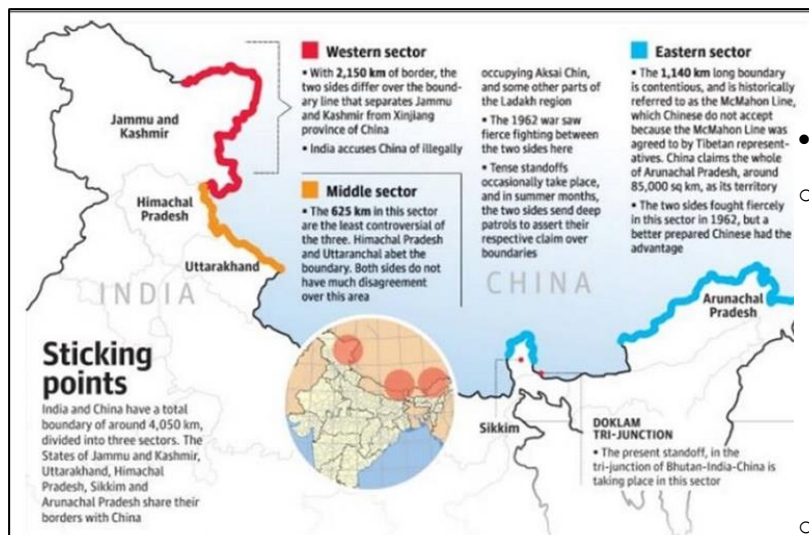


ASIAN GAMES 2023

Why in news?

- Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur called off his trip to China on the eve of the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games.
- This was after three athletes — all wushu martial arts players — from Arunachal Pradesh were denied accreditation cards and instead offered stapled visas by China.
- Accreditation cards have the dual purpose of being an ID card for the Asian Games as well as a visa.

India – China Border Dispute



Stapled Visa Row

What is a stapled visa?

- A stapled visa is simply an unstamped piece of paper that is attached by a pin or staples to a page of the passport and can be torn off or detached at will.
- This is different from a regular

visa that is affixed to the passport by the issuing authority and stamped.

Stapled visas issued by China

- China has made it a practice to issue stapled visas to Indian nationals from Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.
- It says the visas are valid documents, but the Government of India has consistently refused to accept this position.
- China began issuing stapled visas to residents of Arunachal Pradesh in the mid-2000s and to those from Jammu and Kashmir from 2009.
- China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of its territory.

- The Indian government has refused to accept the stapled visas as valid documents.
- China's actions are seen as attempts to challenge India's control and authority over parts of its own territory.

The Asian Games

• About

- The Asian Games, **also known as Asiad**, are a multi-sport event that takes place every four years. The games are the second largest multi-sport event after the Olympics.
- The **Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)** organizes the games, which have 45 participating countries or regions.
- The **19th edition of the Asian Games** is being held in Hangzhou, China (from September 23 to October 8).
- The 18th Asian Games were held in Indonesia in 2018.

• Background

- The Asian Games were first held in 1951, soon after the end of World War II.
- These games were advocated by Nehru, the first PM of India, who wished to reestablish the bonds between Asian countries that had been broken in the war through sports, and contribute to everlasting peace in Asia.
- The **1st Games were held in New Delhi**, with 11 participating countries, including Japan.

WHAT IS I2U2 GROUP?



The I2U2 group recently announced a new joint space venture that aims to create a "unique space-based tool" for policymakers, institutions, and entrepreneurs.

About the I2U2 Group:

- It is a grouping of **India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States.**
- **Formation:**

- The group was initially formed in October 2021 to deal with issues concerning infrastructure, transport, and maritime security in the region.
- Originally named the "International Forum for Economic Cooperation," it was also known as the "West Asian Quad" at the time.
- **First virtual summit:** The group held their first virtual summit in July 2022.
- This unique grouping of countries identifies bankable projects and initiatives to tackle some of the greatest challenges, with a particular focus on joint investments and new initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, food security, and technology.
- It aims to mobilise private sector capital and expertise to achieve a variety of goals, including modernising infrastructure, advancing low-carbon development pathways, and improving public health.

IMPOSITION OF RESTRICTIONS ON LAPTOP IMPORTS LIKELY TO BE DELAYED

Why in News?

- The Union government may delay import restrictions on laptops and personal computers till November 2024.

Background:

- On 3rd August, the Union Government imposed restrictions on import of laptops, tablets, all-in-one personal computers and ultra-small computers and servers with immediate effect.
- However, this decision was later suspended till 1st November, 2023.
- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) had to suspend the implementation as custom officials stationed at ports started holding up shipments of the specified electronic items.
- The issue has also come up in meetings between US and Indian officials after American companies including **Apple**, **Dell**, and **HP** urged the US government to ask Indian government to reconsider its policy.

Motive Behind Import Restrictions on Import of Laptops & Similar Electronic Goods:

- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) is the agency of the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, responsible for administering laws regarding foreign trade.
- Although the DGFT notice did not specify any reason behind the change in policy, the move is largely being seen as a push for the Centre’s ‘**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**’ mission and a bid to **reduce dependencies on China**.
- Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is the mission started by the Government of India in May 2020, towards making India Self-reliant.
- **China Factor –**



- Data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry gives us a broad picture of India’s dependence on China with regard to the import of electronic goods such as laptops, computers etc.
- Indeed, India’s imports of the aforementioned class of electronic goods have been steadily rising.
- Whereas in 2019-20, India’s imports of electronic goods stood at \$5.3 billion, that figure climbed to \$10.3 billion in 2021-22, before declining slightly to hit \$8.7 billion in 2022-23.
- Given this fact, a rise in indigenous manufacturing would not only help India reduce its dependence on its diplomatic and business rival but would also help indigenous manufacturers expand their footprint globally.

Security Factor –

- Another factor behind the restrictions imposed on this class of electronic goods is concerns about ‘security’.
- The restrictions may have been brought in to **guard against electronic hardware coming in with “in-built security loopholes that may potentially endanger sensitive personal and enterprise data”**.
- Across the world, many red flags have been raised about cybersecurity with regard to Chinese-manufactured electronics.

Implications of Import Ban on Laptops & Similar Electronic Goods:

- Shortly after the announcement, shares of local electronics contract manufacturers have gone up.
- Further, the government's announcement is expected to impact companies that import bulk of their products from outside India.
- Big Corporations like **Apple will have to either start manufacturing their laptops in India or stop importing their gadgets to India.**
- The same rule will also apply to other PC manufacturers like Lenovo, HP, Asus, Acer, Samsung.
- This will likely lead to an increase in the price of current laptops, computers, MacBooks, and Mac Minis in the Indian market.
- The restriction is likely to impact the sales and discounts that retailers and companies offer from time to time.
- If the demand will go up, the retailers will have no incentive to offer any discounts on the laptops.

WHAT IS VB_HMEY_H4907?

At the lowest point, nearly 11,000 metres below the surface of the Pacific Ocean, a new virus named vB_HmeY_H4907 has been discovered on Earth.



About VB_HmeY_H4907:

- It is a new virus discovered nearly 11,000 metres below the surface of the Pacific Ocean.
- The virus has been understood as a Bacteriophage, which means ‘bacteria eater’.
- It infects halophilic bacteria (bacteria that inhabit environments with high salt concentrations) from the genus Halomonas. Such bacteria are generally found in deep-sea hydrothermal vents.
- The virus is actually very genetically similar to its host and is a lysogenic phage, meaning that it inserts its genetic material into the bacteria but usually doesn’t kill it; instead, both virus and bacteria replicate at the same time.

What are Bacteriophages?

- Bacteriophages, also known as phages, are viruses that infect and replicate in bacterial cells.
- They also infect the single-celled prokaryotic organisms known as archaea.
- They were discovered independently by Frederick W. Twort in Great Britain (1915) and Félix d'Hérelle in France (1917).
- They are ubiquitous in the environment and are recognised as the most abundant biological agent on earth.
- They are extremely diverse in size, morphology, and genomic organisation.
- Like all viruses, phages are simple organisms that consist of a core of genetic material (nucleic acid) surrounded by a protein capsid. The nucleic acid may be either DNA or RNA and may be double-stranded or single-stranded.

HIRAKUD DAM

A day after opening six gates of the Hirakud dam, the authorities opened 16 more sluice gates to discharge excess water from the reservoir.



About Hirakud Dam:

- Hirakud Dam is built across the Mahanadi River, about 15 kilometres from Sambalpur in the state of Odisha.
- It is the longest earthen dam in the world, about 16 miles and around 26 km in length.
- The dam forms a vast reservoir known as the Hirakud Reservoir or Hirakud Lake. It is the biggest artificial lake in Asia.
- **History:**
 - It is one of the first multipurpose projects undertaken by India after independence.
 - The construction began in 1948 and was completed in 1953.
 - It was built to control the flow of the Mahanadi River and manage the perennial problem of floods in the region.

- The **inauguration** of the dam was done by the then **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru** in **1957**.

Purpose:

- **Irrigation facility** to **1,08,385 hectares** of **Rabi crops** and **1,55,635 hectares** of **Kharif crops** in Bolangir, Subarnapur, Bargarh, and Sambalpur.
- The **capacity of power generation** installed at Hirakud dam is **359.8 MW**.
- **More than 436,000 hectares** of land in the **Mahanadi delta** also get irrigated by the water which is released from the powerhouse.
- The **delta area in Cuttack and Puri districts**, which covers an area of **9500 sq Km**, also gets **flood protection** because of the Hirakud Project.

Cattle Island:

- It is a **small island** in the Hirakud Reservoir.
- It is **inhabited by a large herd of wild cattle**, which are believed to be the **descendants of cattle that were left behind by villagers** when the dam was constructed in the 1950s.

Key Facts about the 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**.

- 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**.
- **Length:** It flows a total of **860 km** by distance before it **ends up in the Bay of Bengal**.
- **Tributaries:** The main tributaries of Mahanadi are **Seonath River, Jonk River, Hasdeo River, Mand River, Ib River, Ong River and Telen River**.

VEERANGANA DURGAVATI TIGER RESERVE

The Madhya Pradesh Government recently announced the establishment of the "Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve", marking the seventh tiger reserve in the state and the 54th in the country.



About Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve:

- **Location:** It is spread across Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- It is spread over an area of **2,339 square kilometres**.
- It is the **seventh tiger reserve in Madhya Pradesh**.
- It will encompass areas within the Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary.
- A green corridor linking Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR) with Durgavati will be developed for the natural movement of the tiger to the new reserve.
- **Rivers:** Parts of the reserve fall under the Narmada and Yamuna River basins.
- The Singorgarh Fort is located within the reserve.
- **Vegetation:** Dry deciduous type
- **Flora:** The chief floral elements include Teak, Saja, Dhaora, Ber, Amla, etc.
- **Fauna:** Tiger, leopard, wolf, jackal, Indian fox, striped hyena, Nilgai, Chinkara, Chital, Sambhar, Black Buck, Barking deer, Common Langur Rhesus Macaque etc.

TASMANIAN TIGER

Recently, researchers have recovered Ribonucleic acid (RNA) from the desiccated skin and muscle of a Tasmanian tiger stored since 1891 at a museum in Stockholm.



About the Tasmanian tiger:

- The Tasmanian tiger resembled a wolf, aside from the tiger-like stripes on its back.
- The last known Tasmanian tiger succumbed in a Tasmanian zoo in 1936.

- It is a **large carnivorous marsupial** now believed to be extinct.
- It was the only member of the **family Thylacinidae** to survive into modern times.
- It was widespread over **continental Australia**, extending north to **New Guinea** and south to Tasmania.
- It was an apex **predator** that hunted kangaroos and other prey.

What is RNA?

- It is a complex compound of high molecular weight that functions in cellular protein synthesis.
 - It replaces DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) as a **carrier of genetic codes** in some viruses.
 - It consists of **ribose nucleotides** (nitrogenous bases appended to a ribose sugar) attached by phosphodiester bonds.
 - The nitrogenous bases in RNA are **adenine, guanine, cytosine, and uracil**.
 - It is a **single-stranded molecule** that carries **genetic information**.
 - RNA synthesises the panoply of proteins that an organism requires to live and works to regulate cell metabolism.
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