

### PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS REGULATORY BOARD (PNGRB)

Recently, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board approved a unified tariff for natural gas pipelines, a move that will help expand access to clean burning fuel at competitive rates in far-flung areas.



#### About Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board:

- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) was formed under the **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, of 2006**.
- **Objective:** To protect the interests of consumers and entities engaged in specified activities relating to petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas and to promote competitive markets and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- PNGRB authorises the CGD networks, natural gas and petroleum product pipelines, determines tariffs, lays down the technical and safety standards etc.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

#### What is a Natural Gas?

- Natural gas is a **fossil fuel energy** Natural gas contains many different compounds. The largest component of natural gas is **methane**, a compound with one **carbon atom** and four hydrogen atoms (CH<sub>4</sub>).
- Natural gas also contains smaller amounts of natural gas liquids (NGLs, which are also hydrocarbon gas liquids), and nonhydrocarbon gases, such as carbon dioxide and water vapour.

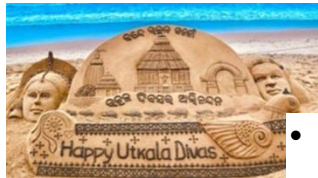
#### How did natural gas form?

- Millions to hundreds of millions of years ago, the **remains of plants and animals** (such as diatoms) built up in thick layers on the earth's surface and ocean floors, sometimes mixed with sand, silt, and calcium carbonate.
- Over time, these layers were **buried under sand, silt, and rock**.

- **Pressure and heat changed** some of this carbon and hydrogen-rich material into coal, some into oil (petroleum), and some into natural gas.
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## UTKAL DIBAS

Recently, the Prime Minister of India greeted the people on Utkal Dibasa.



### About Utkal Dibas:

- The modern state of Odisha was established on **1 April 1936 at Kanika Palace**, Cuttack, as a province in India, and consists predominantly of Odia speakers. 1 April is therefore celebrated as Utkal Divas (Odisha Day).

### What is the History of the Odisha?

- The British had occupied the Northern Circars, comprising the southern coast of Odisha, as a result of the **Second Carnatic War by 1760**, and incorporated them into the Madras Presidency gradually.
  - In 1803, the British ousted the Marathas from the Puri-Cuttack region of Odisha during the Second Anglo-Maratha War. The northern and western districts of Odisha were incorporated into the Bengal Presidency.
  - In 1903, the **Utkal Sammilani organisation** was founded to demand the unification of Odia-speaking regions into one state.
  - On 1 April 1912, the Bihar and Orissa Province was formed. and on 1 April 1936, Bihar and Orissa were split into separate provinces.
  - The new province of Orissa came into existence on a linguistic basis during the British rule in India, with **Sir John Austen Hubback** as the first governor.
  - Following India's independence, on 15 August 1947, 27 princely states signed the document to join Orissa.
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## ASSAMESE GAMOSA

Recently, the ‘hybrid’ gamosa which was used for felicitating guests at a function sparked protests across Assam.



## About Assamese gamosa

- The ‘gamosa or gamocha’ is a **hand-woven rectangular cotton piece** of cloth with red borders and different designs and motifs.
- It is traditionally offered to elders and guests as a mark of respect and honour by Assamese people.
- It is an integral part of **all socio-religious ceremonies** in the state and is considered an Assamese identity and pride.
- For specific purposes, it is also made of expensive materials like traditional Assamese ‘Pat’ **silk** and in different colours as well.
- The ‘gamosa’ meant for exchange during the ‘**Bihu**’ festival is known as ‘Bihuwan’.
- It is a unique scarf found only in Assam and also **received Geographic Indication (GI) tag**.

## What is a Geographic Indication Tag?

- A Geographical Indication is a sign used on products that **have a specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- This tag is typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts and industrial products.
- The **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999** seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- This GI tag is **valid for 10 years** following which it can be renewed.

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## [THE AMASR ACT: GOVT TO EASE RULES ON CONSTRUCTION AROUND PROTECTED MONUMENTS](#)

Why in News?

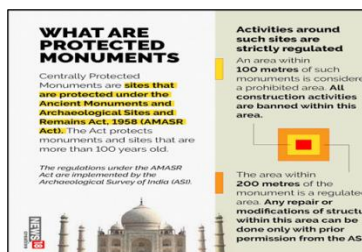
- The government will **soon liberalise construction activity** in the vicinity of protected monuments across the country regulated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological sites and Remains (AMASR) Act.
- Currently, construction up to 100 metres around protected monuments is prohibited, while an area up to 200 metres beyond the prohibited area is regulated.

## What is the AMASR Act 1958?

- It provides for the -
  - **Preservation** (of ancient and historical monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance, which are over 100 years old)
  - **Regulation** (of archaeological excavations)
  - **Protection** (of sculptures, carvings and other like objects).
- 3,696 Centrally Protected Monuments or Sites are located in India and are guarded by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** - a Ministry of Culture agency, which functions under the provisions of this act.

## What is the AMASR (Amendment) Act 2010?

- In order to **strengthen the penal provisions** to prevent encroachments and illegal construction close to the monuments, the 1958 Act was amended in 2010.
- **The amendments provide for the creation of a**
  - **Prohibited area** 100 metre around every national monument where no construction, public or private is permitted.



- **Regulated area** 200 metres beyond the prohibited area, where any construction requires permission of a newly constituted **National Monuments Authority (NMA)**.

- The amendment also suggested that **heritage by-laws for each monument** be created by an expert body given the uniqueness of each monument.

## WHAT IS THE BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA?

The Society of Indian Law Firms (SILF) has written to the Bar Council of India (BCI), raising concerns over its recent decision to allow foreign lawyers and law firms to practise in the country.



### About Bar Council of India (BCI):

- It is a statutory body established under the Advocates Act 1961 to regulate and represent the Indian bar.
- **Functions:**
  - It performs the regulatory function by prescribing standards of professional conduct and etiquette and by exercising disciplinary jurisdiction over the bar.
  - It also sets standards for legal education and grants recognition to Universities whose degrees in law will serve as qualification for enrolment as an advocate.
  - It conducts the All India Bar Examination (AIBE) to grant a 'Certificate of Practice' to advocates practising law in India.
  - BCI also funds welfare schemes for economically weaker and physically handicapped advocates.

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## COMPETITION (AMENDMENT) BILL AND ITS IMPACT ON BIG TECH

### Why in news?

- Recently, the lower house of Parliament passed the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which seeks to amend the Competition Act, 2002.
- This legislation could pose a new frontier of challenges for Google and other global technology companies.

### Competition Commission of India (CCI):

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) is a statutory body established in March 2009 under the Competition Act, 2002.
- **Objectives:**

- Eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition
- Promote and sustain competition
- Protect the interests of consumers
- Ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India
- The Commission consists of one Chairperson and six members who shall be appointed by the Central Government.

### Functions of CCI

- The commission is a quasi-judicial body who also gives opinions to statutory authorities.
- It is also mandated to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.
- In order to fulfil its objectives, the commission may:
  - conduct an enquiry into certain kinds of agreements and dominant position of enterprise,
  - determine whether an agreement has AAEC (appreciable adverse effects on competition).

### Powers of CCI

- It has the power to inquire into any acquisition or combination if it determines that such acquisition or combination may adversely affect competition in the Indian market.
- It has the power to regulate its own procedures.
- It has the power to **impose monetary penalties** upon violation of the Competition Act, 2002.
- It has the power to pass an interim order for any act where there has been anti-competition agreements or abuse of position by dominant parties which adversely affects the competition in the market.

### What are the other amendments to the bill?

- **Greater power to CCI**
  - The amendment gives the CCI a greater say in mergers and acquisitions as entities will have to seek its approval in case a deal value is worth more than Rs 2,000 crore.
  - The CCI could also incentivise parties in ongoing cartel investigations in terms of lesser penalty to disclose information regarding other cartels.
- **Reduced the time limit for approval of mergers and acquisitions**

- The bill has also reduced the time limit for approval of mergers and acquisitions from the existing 210 days to 150 days.
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## ONE INDIAN AUDIT & ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT ONE SYSTEM (OIOS)

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) recently announced the full activation of the One Indian Audit & Accounts Department One System (OIOS) workflow system in the audit offices.



About One Indian Audit & Accounts Department One System (OIOS):

- It is an **enterprise-wide end-to-end IT application**.
- It is a **web-enabled solution** with support for **multiple languages** with, **offline functionality**, and a **mobile app**.
- **All new audit work** in offices under the CAG will take place only through OIOS.
- **Applications:**
  - All **audit work** can be **carried out digitally**.
  - Offices will **not have to go through files physically**, and **records can be maintained for eternity**.

**What is an Audit?**

- Auditing, or a financial audit, is an **official examination** and **verification of a business's financial records**.
  - The financial records **include a balance sheet, an income statement**, a statement of changes in equity, a cash flow statement, and notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.
  - **The main goal** of auditing is to make sure that a company's **financial statements are accurate and follow regulatory guidelines**.
  - Auditing **also gives investors, creditors, and other stakeholders reasonable assurance** that they can rely on a company and its integrity.
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## FOREIGN TRADE POLICY 2023

### Why in News?

- Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, recently launched the Foreign Trade Policy 2023.

### About Foreign Trade Policy 2023:

- Foreign Trade Policy (2023) is a **policy document** which is based on continuity of time-tested schemes facilitating exports as well as a document which is nimble and responsive to the requirements of trade.
- The Key Approach to the policy is **based on these 4 pillars** –
  - **Incentive to Remission,**
  - **Export promotion** through collaboration - Exporters, States, Districts, Indian Missions,
  - **Ease of doing business,** reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives and
  - **Emerging Areas** – E-Commerce Developing Districts as Export Hubs and streamlining SCOMET policy.

### Key Highlights of FTP 2023:

- **Process Re-Engineering and Automation** –
  - Greater faith is being reposed on exporters through automated IT systems with risk management system for various approvals in the new FTP.
  - The policy emphasizes export promotion and development, **moving away from an incentive regime to a regime which is facilitating**, based on technology interface and principles of collaboration.
- **Towns of Export Excellence** –
  - Four new towns, namely **Faridabad, Mirzapur, Moradabad, and Varanasi**, have been designated as Towns of Export Excellence (TEE) in addition to the existing 39 towns.
  - The TEEs will have priority access to export promotion funds under the MAI scheme and will be able to avail Common Service Provider (CSP) benefits for export fulfillment under the EPCG Scheme.



- **Market Access Initiative (MAI) Scheme** is an Export Promotion Scheme envisaged **to act as a catalyst to promote India's exports on a sustained basis.**
  - The objective of the **Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme** is **to facilitate import of capital goods for producing quality goods and services and enhance India's manufacturing competitiveness.**
    - This addition is expected to boost the exports of handlooms, handicrafts, and carpets.
  - **Recognition of Exporters –**
    - Exporter firms recognized with 'status', based on export performance, will now be partners in capacity-building initiatives.
  - **Promoting Export from the Districts –**
    - The FTP aims at building partnerships with State governments and taking forward the **Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) initiative** to promote exports at the district level.
    - District specific export action plans to be prepared for each district outlining the district specific strategy to promote export of identified products and services.
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