

WHAT IS A FOREIGNERS TRIBUNAL (FT)?



The Supreme Court (SC) recently halted the deportation of a woman who was declared a foreigner by a Foreigners' Tribunal in Assam.

- The FTs came into existence through the **Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964**, to let **state administration** (District Collector/District Magistrate) to make a reference about a person suspected to be a foreigner to the Tribunals.
- The Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964, was enacted by the **Central govt.** through the use of powers granted under Section 3 of the **Foreigners Act, 1946**.
- The Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964, **applies to the whole of India**, yet, **FTs exist only in Assam as of now**.
- In other states, if an illegal immigrant is found, he is produced before a local court and dealt with as per the **Foreigners Act, 1946**.
- Prior to the 2019 amendment to the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964, only the Centre was empowered to establish FTs in states, but after this amendment, the power has been granted to states as well.

Need for FT:

- The **superintendents of police (SPs)** and **district commissioners** were empowered to detect suspected foreigners. References for these “suspected persons” were required to be made before an authority which came into existence through the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964.
- **The Election Commission of India (ECI)** can also refer cases of D or Doubtful voters to the local SP, who then refers them to a tribunal to verify their citizenship.
- The **persons excluded from the final draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC)** as released in August 2019 **can appeal before the FTs** to prove their citizenship.

INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF INDIA (ICAI)

The Supreme Court recently upheld a rule issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAA) barring chartered accountants from accepting more than the "specified number of tax audit assignments" in a financial year.

Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament, viz., the **Chartered Accountants Act, 1949**, for regulating the profession of Chartered Accountancy in the country.

- It functions under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**, Government of India.
- **Headquarters: New Delhi**
- It is the **second largest** professional body of chartered accountants in the world.
- The affairs of the ICAI are managed by a Council in accordance with the provisions of the **Chartered Accountants Act, 1949, and the Chartered Accountants Regulations, 1988.**
 - The Council consists of **40 members**, of whom 32 are elected by the Chartered Accountants and the remaining 8 are nominated by the Central Government, generally representing the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the Securities and Exchange Board of India, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and other stakeholders.

Functions of ICAI:

- Regulates the profession of Accountancy
- Examination and education of Chartered Accountancy course
- Continuing professional education of members
- Conducting post-qualification courses
- Formulation of accounting standards

- Prescription of standard auditing procedures
 - Laying down ethical standards
 - Monitoring quality through peer review
 - Ensuring standards of performance of members
 - Exercise disciplinary jurisdiction
 - Financial reporting review
 - Input on policy matters to the government
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WHAT IS BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BIMSTEC)?



BIMSTEC will now be open to new members and observers after a historic first charter of the grouping came into force recently.

BIMSTEC is a multilateral regional organization comprising seven member states lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal, constituting a contiguous regional unity.

- **Aim:** Accelerating shared growth and cooperation between littoral and adjacent countries in the Bay of Bengal region.
- **Formation:**
 - It was founded as BIST-EC in June 1997, with the adoption of the **Bangkok Declaration**, with Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand as members.
 - It became BIMST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation) with the entry of Myanmar in late 1997, and eventually, it was named in its current form when Nepal and Bhutan became members in 2004.
- **Current Member States:** Five deriving from **South Asia**, including **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka** and two from **Southeast Asia**, including **Myanmar and Thailand**.
- **Permanent Secretariat:** Dhaka, Bangladesh
- **Areas of cooperation:**

- It is a **sector-driven cooperative organisation** in which, initially, six sectors had been included:
- Trade, Technology, Energy, Transport, Tourism, and Fisheries
- As of now, BIMSTEC has **14 priority areas** of cooperation. Climate change was added as the 14th priority area of cooperation in 2008.
- Among these priority areas, a member country chooses which of the 14 priority areas it is willing to take the lead.
- India is lead country for Transport & Communication, Tourism, Environment & Disaster Management, Counter-Terrorism & Transnational Crime.

TRAVEL & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT INDEX



India has improved its ranking in recently released Travel & Tourism Development Index as compared to the previous report.

Travel & Tourism Development Index is the **second edition** of an index that evolved from the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) series, a flagship index of the World Economic Forum that has been in production since 2007.

- It is created in collaboration with the University of Surrey and with input from leading Travel & Tourism (T&T) stakeholder organizations, thought leaders and data partners.
- It measures the set of factors and policies that enable the **sustainable and resilient development of T&T**.
- India is **ranked 39th**, the highest in South Asia and among other lower-middle-income economies.
- India's new ranking is a notable improvement from its **54th position in the 2021 index**.
 - On an overall index score of 7, where **1 is the worst, and 7 is the best**, India scored 4.25. India's significant leap in the rankings underscores its growing competitiveness in the global tourism landscape.
- **The biennial index** analyzed the travel and tourism sectors of 119 countries, evaluating them on a range of factors and policies that foster tourism development.

WHAT IS HEATSTROKE?



Heatstroke is the most serious **heat-related illness**.

When it occurs?

- It occurs when the **ambient temperature** is so high that the body is **unable to sweat to regulate** the core temperature, which shoots up to 40 degree Celsius.
 - In such cases, there is a severe **imbalance of salts such as sodium and potassium** in the body. The high core temperature coupled with salt imbalances disrupts organs, leading to a host of symptoms.
 - **Impacts on human body:** It can affect the brain, making a person foggy, drowsy and in severe cases may also lead to a person going into a coma. It can lead to kidney and liver damage as well. A cascade of such symptoms leads to death due to heat stroke,
 - **Symptoms observed:** The one who gets impacted whose body **temperature is very high** but they are not sweating at all, feeling drowsy, vomiting, not passing urine and not breathing properly.
 - **Prevention:** To prevent heat stroke, it is better to avoid stepping out in direct sunlight, especially between noon and 3 pm. You should avoid strenuous activity during this time.
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PLANETARY ALIGNMENT



Next month, on June 3, there will be planetary alignments that may actually allow people to witness six planets align in the sky.

Planetary alignment is a term used to describe the **positioning of planets** in the solar system such that they appear to be in a straight line or close to one when viewed from a specific vantage point, for us that's Earth.

- This phenomenon is **more an illusion of perspective** rather than the planets being in a perfect line in space.
 - **Aligning planets:** Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune will form a near-straight line.
 - **Which Planets will be visible?**
 - While six planets align, not all of them will be visible to the naked eye, due to their **vast distance** from Earth.
 - Meanwhile, the Moon will also play a spoilsport as it distorts the visibility.
 - Mercury and Jupiter will be tricky to see in the sky due to their proximity to the Sun in their orbit.
 - However, **Mars and Saturn** will be visible to the **naked eye**, though very dim. Meanwhile, keen observers will need telescopes or high-powered binoculars to spot the distant planets Uranus and Neptune.
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WHAT ARE AI AGENTS?



Known as ‘AI agents’, GPT-4o and Project Astra have been touted as far superior to conventional voice assistants such as Alexa, Siri, and Google Assistant.

- These are sophisticated AI systems that can **engage in real-time, multi-modal** (text, image, or voice) interactions with humans.
- Unlike conventional language models, which solely work on text-based inputs and outputs, AI agents can **process and respond** to a wide variety of inputs including voice, images and even input from their surroundings.
- These agents **perceive their environment via sensors**, then process the information using algorithms or AI models, and subsequently, take actions. Currently, they are used in fields such as gaming, robotics, virtual assistants, autonomous vehicles, etc.

How are they different from large language models?

- The Large Language Models (LLMs) like GPT-3 and GPT-4 have the ability to only generate human-like text, AI agents make **interactions more natural and immersive** with the help of voice, vision and environmental sensors.
- Unlike LLMs, AI agents are designed for instantaneous, real-time conversations with responses much similar to humans.
- LLMs **lack contextual awareness**, while AI agents can understand and learn from the context of interactions, allowing them to provide more relevant and personalised responses.
- Also, language models **do not have any autonomy** since they only generate text output. AI agents, however, can perform complex tasks autonomously such as coding, data analysis, etc. When integrated with robotic systems, AI agents can even perform physical actions.
- **Potential Uses**
 - AI agents can serve as intelligent and highly capable assistants. They are capable of handling an array of tasks, from offering personalised recommendations to scheduling appointments.
 - These can be ideal for customer service as they can offer seamless natural interactions and resolve queries instantly without actually the need for human interventions.
 - In the field of **education and training**, AI agents can act as personal tutors, customise themselves based on a student's learning styles and may even offer a tailored set of instructions.
 - In healthcare, they could **assist medical** professionals by providing real-time analysis, diagnostic support and even monitoring patients.

WHAT IS EVTOL?

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras-incubated ePlane Company is expected to launch its e-flying taxis in Bengaluru this year but the Indian government has yet to establish clear policies regarding eVTOL flying taxis.



- An **electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing (eVTOL)** aircraft is one that uses electric power to hover, take off and land vertically.
- It is one of the newer technologies and developments in the aerospace industry.
- It is a **low-altitude urban air mobility** aircraft capable of carrying only a few passengers- six-seaters and eight-seaters.
- **Technology used:**
 - Most eVTOLs use **distributed electric propulsion technology** which means integrating a complex propulsion system with the airframe. There are multiple motors for various functions; to increase efficiency; and to also ensure safety.
 - This is a technology that has grown on account of successes in electric propulsion based on progress in motor, battery, fuel cell and electronic controller technologies and also fuelled by the need for new vehicle technology that ensures **Urban Air Mobility (UAM)**.
- **Applications:** Air Taxi, Delivery, Medical assistance (EMS), Cargo Transport, Recreation.
- **Significance:** In the near future, these eVTOLs will enhance “on-demand” mobility for intra- and intercity transportation, improving connectivity between metropolitan city centers and airports.

ECONOMIC CAPITAL FRAMEWORK (ECF)

Why in News?

The Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved a highest-ever surplus transfer/dividend of Rs 2.11 lakh crore to the Central government for the accounting year 2023-24.

The transferable surplus for the year (2023-24) has been arrived at on the basis of the **Economic Capital Framework (ECF)**.

What is the Economic Capital Framework (ECF)?

- **Meaning:**
 - The ECF provides a **methodology** for determining the appropriate level of risk provisions and profit distribution to be made under **Section 47 of the RBI Act 1934**.
 - As per this provision, **the central bank is required to pay the balance of its profits to the central government** after making provision for bad and doubtful debts, depreciation in assets, and contributions to staff.

What is the Surplus Distribution Policy of the Revised ECF?

- The previous surplus distribution policy targets **only the total economic capital**.
 - **Economic capital** of a central bank includes its capital, reserves, risk provisions and revaluation balances.
- However, the Expert Committee recommended that the target **should also include realised equity**.
 - **Realised equity** is the component of RBI's economic capital comprising its capital, reserve fund and risk provisions.

Year	Surplus transfer (Rs crore)
2023-24	2,10,874
2022-23	87,416
2021-22	30,307
July 2020-March 2021	99,122
2019-20	57,128
2018-19	1,23,414

Surplus Transfer by the RBI to the Central Government:

- The Central Board of Directors of the RBI approved the transfer of **Rs 2,10,874 crore** as surplus to the Central Government for the accounting year 2023-24.
- **The latest transfer** by the central bank is **more than double** the ₹87,416 crore that the RBI had transferred in FY23.
- The RBI Board also decided to **increase the CRB to 6.50% for 2023-24**, from 6% in the previous year, as the economy remains robust and resilient.
- In the Interim Budget for FY2025, the government had set an ambitious target of bringing down the fiscal deficit target to 5.1% of GDP in FY25 from 5.8% of GDP in FY24.