

NEWS TODAY

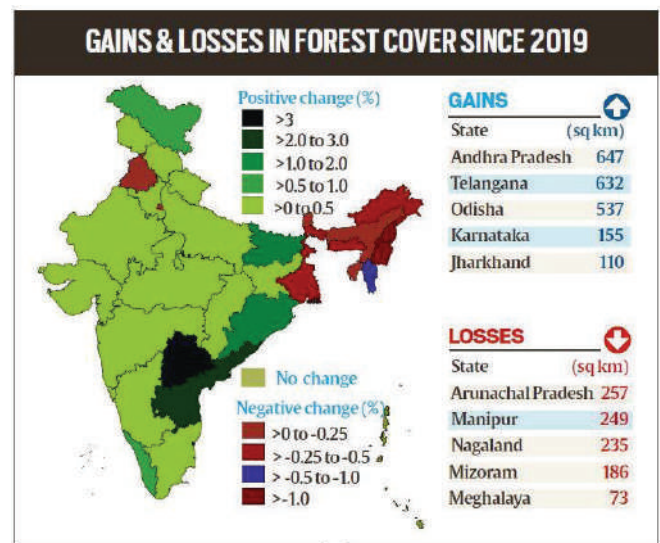
PAKISTAN LAUNCHES FIRST EVER NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY (NSP) 2022-2026

- It seeks to co-locate Pakistan in emerging global trends and articulate Pakistan's national security vision and interests.
 - It places **economic security as the core element of national security**.
 - A stronger economy would create additional resources which would then be distributed to further bolster military and human security.

Issue	Pakistan NSP	India's stand
On J&K	India's decision to scrap the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019 was illegal and unilateral and alleged that Indian security forces were behind human rights abuses and oppression in Kashmir.	Kashmir is an "integral part" of the country and the welfare of people in the valley lies in their integration with India . India also said Statehood to Jammu and Kashmir would be granted at an appropriate time
On border issues	Special attention is required to manage persistent border disputes which continue to pose security threats , particularly along the Line of Control and Working Boundary where ceasefire violations by India threaten civilian lives and property while endangering regional stability.	India agreed to abide by all agreements on ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and the sectors of the International Border "in the interest of achieving mutually beneficial and sustainable peace along the borders".
Trade	It is aimed at normalising trade ties with India (which is on back-step since 2008 Mumbai Terror attack) and other neighbours.	India desires normal relations, including on trade with all countries, including Pakistan .

INDIA STATE OF FOREST REPORT (ISFR) 2021 RELEASED

- It is 17th report, **published biennially by the Forest Survey of India** under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
 - India is the **only** country that carries out forest assessment **biennially**.
 - Change in forest cover over a period of **one year may not be significant** to assess the forest growth, hence biennial publication.
 - Many countries do their assessment on a 5-year cycle** or have carried their assessment only once.
- Key findings**
 - The **total forest and tree cover** of the nation is 24.72% of India's geographical area (**forest cover: 21.71% and tree cover: 2.91%**).
 - Madhya Pradesh** has **highest forest cover** followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.
 - In NER states, **Mizoram** has the **highest forest cover**, followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, and Nagaland.
 - In terms of type of Forest**
 - Very Dense Forest** (tree canopy density of 70% or above): **76.87%**
 - Moderately Dense Forest** (tree canopy density between 40% - 70%): **9.33%**.
 - Open Forest** (tree canopy density between 10% - 40%): **9.34%**.
 - Scrub**, surveyed but not categorised as forests (tree canopy density less than 10%): **1.42%**



SEVERAL KILLED AS TRAIN DERAILS IN NORTH BENGAL

- The incident has occurred in the backdrop of **falling numbers of rail mishaps since 2014-15**.
 - The number of accidents have come down from **135 in 2014-15 to 55 in 2019-20** and **number of deaths have decreased from 292 to 5 in the same period**.
- Causes of accidents in Indian Railways**
 - Poor rolling stock (Linke Hoffman Busch (LHB) coaches are not there in all trains)
 - Stainless steel LHB coaches are more efficient at shock absorption and can reduce incidents of derailment.
 - Lack of fire detection systems and anti-collision systems
 - Inappropriate maintenance of tracks
 - Extreme weather causing tension on tracks**
- Recommendations made by committees on railways**
 - Sam Pitroda Committee on Modernization of Railway** - Centralized train monitoring system, Modernisation of 19,000 km of existing tracks, Implementation of automatic block signalling on major routes etc.
 - Anil Kakodkar Committee on Railway Safety review** - Creation of a statutory Railway Safety Authority, adoption of an Advanced Signalling System etc.
 - Bibek Debroy Committee on Restructuring of Railways** - Bringing private sector participation, Need for independent regulator etc.

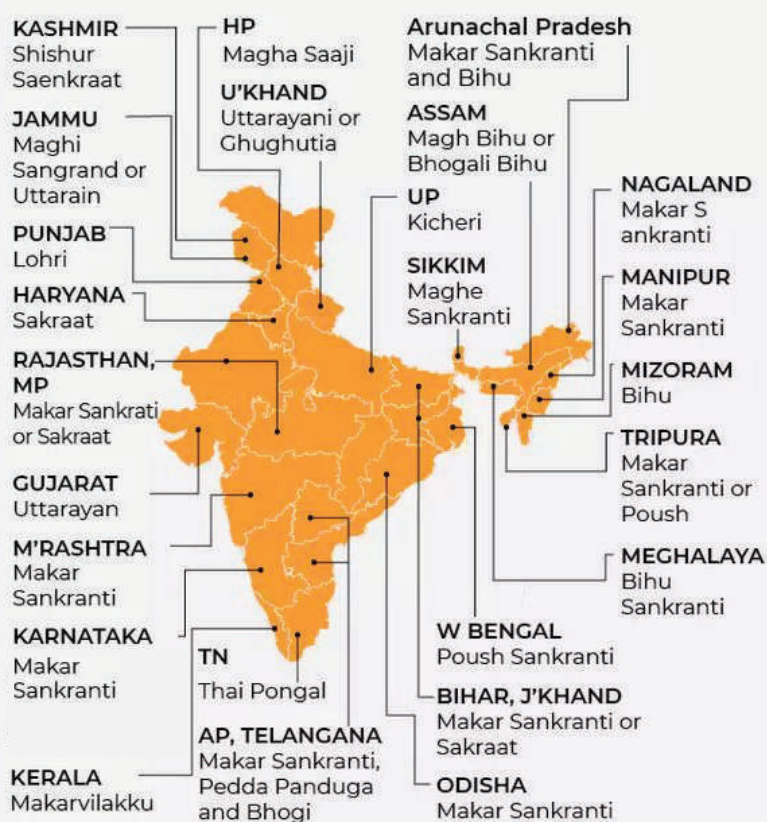
Steps taken by government

- Mission Zero Accident via** Elimination of Unmanned Level Crossings (UMLC) and Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS).
- Exclusive fund called **"Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh" (RRSK)** with a corpus of ₹1 lakh crore over a period of 5 years was created for give boost to safety related works.
- Conventional ICF design coaches being replaced with **LHB design coaches**.
- GPS based Fog Pass device** is being provided to loco pilots in fog affected area

NATION CELEBRATES VARIOUS HARVEST FESTIVALS ON JANUARY 14TH

MAKAR SANKRANTI: MANY NAMES

Different names of winter harvest festival across India



CENTRE BRINGS ALL RECOGNISED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS ON ACADEMIC BANK OF CREDIT (ABC) PLATFORM

- Under the recently released UGC (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) Regulations, 2021 **any university or college, irrespective of ranking, can participate and register to come under the ABC framework**.
 - This will include both **central and state universities, deemed-to-be universities and autonomous institutions**.
 - Earlier, only **institutions of national importance and other institutions satisfying certain criteria** were incorporated in the framework.
- About ABC**
 - It is part of **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, and will **allow higher education institutions to maintain a digital repository of credits** earned by students.
 - Under ABC, students can choose to **study one course in a year in one institution and switch to another one the next year**.
 - The validity of credit for courses is a **maximum of seven years or the duration specified for a given discipline**.
- Benefits**
 - ABC would give **liberty to students to choose the pace of their studies, tailor their degrees**, and enable multiple entry-multiple exit for students to complete their degrees as per their time preferences.
 - The ABC would reduce such **disparity among institutions through standardisation of crediting system and promote uniformity in the degree-granting mechanism**.



INDIA AND UK LAUNCH FREE TRADE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

- Objective is to conclude the FTA discussions **by year end 2022** and in the meanwhile put in **place an interim agreement or an early harvest scheme by March 2022**.
 - Early harvest scheme is a precursor to FTA that helps the two trading countries identify certain products for tariff liberalisation pending conclusion of FTA negotiation. It is primarily a confidence building measure.
- Target has been set to **double the trade between India and the United Kingdom (UK) by 2030 (to over USD 100 billion)**.
 - **Agreed to avoid "sensitive issues" and focus on areas where there is more complementarity.** For instance - agriculture and dairy sectors are sensitive sectors for India.
- Significance of the FTA for India**
 - **Increase exports of goods** for large job-creating sectors such as textiles, leather goods, and footwear.
 - Potential to **increase export in services such as IT, nursing etc.**
 - **Help India strengthen trade pacts** in the backdrop of **India's exit from Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.**

○ FTAs are arrangements between two or more countries or trading blocs that aim to reduce or eliminate customs tariff and non-tariff barriers on substantial trade between them.

➤ Presently negotiations are going on over FTA with UAE, UK, Australia, Canada, Israel.

ALSO IN NEWS



Registration of Political parties

- Registration of political parties is governed by the **provisions of section 29A of the RPA, 1951**.
- A party seeking registration has to **submit an application to the Election Commission within a period of 30 days following the date of its formation**.
 - Under the guidelines, the **applicant has to publish proposed Name of the party in two national daily newspapers and two local daily newspapers for submitting objections**
- The candidates set up by a political party registered with the EC will get preference in the matter of allotment of free symbols vis-à-vis purely independent candidates.



Olive Ridley Turtle

- In a first, Olive Ridley Turtle nest recorded at **Tarkarli beach Maharashtra**.
- About Olive Ridley Turtle
 - It is the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world, inhabiting **warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans**.
 - They are **carnivores**, and feed mainly on jellyfish, shrimp, snails, etc
 - They are known for their unique mass nesting called **Arribada**.
 - IUCN status: **Vulnerable**
 - **Threats:** unfriendly fishing practices, ghost nets, illegal trade, etc.
- Initiatives:** Operation OLIVIA, Operation Save Kurma, legal protection under The Wild Life Protection Act, 1972.



Deep-sea mollusc (Xylophaga nandani)

- A new species of deep sea molluscs belonging to the **family Xylophaga been identified from the Arabian Sea for the first time**.
 - The word 'xylophaga' itself denotes 'wood eating'.
 - They are deep-sea dwellers, their presence recorded even at depths of 7,000 metres.
- About mollusc -It is an animal such as a snail, clam, or octopus which has a soft body. They have important commercial benefits such as fisheries and mariculture.



Khoisans

- Known to be the **first people to inhabit South Africa**. They have two different communities as subsets - **the Khoikhoi, who were nomadic farmers, and San, who were hunter-gatherers**.
- They have been protesting for the past three years demanding **recognition as the first nation of the country, land rights and declaration of Khoekhoe as the national language of the country**.
 - Land restitution was conceived to benefit black South Africans, but the Khoisan are not generally considered black; they are designated as "coloured."



Personalities in News

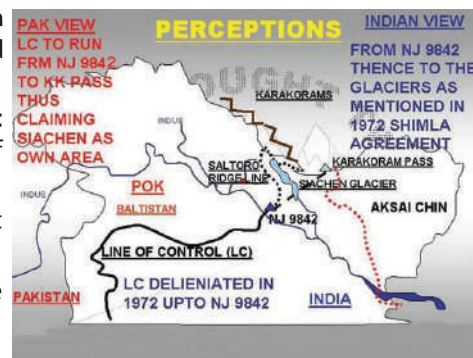
- Dr. Bhagwan Das** (12 January 1869- 18 September 1958)
 - He was India **Theosophist** and has significant role in development of **Theosophical society in Banaras**.
 - For a time he served in the Central Legislative Assembly of British India.
 - In 1921 went **jail for association with Non-Cooperative Movement**.
 - He was the **founder of Kashi Vidyapeeth**.
 - Kashi Vidyapith was the first modern university organised by Indians in British India.
 - **Personality Trait:** Educationist (believe in power of education in bringing social progress), Orientalist, Reformist.
 - **Received Bharat Ratna in 1955.**



Places in News

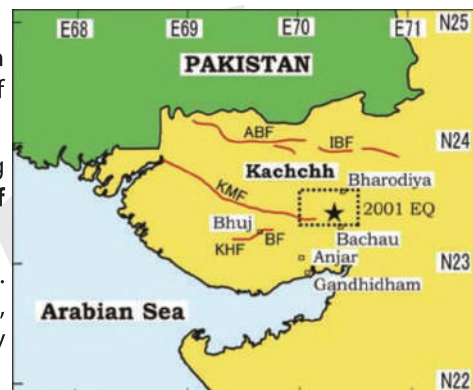
Siachen Glacier (Karakoram, Ladakh)

- Recently, the Indian Army chief expressed India's position on possible demilitarisation of the Siachen Glacier based on acceptance of the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL).
- Siachen Glacier**, the world's **highest and coldest battlefield** (with **Saltoro Ridge** at **23,00 feet**), is part of **Eastern Karakoram Range** with nearly 76 km length.
- Second biggest non-polar glacier of the world, it demarcates central Asia from the Indian subcontinent.
- It is the source for the **Nubra River**, a tributary of the **Shyok**, which is part of the **Indus River system**.
- India overtook it in 1984 through **Operation Meghdoot**.



Katrol Hill Fault (KHF), Kachchh region (Gujarat)

- Recent studies on sediment samples in Kachchh basin highlighted the spectacular changes in the landscape of KHF in last 30,000 years
- The Katrol Hill Fault (KHF) is one of the **E-W trending major intrabasinal faults** located in the **central part of Mainland Kachchh**.
- Among other seismically active faults of the region, viz. Kachchh Mainland Fault (KMF), South Wagad Fault (SWF), Gedi Fault (GF), and Island Belt Fault (IBF), seismic activity along KHF are not apparent.
- However, KHF has produced high magnitude seismic events in the past ~30,000 years and is capable of generating surface rupture hazard in the Kachchh Basin.



Java Island, Indonesia

- Recently, a 6.6 magnitude earthquake struck off Java Island, Indonesia.
- Java Island is the 13th largest island of world and home to over 100 volcanoes including **Mount Semeru** the **highest volcano mountain** of Indonesia.
 - It is home to Indonesia capital and largest city, i.e. Jakarta.
- It is part of **Sunda Island Arc**, which includes Sumatra to the northwest and Bali to the east.



Errata: In News Today dated 12th January, 2021 under Also in news, Bangladesh, Mauritius and Seychelles were incorrectly mentioned as members of Colombo Security Conclave (CSC). These nations currently have observer status with CSC.



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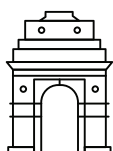
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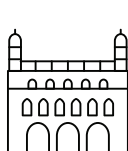
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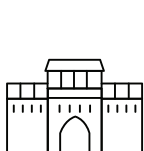
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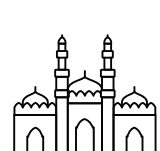
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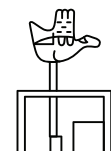
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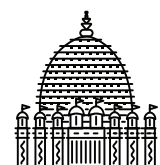
PUNE



AHMEDABAD



CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI