END THE FREE REIN OF JUNK FOOD ADVERTISING IN INDIA

- The rapid growth of Ultra-Processed Foods **(UPFs)** and High Fat, Sugar and Sodium **(HFSS)** products has become a major public health concern in India.
- Given the rising burden of **obesity**, **diabetes**, and other **non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, stronger regulation of food advertising is increasingly necessary.

The Problem of Misleading Food Advertising

- **Selective Disclosure of Information**
  - Food companies frequently market products using terms such as baked, multigrain, and no maida while failing to disclose high levels of sugar, salt, unhealthy fats, and refined carbohydrates.
  - Such selective presentation creates a false perception of healthfulness and prevents consumers from making **informed choices**.
- **Role of Celebrity Endorsements**
  - Celebrities and influencers often promote breakfast cereals, biscuits, and snacks that are high in sugar, fat, or salt.
  - These endorsements enhance consumer trust and increase the appeal of products, especially among young audiences, despite their questionable nutritional value.

Impact of Advertising on Consumption Patterns

- **Creation of Consumer Demand**
  - Advertising does not merely reflect consumer demand; it actively shapes and creates it. Food corporations invest heavily in marketing because it influences purchasing decisions and consumption habits.
- **Influence on Children and Adolescents**
  - Children are particularly vulnerable to persuasive marketing techniques.
  - Continuous exposure to advertisements through television, social media, sports broadcasts, schools, and public spaces encourages **brand loyalty** and normalises unhealthy dietary habits.

The Path Forward: Need for Stronger Regulation

- **Protecting Public Health**
  - When health risks are foreseeable and vulnerable populations are affected, the state has a responsibility to intervene.
  - Nutrition education alone cannot succeed in an environment saturated with aggressive marketing of unhealthy foods.
  - Effective regulation is therefore essential to create healthier food environments.
- **Learning from International Experience**
  - Countries such as **Chile**, **Mexico**, and **Brazil** have implemented warning labels and restrictions on unhealthy food advertising.
  - Their experiences suggest that legally enforceable measures are often more effective than voluntary **self-regulation** by industry.
- **Promoting Healthier Food Systems**
  - Restricting the advertising of UPFs should not be viewed as anti-industry.
  - Reduced spending on aggressive marketing could encourage companies to invest in healthier and minimally processed food products.
  - Such a shift would support more sustainable and nutrition-oriented food systems.

Conclusion

- The widespread advertising of **UPFs** and **HFSS foods** poses significant challenges to public health in India.
- Misleading marketing practices, extensive exposure among children, and strong scientific evidence linking these products to chronic diseases justify stronger government intervention.
- Measures such as **advertising restrictions**, **warning labels**, and stricter regulatory frameworks can help protect consumers, promote healthier dietary habits, and uphold the constitutional **right to health**.
- Creating a healthier food environment is essential for reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases and ensuring the well-being of future generations.

POLICE BEGIN COLLECTING DNA RECORDS UNDER THE CRPI ACT

- Police across several Indian states have begun collecting DNA records of suspects under the **Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022**, with over one lakh DNA profiles generated and stored in a central database operated by National Crime Records Bureau.

About the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 (CrPI Act)

- It is a significant piece of legislation passed by Parliament in 2022 to modernise India's criminal investigation framework.
- It replaced the colonial-era Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920, which had limited provisions for collecting only fingerprints and footprints.
- **Background**
    - The 1920 Act was considered outdated in the era of advanced forensic technology. The new law was enacted to:
        - Modernise identification techniques in line with global standards
        - Strengthen the criminal justice system through scientific evidence
        - Improve conviction rates by enabling accurate identification
        - Solve interstate crimes through a unified national database
- **Key Provisions**
    - The CrPI Act empowers police and prison officers to collect a wide range of identification data from:
        - Convicted persons
        - Arrested persons for offences punishable with imprisonment of seven years or more
        - Persons detained under preventive detention laws

Types of Measurements Collected

- Fingerprints and palm prints
- Footprints and photographs
- Iris and retina scans

- Physical and biological samples, including blood and saliva for DNA profiling
- Behavioural attributes, including signatures and handwriting

Data Retention

- Records can be retained for up to 75 years from the date of collection.
- Data is stored in a central database maintained by the National Crime Records Bureau.
- Records are deleted when a person is acquitted or discharged in all proceedings.

Authorised Agencies

- State police forces across the country
- Central agencies, including the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), National Investigation Agency (NIA), and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)
- Prison authorities for record collection

Concerns and Criticisms

- Privacy concerns regarding mass collection of biometric and biological data
- Potential misuse by authorities
- Vague definitions of who can be subjected to collection
- Lack of judicial oversight for collection from arrested persons
- Long retention period of 75 years raises proportionality questions

- **Implementation Challenges**
  - Standardising procedures across states
  - Training law enforcement on proper collection techniques
  - Maintaining the sanctity of samples and the chain of custody
  - Integration with state databases
- **Need for Safeguards**
  - Judicial oversight for sensitive data collection
  - Clear protocols for data deletion upon acquittal
  - Regular audits of database access and use
  - Transparency in operational procedures
  - Periodic legislative review of the framework

INDIAN NAVY'S TRIPLE COMMISSIONING: INS DUNAGIRI, INS SANSHODHAK AND INS AGRAY

The Indian Navy commissioned three indigenously built warships—INS Dunagiri, INS Sanshodhak, and INS Agray, in Kolkata.

INS Dunagiri — The Blue-Water Warrior

- Dunagiri is a stealth guided-missile frigate under Project 17A. It is the largest of the three (149 m, 6,670 tonnes). 'Stealth' here means reduced radar and sensor visibility — not complete invisibility.

- **Key weapons and systems**: BrahMos surface-to-surface missiles, Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) system, MFSTAR radar, sonar, electronic warfare systems, and anti-submarine weapons.

INS Sanshodhak — The Eye Beneath the Sea

- Sanshodhak is a Survey Vessel — Large (SVL). Its job is to **measure and map the sea**: water depth, seabed features, navigational routes, port approach channels, and oceanographic data.
- It is equipped with autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), and multi-beam echo sounders.
- **Why it matters**: Submarines and warships don't operate in empty water. Knowing the underwater terrain — depths, currents, seabed clutter — is essential for safe navigation, submarine route planning, port management, disaster relief, and coastal development.

INS Agray — The Coastal Submarine-Hunter

- Agray is the smallest (77 m, 900 tonnes) but most specialised of the three. It is an Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC) of the **Arnala-class**.
- Its weapons: lightweight torpedoes, indigenous anti-submarine rocket launchers, and sonar systems.
- Its role is to detect and destroy submarines in littoral waters — shallow coastal zones near ports, naval bases, and sea approaches.

Strategic Significance

- **Layered Naval Capability**
  - The triple-commissioning is significant because it adds three distinct capabilities in one ceremony: blue-water strike power, maritime domain awareness, and coastal anti-submarine defence.
  - This reflects a layered approach to naval capability-building.
- **Geopolitical Context**
  - The Indian Ocean is increasingly contested. China and Pakistan are expanding their naval presence.
  - India's maritime responsibilities now span the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, island territories (Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep), and the broader Indo-Pacific.
  - The Navy is therefore developing capabilities at multiple layers:
    - Deep-sea combat platforms.
    - Maritime surveillance assets.
    - Coastal defence systems.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat in Defence**
  - All three ships were built domestically by GRSE, Kolkata.
  - Three technologically distinct vessels — a stealth frigate, a survey ship, and an ASW craft — being built and commissioned together signals the maturing of India's naval shipbuilding ecosystem.
  - The involvement of 200+ MSMEs underlines the depth of the domestic defence-industrial base.

Conclusion

The simultaneous induction of INS Dunagiri, INS Sanshodhak, and INS Agray marks a significant milestone in India's naval modernisation. Together, they strengthen combat capability, maritime awareness, and coastal defence while showcasing the growing maturity of India's indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem.

RIGHT TO WALK ON FOOTPATHS: A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

The Supreme Court of India, in its judgment in Maniyar Iliyaz @ Shaik Riyaz vs. P. Ayyappan, declared the right to walk on safe, demarcated footpaths as a **fundamental right**.

The Crisis on the Ground: Data That Demands Attention

- India's pedestrian death figures are alarming.
- Between 2015 and 2024, while total road fatalities rose by 21.24%, **pedestrian deaths surged by nearly 163%** — from 13,894 in 2015 to **36,526 in 2024**.
- The cause is not just speed or recklessness. It is the **systematic denial of pedestrian space**. Footpaths across Indian cities are routinely encroached by two-wheelers, vendors, parked vehicles, and garbage. In many places, they simply do not exist.

What the Court Said: Beyond Accident Law

- A footpath is not merely a safety buffer to prevent accidents. It has an identity and purpose of its own.
- The court held that the **right to walk is the most fundamental of human activities**.
- Road infrastructure built overwhelmingly for vehicles has effectively pushed walkers to the margins, treating them, in the court's words, as a "nuisance for drivers."

Constitutional and Legal Foundations

- **Article 21 — Right to Life:** The court grounded the right to walk in Article 21. A safe, unobstructed footpath is essential to the dignified exercise of the right to life and personal liberty.
- **Article 39(b) — Directive Principle**: Footpaths are material resources of the community. Article 39(b) mandates that such resources must be distributed to serve the common good — not monopolised by the motorised class. Urban land allocated for roads must balance the needs of both pedestrians and vehicle users.
- **Tragedy of the Commons**: Footpaths — like other shared public resources — degrade when they are encroached upon by many without accountability. Safe footpaths have become a scarce resource in Indian cities.

KHURASANI IMLI

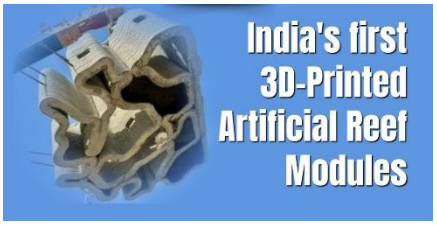
Recently, the Khurasani Imli has been awarded Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

- **Khurasani Imli** or **Tamarind** is a fruit of **Mandu's (Madhya Pradesh) iconic Baobab tree.**
- It was brought to Mandav during the reign of Mahmud Khilji in the 14th century and its name was **changed from 'Baobab' to "Khurasani Imli.**
- It is known by one **more name Mandav Imli.**
- It has a light green fruit with **a tangy sweet-sour flavour**, grows across villages in the Mandu region.
- **Benefits:**
    - Tribal communities have traditionally used not only the pulp but also the tree's juice and dried **bark for treating ailments such as diabetes.**
    - It is packed with **Vitamin C, antioxidants, and essential minerals.**
    - Tribal healers have long used it to treat **digestive ailments, fever, and fatigue**, while seeds and bark also hold medicinal value.

What is Geographical Indication Tag?

- It 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 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.**

INDIA'S FIRST 3D-PRINTED ARTIFICIAL REEF MODULES



- It is to be deployed by **Tamil Nadu in coastal waters** off the Ramanathapuram coast.
- It is part of an ambitious **marine habitat restoration initiative** under the **second phase** of the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana.**
- It will serve as a pilot to assess the performance of **six newly developed reef designs** created through **advanced 3D-printing technology.**
- The **modules**, **each weighing about 1 tonne**, were **developed by Chennai-based startup Tvasta, an IIT Madras-incubated company,** in **collaboration with Visakhapatnam Regional Centre of the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute.**
- These modules will be deployed about two nautical miles offshore.

Features:

- Unlike conventional artificial reefs made from reinforced concrete structures, the new modules feature **complex geometries with multiple crevices, folds** and **attachment surfaces** designed to enhance biodiversity.
- They are manufactured **without iron reinforcement** and incorporate material innovations aimed at **increasing porosity and creating substrates more suitable for marine organisms, i**ncluding corals, sponges and other reef-associated fauna.
- They allow **greater structural complexity, higher surface area**, and **species-specific habitat design.**
- The technology offers significant advantages over traditional reef modules, including **faster fabrication, reduced labour** requirements and **flexibility** to alter material composition according to site-specific ecological needs.