

### STUDY IN INDIA (SII) PORTAL

The Education Ministry recently launched the Study In India (SII) portal with a vision to promote Indian education to foreign students.



#### About Study in India (SII) portal:

- It is a dedicated website to provide information about higher education institutions (HEIs) in India.
- **Aim: Establishing India as a global hub for education** by welcoming students from diverse backgrounds.
- It will **showcase the academic programmes in the HEIs** covering undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes as well courses in Indian Knowledge System (IKS) such as Yoga, Ayurveda, classical arts and more.
- The portal **will have information about the academic facilities, research support** and related information **available in the institutes**.
- It will be a **one-stop spot for student registration, the visa application process**, choosing the desired courses and receiving offer letters from the institute.
- It will have the **provision for students to apply in more than one institute** or course of their choice.
- It will offer a **streamlined and well-organised application process for international students** seeking higher education opportunities in India.

#### Study in India (SII) programme:

- It is a flagship project **launched by the education ministry in 2018**.
- **Aim: Endorse India as a prime education hub for international students** by inviting them to pursue higher education in the country and explore valuable educational opportunities enabled by top Indian universities.

## UNESCO HERITAGE DANGER LIST

Recently, experts from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have stated in a new report that the Italian city of Venice should be added to a list of world heritage sites in danger.



### About UNESCO heritage danger list:

- The list highlights a number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites which are threatened due to factors like **armed conflict and war, earthquakes and other natural disasters, pollution, poaching, uncontrolled urbanisation** and unchecked tourist development.
- The UNESCO also sets **certain guidelines and criteria under the 1972 World Heritage Convention**, which decide, whether or not, a property is faced with specific and proven imminent danger or threat.

### Key facts about UNESCO

- UNESCO stands for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- It is **specialized agency of the United Nations (UN)**.
- The constitution, which entered into force in 1946, called for the promotion of international **collaboration in education, science, and culture**.
- The agency's permanent **headquarters are in Paris, France**.
- Parent Organisation - United Nations Economic and Social Council

**Goal:** The primary goals of UNESCO are to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, and culture, and to promote sustainable development and intercultural dialogue.

- UNESCO believes that these areas are crucial for building a more just, peaceful, and inclusive world.

## KEY FACTS ABOUT MAHANADI RIVER

The Odisha government recently alerted the districts in the Mahanadi delta area as it apprehends a “medium” flood in the river system following heavy rains for three consecutive days in the state.



### About Mahanadi River:

- It is one of the major **east-flowing peninsular rivers in India.**
- **Origin:** The river originates from the Sihawa range of hills in the Dhamtari district of **Chhattisgarh state.**
- **Length:** It flows a total of **860 km** by distance before it **ends up in the Bay of Bengal.**
- **Course:**
  - It flows in a **southeastern direction through Chhattisgarh and Odisha.**
  - The **catchment area** of the basin extends over **major parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha** and comparatively **smaller portions of Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.**
  - It **passes through several major cities and towns, including Raipur, Sambalpur, and Cuttack.**
- The river is **bounded in the north by Central India hills, in the south and east by the Eastern Ghats and in the west by Maikal hill range.**
- **Tributaries:** The main tributaries of Mahanadi are **Seonath River, Jonk River, Hasdeo River, Mand River, Ib River, Ong River and Telen River.**
- **Hirakud Dam:**
  - The Hirakud Dam, the **world's longest earthen dam (26km)**, is constructed **across the Mahanadi River**, about 15 km from Sambalpur in Odisha.
  - The dam is used for irrigation, flood control, and power generation.
- **Chilika Lake:** Chilika, named **wetland of international importance** under the Ramsar Convention, **gets 61% of its inland flow from the Mahanadi river system**, mainly from its distributaries - Daya and Bhargabi.
- It ranks **second to the Godavari River among the peninsular rivers in respect of water potential.**

## RAJMARGYATRA APPLICATION

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) takes a significant stride towards improving the highway user experience with the launch of 'Rajmargyatra application.



### About Rajmargyatra Application:

- It empowers travellers with comprehensive information on **Indian National Highways** while also offering an efficient complaint redressal system.
- This is user-friendly app which is now available for download on both Google Play Store and iOS App Store.
- The app is currently available in **Hindi and English**.

### Features:

- **Comprehensive Highway Information:**
  - It serves as a **one-stop repository** of essential information for National Highway users.
  - Get **real-time weather conditions**, timely broadcast notifications, and access to details about nearby toll plazas, petrol pumps, hospitals, hotels, and other essential services that ensure a seamless and safe journey on National Highways.
- **Hassle-Free Complaint Redressal:**
  - The app comes equipped with an **inbuilt complaint redressal** and escalation mechanism.
  - Users can easily **report highway-related issues**, attaching geo-tagged videos or photos for better clarity.
- **Seamless FASTag Services:**
  - It integrates its **services with various bank portals**, making it convenient for users to recharge their FASTags, avail monthly passes, and access other FASTag-related banking services – all within a single platform.
- Over-speeding notifications and **voice-assistance** to encourage responsible and safe driving behaviour.
- With these improvements, 'Rajmargyatra' aims to create a seamless, user-friendly experience for highway users, fostering a safer and more enjoyable journey on Indian National Highways.

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND INDIA

- India's nuclear programme can trace its origins to June 1945 when **Dr Homi Jehangir Bhabha** founded the nuclear research centre, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.
- India built its first research reactor (**Apsara**, which was also Asia's first nuclear research reactor) in 1956 and its first plutonium reprocessing plant by 1964.
- India's military defeat to China in October 1962, provided the Government of India impetus for developing nuclear weapons as a means of deterring potential aggression.
- Also, China conducted its first nuclear test in October, 1964.

### **About Pokhran-I Nuclear Test:**

- Physicist **Raja Ramanna** expanded and supervised scientific research on nuclear weapons and was the first directing officer of a small team of scientists that supervised and carried out the test.
- The test was codenamed '**Smiling Buddha**' (conducted on Buddha Purnima) and conducted on **May 18, 1974**.
- The bomb was detonated on the army base Pokhran Test Range in **Jaisalmer, Rajasthan**.
- It was the first confirmed nuclear test by a nation that was not a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

### **Subsequent Nuclear Tests:**

- After the 1974 tests, India conducted five tests - three on May 11 and two on **May 13, 1998**.
- The tests codenamed '**Operation Shakti**'/ Pokhran-II were carried out again at the Pokhran test range.
- **Following Pokhran-II**, the Indian leadership exploited the political utility of its action, which once again attracted international criticism and sanctions, also **created political space for**, and gave **strategic autonomy** to India's decision-making.
- **For example, the Indo-US nuclear deal(2008)** paved the way for the strategic partnership that now involves high-end technology cooperation from defence to artificial intelligence.

## India's Nuclear Doctrine:

- A nuclear doctrine states how a nuclear weapon state would employ its nuclear weapons both during peace and war. India released its Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND) in August 1999.
- In January 2003, India released its official nuclear doctrine which can be summarized as follows –
  - Building and maintaining a **credible minimum deterrent**;
  - A posture of "**No First Use**" - nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere;
  - **Nuclear retaliation** to a first strike will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage.
  - Nuclear retaliatory attacks can **only be authorised by the civilian political leadership through the Nuclear Command Authority**.
  - **Non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states**;

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## MONEY BILLS VS FINANCIAL BILLS: WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES, WHAT THE COURT HAS RULED

### Why in news?

- Parliamentary Affairs Minister said that the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill, 2023** is an ordinary Bill and not a money bill.
- Earlier, it was reported that Bill was being introduced under **Article 117** of the Constitution, which deals with special provisions for Financial Bills.

### Finance Bill:

- In a general sense, any Bill that relates to revenue or expenditure is a financial Bill.
- A **money Bill is also a specific type of financial Bill**, that must deal only with matters specified in **Article 110 (1) (a) to (g)**.
- Financial bills are responsible for the fiscal matters such as government spending or revenue.
- It specifies the amount of money to be spent by the government and the way it is to be spent.
- More specifically, Article 117 of the Constitution deals with the special provisions relating to financial Bills.
- Financial bills are a component of the Constitution and the Union Budget.

## Money Bill:

- **Article 110** defines a money Bill as one containing provisions dealing with taxes, regulation of the government's borrowing of money, and expenditure or receipt of money from the Consolidated Fund of India, among others.
- **Article 109 delineates the procedure for the passage of such a Bill** and confers an overriding authority on the Lok Sabha in the passage of money Bills.
- The **Speaker certifies a Bill as a Money Bill, and the Speaker's decision is final.**
- Over the last seven years, the government has introduced multiple legislations through the money Bill route, the most notable of which are the **Aadhaar Act, 2016**, and the **Finance Act, 2017**.

## What is the Difference Between Money Bills and Financial Bills?

- While **all Money Bills are Financial Bills, all Financial Bills are not Money Bills.**
  - E.g., the Finance Bill which only contains provisions related to tax proposals would be a Money Bill.
  - However, a Bill that contains some provisions related to taxation or expenditure, but also covers other matters would be considered as a Financial Bill.
  - The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2015, which establishes funds under the Public Account of India and states, was introduced as a Financial Bill.
- The procedure for the passage of the two bills varies significantly.
  - **The Rajya Sabha has no power to reject or amend a Money Bill.**
    - After being passed by the Lok Sabha, money Bills are sent to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations.
    - Within 14 days, the Upper House must submit the Bill back to the Lower House with its non-binding recommendations.
    - If the Lok Sabha rejects the recommendations, the Bill is deemed to have passed by both Houses in the form in which it was passed by the Lok Sabha without the recommendations of the Rajya Sabha.

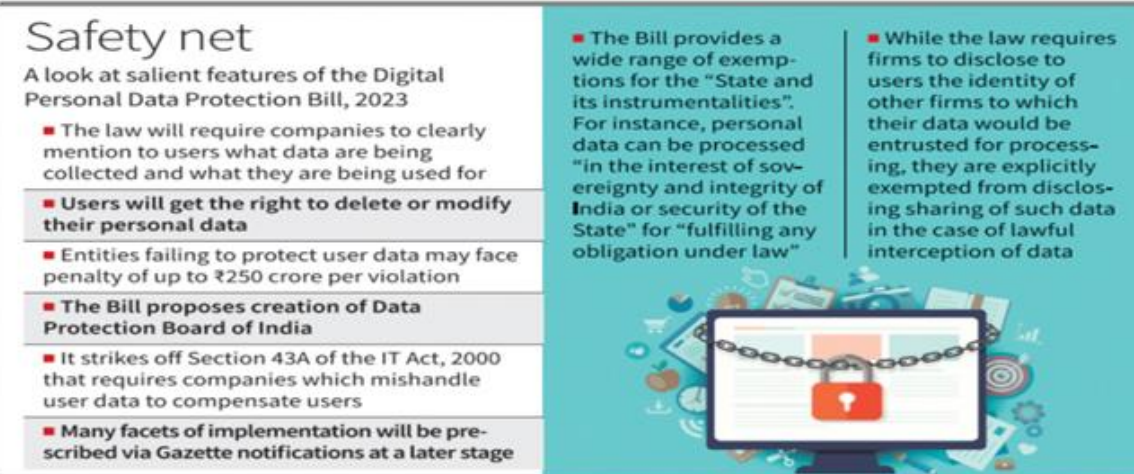
- Even if the Rajya Sabha doesn't respond with its recommendations within 14 days, the same consequences would follow.
- However, a **Financial Bill must be passed by both Houses of Parliament.**
- While an ordinary Bill can originate in either house, a **money Bill can only be introduced in the Lok Sabha**, as laid down in Article 117 (1).

## DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION BILL 2023: AMID ROW, BILL TABLED IN LOK SABHA

### Why in News?

- The Lok Sabha allowed the introduction of the long-awaited Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023, amid demands from opposition parties that the proposed law be referred to a Parliamentary committee.
- The Bill seeks to provide for the protection of personal data and the privacy of individuals.

### Key Features of Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023:



**Safety net**  
A look at salient features of the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023

- The law will require companies to clearly mention to users what data are being collected and what they are being used for
- Users will get the right to delete or modify their personal data
- Entities failing to protect user data may face penalty of up to ₹250 crore per violation
- The Bill proposes creation of Data Protection Board of India
- It strikes off Section 43A of the IT Act, 2000 that requires companies which mishandle user data to compensate users
- Many facets of implementation will be prescribed via Gazette notifications at a later stage

▪ The Bill provides a wide range of exemptions for the "State and its instrumentalities". For instance, personal data can be processed "in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India or security of the State" for "fulfilling any obligation under law"

▪ While the law requires firms to disclose to users the identity of other firms to which their data would be entrusted for processing, they are explicitly exempted from disclosing sharing of such data in the case of lawful interception of data

- **Applicability** –
  - The Bill will apply to the processing of digital personal data within India.
  - It will also apply to the processing of personal data **outside India**, if it is for offering goods or services or profiling individuals in India.
- **Consent** –



- Personal data may be processed only for a lawful purpose for which an individual has given consent. A notice must be given before seeking consent.
  - Notice should contain details about the personal data to be collected and the purpose of processing. Consent may be withdrawn at any point in time.
  - **For individuals below 18 years of age, consent will be provided by the legal guardian.**
  - **Rights and Duties of Data Principal –**
    - An individual, whose data is being processed (data principal), will have the right to
      - obtain information about processing,
      - seek correction and erasure of personal data,
      - nominate another person to exercise rights in the event of death or incapacity
  - **Transfer of Personal Data outside India –**
    - The central government will notify countries where a data fiduciary may transfer personal data.
    - Transfers will be subject to prescribed terms and conditions.
  - **Exemptions –**
    - Rights of the data principal and obligations of data fiduciaries (except data security) will not apply in specified cases. These include
      - prevention and investigation of offences, and
      - enforcement of legal rights or claims.
    - The central government may, by notification, exempt certain activities from the application of the Bill. These include
      - processing by government entities in the interest of the security of the state and public order, and
      - research, archiving, or statistical purposes.
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