long distances.

What is Great Indian Bustard (GIB)?

- GIBs are the largest among the four-bustard species found in India.
 - The other three being **MacQueen’s bustard**, **lesser florican** and the **Bengal florican**.
- Being terrestrial birds, they spend most of their time on the ground with occasional flights to go from one part of their habitat to the other.

Habitat and Status of GIB

- This bird, **found mainly in Rajasthan and Gujarat**, has been categorized as **critically endangered** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
 - As per the 2021 report of the IUCN, they are on the verge of extinction with hardly 50 to 249 of them alive.
 - According to a report by The Corbett Foundation (TCF), less than 150 GIB are left in the wild.
- GIBs' historic range included much of the Indian sub-continent but it has now shrunk to just 10 per cent of it.
- Among the heaviest birds with flight, GIBs prefer grasslands as their habitats.
- **Threats faced by GIB**
 - Scientists of Wildlife Institute of India (WII) have been pointing out overhead power transmission lines as the biggest threat to the GIBs.
 - WII research has concluded that in Rajasthan, 18 GIBs die every year after colliding with overhead powerlines.
 - These birds, **due to their poor frontal vision**, cannot detect powerlines in time and their weight make in-flight quick manoeuvres difficult.
 - Unlike some birds that have a panoramic vision around the head, species like raptors and bustards have extensive blind areas above their heads.
 - When they stretch their head forward to scan the ground below, they fly blind in the direction of travel.
 - Kutch and Thar desert are the places which have witnessed creation of huge renewable energy infrastructure over the past two decades.
 - This led to installation of windmills and construction of power lines even in core GIB areas.
 - Other threats include:
 - Free-ranging dogs
 - Widespread use of pesticides in farmlands

- Loss of grassland, particularly nesting sites, and
- An erosion of support from local communities
- **Conservation measures initiated for the protection of GIB**
 - In 2015, the Central government launched the **GIB species recovery programme**.
 - Under the programme, the WII and Rajasthan Forest department have jointly set up **conservation breeding centres** where GIB eggs harvested from the wild are incubated artificially and hatchlings raised in controlled environment.
 - The plan is to create a population which can act as insurance against the threat of extinction and release the third generation of these captive-bred birds into the wild.
 - **Bird diverters** have also been installed on power lines to protect the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) from collisions.
 - The diverters act as reflectors that birds can see from about 50 meters away.
 - When birds spot the diverters, they change their flight path to avoid colliding with the power lines.
- **March 2024 order of SC**
 - In March 2024, the Supreme Court said it will review its April 2021 order.
 - It also created a seven-member committee that will suggest steps to protect and conserve the GIB, identifying critical areas where power lines may have to go underground.

Arguments of the Centre on the issue of undergrounding all power lines

- The Centre said taking lines of 66 KV and higher voltage underground was not feasible for the evacuation of bulk power.
 - This is due to constraints such as transmission losses, maintenance challenges, multiple cable joints, increased time requirements, and concerns of safety.
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