

SEAT BELTS, HEAD RESTRAINTS AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

Context

- The death of Cyrus P. Mistry, former Chairman of Tata Sons, in a car crash in Maharashtra recently has turned the focus on whether **compulsory use of seat belts in cars**, including by **passengers in the rear seat** can save lives during such accidents.
- The tragic death of Cyrus Mistry came days after the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) **Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (ADSI) report** showed that 1.55 lakh individuals died in accidents on India's roads in 2021, up from the 1.33 lakh deaths in the pandemic lockdown year of 2020.

Background

- Media reports cited Police sources to say that **Mistry** and a co-passenger who was also killed in the mishap, were **not wearing seat belts**.
- Although a full investigation has to follow but as per preliminary findings by authorities, the car was moving at high speed, covering about **20 km in nine minutes** from the last check post where it was recorded by CCTV.

Role of seat belt in preventing mishap

- **Description:** It is a low cost restraint system that prevents occupants of a vehicle from being thrown forward in a crash.
 - In the U.S, unrestrained drivers and passengers represented 48% of all deaths in vehicle crashes during 2016, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- **History:** The three-point seat belt was engineered by **Nils Bohlin** as a **passive safety device** first incorporated into a car by Volvo in **1959**, and now is a standard in cars sold in India.
- **Role of seat belt:** The seat belt performs many functions as follows:
 - **Slowing the occupant** at the same rate as the vehicle
 - **Distributing the physical force** in a crash across the **stronger parts** of the body such as the pelvis and chest,
 - **Preventing collisions** with objects within the vehicle and **sudden ejection**.

- **Without seat belt:** In a car crash, particularly at **moderate to high speeds**, the driver or passenger who has no seat belt continues to **move forward at the speed of the vehicle**, until some object stops the occupant.
 - This could be the steering wheel, dashboard or windscreen for those in front, and the front seat, dashboard or windscreen for those in the rear.
 - Also, absence of seat belts could lead to rear seat occupants even being **ejected through the front windscreen** during the collision.
- **Regulations:** The **Centre for Road Safety** of New South Wales, **Australia** (NSW Centre), which has had a **compulsory seat belt rule since 1971**, explains that even if the vehicle is fitted with an airbag, the force at which an **unrestrained occupant** strikes the airbag can cause serious injuries
- **Limitation:** Although cars are equipped with seat belts, the enforcement for rear seat occupants is virtually absent in India. Also the toll from non-compliance in India is high, as **taxicabs** often have **missing seat belts**.
- **Statistics:** As per data provided by the Road Transport Ministry, “During **2017**, a shocking of **26,896 people lost their lives** due to **non-use of seat belts** and **16,876** of them were **passengers**.
 - **No specific data** with regard to loss of lives due to non-usage of seat belts by **rear seat passengers** is available with the Ministry.
- **NCRB data:** According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data released recently, an average of **426 daily** or **18 every single hour** were **killed in road crashes** across India in 2021. This is the **highest death figures** recorded in such accidents in any calendar year so far
- **Fatalities:** Despite being home to only **1% of the world’s vehicles**, India shoulders **11%** of the global **road crash** fatality burden.

PM-SHRI SCHOOLS TO BE DEVELOPED AS ‘GREEN’ HUBS: MODI

In News:

- PM Modi, on the occasion of Teacher’s Day, announced a new scheme — **PM-SHRI Yojana** to develop 14,500 schools as model schools.
- The schools will be equipped with modern infrastructure, including labs, smart classrooms, libraries, and sports facility.

PM SHRI Yojana:

- PM SHRI Yojana stands for **PM ScHools for Rising I**
- It will be a **centrally-sponsored scheme**.
 - Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) are those schemes which are implemented by the state government but sponsored by the central government with a defined shareholding.
- **Features –**
 - Upgradation & development of more than 14,500 schools across the country by strengthening the selected existing schools from amongst schools managed by Central Government/ State/ UT Government/ local bodies.
 - The schools will showcase all components of the National Education Policy 2020 and act as exemplar schools and also offer mentorship to other schools in their vicinity.
 - Pedagogy adopted in these schools will be more experiential, holistic, integrated, play/toy-based (particularly, in the foundational years) inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, discussion-based, flexible and enjoyable.
 - Focus will be on achieving proficiency in learning outcomes of every child in every grade.
 - Assessment at all levels will be based on conceptual understanding and application of knowledge to real life situations and will be competency-based.
 - These schools shall also be developed as green schools with water conservation, waste recycling, energy-efficient infrastructure and integration of organic lifestyle in curriculum.
- The aim of these schools will not only be qualitative teaching, learning and cognitive development, but also creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with key 21st century skills.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

- The National Education Policy, approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system.
- The committee that drafted the NEP 2020 was headed by **Shri K Kasturirangan**.
- NEP 2020 focuses on five pillars: **Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability** – to ensure continual learning.
- The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986 and forms a comprehensive framework to transform both elementary and higher education in India by 2040.
 - This is the 3rd such education policy since India's independence.
 - The earlier two were launched in **1968 & 1986**.

LADAKH TO HAVE INDIA'S FIRST 'DARK SKY RESERVE' TO PROMOTE ASTRONOMY TOURISM

In News:

- By the end of 2022, India will establish the **country's first** Dark Sky Reserve in the cold desert regions of Ladakh.
- This was announced recently by the Minister of State (Independent charge) for Science and Technology.

Dark Sky Reserve

- A Dark Sky Reserve is **public or private land** with a distinguished nocturnal environment and starry nights that has been developed responsibly to prevent light pollution.
- According to the **International Dark Sky Association (IDSA)** website, these reserves consist of:
 - a **core area** meeting minimum criteria for sky quality and natural darkness, and
 - a peripheral area that supports dark sky preservation in the core.

Process of site becoming a Dark Sky Reserve

- **Individuals or groups** can nominate a site for certification to the International Dark Sky Association (IDSA).
 - IDSA is a **United States** based non-profit organization.

- It is the recognized authority on light pollution and is the leading organization combating light pollution worldwide.
- There are **five** designated categories, namely International Dark Sky parks, communities, reserves, sanctuaries and Urban Night Sky Places.
- The certification process is similar to that of a site being awarded the UNESCO World Heritage Site tag or getting recognised as a Biosphere Reserve.
- The IDSA considers a piece of land suitable for dark sky place only if:
 - It is either publicly or privately owned;
 - It is accessible to the public partially or entirely during the year;
 - the land is legally protected for scientific, natural, educational, cultural, heritage and/or public enjoyment purposes;
 - the core area of the land provides an exceptional dark sky resource relative to the communities and cities that surround it and
 - the land offers **prescribed** night sky brightness either for a reserve, park or sanctuary.
- India is still in the process of filing its nomination to IDSA.

Development of India's first Dark Sky Reserve

- The Ladakh Union Territory administration is leading the efforts in establishing the country's first Dark Sky Reserve.
- To be situated at a height of 4,500 metres above sea level at **Hanle**. The Hanle Dark Sky Reserve (HDSR) will come up within the **Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- The Department of Science and Technology and experts from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru, are providing scientific and technological support.
 - The IIA already manages the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) complex at Hanle, Ladakh.
 - The Himalayan Chandra Telescope (HCT), High Energy Gamma Ray telescope (HAGAR), the Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment Telescope (MACE) and GROWTH-India are prominent telescopes located at the Hanle observatory.

Why was Ladakh chosen for the project?

- **Ladakh** is a unique cold desert located about **3,000 metres** above sea level with high mountainous terrains.
- Long and harsh winters with minimum temperatures dropping to minus 40 degrees Celsius make large parts of the UT highly inhabitable.
- This aridity, limited vegetation, high elevation and large areas with sparse populations – all make it the perfect setting for long-term astronomical observatories and dark sky places.
- But the primary objective of the proposed Dark Sky Reserve is to promote astronomy tourism in a sustainable and environment-friendly manner.

Tourism in Ladakh

- After it became a UT, tourism in Ladakh has seen an uptick during favourable months.
- However, its fragile environment is vulnerable to rising carbon footprint and in-coming vehicles.
- The Ladakh Tourism Vision Document 2022 underlined the need for efforts to increase the use of green fuels and boost carbon-neutral activities.

LIZ TRUSS TO TAKE OVER AS U.K.'S NEXT PRIME MINISTER

In News:

- Liz Truss will be Britain's next prime minister after she was elected leader of the ruling Conservative Party.

UK'S 3rd FEMALE PRIME MINISTER •

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Liz Truss, 47, is UK's 3rd female PM after Theresa May & Maggie Thatcher; will be Tories' 4th PM since 2015 election > Was born in Oxford to a maths professor father and nurse teacher mother > Graduated in philosophy, politics and economics from Oxford University, was president of its Liberal Democrat branch > Is married to accountant Hugh O'Leary, has 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teenage daughters > Had voted for the UK to remain in the European Union in the 2016 referendum > As foreign secretary, was at the forefront of UK response to Russia's war on Ukraine, imposing tough sanctions > Signed off on India-UK Enhanced Trade Partnership as international trade secretary last year, marking the start point of FTA negotiations
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Electoral system of UK

- The UK is divided into **650 constituencies** and each constituency is represented by one MP elected in the House of Commons (the UK's lower chamber of parliament).
- It follows first past the post system to decide the winner in each constituency.

- The members of the upper chamber of the parliament, the House of Lords, are not elected. The Queen on the advice of the prime minister appoints them.
- To govern, a winning party needs to win more than half of the 650 seats.
- Whenever a prime minister steps down midway through a parliament, there is no constitutional need to hold a new general election.
- Instead, the incumbent governing party chooses a new leader and thus the new prime minister.
- The leader of the winning party is appointed by the Queen as prime minister and forms a Cabinet of senior politicians.

Background

- Boris Johnson, the ex-PM of UK was compelled to step down as Conservative leader and prime minister in July 2022.
- In his short stint as the Prime Minister and even before, Boris Johnson has courted controversy many times.
- This ranges from the use of aggressively sexist rhetoric to accepting secret donations for the refurbishment of his private residence at 11 Downing Street.
- The highly damaging “**Partygate**” scandal then blew up and in April 2022 and Johnson became the first PM found to have broken the law while in office.
- 'Partygate' refers to a series of lockdown gatherings held in and around the official residence of the PM during the height of the first series of total lockdowns.
- Finally, he was forced to quit after a mass resignation of around 60 ministers and other political appointees came in protest for Johnson’s mishandling of a scandal involving Chris Pincher, the government’s former deputy chief whip.
- Chris Pincher was accused of sexual misconduct and excessive drinking.
- After the resignation of Johnson, the party had initiated a process to find his successor.

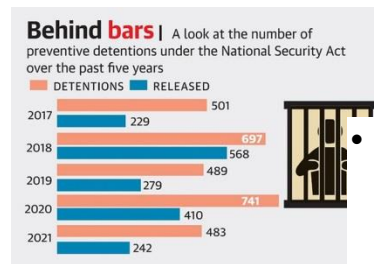
News Summary

- Liz Truss has won the Conservative leadership race and will become the next UK prime minister.

- Truss defeated former Chancellor, **Rishi Sunak**. She won a vote share of 57.4% or 81,326 votes versus Sunak’s 42.6% or 60,399 votes.
- With this, Ms. Truss is set to become Britain’s 56th Prime Minister and the third woman to hold the position.

PREVENTIVE DETENTIONS

Preventive detentions in 2021 saw a rise by over 23.7% compared with the year before, with over 1.1 lakh people being placed under preventive detention, according to statistics released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

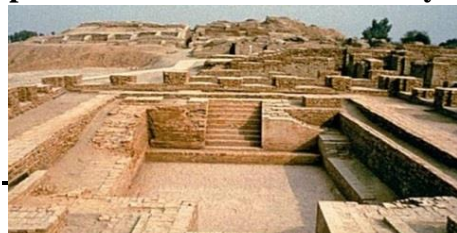


About:

- Of these, 483 were detentions under the National Security Act, of which almost half (241) were either in custody or still detained as of 2021-end.
- Over 24,500 people placed under preventive detention were either in custody or still detained as of 2021-end — the highest since 2017 when the NCRB started recording this data.
- The number of persons placed under detention has been increasing since 2017 — to over 98,700 in 2018 and over 1.06 lakh in 2019 — before dipping to 89,405 in 2020.
- According to Section 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the police are empowered to make preventive arrests if they believe they must do so to prevent the commission of “any cognisable offence”. This detention can be extended beyond 24 hours if required “under any other provisions of this Code or of any other law”.

MOHENJODARO

The recent spell of heavy rains and floods that ravaged large parts of Pakistan’s Sindh province has also taken a heavy toll on the archaeological site of Mohenjodaro.



About:

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- In fact, the calamity has pushed the archeological site – situated on the bank of the Indus river – to the “brink of extinction”.
- Mohenjo-daro, a group of mounds and ruins, is a 5000-year-old archaeological site located about 80-km off the city of Sukkur. It comprises the remnants of one of two main centres of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation, the other one being Harappa.
- Mohenjo-daro, which means ‘mound of the dead’, was one of the oldest cities of the world.
- Known to be a model planned city of the ancient civilisation, the houses here had bathrooms, toilets and drainage system. Though in ruins, the walls and brick pavements in the streets are still in a preserved condition.
- The ruins of the city remained undocumented for around 3,700 years, until 1920, when archaeologist RD Banerji visited the site. Its excavation started in 1921 and continued in phases till 1964-65. The site went to Pakistan during Partition.

Other Indus Valley sites

- The Indus Valley Civilisation spanned much of what is now Pakistan and the northern states of India (Gujarat, Haryana and Rajasthan), even extending towards the Iranian border.
- Its major urban centres included Harappa and Mohenjo-daro in Pakistan, and Lothal, Kalibangan, Dholavira and Rakhigarhi in India.

PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO

The country has witnessed substantial reduction in pupil-teacher ratio over the last one decade.



About:

- According to Ministry of Education, in Primary Schools, the pupil teacher ratio which was at 43 in 2010-11 has come down to 26.3 in 2020- 21.
- While in Upper Primary schools, the pupil-teacher ratio has reduced from 33 in 2010-11 to 18.9 in 2020-21.

- The Pupil Teacher Ratio at different levels of education show availability of adequate number of teachers for teaching children enrolled at different grade.
 - The increase in number of teachers in schools is contributing to focused delivery of education.
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CREATIVE MINDS OF TOMORROW

The information and Broadcasting Ministry has invited entries for 75 Creative Minds of Tomorrow.



About:

- The segment is an annual platform at the International Film Festival of India to identify, encourage and nurture young creative talents from across various aspects of filmmaking. The entries will be open till 23rd of this month.
 - The initiative was launched last year, as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
 - It was conceptualised by Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur to provide a platform and connect young talent with the masters of industry from the media and entertainment sector.
 - The 75 creative minds will be shortlisted and selected on the basis of their submissions by an eminent jury, under the aegis of the National Film Development Corporation.
 - This program identifies young budding film makers and provides them a platform to interact and learn from national as well as international film makers during the period of IFFI, Goa.
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INDIA-NEPAL DEFENCE RELATIONS

Indian Army Chief General Manoj Pande was conferred with the honorary rank of General of Nepal Army by President of Nepal Bidhya Devi Bhandari in a ceremony at her residence Sheetal Niwas.



About:



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- The ceremony was part of the unique tradition between the two Armies. General Pande is on a four-day official visit to Nepal from 5th to 8th of this month. This is his first visit to Nepal as Chief of Army Staff.
 - General Manoj Pande also handed over non-lethal military aids including Artillery Equipment, Mine Protected Vehicles, Medical Stores and Horses to Nepal Army, with the aim to enhance the Military Cooperation between the two Armies.
 - Indian Army Chief's visit aims to provide an opportunity to enhance existing bilateral defence ties and strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual interest between the two countries.
 - India - Nepal relations are historic, multi-faceted and marked by common cultural and civilisational ties, apart from mutual respect and trust. India attaches highest priority to its relationship with Nepal in accordance with its Neighborhood First policies.
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