

### DIGITAL MARKETS ACT

Recently, the European Commission has designated six technology giants – Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, ByteDance, Meta, and Microsoft – as gatekeepers under the Digital Markets Act (DMA).



#### About the Digital Markets Act:

- It is a ground breaking European law aiming to **prevent large online platforms** that connect consumers with content, goods, and services **from abusing their market power**.
- The European Commission believes that keeping the big internet companies in check can lead to more competition and choice, greater innovation, better quality, and lower prices.

#### Key Measures

- Tighter restrictions on how digital gatekeepers can use people’s data—users **must give their explicit consent for their activities** to be tracked for advertising purposes.
- Messaging services and social media platforms teaming up and sharing users. This could mean, for example, Meta-owned WhatsApp users being able to send messages directly to a completely different messaging service, such as Telegram.
- Presenting **users** with the **option to uninstall preloaded applications** on devices.
- **Gatekeepers** are **banned** from ranking their **own products or services higher than others in online searches**.
- According to the rules, any service offered by the company that meets two criteria is **gatekeeper designated**. These are:
  - They have a market value **of at least EUR 75 billion** (approximately \$82 billion), and
  - Either own a **social platform or app** that is used by **at least 45 million people every month** or have at least 10,000 active business users.
- The bulk of the DMA will become enforceable during 2023.

## WHAT IS NIPAH VIRUS?

The Kerala health department issued a health alert in Kozhikode after two people who died due to “unnatural” deaths in the district were suspected to have been infected with the Nipah virus (NiV).



### About Nipah Virus:

- Nipah virus infection is a **zoonotic illness** that is transmitted from animals to humans.
- The organism which causes Nipah Virus encephalitis is an **RNA or Ribonucleic acid virus of the family Paramyxoviridae**, genus Henipavirus, and is closely related to Hendra virus.
- It was **first broke out in Malaysia and Singapore** in 1998 and 1999.
- It first appeared in domestic pigs and has been found among several species of domestic animals, including dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep.

### Transmission

- The disease spreads through **fruit bats, or ‘flying foxes,’** of the genus Pteropus, who are natural reservoir hosts of the Nipah and Hendra viruses.
- The virus is present in **bat urine and, potentially, bat faeces, saliva,** and birthing fluids.
- **Symptoms**
  - Typically, the human infection presents as an **encephalitic syndrome** marked by fever, headache, drowsiness, disorientation, mental confusion, coma, and potentially death.
- **Treatment:** There is **no definitive treatment** available for the virus.

## SHANTI SWARUP BHATNAGAR AWARDS

Recently, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) announced the list of awardees for the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) awards for 2022.



### About Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar awards:

- The award is named after the founder Director of the Council of



# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) India, the late Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar.

- The Prize is given **each year** for outstanding contributions to **science and technology**.
- **Nature of the Prize**
  - It carries a prize amount of **Rs 5,00,000** (Rupees five lakh only).
  - It is given for notable and outstanding research, applied or fundamental in the following disciplines: (i) Biological Sciences, (ii) Chemical Sciences, (iii) Earth, Atmosphere, Ocean and Planetary Sciences, (iv) Engineering Sciences, (v) Mathematical Sciences, (vi) Medical Sciences and (vii) Physical Sciences.

## Eligibility

- Any **citizen of India engaged in research** in any field of science and technology **up to the age of 45 years** as reckoned on 31st December of the year preceding the year of the Prize.
- **Overseas citizens of India (OCI)** and **Persons of Indian Origin (PIO)** working in India are also **eligible**.
- The Prize is awarded on the basis of contributions made through **work done primarily in India during the five years** preceding the year of the Prize.
- In awarding the Prize, the Governing Body of CSIR is guided by the **recommendations of the Advisory Committees** constituted with the approval of the Chairman of the Governing body of CSIR.
- The names of the recipients are made public on 26 September, the CSIR Foundation Day, by the Director General CSIR.

## EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM

The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways will attend the Eastern Economic Forum, which is being held at the Russian port city of Vladivostok.



### About Eastern Economic Forum:

- It was established in 2015 to support the economic **development of Russia's Far East** and to expand international **cooperation in the Asia-**

## Pacific region.

- It is a key international platform for establishing and strengthening ties within the Russian and global investment communities.
- For a comprehensive expert **evaluation of the economic potential** of the Russian Far East, the investment opportunities it offers, and business conditions within advanced special economic zones.

## Key facts about the Russia Far East

- It is the easternmost part of Russia.
- The macro-region **borders two oceans**, the Pacific and the Arctic, and five countries (China, Japan, Mongolia, the United States and the DPRK).
- The Far Eastern region spreads **over four time zones** and various climate zones, from northern deserts to subtropics.
- It is rich in **natural resources** like diamonds, borax, etc.
- About 1/3 of all coal reserves and **hydro-engineering resources** of the country are here.

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## INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea will hear a landmark case brought by a group of small island states seeking protection of the world's oceans from catastrophic climate change.



### International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

### About the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea:

- It is an **independent judicial body** established by the 1982 **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**.
- **Composition**
  - The Tribunal is composed of **21 independent members**.
  - Members **elected by secret ballot** by the States Parties to the Convention.
  - Each State Party **may nominate up to two candidates**.

## Jurisdiction

- It has jurisdiction over any **dispute concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention** and over all matters specifically provided for in any other agreement which confers jurisdiction on the Tribunal.
- Disputes relating to the Convention may concern the **delimitation of maritime zones, navigation, conservation and management of the living resources of the sea**, protection and preservation of the **marine environment and marine scientific research**.
- The Tribunal is **open to States Parties to the Convention** (i.e. States and international organisations which are parties to the Convention).
- It is also open to **entities other than States Parties**, i.e., States or intergovernmental organisations which are not parties to the Convention, and to state enterprises and private entities.
- The seat of the Tribunal is in the City of **Hamburg, Germany**.

## ITALY TO WALK OUT OF CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE?

### Why in news?

- In a private meeting during the G20 summit 2023, Italian PM Giorgia Meloni reportedly conveyed Italy's plans to withdraw from the Belt and Road Initiative to Chinese Premier.
- While talking to the news reporters, Meloni clarified that a final decision on whether to leave the BRI was still to be taken.
- Italy is the only G7 country to sign up for the BRI, which it did in 2019.



- G7 is the grouping of advanced economies of US, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan, with the European Union as a “non-enumerated” member.

### China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

- China's Belt and Road Initiative (also known as One Belt, One Road (OBOR)) envisages the construction of a maze of road, rail and port projects through a number of countries.
- It aims to strengthen Beijing's economic leadership through a vast program of infrastructure building throughout China's neighbouring regions.
- This initiative is called "21st century silk road," and is made up of
  - belt of overland corridors (also known as silk road economic belt)
  - maritime shipping lanes

### What are the risks for countries involved?

- Sri Lankan government leased a port to a Chinese company for 99 years after struggling to make repayments.
- Recently, a study found out that many more Belt and Road countries are at serious risk of not being able to repay their loans.

### Why World is worried?

- It is being feared that China could use "**debt-trap diplomacy**" to extract strategic concessions:
  - such as over territorial disputes in the South China Sea or
  - silence on human rights violations.
- China had done this in the past. In 2011, China wrote off an undisclosed debt owed by Tajikistan in exchange for 1,158 sq km of disputed territory.
- Many experts claim that it is a form of economic imperialism that gives China too much leverage over other countries, often those that are smaller and poorer.

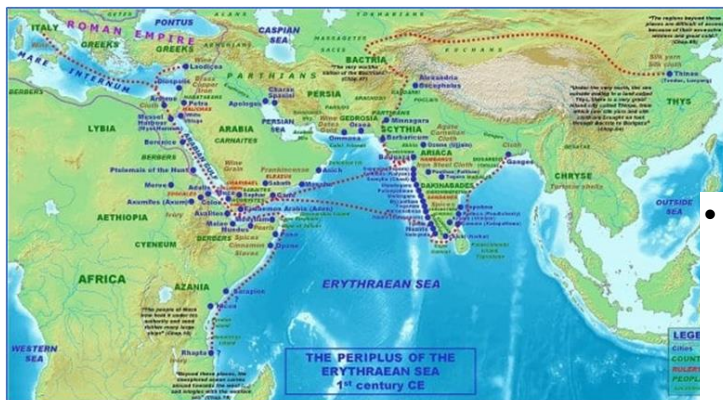
### BRI and India

- India does not support the BRI, and has declined to join the project. The major reason for this is that the BRI passes through Indian territory illegally held by Pakistan.
- The arm of the BRI project, known as China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), runs from **Kashgar** in China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region to **Gwadar port in southwestern Baluchistan in Pakistan**.



## Why does Italy want to leave the BRI?

- **Expectations not fulfilled**
  - Italy had signed an agreement to join the BRI in 2019. Four years later, the agreement hasn't done much for Italy.
  - Chinese FDI in Italy dropped from \$650 million in 2019 to just \$33 million in 2021.
  - In fact, the country invested far more in non-BRI countries in Europe.
  - In terms of trade, since joining BRI, Italy's exports to China increased from 14.5 billion euros to a mere 18.5 billion euros, while Chinese exports to Italy expanded from 33.5 billion euros to 50.9 billion euros.
- **Changing geopolitics**
  - For Beijing, a G7 country joining the BRI had been a big diplomatic win, and Rome walking out just ahead of the initiative's 10th anniversary will be a loss of face.
  - This will be in line with Europe's increasingly cautious stand towards China.
  - While the US-China ties have been rocky for years now, many countries in Europe continued to maintain close economic and trade links with China.
  - Italy has the G7 presidency next year, and walking out of the BRI will sit well with its Western allies.



Roman Empire.

## HISTORY OF INDIA – EUROPE TRADE

### Why in News?

- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor announced at the G20 Summit harkens to an ancient trade route between the Indian Subcontinent and the

## Historical Background on India-Europe Trade Route:

- Sir Mortimer Wheeler was digging south of modern Puducherry in the 1930s and 40s, and established the existence of Indo-Roman trade in the 1st century CE.
- Though the Indo-Roman trade started in the 1st century BCE, it truly matured in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.
- The geographical location of Arabia, Asia Minor and northeastern Africa helped to establish trade contacts between South Asia, West Asia and Europe.
- Indo- Roman trade was carried out on the sea as well on land.
  - The seaborne trade was controlled by the **Sakas** and the **Satavahanas** whereas the land-borne trade was monitored by the **Kusanas**.
- The political tensions between the Sakas and Satavahanas did affect this trade for some time at least.
- Similarly, the contentions between the Sakas and Parthians also served as a major impediment for trade overland.
- In order to overcome this problem, **Augustus**, the Roman Emperor, encouraged the traders to take the sea route and offered them protection as well.
- There is a text called “**Periplus on the Erythrean Sea**”, a sort of a guide book written by an unknown Greek sailor which is one of the major sources to reconstruct the history of this trade.

### What was being Traded on this Route?

- Indo-Roman trade **was mainly in luxury items** and the Roman Empire paid for these in Roman gold coins.
- Chinese goods with the exception of silk were first brought to India and then dispatched to the eastern frontiers of the Roman Empire.
  - Silk was directly sent to Europe along the silk route.
- Indian animals like tigers, lions, rhinoceroses, elephants and serpents also formed a part of exports from India and these were used in circus shows to entertain the Romans.
- Ivory and tortoise shells were also exported which were used to inlay furniture.
- Roman ladies were especially fond of pearls from India and the Persian Gulf.



- Different kinds of herbs, spices, indigo, cotton cloth, sesame oil, rice, wood for furniture and plant products from India were also in great demand in the Roman markets.

### Trade from Rome to India:

- The flow of goods in the other direction was more limited.
  - The Roman historian Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE) says it was **mainly gold that went to India**, which was a problem for the Roman economy because the balance of trade was firmly in India's favor.
  - But we do have records of Indians having a taste for Roman wine. It was called **Varuni** as it was brought from the sea in specially designed carriers which were called **Amphorae**.
  - Roman Amphorae have been discovered at many sites in peninsular India including **Nevasa in Maharashtra**.
  - Apart from wine, the other goods which were imported were copper, tin, lead, coral, topaz and waist girdles.
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