

### PITCHING INDIA AS A SIGNATURE DESTINATION

#### Context

- Recently, State Tourism Ministers gathered at Dharamshala (Himachal Pradesh) in a **first-of-its-kind** meeting to discuss, debate and deliberate on modes and mechanisms to develop tourism in India
- The three-day National Conference of State Tourism Ministers concluded with co-developing ‘**The Dharamshala Declaration**’.

#### About Dharamshala Declaration

- **Description:** The document titled “Dharamshala Declaration-2020: Sustainable and Responsible Tourism” asserts that India will play a pivotal role in contributing toward global tourism recovery driven mainly through domestic tourism.
  - It announces to bring in necessary interventions including visa reforms, ease of travel, travel-friendly immigration facilities at airports and openness to international travel.
- **Background:** The Dharamshala Declaration’ draws inspiration from Indian PM Modi’s ‘**Whole of Government**’ approach, which enables the breaking down of silos and encouraging synergies across various government corridors.
  - Also, in his Independence Day speech in 2019, PM Modi urged every Indian who could afford to travel, to visit at least 15 locations in India by 2022 and discover the country.
- **Position India as global leader:** The document talks about the short-term and long-term goals in the tourism sector as follows:
  - **Short term goals:** The Indian tourism industry will strive towards recovery of tourism to the pre-pandemic level by **2024**, achieve \$150 billion GDP contribution, USD 30 billion foreign exchange earnings and 15 million foreign tourist arrivals by that period.
  - **Medium term:** \$250 billion contribution to the GDP by **2030**, 137 million jobs, more than 25 million foreign tourist arrivals and USD 56 billion in foreign exchange earnings.
  - **Long-term:** Ensuring the positioning of India as one of the leaders in the world in the tourism sector and revenue goal of \$1 trillion by **2047**.

- **Action Plan:** In the declaration, the Tourism Ministry has come up with a strategy to encourage more Indians to travel domestically and explore India’s natural, cultural, and spiritual beauty while simultaneously reaching the goal of an ‘**Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat**’ (interaction and mutual understanding).
- **Tourism Clubs:** The Union Tourism and Culture Minister called on states to start work on “a war footing” by establishing tourism clubs.
  - The proposal is to work on making Yuva Tourism clubs at district and mandal levels.
- **Boost international tourism:** In parallel, the Tourism Ministry has also been working with the Ministry of External Affairs to identify 20 Indian missions abroad with the **highest tourist footfalls** to India and build **country-specific strategies** to attract foreign tourists.
- **Significance:** The Conference holds significance in the current context of India’s G20 presidency (in 2023). G-20 will be used as a platform to showcase India’s age-old dictum of ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’ and tourism potential to the world.
- **Significance:** Once the new policy is ratified, the Ministry would have a new set of tools and frameworks that are required to execute on the vision and goals we have set for ourselves.
- **Other initiatives:** The Ministry of Tourism has also launched a number of initiatives and implemented a four-pronged development strategy that focuses on:
  - Improving the connectivity - air, rail, and roads
  - Enhancing the tourism infrastructure and dependent services
  - Streamlining branding and promotion
  - Showcasing the culture and heritage

## Tourism Sector in India: Role & importance

- The tourism sector is an integral pillar of the “Make in India” programme and encourages the development of multiple-use infrastructure, eg hotels, resorts & restaurants, transport infrastructure (aviation, roads, shipping & railways) and healthcare facilities.
- In India, the travel and tourism sector is one of the largest employers, with nearly 12.75% (including both direct and indirect employment) of employment share in 2018-19.

## CENTRE'S PUSH FOR NAVIC SYSTEM LANDS SMARTPHONE GIANTS ON UNKNOWN ROAD

### **In News:**

- India is pushing tech giants to make smartphones compatible with the indigenous navigation system within months.

### **News Summary:**

- Government of India wants to reduce dependence on foreign systems, including the widely used U.S. Global Positioning System (GPS).
- Hence, it has asked the smartphone manufacturing firms to make smartphones compatible with the NavIC.
- However, companies like Samsung, Xiaomi and Apple fear elevated costs and disruptions as the move will require hardware changes.
- The Government says NavIC provides more accurate domestic navigation and that its use would benefit India's economy.

### **About NavIC:**

- NavIC, or **Navigation with Indian Constellation**, is also called the **Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)**.
  - With the last launch of the constellation's satellite (IRNSS-1G), IRNSS was renamed NavIC by India's Prime Minister
- It is an independent stand-alone navigation satellite system which **Presently comprises of 8 satellites**.
  - Presently, IRNSS consists of eight satellites, three satellites in geostationary orbit and five satellites in geosynchronous orbit.
  - **IRNSS-1I to replace IRNSS-1A**, which was rendered ineffective after its three rubidium atomic clocks failed.
- It is developed by the ISRO. NavIC was approved in 2006.

- It was expected to be completed by late 2011, but it only became operational in 2018.
- NavIC covers the whole of India's landmass and up to **1,500 km** from its boundaries.
- It was recognised by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as a part of the World Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS) for operation in the Indian Ocean Region in 2020.

### **Benefits:**

- Currently, NavIC is being used in –
  - Public vehicle tracking in India,
  - For providing emergency warning alerts to fishermen venturing into the deep sea where there is no terrestrial network connectivity, and
  - For tracking and providing information related to natural disasters.
- Enabling it in smartphones is the next step India is pushing for.

### **Other Navigation Systems:**

- The **Global Positioning System (GPS)** is a satellite-based navigation system owned by the United States government and operated by the United States Space Force.
- The main difference between GPS and NavIC is the serviceable area covered by these systems.
  - GPS caters to users across the globe and its satellites circle the earth twice a day, while NavIC is currently for use in India and adjacent areas.
- Like GPS, there are four more navigation systems that have global coverage –
  - **Galileo** from the European Union,
  - **QZSS(Quasi-Zenith Satellite System)** by Japan,
  - Russia-owned **GLONASS** and
  - **Beidou** from China.

### **Why is India promoting NavIC?**

- India says NavIC is conceived with the aim of removing dependence on foreign satellite systems for navigation service requirements, particularly for “strategic sectors.”

- Relying on systems like GPS and GLONASS may not always be reliable as those are operated by the defence agencies of respective nations and it is possible that civilian services can be degraded or denied.
- India also wants to encourage its ministries to use NavIC applications to promote local industry engaged in developing indigenous NavIC-based solutions.

## CENTRE SETS STIFFER 40% AIR POLLUTION REDUCTION TARGET FOR CITIES BY 2026

### In News:

- The Central government has revised the target for reducing air pollution (particulate matter (PM) concentrations) in cities from 20-30% by 2024 to **40% by 2025-26**.
- The revised target may prompt the respective states to increase their ambition through city-based action plans under the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**.

### About National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):

- NCAP was launched in **2019** by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India.
- It is India's flagship program that outlines a **long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle the air pollution problem** across the country in a comprehensive manner.
- It aims to achieve a **20% to 30% reduction in PM** (PM10 - coarse PM of diameter 10 micrometres or less and PM2.5 -fine particulate matter of diameter 2.5 micrometres or less) **concentrations by 2024**, using 2017 as the baseline year for comparison.
  - The country's current annual safe limits for PM2.5 and PM10 are **40 ug/m3** (micrograms/per cubic metre) and **60 ug/m3**.
- In accordance with the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** will execute this nationwide program.
- Under NCAP, **131 non-attainment cities** (earlier 102, to which more added later) have been identified across the country, as they did not meet the **national ambient air quality**

standards (NAAQS) for the 2011-15 under the **National Air Quality Monitoring Program (NAQMP)**

- Delhi, Varanasi, Bhopal, Kolkata, Noida, Muzaffarpur, Mumbai, etc., are among them.
- **City-specific action plans** have been developed, which include measures to strengthen the monitoring network, reduce vehicular or industrial emissions, raise public awareness, etc.
- The implementation of city-specific action plans is **regularly monitored by Central and State Committees**, namely the Steering Committee, Monitoring Committee and Implementation Committee.
- **State Pollution Control Boards monitor city air quality** and publish their findings on a regular basis.
- For effective monitoring, some Smart Cities have established **Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)** that are also linked to Air Quality Monitors (AQMs).
- As part of the program, **the Centre intends to expand India's air quality monitoring network.**
- According to an estimate, at least 4,000 monitors are required across the country, in addition to the existing 101 real-time AQMs.

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## [GOVT TO PHASE OUT 100 AWARDS, SEVERAL FELLOWSHIPS IN SCIENCE](#)

### **In News:**

- Every scientist's calendar includes September 26 as the date of the **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar** awards, India's highest recognition for scientific achievement.
- This year, no announcement was made on the day, and the Government of India instead issued a notification announcing the discontinuation of approximately 100 awards and several fellowships in the field of science.

### **About Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for Science and Technology:**

- It is a science award in India given annually by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).





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- It is the **most coveted award** in multidisciplinary science in India, **recognizing outstanding Indian work** (according to the view of the CSIR awarding committee) in science and technology.
- It is given **for notable and outstanding research** in applied or fundamental science, biology, chemistry, environmental science, engineering, mathematics, medicine and physics.
- The award is named after the **founder Director of the CSIR - Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar**.
- It was awarded first in **1958** and the names of the recipients are traditionally declared by the Director General on every **26 September**, which is the CSIR Foundation Day. The prize is distributed by the Prime Minister of India.
- **Any citizen of India** engaged in research in any field of science and technology **up to the age of 45 years** is eligible for the prize.
- The prize is awarded on the basis of contributions made through work done in India only **during the 5 years preceding the year of the prize**.
- The prize comprises a citation, a plaque, and a cash award of ₹5 lakh. In addition, recipients also receive Rs. 15,000 per month up to the age of 65 years.

## News Summary:

- Currently, government departments like earth sciences, biotechnology, space, atomic energy, etc., have separate prizes to recognise talent.
- In all, **there are 207 such awards**, of which 4 are national awards, 97 private endowments awards, 54 are lecture or scholarship or fellowship-based awards and 56 are internal awards.
- **As per the notification,**
  - All private endowments awards may be discontinued.
  - All lecture or scholarship or fellowship-based awards may be discontinued.
  - The internal awards may be discontinued and wherever required, these awards may be merged in the proposed schemes for scholarship or fellowship.
  - Most departments will now have **only one award of a "high stature" instituted**.
- Despite the changes, the **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar award** that recognizes excellence in scientific research will be retained, **though some say it is being diluted**.

- The notification says,
    - Concerning the monthly remuneration provided under the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar award, a proposal to provide a lump sum amount in lieu of monthly remuneration was considered, **but no final decision was made.**
    - It was also agreed that the monthly remuneration **should be limited to 15 years.**
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## JALDOOT APP

Union Minister of Rural Development, Shri Giriraj Singh will launch the JALDOOT App.



### About:

- Ministry of Rural Development has developed “JALDOOT App” that will be used across the country to capture the water level of selected wells in a village.
  - The Jaldoot app will enable Gram Rojgar Sahayak (GRS) to measure the water level of selected wells twice a year (pre-monsoon and post-monsoon).
  - In every village, adequate number of measurement locations (2-3) shall need to be selected. These will be representative of the ground water level in that village.
  - The app will facilitate panchayats with robust data, which can be further used for better planning of works.
  - The ground water data could be utilised as part of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and Mahatma Gandhi NREGA planning exercises. Further, the data can also be used for different kinds of research and other purposes.
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## ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR INDIA

Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi has declined the government’s offer to be Attorney General (A-G) for India. The term of the incumbent A-G, K K Venugopal, ends on September 30. He is 91 years old, and on his third extension.





## About:

- The Constitution of India places the post of the A-G on a special footing. The A-G is the Government of India's first law officer, and has the right of audience in all courts of the country.
- Article 76(2) of the Constitution says "it shall be the duty of the Attorney-General to give advice to the Government of India upon such legal matters, and to perform such other duties of a legal character, as may from time to time be referred or assigned to him by the President".
- The A-G is also supposed to "discharge the functions conferred on him by or under this Constitution or any other law for the time being in force".
- Under Article 88, the "Attorney-General of India shall have the right to speak in, and otherwise to take part in the proceedings of, either House, any joint sitting of the Houses, and any committee of Parliament of which he may be named a member".
- However, he "shall not by virtue of this article be entitled to vote" in the House.
- Under Article 76(1), the A-G is appointed by the President from among persons who are "qualified to be appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court". Article 76(4) says "the Attorney-General shall hold office during the pleasure of the President, and shall receive such remuneration as the President may determine."

## CHEETAH MITRAS

One way the government is trying to smoothen the settling in of the cheetahs in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno national park is through the medium of "cheetah mitras" or 'cheetah friends'.



## About:

- Cheetah mitras have mainly been involved by the government to familiarise the local populations with the big cats and minimise potential conflicts. As the cheetahs have been brought to Kuno, the nearby villages might be unaware of the changes that can come about with the new animal being introduced.



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- To make the local population understand more about the cheetah and its characteristics, forest officials have trained around 400 cheetah mitras from 51 villages, including school teachers, village headmen and patwaris
  - Along with informing the villagers, keeping the big cats safe from poachers will be an important task. Hunting was why the Asiatic cheetah went extinct in India in 1952.
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