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MK Yadav Sir

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LIVE MINT

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# PONZI SCHEMES

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

# Govt works to shutter 'ponzi apps'

## No proposal to regulate financial influencers on social media: FM

Gulveen Aulakh
gulveen.aulakh@livemint.com
NEW DELHI



Consumers must be cautious, said Sitharaman. AP

The government is not considering any proposal to regulate financial influencers on social media, but is coordinating with the Reserve Bank of India and the ministry of electronics and information technology (Meity) to check 'ponzi apps' making outlandish financial claims, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

"There are also apps which are coming out and reaching out to people saying we can do this, we can do that, your money will fetch you this much—many of who are ponzi apps on which we are working with Meity and with the Reserve Bank, and clamping down on them like never before, so that we don't get those ponzi apps taking away hard-earned money," the minister said at an interactive session with academics, students and public intellectuals at Tumakuru in Karnataka on Sunday.

associations to ensure transparency and protect consumers. Influencers who fail to comply may face fines as high as ₹50 lakh, or be prohibited from endorsing products for up to six years. Disclosures are required to be published when there is a "material connection" between an advertiser and a celebrity or influencer.

The rules come at a time the influencer industry is projected to reach ₹2,800 crore by 2025,

**Context:** The government is not considering any proposal to regulate financial influencers on social media, but is coordinating with the Reserve Bank of India and the ministry of electronics and information technology (Meity) to check **'Ponzi apps'** making outlandish financial claims, finance minister said.

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) deputy governor has said that cryptocurrencies are akin to **Ponzi schemes (due to volatility, regulator challenges, and other factors)** or even worse, and banning them is the most sensible option for India.

**Ponzi Schemes**

- It is a **fraudulent investing scam promising high rates of return** with little risk to investors.
- The term **"Ponzi Scheme" was coined in 1919** after the name of an Italian con-man named Charles Ponzi.
- He arrived in the US in 1882 and made money through fraudulent schemes.
- It **works like a pyramid scheme** and generates returns for older investors by acquiring new investors, who are promised a large profit at little to no risk.
- It **relies on a constant flow of new investments** to continue to provide returns to older investors and when the flow of fresh investments runs out, the scheme falls apart.
- These are **generally multi-level marketing schemes**, however, Multi-level marketing itself is not illegal in India because there is a product being sold. But direct marketing companies cannot promote pyramid or money circulation schemes.

**Legislation in India**

- Ponzi schemes are **banned under the Prize Chit and Money Circulation (Banning) Act, 1978.**
  - It is a Central Act but the **respective State governments are the enforcement agency** of this law.
  - These are also dealt with by the **Enforcement Directorate under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.**
- The **Banning of unregulated Deposit Schemes Act 2019** has been enacted to prevent fraudulent schemes.
  - It provides for **severe punishment ranging from 1 year to 10 years** and fines ranging from 2 lakh to 50 crore rupees to act as a deterrent.
  - It has **adequate provisions for disgorgement or repayment of deposits** in cases where deposits have been raised illegally.
  - It mentions that the first claim on the recovered money will be that of depositors.

TIMES OF INDIA

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# PAYMENT AGGREGATOR

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

# UIDAI, NPCI to set up eKYC aggregator, fin entities to gain

Sidhartha@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) are setting up an aggregator platform for eKYC (electronic know-your-customer) as part of a move that will benefit thousands of regulated entities in the financial sector.

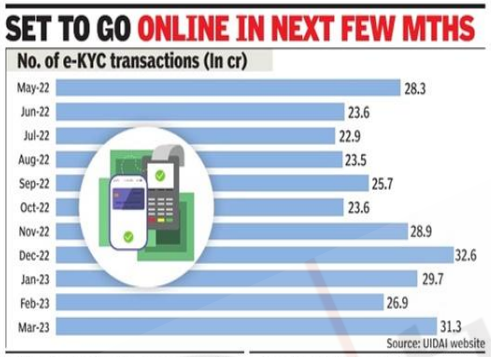
The platform is expected to go online over the next few months, sources told **TOI**. The process of Aadhaar-based eKYC is used for paperless verification of a customer's credentials to get a mobile connection or open a bank account. The process can be completed using biometrics or through the use of OTP and is being used by financial services players, mobile operators and government agencies.

The new platform will enable entities that are regulated by the RBI, Sebi or the insurance and pension regulators to register on it.

This will do away with the need for these entities to individually register for undertaking eKYC using Aadhaar, while also ensuring that user data is not shared with the players using the platform. Sources said that the idea is to ensure that at best the last four digits are available to the financial services players and even the masked data of the consumers is not shared. Besides, users will not have to share physical copies of their documents, which often result in misuse and data theft.

Once implemented, the platform is expected to help several non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) reach out to consumers to offer loans apart from aiding fintech players and insurance intermediaries.

"We expect a few thousand players to undertake eKYC through the platform, which will be a significant increase," said a source.




**Context:** The **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** are setting up an **aggregator platform for eKYC** (electronic know-your-customer) as part of a move that will benefit thousands of regulated entities in the financial sector.

## Payment Aggregator (PA)

- **About**: A PA (also known as a merchant aggregator) is a **third-party service provider** that allows merchants to accept payment from customers by integrating it into their websites or apps.
- **Legislation**: A PA in India is incorporated under the **Companies Act 2013.**
  - A PA can be a **bank or a non-bank entity.**
  - Since a PA handles funds, it **requires a license from the RBI.**
  - Only **non-bank payment aggregators** require unique authorization from RBI as 'handling funds' is considered a part of the normal banking relationships for bank PAs.
    - **Examples**: Amazon (Pay) India, Google India, Razorpay, Pine Labs, etc.
- **Functions**: It **facilitates different types of payment transactions,** including cash/cheque, online payments through multiple payment sources, or offline touchpoints.
  - It allows merchants to accept bank transfers without setting up a bank-based merchant account. It means a merchant need not have a merchant account directly with the bank.

## Payment Aggregator v/s Payment gateway

- A **payment gateway is a software that allows online transactions** to take place, while a payment aggregator is the **inclusion of all these payment gateways.**
- While a payment gateway is an **intermediary**, the payment aggregator is the **interface** where the payment gateway processes the transactions.
- Most payment aggregators own payment gateways to offer various exclusive services to their merchant customers.

PIB

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# LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE INDEX 2023

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

## PM expresses happiness over India's spectacular climb of 16 places in World Bank's Logistic Performance Index

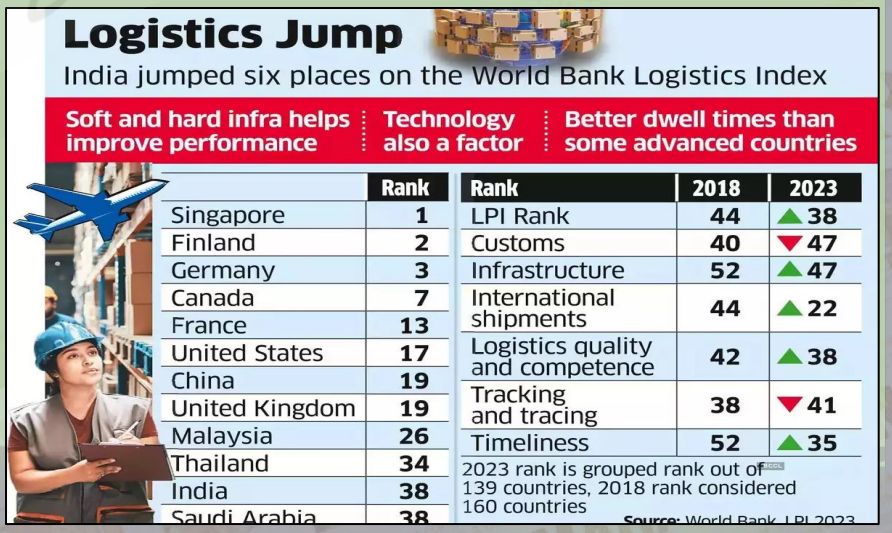
**Context:** The Prime Minister has expressed his happiness over over India's spectacular climb of **16 places in World Bank's Logistic Performance Index.**

**Highlights of LPI 2023**

- The LPI 2023 allows for **comparisons across 139 countries.**
- The LPI 2023, for the first time, **measures the speed of trade with indicators** derived from big datasets tracking shipments.
- **Singapore and Finland are the most efficient** and highest-ranked LPI countries as per the 2023 LPI.
- **India is ranked 38 out of 139 countries**, climbing 6 places from the previous index.
- Two major factors for India's jump in the index could be **modernisation and digitalisation**, which the report quotes as a reason for emerging economies like India to leapfrog advanced countries.

**Logistics Performance Index (LPI)**

- It is released by **World Bank.**
- It is an **interactive benchmarking tool** created to help countries identify the challenges and opportunities they face in their performance on trade logistics and what they can do to improve their performance.
- It **measures the ease of establishing reliable supply chain connections and structural factors** that make it possible, such as the quality of logistics services, trade and transport-related infrastructure, as well as border controls.



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# SECTION 27 OF THE MGNREGA ACT

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy & Employment)



**No money to fix leaky roofs, MGNREGS workers in West Bengal fear upcoming monsoon**

The Centre has blocked the state's funds for the rural employment scheme for over a year, jeopardising the economic conditions of many villagers

NEXT NEWS >

By Himanshu Nitnaware
Published: Friday 21 April 2023

**Context:** Rural workers in West Bengal have had their right to work violated for over a year now.

**Key Points**

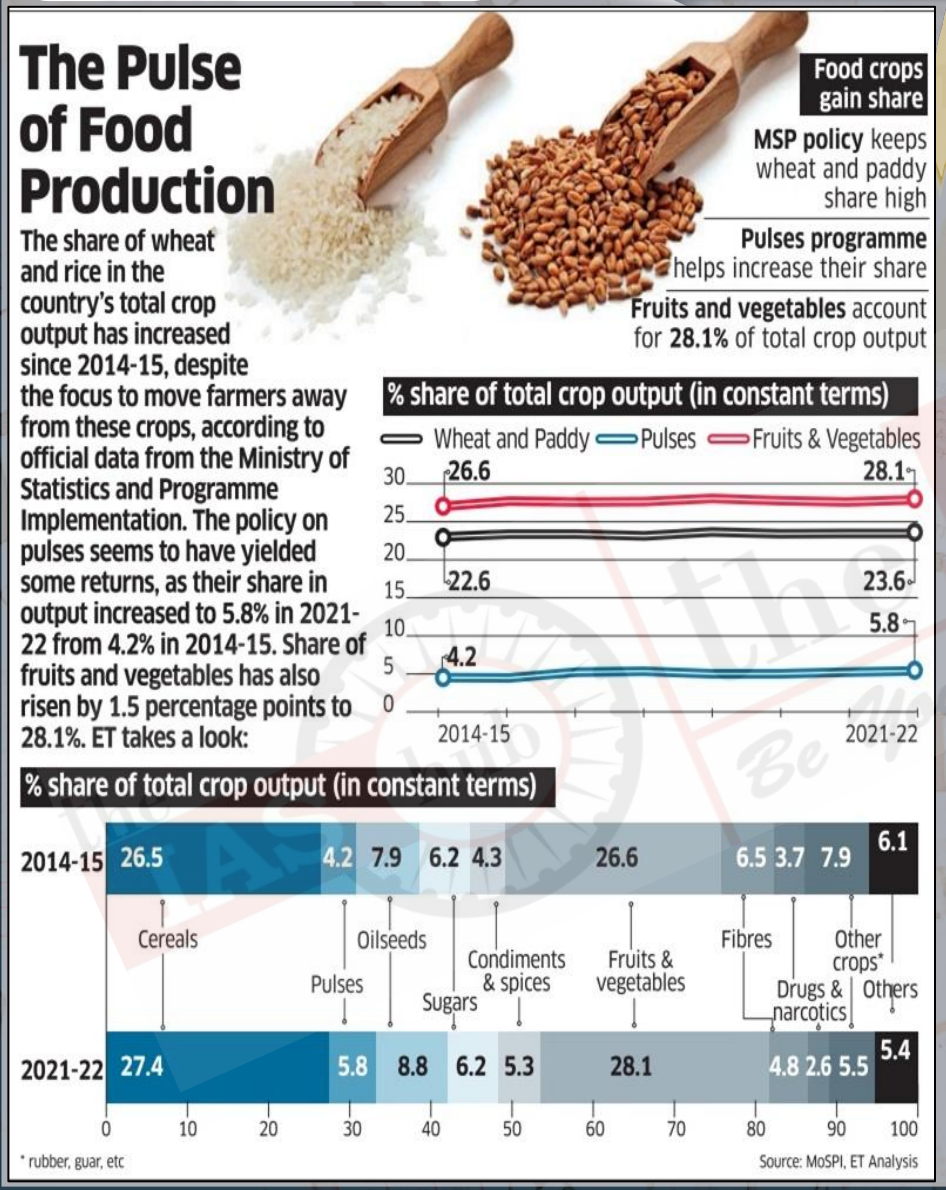
- Recently, the Union Rural Development Ministry has **decided to withhold the MGNREGS funds for West Bengal** for the financial year 2023-24, extending the imposition of **Section 27 of the MGNREGA** that allows for stoppage of funds for violation of rules in implementation of the scheme by the State.
  - The Section however also states, "**appropriate remedial measures** for its proper implementation within a reasonable period of time" has to be taken.
- The Centre had **first invoked the rule in December 2021** based on ground surveys, which revealed large-scale corruption and violation of the guidelines.
- **West Bengal is the only State** in the country against whom this Section was invoked.

**Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)**

- **MGNREG scheme**: enacted through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee act (MGNREGA) on August 25, 2005.
- **Nodal Ministry: The Ministry of Rural Development (MRD)**, Govt of India is monitoring the entire implementation of this scheme in association with state governments.
- **Implementation agency**: It is the **Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat** which approves the shelf of works under MGNREGA and fix their priority.
- **Provides a legal guarantee:** for 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.
  - **Within 15 days of submitting the application** or from the day work is demanded, wage employment will be provided to the applicant.
  - Receipt of wages within 15 days of work done.
  - **Wages must be paid** according to the statutory minimum wages specified for agricultural labourers in the state **under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948**.
  - **At least one-third of beneficiaries have to be women.**
- **Right to get unemployment allowance:** In case employment is not provided within 15 days of submitting the application or from the date when work is sought.
- **Mandatory social audit**: Social Audit of MGNREGA works is mandatory, which lends to accountability and transparency.
- **Eligibility Criteria**
  - **Must be Citizen of India** to seek MGNREGA benefits.
  - Job seeker has **completed 18 years** of age at the time of application.
  - The applicant must be **part of a local household** (i.e. application must be made with local Gram Panchayat).
  - Applicant must **volunteer for unskilled labour.**

# AGRICULTURE PERFORMANCE

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Agriculture)




**Context:** The **share of wheat and rice in the country's total crop output has increased** since 2014-15, despite the focus to move farmers away from these crops, according to official data from the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.**

- The policy on pulses seems to have yielded some returns, as their share in output increased to 5. 8% in 2021-22 from 4.
- 2% in 2014-15. Share of fruits and vegetables has also risen by 1. 5 percentage points to 28. 1%. ET takes a look:

**Economic Survey 2022-23: Performance in Agriculture and Food Management**

- In recent years, **India has emerged as the net exporter of agricultural products,** with exports in 2021-22 touching a record USD 50.2 billion.
- **Agri sector saw buoyant growth** due to the following measures taken by the govt:
  - Augmentation of crop and livestock productivity
  - MSP for all mandated crops fixed at 1.5 times of all India weighted average cost of production
  - Promotion of crop diversification
  - Mechanisation and boost to horticulture and organic farming.
- **Private investment in agriculture increased** to 9.3% in 2020-21. Institutional credit to the Agri sector continued to grow to Rs. 18.6 lakh crore in 2021-22.
- **Foodgrains production in India saw sustained increase** and stood at 315.7 million tonnes in 2021-22.
  - As per the First Advance Estimates for 2022-23 (Kharif only), total foodgrains production in the country is estimated at 149.9 million tonnes which is higher than the average Kharif foodgrain production of the previous five years (2016-17 to 2020-21).
  - Also, the GoI has recently decided to provide free foodgrains to beneficiaries under the NFSA 2013 for one year from 1 January 2023.
- The **National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) Scheme** has established an online, competitive, transparent bidding system to ensure farmers get remunerative prices for their produce (covering 1.74 crore farmers and 2.39 lakh traders).
- Under **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY),** organic farming is being promoted through Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO).
- **India stands at the forefront to promote millets after the UNGA**, in its 75th session in 2021, declared 2023 the International Year of Millets (IYM).

BUSINESS STANDARD

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# PM CARES

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Govt. Policies & Interventions)

The first of a three-part series on corporate social responsibility (CSR) explores allocations to the PM CARES Fund. The analysis is in the context of easing of CSR disclosure rules in annual reports

## Listed govt firms contributed ₹2,900 cr to PM CARES

SACHIN P MAMPATTA
Mumbai, 23 April

Government-run firms accounted for the majority of donations that listed entities made to the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund.

They contributed at least ₹2,913.6 crore between 2019-20 and 2021-22, according to an analysis of the data collated by tracker primeinfobase.com for all the companies listed on the National Stock Exchange.

*Business Standard* identified 57 companies in which the government had a significant stake to reach the aforementioned amount. Their contribution accounts for more than the cumulative donation made by 247 other firms to the fund – 59.3 per cent of total donation of ₹4,910.5 crore.

The top five donors among the list of 57 are Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (₹370 crore), NTPC (₹330 crore), Power Grid Corporation of India (₹275 crore), Indian Oil Corporation (₹265 crore), and Power Finance Corporation (₹222.4 crore).

There has been controversy around the fund since it was set up in March 2020.

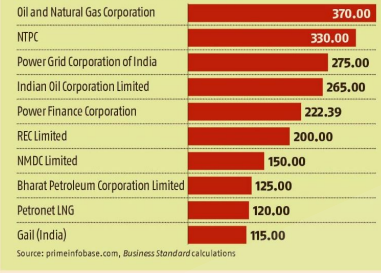
The chairman of the fund is the prime minister and trustees include the defence minister, home minister, and finance minister. The fund is not controlled by the Government of India, according to a reported submission by the Centre to the Delhi High Court in January 2023. This reiterates a position mentioned in a 2020 judgment by the Supreme Court of India, which noted that the trust does not receive any government money.

EYE on CSR
PART-I

"The PM CARES Fund is a charitable trust registered under the Registration Act, 1908, at New Delhi on 27.03.2020. The trust does not receive any Budgetary support or any government money," stated the August 18, 2020, Supreme Court Judgment.

**NEARLY ₹1,500 CR CAME FROM TOP FIVE**

Amount contributed to PM CARES, FY20-22 (in ₹ cr)




Source: primeinfobase.com, *Business Standard* calculations

Scrutiny over CSR spending gains significance in light of the new norms. The government in September 2022 amended norms to limit the amount of information that companies have to put out in their annual reports on CSR spends.

Pranav Haldea, managing director at PRIME Database, said the recent amendments in the CSR provisions allow less transparency. "Companies no longer have to provide as many details to shareholders on where CSR spends are going. Greater disclosures for the donating companies, as well as large recipients, would be positive," he said.

The PM CARES Fund also receives donations from individuals and other organisations, besides companies.

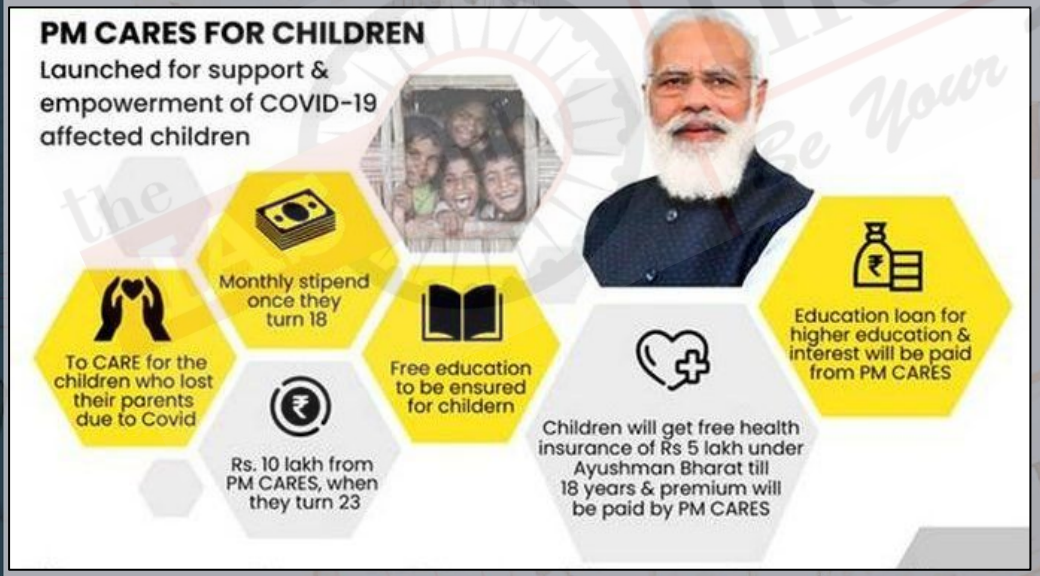
It collected ₹3,076.6 crore in 2019-20, according to disclosures on its website. This rose to ₹10,990.2 crore in 2020-21. It was ₹ 9,131.9 crore in 2021-22.

The bulk of the amount appeared to have come from corporate India's CSR budgets in its first year.

Total CSR contribution to the PM CARES Fund was ₹1,577.8 crore or more than half the collection in 2019-20. Total CSR contributions from NSE-listed companies rose to ₹2,471.6 crore in 2020-21. The figure for 2021-22 was ₹861.1 crore.

The PM CARES Fund spent a limited amount (₹2,049) in the few days it was operational in 2019-20. This rose to ₹3,976.2 crore in 2020-21 and ₹3,716.3 crore in 2021-22.

E-mails sent to the 57 companies on Wednesday and to the PM CARES Fund on Thursday did not elicit a reply.




**Context:** Government Run firms accounted for the majority of donations that listed entities made to the **Prime Minister´s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund.**

- The top five donors among the list of 57 are Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (₹ 370 crore), NTPC (₹ 330 crore), Power Grid Corporation of India (₹ 275 crore), Indian Oil Corporation (₹ 265 crore), and Power Finance Corporation (₹ 222.4 crore).

### PM CARES

- **About**: Established in March 2020, It has been registered as a **Public Charitable Trust.**
  - The trust deed of PM CARES Fund has been registered under the Registration Act, 1908.
- **Composition**: **Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman** of the PM CARES Fund and Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance, Government of India are ex-officio Trustees of the Fund.
  - The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall have the **power to nominate three trustees** to the Board of Trustees who shall be eminent persons in the field of research, health, science, social work, law, public administration and philanthropy.
  - Any person appointed a Trustee shall act in a **pro bono capacity.**
- **Funding**: The fund consists **entirely of voluntary contributions** from individuals/organisations and does not get any budgetary support.
- **Exemptions**: Donations to PM CARES Fund would qualify for **80G benefits for 100% exemption under the Income Tax Act, 1961.**
  - Donations to PM CARES Fund will also qualify to be counted as **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure** under the Companies Act, 2013
  - PM CARES Fund has also got **exemption under the FCRA** and a separate account for receiving foreign donations has been opened.

THE HINDU Page 11

# SUDAN POLITICAL CRISIS

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - International Relations)

## India sends aircraft, ships for evacuation from Sudan

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

India has sent two heavy-lift aircraft to Saudi Arabia and a ship to the coast of Sudan, to begin evacuation of its citizens who are caught in the war-torn African nation, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Sunday. These moves are part of India's preparations to activate a contingency plan to evacuate people from Sudan once the situation improves.

"As part of our preparations, and in order to move swiftly, the Government of India is pursuing multiple options. Two Indian Air Force C-130J are currently positioned on standby in Jeddah. And *INS Sumedha* has reached Port Sudan," the MEA said.

It added the Indian Embassy in Sudan is in "regular touch" with Indian citizens across the country, and are advising them on the possibilities of "safe movement". It will coordinate with citizens regarding possible exit from Khartoum "as and when the situation permits safe movement", the MEA said.

**Context:** India has sent **two heavy-lift aircraft to Saudi Arabia and a ship to the coast of Sudan** to begin evacuation of its nationals who are caught in war-torn Sudan.

- The moves are part of **India's plans to activate a contingency plan** to evacuate people from the war-torn country once the security situation improves.

**Sudan Political Crisis**

- In Sudan, powerful **rival military factions** are battling for control.
- The fight is between the **army and the powerful paramilitary group**, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).
  - The **RSF was formed in 2013** and has its origins in the notorious Janjaweed militia that brutally fought rebels in Darfur, where they were accused of ethnic cleansing.
- **Both groups were allies. Together, they** seized power in a 2021 coup.
- Since the 2021 coup, **Sudan has been run by a council of generals**, led by the two military men at the centre of this dispute.
- They have **disagreed on the direction the country is going** in and the proposed move towards civilian rule.
- The main sticking points are plans to include the **100,000-strong RSF into the army,** and who would then lead the new force.

**Sudan**

- Sudan is in **north-east Africa** and is one of the largest countries on the continent, covering 1.9 million square kilometres.
- It is also **one the poorest countries in the world,** with its 46 million people living on an average annual income of $750 (£606) a head.
- The population of Sudan is **predominantly Muslim** and the country's official languages are Arabic and English.
- Sudan **borders the Red Sea, the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa.**
- Its strategic location and agricultural wealth have **attracted regional power** plays, complicating the chances of a successful transition.



DST

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# THEORY OF EVOLUTION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Sci & Tech)

## Indian biologists put forward novel refinements to fundamental conceptual principles of evolutionary biology

**Context:** Indian scientists have presented a number of novel technical, historical, and philosophical refinements to core concepts in how we understand **evolutionary biology and its development** in the recent edited volume **Evolutionary Biology: Contemporary and Historical Reflections upon Core Theory.**

- The revised conceptualizations and definitions for **natural selection and Darwinian fitness** that explicitly include heredity (via transmission fidelities) that Indian scientists from the **Foundations of Genetics and Evolution Group (FOGEG)** presented bring new ideas towards resolving ongoing debates about the conceptual core of evolutionary theory and whether it needs a substantial overhaul.

**Theory of Evolution**

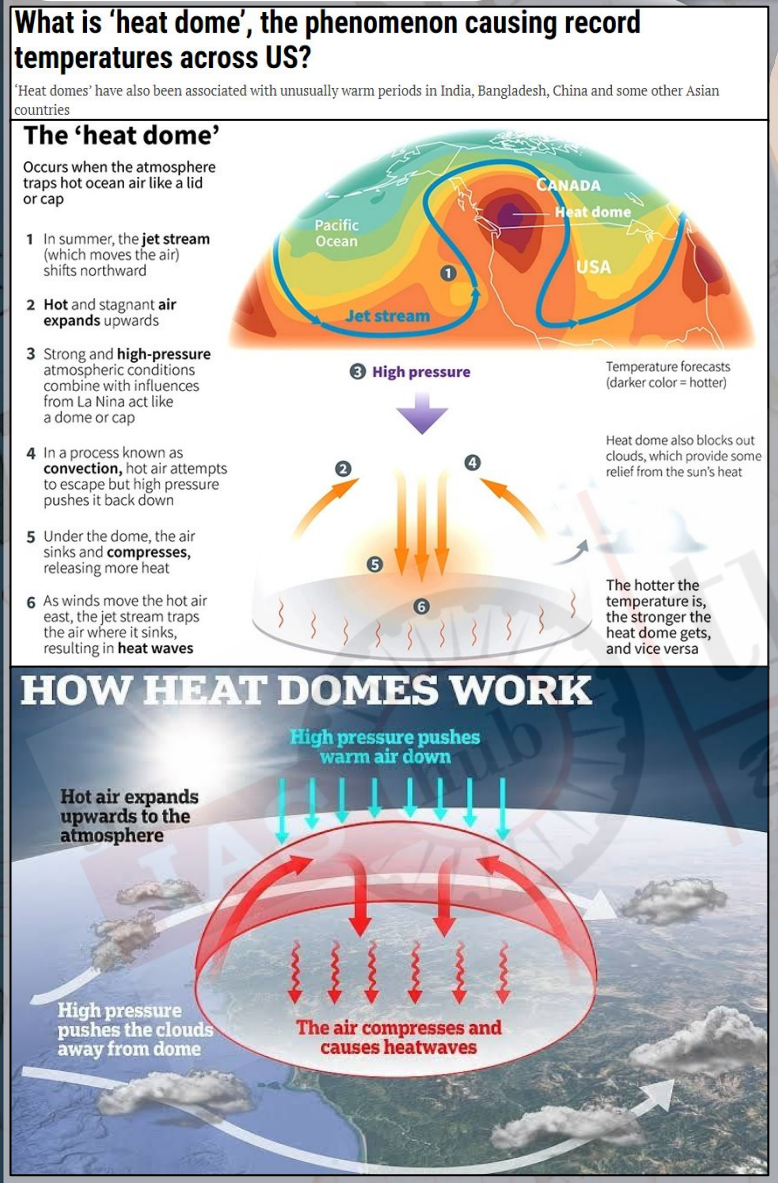
- **About**: Theory of Evolution was **proposed by Charles Darwin.**
  - According to Darwinian theory, **nature selects fitness.**
  - Fitness is based on **characteristics that are inherited.**
  - Any population has built-in variation in characteristics which **adapt it better to environment.**
  - **Adaptability** is inherited and fitness is the end result of ability to adapt and get selected by nature.
- **Key Concepts**: The two key concepts of Darwinian theory are **branching descent (adaptive radiation) and natural selection:**
  - **Branching descent (survival of the fittest):** Characteristics which enable some populations or individuals to **outbreed others in natural conditions** (food, climate, physical factors).
  - **Natural selection:** Those populations which are **better fit (reproductively fit)** in an environment will be **selected by nature** and will survive more.

DTE

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# HEAT DOME

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)




**Context:** Places across the southwest and eastern parts of the United States recorded temperatures as warm as those seen in late June or early July, and the unusual warming was caused by a phenomenon known as **'heat domes'.**

- **'Heat domes' are natural phenomena** that have also been associated with unusually warm periods in India, Bangladesh, China and some other Asian countries.

**Heat Dome**

- **About**: It is a **mountain of warm air built into a very wavy jet stream,** with extreme undulations.
  - As per the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**, a heat dome occurs when the atmosphere traps hot ocean air like a lid or a cap.
- **Causes**: The phenomenon of Heat dome starts when there is a **strong change (or gradient) in the ocean temperatures.**
  - In the process called **convection**, the gradient causes more warm air, heated by the ocean surface, to rise over the ocean surface.
  - The prevailing winds move the hot air east, the northern shifts of the **jet stream trap the air** and move it toward the land, where it sinks and results in heatwaves.
- **Relation to Jet Stream**: The heat dome's formation is related to the **behaviour of the jet stream.**
  - **Jet streams are relatively narrow bands of strong wind** in the upper levels of the atmosphere
  - The jet stream is believed to have a **wave-like pattern** that keeps moving from north to south and then north again.
  - When these waves get **bigger and elongated**, they move slowly and sometimes can become stationary.
  - This is when a **high-pressure system** gets stuck and leads to the occurrence of a heat dome.
  - Although heat domes are likely to have always existed, researchers say that **climate change may be making them more intense and longer.**
  - They suggest with the **rising temperatures**, it is expected that the jet stream will become more wavy and will have larger deviations, causing more frequent extreme heat events.

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# BASAVA JAYANTHI

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Personalities)

## PM bows to Jagadguru Basaveshwara on the sacred occasion of Basava Jayanthi

**Context:** The Prime Minister has paid tributes to **Jagadguru Basaveshwara** on the sacred occasion of Basava Jayanthi.

**Jagadguru Basaveshwara**

- **About**: Born in **Bagevadi** (of undivided Bijapur district in Karnataka) during 1131 AD.
  - He belonged to the **Brahmin community.**
  - He was a **12th Century Kannada social reformer,** poet and philosopher during the rule of the Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I in Karnataka.
  - He is the **founding saint of the Lingayat sect.**
    - The term **Lingayat denotes a person who wears a personal linga**, an iconic form of God Shiva, on the body which is received during the initiation ceremony.
- **Philosophy & Teachings**: His philosophy was **based on the principles of Arivu (true knowledge), ethos (right conduct), and Anubhava (divine experience),** which brought about a social, religious, and economic revolution in the 12th century.
  - He also founded the **Anubhava Mantapa,** loosely translated as the forum of experiences, an academy which included Lingayat mystics, saints, and philosophers.
    - It was the **first and foremost Parliament of India,** where Sharanas (citizens of welfare society) sat together and discussed the socialistic principles of a Democratic set up.
    - In Kalyana, the **Kalachurya king Bijjala (1157-1167, AD) appointed Basaveshwara as a karanika (Accountant)** in the initial stage, in his court and later as the Prime minister.
  - He spread **social awareness** through his poetry, popularly known as **Vachanaas**.
- **Socio-economic principles**: Basaveshwara gave **two more very important socio-economic principles.**
  - **Kayaka (Divine work)**: According to this, every individual in society should **take up the job of his choice and perform it** with all sincerity.
  - **Dasoha (Equal distribution):** There must be an **equal income for equal work.**
    - The worker (**Kayakajeevi**) may lead his day-to-day life by his hard-earned income. But he should not preserve the money or property for tomorrow. He must utilize the surplus money for society and the poor.

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