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Current Affairs

Presented By-Prabhakar Jha

Panel Recommends Framework for Direct Recruitment in CBI

Key Recommendations

- **Independent Recruitment:** A large portion of positions in the CBI are currently filled through deputation from various organizations. To enhance autonomy, the agency should establish its own recruitment framework. This could involve direct hiring via SSC, UPSC, or a specialized CBI examination. Additionally, lateral entry should be introduced for experts in cybercrime, forensics, financial fraud, and legal fields. Deputation should be restricted to senior roles, and an internal team of specialists should be developed to minimize dependence on external experts.
- **State Consent:** A new legal framework should be enacted, granting CBI the authority to investigate cases concerning national security and integrity without requiring state approval. This law should incorporate safeguards to ensure impartiality while preventing state governments from feeling disempowered.
- **Permanent Cadre:** To enhance stability and career

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

- CBI is **India's specialized investigative agency**, responsible for tackling high-profile crimes, corruption, and national security matters.
- **Founded:** CBI was established in **1963** on the recommendation of the **Santhanam Committee** on Prevention of Corruption.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions.
- **Jurisdiction:** CBI's investigative powers are subject to state government consent for crimes not covered under its general consent.
 - Eight states have withdrawn this consent, limiting its ability to investigate certain cases.
- **Director:** The CBI is headed by a Director for a tenure of **2 years**, appointed by the central government on **recommendation by a three-member Appointment Committee**.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) in India

India's Legal Position on Abortion

- The **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act** allows abortions under specific conditions.
- Prior to its enactment in **1971**, abortion laws were governed by the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)**, which primarily criminalized the procedure, except when performed in good faith to save a woman's life.
- These IPC provisions did not differentiate between wanted and unwanted pregnancies, making it difficult for women to access safe abortion services.
- The **MTP Act of 1971** was introduced as a health-focused reform to decriminalize abortion in certain cases, provided it was conducted under the supervision of registered medical practitioners.
- Under **Section 3(2)**, pregnancy termination was allowed only up to **20 weeks**—requiring the approval of **one doctor** if done within **12 weeks** and **two doctors** if performed between **12 and 20 weeks**.
- The **2021 amendment** to the MTP Act expanded access by permitting abortion up to **24 weeks** in specific cases, including changes in marital status during pregnancy, survivors of **rape**, victims of **incest**, and other vulnerable women.
- The amendment also replaced the phrase "**by any married woman or her husband**" with "**any woman or her partner**", thereby recognizing pregnancies outside marriage.
- Beyond **24 weeks**, termination is only allowed in cases of severe **foetal abnormalities** with a **medical board of experts**—established

- 10th Anniversary of Sagarmala Programme

Sagarmala Programme

- **Objectives:** To streamline logistics, reduce costs, and enhance international trade competitiveness by shifting from traditional, infrastructure-heavy transport to efficient coastal and waterway networks.
 - The program focuses on port modernization, industrial growth, job creation, and sustainable coastal development, ensuring minimal infrastructure investment while maximizing economic impact.
- **Components:**
 - The program consists of several key components aimed at transforming India's maritime sector. The overall set of projects under the Sagarmala Programme are divided into 5 pillars.

Five Pillars & Subcategories of the Sagarmala Programme



- **Implementation Mechanism:**

- Major Ports, central ministries, State Governments, state maritime boards, and other relevant agencies execute projects.
- Projects are selected based on the Master Planning of Major Ports, meetings of the National and State Steering Committees.

- **Funding Structure:**

- Many projects are funded through the internal resources of MoPSW agencies, including Major Ports.
- Priority is given to private sector participation, with PPP models implemented wherever feasible.
- Sagarmala Development Company Limited (SDCL) was established to support project Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs).

- **Achievements:**

- Coastal shipping grew 118% in a decade, Ro-Pax ferries moved over 40 lakh passengers, and inland waterway cargo rose 700%.
- Nine Indian ports rank in the world's top 100, with Vizag in the top 20 container ports.



SAGARMALA 2.0 - OVERVIEW

Focus Areas

Shipbuilding, repair,
breaking, and
recycling

01

Budgetary Support

₹40,000 crore

allocated for strategic
maritime growth

02

Investment Potential

Aims to mobilize
₹12 lakh crore over
the next decade

03

Economic Impact

Boosts infrastructure
and drive Coastal
Economic Growth

04

Strategic Vision

Aligns with
Viksit Bharat
& Atmanirbhar
Bharat 2047 goals

05

Global Positioning

Strengthens India
as a leading maritime
powerhouse

06



STATUS OF THE SAGARMALA SCHEME

AS OF 19 MARCH 2025

➡ 839 projects worth **₹5.79 lakh crore** under Sagarmala

➡ 272 projects completed with an investment of **₹1.41 lakh crore**

Port Modernization:

➡ 234 projects worth
₹2.91 lakh crore
underway

➡ 103 projects completed,
adding **230 MTPA** capacity

Connectivity Enhancement:

➡ 279 projects worth
₹2.06 lakh crore in progress

➡ 92 projects completed,
boosting **1,500 km** of
port links

Coastal Community Development & Inland Waterways:

➡ 310+ projects worth
₹26,000 crore

➡ Benefitted **30,000+**
fishermen & coastal
infrastructure

Port-Led Industrialization:

➡ 14 projects worth
₹55,000 crore

➡ 9 projects completed

➡➡➡ **₹10,000 crore** allocated for **119** projects
across coastal states & UTs

Sagarmala Startup Innovation Initiative (S2I2)

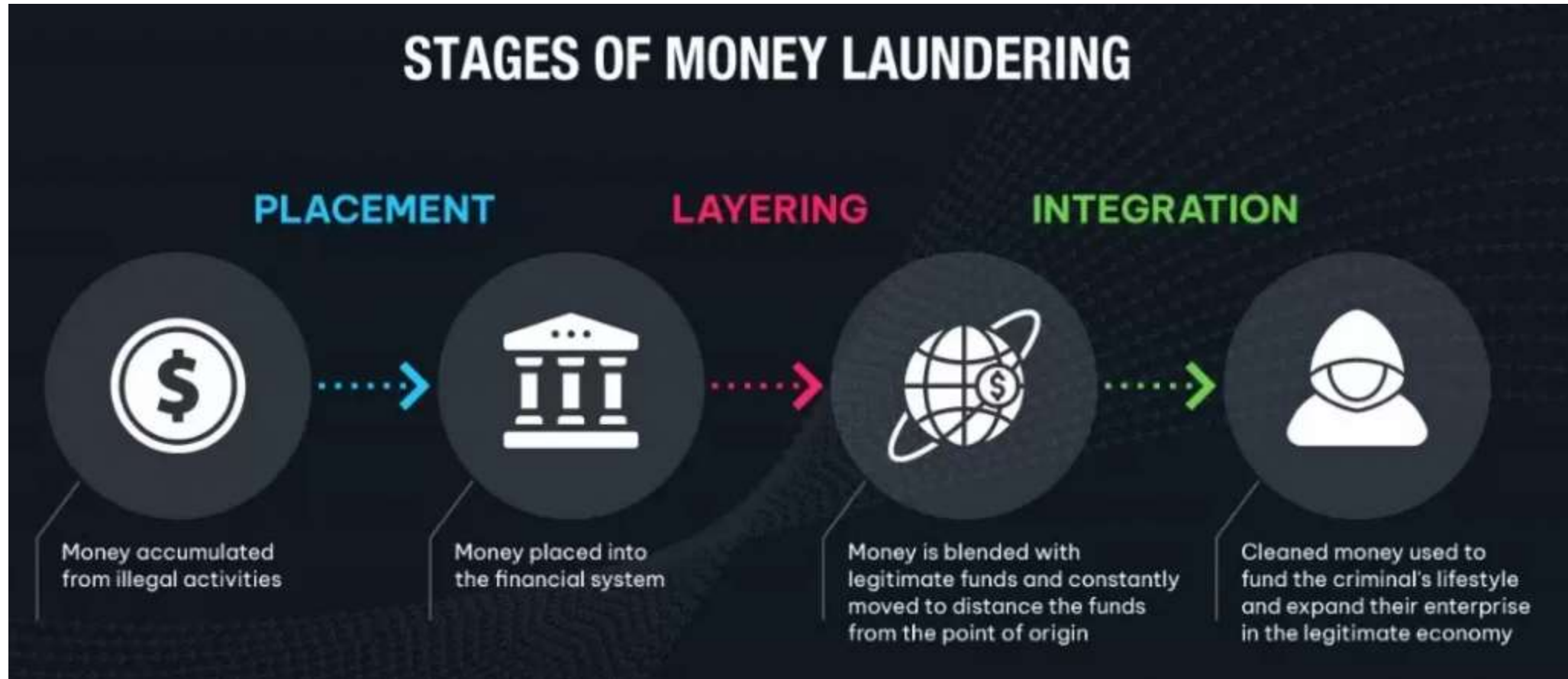
- Launched on **March 19th 2025**, it is a transformative program designed to **foster innovation and entrepreneurship in India's maritime sector**.
- S2I2 supports startups in green shipping, smart ports, maritime logistics, shipbuilding technology, and sustainable coastal development by providing funding, mentorship, and industry partnerships.
- Anchored in the principles of **RISE—Research, Innovation, Startups, and Entrepreneurship**-S2I2 will drive technological advancements, enhance industry competitiveness, and accelerate economic growth.

Growth of India's E-retail Market

Current Status

- India is currently the **world's second-largest e-retail market** and had over 270 million online shoppers in 2024.
 - India now trails only China, which boasts a staggering 920 million digital buyers.
- The market is valued at \$60 billion in 2024, with a growth rate of 10–12%, down from over 20% due to macroeconomic pressures.
- Categories like **grocery, lifestyle, and general merchandise** are expected to drive **70%** of incremental growth by 2030, with penetration levels rising two to four times.
 - **Quick commerce (Q-commerce)**, accounting for **10% of total e-retail GMV**, is forecast to grow over 40% annually.

Battling Money Laundering & Terrorist Financing



India's Legal and Institutional Framework

- India has adopted several laws and enforcement measures to tackle money laundering and terrorist financing, aligned with **global standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**.
- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002:** It is India's primary anti-money laundering law.
 - It mandates financial institutions to report suspicious transactions and empowers authorities to seize illicit assets.
 - The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** is the primary agency enforcing PMLA provisions.
- **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967:** It criminalizes terrorist financing and provides strict penalties for funding or supporting extremist groups.
- **Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND):** It, *under the Ministry of Finance*, collects and analyzes financial data to detect money laundering and terror financing.
- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Guidelines:** RBI mandates Know Your Customer (KYC), Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-terrorism Financing (CFT) Frameworks and norms for banks and financial institutions to curb illicit financial flows.
- **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010:** FCRA monitors foreign funding received by NGOs and associations, ensuring they are not used for illegal activities.

Free Movement Regime between India and Myanmar

Free Movement Regime

- The FMR is a **mutually agreed arrangement** between the **two countries** that allows tribes living along the border to travel inside the other country **without a visa**.
- The FMR with Myanmar came into **existence in 1968** as people on either side of the border have familial and ethnic ties.
- The territorial limit of free movement then was **40 km**, which was **reduced to 16 km in 2004**, and additional regulations were enforced in 2016.

Coral Bleaching Devastates Western Australia's Ningaloo Reef

About

- The event is part of a broader fourth global coral bleaching episode, **ongoing since 2023**.
- The **NOAA reported that nearly 84% of the world's reef areas** have experienced bleaching-level heat stress, impacting over 80 countries and territories.
- The crisis is worsened by **rising global sea surface temperatures, overfishing, and pollution**—challenges that have intensified due to climate change.

District Mineral Foundation (DMF)

Syllabus: GS2/Governance

Context:

The Odisha government has revised **DMF norms** to include new projects, enhance fund utilization, and expand its scope.

Key Updates:

- **Expansion of Affected Areas:** The **directly affected** zone now extends **15 km** from mining sites (earlier **10 km**), while the **indirectly affected** zone covers **25 km**.
- **Saturation Mode for Development:** Development within **5 km** of mines will be carried out in a **saturation mode** to ensure comprehensive progress.

About District Mineral Foundation (DMF)

- The **Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 2015** led to the formation of **DMFs** in districts affected by mining.
- DMFs are **non-profit** entities, with their roles and structure determined by **state governments**.
- **Objective:** To promote the welfare of individuals and areas impacted by mining activities, as per state government guidelines.
- **Establishment:** DMFs have been set up in **645 districts across 23 states**, with state-specific regulations.
- **Legal Framework:** DMF operations align with laws concerning **Scheduled Areas, Tribal Areas**, and acts such as **PESA, 1996**, and the **Forest Rights**

MGNREGS Wage Hike

Syllabus: GS2/Welfare Schemes

In News:

The Union government has increased wages under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** by **2-7%** for **FY 2025-26**.

Details of Wage Hike:

- Wage increments range from **₹7 to ₹26** across states.
- **Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, and Telangana** received a **₹7** increase.
- **Haryana** saw the highest hike of **₹26**, raising its daily wage rate to **₹400**, making it the first state to reach this level.

About MGNREGA

- **Demand-Driven Program:** MGNREGA provides **wage-based employment**, with funds transferred from the **Centre to States** based on employment demand.
- **Objective:** Ensures **100 days of guaranteed wage employment per year** for rural households whose adult members opt for **unskilled manual work**.
- **Types of Work:** Covers **266 categories**, including **agriculture, natural resource management, and rural infrastructure**, with a focus on **water conservation and irrigation projects**.
- **Wage Determination:** MGNREGA wages are linked to the **Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL)** to account for **rural inflation**.
- **FY 2024-25 Wage Trends:** **Goa** recorded the **highest wage hike (10.56%)**, while **Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand** had the **lowest (3.04%)**.

Budget & Participation:

- **Budget Growth:** Funding has increased from **₹11,300 crore in 2006-07** to **₹86,000 crore in FY 2024-25**, with a record **₹1,11,000 crore spent in 2020-21** due to **COVID-19 relief efforts**.
- **Women's Participation:** Increased from **48% in FY 2013-14** to **over 58% in FY 2024-25**.

Digital Reforms:

- **Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS):** Enhanced **efficiency, targeting, and reduced payment delays**, with **99.49% of active workers Aadhaar-seeded**.
- **National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS):** Improved **transparency and eliminated fake attendance**.
- **National Electronic Fund Management System (NeFMS) & DBT:** Made MGNREGA the **largest Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme**, ensuring **100% electronic wage disbursement**.

India Becomes the World's Second-Largest Tea Exporter in 2024

Syllabus: GS3/Economy

Context:

According to the **Indian Tea Board**, India has emerged as the world's **second-largest tea exporter**.

Key Highlights:

- **India's Tea Exports (2024):** 255 million kg, surpassing **Sri Lanka** and ranking **second after Kenya**.
- **Export Value:** Increased by **15%**, rising from **₹6,161 crore in 2023** to **₹7,111 crore in 2024**.
- **Tea Varieties Exported:** **96%** of exports consist of **black tea**, with smaller quantities of **green, herbal, masala, lemon, and regular tea**.
- **Major Growth Factor:** Surge in exports to **West Asia**, particularly **Iraq**, which now accounts for **20% of India's tea exports**.
- **Export Destinations:** Over **25 countries**, including **UAE, Iraq, Iran, Russia, US, and UK**.
- **Iraq's Import Forecast:** Expected to purchase **40-50 million kg** in the current fiscal year.
- **Key Tea-Producing Regions:**
 - **Assam:** Assam Valley, Cachar
 - **West Bengal:** Dooars, Terai, Darjeeling
- **Global Recognition:** Indian teas, particularly **Assam, Darjeeling, and Nilgiri**, are renowned for their **quality and flavor**.
- **Factors Contributing to Growth:**
 - Increased **tea production** and branding initiatives.
 - Strengthened **marketing strategies**.
 - Improved **welfare measures** for tea plantation workers.

About the Tea Board of India:

- **Established:** 1954 as a **statutory body** under the **Tea Act, 1953**.
- **Purpose:** Regulates the **Indian tea industry** and safeguards the interests of **tea producers**.
- **Jurisdiction:** Governs all tea-producing regions across India.
- **Composition:** **32 members**, including a **Chairman and Deputy Chairman**, appointed by the **Government of India**.
- **Headquarters:** Kolkata.

Exercise Prachand Prahar

Syllabus: GS3/Defence

Context

- The Indian Armed Forces recently conducted a high-level tri-service integrated multi-domain exercise, **Prachand Prahar**, in the high-altitude terrain of Arunachal Pradesh.

About the Exercise

- The exercise showcased the seamless integration of advanced surveillance, strike capabilities, and multi-domain operational planning.
- Cutting-edge platforms such as long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft, armed helicopters, UAVs, loitering munitions, and space-based assets were employed to achieve total situational awareness and rapid target engagement.
- Prachand Prahar follows **Exercise Poorvi Prahar**, conducted in November 2024, which focused on the integrated application of aviation assets.

Nag Missile System (NAMIS)

Syllabus: GS3/Defence

In News:

To enhance India's self-reliance in defence, the **Ministry of Defence** has signed a contract under the **Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed, Developed, and Manufactured)** category for procuring the **Nag Missile System (NAMIS)**.

About NAMIS:

- NAMIS is a **third-generation, fire-and-forget Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM)** developed by DRDO.
- It is designed specifically for the **Indian Army** to **eliminate heavily armoured enemy tanks**.
- The missile requires **no further guidance** after launch, allowing for **autonomous target engagement**.