

### SC ASKS CENTRE TO EXPAND FOOD SECURITY COVERAGE

#### In News:

- The Supreme Court has directed the Centre to increase coverage under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) so that more and more needy persons and citizens get the benefit under the Act.
- The coverage under the NFSA is as per the population figures of 2011 census.

#### Food Security

- The basic concept of food security globally is to ensure that all people, at all times, should get access to the basic food for their active and healthy life.
- The Indian Constitution does not have any explicit provision regarding right to food.
- However, the right to life enshrined in **Article 21** of the Constitution may be interpreted to include right to live with human dignity, which may include the right to food and other basic necessities.

#### National Food Security Act, 2013:

- The issue of 'food security' at the household is continuously being addressed by the Government since long, through the Public Distribution System and the Targeted Public Distribution System.
- However, the enactment of the National Food Security Act, (NFSA) 2013 on July 5, 2013 marks a paradigm shift in the approach to food security from welfare to rights based approach.
- The Act legally entitles up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population to receive subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System.
- About **two thirds of the population** therefore is covered under the Act to receive highly subsidized foodgrains.
- As a step towards women empowerment, the eldest woman of the household of age 18 years or above is mandated to be the head of the household for the purpose of issuing of ration cards under the Act.

- In case of non-supply of the entitled quantities of foodgrains or meals to entitled persons under NFSA, such persons shall be entitled to receive such food security allowance from the concerned State Government to be paid to each person.
- **Responsibilities under NFSA –**
  - NFSA defines the joint responsibility of the Centre and State/UT Government.
  - While the Centre is responsible for allocation of required foodgrains to States/UTs, the States/UTs are responsible for effective implementation of the Act.
  - The work of identification of eligible households is to be done by States/UTs.

### **Central Issue Price under NFSA:**

- The NFSA provides a legal right to persons belonging to “eligible households” to receive foodgrains at subsidised price— **rice at Rs 3/kg, wheat at Rs 2/kg and coarse grain at Rs 1/kg** — under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- The term “eligible households” comprises two categories — Priority Households, and families covered by the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY).
  - Priority households are entitled to receive 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month, whereas AAY households are entitled to 35 kg per month at the same prices.
- Under Schedule-I of the Act, these subsidised prices were fixed for “a period of three years from the date of commencement of the Act”.
- However, the government has yet not revised the subsidised prices.

### **News Summary:**

- The Supreme Court has directed the Government of India to increase coverage under the National Food Security Act, 2013.
- The court insisted that the government must consider projection of population increase during the decade 2011-2021 so that benefits are not restricted to the coverage as per 2011 census.
- The Central government stated that the Act requires coverage to be updated as per latest published census figures.
  - However, as the census of 2021 has been postponed indefinitely and no date has been notified regarding the publication of the same, the coverage cannot be re-determined.

- The court insisted that **Right to Food** is a fundamental right available under **Article 21** of the Constitution of India.

### NITI Aayog's Proposal:

- In its discussion paper, the NITI Aayog has suggested that the national rural and urban coverage ratio be reduced from the existing 75-50 to 60-40, respectively.
    - If this reduction happens, the number of beneficiaries under the NFSA will drop to 71.62 crore (on the basis of the projected population in 2020).
  - If the national coverage ratio is revised downward, the Central government can save up to Rs 47,229 crore (as estimated by the NITI Aayog paper).
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## MOBILE GAMES TO MAKE YOUTHS AWARE OF AZADI'S UNSUNG HEROES

### In News:

- As part of the 75th anniversary of India's independence, the Union Information and Broadcasting Minister recently unveiled **Azadi Quest**.
- Azadi quest is a series of online educational mobile games that will showcase the contributions of unsung heroes of the freedom struggle.
- The mobile games created are part of the government's efforts to boost the **animation, visual effects, gaming and comics (AVGC) sector** while also entertaining, engaging and educating the youth about India's history, freedom struggle, etc.

### The Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comic (AVGC) sector in India:

#### Potential:

- India's expanding AVGC sector, which is expected to grow 28% in 2021 alone, has propelled the country into the global Top 5 in the gaming business.
- The number of online gamers increased by 8% between 2020 and 2021, and by 2023 it is predicted to reach 45 crores.

- The AVGC sector in India has the potential to capture 5% (\$40 billion) of the worldwide market by 2025, with yearly growth of 25-30% and the creation of approximately 1,60,000 new employments.
- Thus, it can become the torch bearer of “Create in India” and “Brand India”.
- Though the AVGC sector is rapidly expanding in India, there is a gap due to a lack of formal gaming courses and legal certainty.
  - Previously, the Karnataka High Court struck down substantial provisions of the Karnataka Police (Amendment) Act, 2021, which prohibited online gambling and skill-based gaming platforms.

### Way ahead:

- If the potential of the AVGC sector is reaped it will help India to play a larger role in the creation of the Metaverse.
- A metaverse is a network of 3D virtual worlds focused on social connection.
  - It is defined as a simulated digital environment that incorporates Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) and blockchain, as well as social media principles, to build spaces for rich user interaction that imitate the real world.

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## THE PMLA VERDICT REVIEW

### In News:

- The Supreme Court has decided to hear in open court a review of its judgment upholding key provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

### Power of SC to review its judgments

- **Constitutional provision**
  - A ruling by the Supreme Court is final and binding. The SC rarely entertains reviews of its rulings.
  - However, Article 137 of the Constitution grants the SC the power to review its judgments or orders.
  - A review petition must be filed within 30 days of pronouncement of the judgment.

- **Grounds for review**

- A review is allowed on narrow grounds to correct grave errors that have resulted in a miscarriage of justice.
- A mistake apparent on the face of record is one of the grounds on which a case for review is made.
- As per the court, this mistake must be glaring and obvious.

- **Procedure followed while hearing the review cases**

- Except in cases of death penalty, review petitions are heard through circulation by judges in their chambers, and not in an open court.
- Lawyers make their case through written submissions and not oral arguments.
- The judges who passed the verdict decide on the review petition as well.

## News Summary

### Background

- Constitutionality of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 and various amendments made to this act were challenged in the apex court.
- 240 petitions were filed against the amendments.
- The petitioners had claimed that these amendments would violate personal liberty, procedures of law and the constitutional mandate.
- They claimed that the process itself was the punishment.
- In July 2022, the SC, in Vijay Madanlal Choudhary & Ors v Union of India case, upheld the constitutional validity of the PMLA, 2002, as amended from time to time.
- As a result, various petitioners who had challenged the PMLA, sought a review of the verdict.

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## WIND ENERGY

Annual installation of new wind power projects in India will peak by 2024 and likely decline thereafter, according to a report released by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) and MEC+, a consulting firm that specialises in renewable energy.



## About:

- As part of its transition away from fossil fuels, India has committed to sourcing half its electricity in 2030 from non-fossil fuel sources and installing 60 gigawatt (GW, or 1000 MW) of wind power by 2022.
- So far, only 40 GW of wind power capacity has been established.
- Wind industry installations have been slowing down in India since 2017. Only 1.45 GW of wind projects were installed in 2021 with many delayed due to the second wave of COVID-19 and supply chain-related disruptions.
- To compensate, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) granted a blanket timeline extension for seven-and-a-half months after the scheduled commissioning date (SCD) for projects with power purchase agreements (PPAs) signed before June 2021, which pushed the SCD of 0.7 GW projects to 2022.

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## SCO DEFENCE MINISTERS MEETING

**Defence Minister Rajnath Singh travelled to Tashkent (capital of Uzbekistan) on a three-day visit to attend a defence ministerial conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).**



## About:

- The SCO defence ministerial meeting is taking place around three weeks ahead of the annual summit of the SCO scheduled for September 15-16 in Samarkand.
- The SCO is an influential economic and security bloc and has emerged as one of the largest transregional international organisations.
- India and Pakistan became its permanent members in 2017.
- The SCO was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.



- India has shown a keen interest in deepening its security-related cooperation with the SCO and its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence.

## COMPETITION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022

The Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022 was recently introduced in Lok Sabha. It seeks to amend the Competition Act, 2002.



The Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022, inter alia, provides for the following, namely:

- changes in certain definitions like “enterprise”, “relevant product market”, “Group”, “Control”, etc., to provide clarity;
- broadening the scope of anti-competitive agreements and inclusion of a party facilitating an anti-competitive horizontal agreement under such agreements;
- provisions for reduction of time-limit for approval of combinations from two hundred and ten days to one hundred and fifty days and forming a prima facie opinion by the Commission within twenty days for expeditious approval of combinations;
- provisions for “value of transaction” as another criteria for notifying combinations to the Commission;
- limitation period of three years for filing information on anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position before the Commission;
- appointment of the Director General by the Commission with the prior approval of the Central Government;

## NATIONAL GOPAL RATNA AWARDS -2022

Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has invited applications for National Gopal Ratna Awards - 2022 online through the National Award portal.



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## About:



- The last date for the submission of applications is 15th of next month. The awards will be conferred on the occasion of National Milk Day, 26th November.
- The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying is making all efforts to provide sustainable livelihood to the farmers. The Rashtriya Gokul Mission was launched in December 2014 for the first time in the country, with a view to conserve and develops indigenous bovine breeds in a scientific manner.