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सत्यमेव जयते



MK Yadav Sir

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BUSINESS STANDARD

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DIGITAL COMPETITION PANEL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Digital competition law panel to hold first meeting on Feb 22

RUCHIKA CHITRAVANSHI
New Delhi, 19 February



The first meeting of the digital competition law committee, chaired by ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) Secretary Manoj Govil, will be held on February 22, according to government sources.

The 16-member committee includes chairperson, competition commission of India, Saurabh Srivastava, chairman, Indian Angel Network and cofounder of industry body NASSCOM.

MCA has asked NITI Aayog, departments of commerce, economic affairs, consumer affairs, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade to nominate a member for the committee, not below the rank of joint secretary.

The MCA secretary is also expected to nominate certain members to take part in the committee discussions including technology experts.

Among the law firms on the panel are Haigreve Khaitan of Khaitan & Co, Pallavi Shardul Shroff of Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, Anand Pathak, P&A Law Offices, Rahul Rai, Axiom5 Law Chamber.

A parliamentary committee had suggested the need of a digital competition law. The house panel had underlined the need for ex-ante regulations for the big tech.

MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS SETS UP A COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE NEED FOR A DIGITAL COMPETITION ACT

CNBC TV18

- Committee to look at the need for a separate ex ante regulation
- Committee to look at international practices and ex ante laws in other countries
- Committee to be headed by Secretary, MCA and will comprises of officials from commerce, consumer affairs, DPIIT, MEITY, DEA, economists and lawyers
- Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance had recommended a new ex ante legislation to regulate tech companies, prevent market dominance and anti competitive behavior in digital markets

Context: The first meeting of the **digital competition law committee**, chaired by ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) Secretary, will be held on February 22.

- Recently, the Centre has **ordered setting up a committee** that will review whether existing antitrust laws in the country are equipped to deal with the challenges that have emerged from the digital economy, and submit to the government a draft Digital Competition Act within three months.

Committee on Digital competition

- **About**: The **Ministry of Corporate Affairs** has constituted the committee to study the requirement of the digital competition law and give suggestions regarding competition norms.
- **Functions of the committee:**
  - To look into the **challenges emerging from the digital economy**
  - Study **international practices** regarding the digital competition regulation
  - **Review practices** being followed by the significant digital market stakeholders
  - To create a draft of the **Digital Competition Act**
  - List the potential **harm caused to the digital markets**
- **Committee Members:** CCI Chairperson, and Co CEO, NASSCOM co-founders, and others.
  - CCI works under **Corporate Affairs Ministry.**
  - The members of the CCI are **appointed by the GoI.**
  - The main objective of the committee is to remove practices that are causing harm to **healthy competition**. Also, it protects the consumers.

LIVE MINT

Page 1

REGISTRARS OF COMPANIES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

MCA drops RoC approval for most corporate actions

Gireesh Chandra Prasad
gireesh.p@livemint.com
NEW DELHI



The new system is part of a revamp of MCA21 site. MINT

The ministry of corporate affairs has simplified the process for corporate reporting, eliminating the need for approval by Registrars of Companies (RoCs) in most cases and allowing companies to fulfil their reporting obligations with an online acknowledgement, two people informed about the development said.

The new system, called "file and forget" by policy makers, is part of the government's ongoing revamp of the statutory filing website, MCA21, one of the two people cited above said, requesting anonymity. Companies can now fulfil most of their statutory filing obligations with an online acknowledgement, equivalent to approval by RoCs.

Of the nearly 100 forms that companies need to file as part of compliance requirements under the Companies Act on various transactions and filing obligations linked to statutory requirements, 56 have been migrated to a new web-based version in January, and an additional 30 web-based forms will be launched soon.

"Among these, the majority of the critical ones, such as allotment of securities or shares, are now out of RoC approval requirement. Online acknowledgement is enough, and they are taken on record under an auto-approval process. Earlier, barring a few, most forms filed by companies used to go to RoCs for their approval," said the first person cited above.

The ministry is also setting up a centralized processing centre for corporate filings under the Companies Act, similar to the income tax department's centralized processing centre in Bengaluru.

"With scaled-up use of

TURN TO PAGE 6

Context: The ministry of corporate affairs has simplified the process for corporate reporting, eliminating the need for approval by **Registrars of Companies (RoCs)** in most cases and allowing companies to fulfil their reporting obligations with an online acknowledgement.

- The new system, called **"file and forget"** by policy makers, is part of the government's ongoing revamp of the statutory filing website, MCA21.
- Companies can now fulfil most of their statutory filing obligations with an online acknowledgement, equivalent to approval by RoCs.

Registrar of Companies (India)

- **About**: The Registrar of Companies (ROC) is an office under the Indian **Ministry of Corporate Affairs** that deals with administration of the **Companies Act, 2013**, The Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008, The Company Secretaries Act, 1980 and The Chartered Accountants Act, 1949.
- **'ICLS' Cadre**: These officers are from **Indian Corporate Law Service cadre.**
  - 'ICLS' is an organised **Group A service** recruitment of which is done by UPSC through Civil Service Examination since 2009 along with other services like IRS, IAS & IPS etc.
- **Current Status**: There are currently **25 Registrars of Companies (ROC)** operating from offices in all major states of India.
  - Some states, such as Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, have two ROCs each.
  - Also in some places unified ROC offices manned by senior Group A ICLS officers are located in capital cities like Jammu and Srinagar.
- **Functions and Roles**: Section 609 of the **Companies Act, 1956** tasks the ROCs with the primary duty of registering companies and LLPs floated in the respective states and the union territories under their administration.
  - The Registrar of Company **takes care of company registration** (also known as incorporation) in India, completes reporting and regulation of companies and their directors and shareholders, and also oversees government reporting of various matters including the annual filling of various documents.

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GORAKHPUR NUCLEAR PLANT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy & Infrastructure)

North India's first Nuclear Plant is coming up in Haryana in the town of Gorakhpur, which is about 150 km north of the national capital of New Delh, says Dr. Jitendra Singh

Context: North India's first Nuclear Plant is coming up in Haryana in the town of **Gorakhpur**, which is about 150 km north of the national capital of New Delhi.

- The **Department of Atomic Energy,** GoI has also been given permission for forming joint ventures with PSUs for resources to opening up of atomic energy plants, which is an upcoming and promising sector, having potential to fulfill India's all energy needs in times to come.

Key Points

- **Gorakhpur Haryana Anu Vidyut Pariyojana's (GHAVP)** having two units of 700 MWe capacity each of Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) indigenous design is under implementation near Gorakhpur village in Fatehabad district in Haryana.
- Construction of **Water Duct from Tohana to GHAVP** for meeting operational cooling water requirements has been taken up through Haryana Irrigation & Water Resources Department (HI&WRD) as deposit work and progressing well.

Nuclear Power In India

- **About**: Nuclear power is the **fifth-largest source of electricity in India** after thermal, hydroelectric and renewable sources of electricity.
- **Current Status:** Presently, India has **22 nuclear power reactors** operating in 7 states, with an installed capacity of 6780 MegaWatt electric (MWe).
  - 18 reactors are **Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs)** and 4 are **Light Water Reactors (LWRs).**
- **Nodal Agency**: **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited -NPCIL** based in Mumbai is a government-owned corporation of India that is responsible for the generation of electricity through nuclear power.
  - NPCIL is administered by the **Department of Atomic Energy** (under the Prime Minister's Office), Government of India.



PIB 20

SAGAR PARIKRAMA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Shri Parshottam Rupala launches Sagar Parikrama Phase-III from Hazira Port in Gujarat

Context: Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying starts the **Sagar Parikrama Phase-III from Hazira Port, Gujarat,** and proceeds towards the coastline of Maharashtra at Satpati, Vasai, Versova, and Parikrama will end at Sasson Dock, Mumbai.

- **Phase I Programme of 'Sagar Parikrama'** was organized in Gujarat, started on 5th March, 2022 from Mandvi and ended on 6th March 2022 at Porbandar, Gujarat.
- **The voyage Sagar Parikrama as Phase –II programme** started on 22nd September 2022 from Mangrol to Veraval and ended at Mul Dwaraka, on 23rd September 2022 from Mul Dwaraka to Madhwad.

Key points

- **Gujarat is the leading state in marine fish production,** sharing 16.67 per cent of the country's total marine fish productions.
- **Maharashtra state is sixth position** in Marine fish production in India which contributes to 4.33 lakh tonnes.
- **Marine capture fisheries in India account for 3.71 million tonnes during 2021**, and it is well understood that the marine capture fisheries of our country are vulnerable.
- The initiation of programs like **Sagar Parikrama facilitates the interaction with the fishers** along the coast, thus promoting sustainable and responsible fishing with due importance to the small-scale fishers and their interests.
- The DoF is making concerted **efforts to increase the coverage of a large number of fishers and fish farmers** for providing KCC facilities, including organizing special drives from time-to-time, organizing sensitization programmes, mass and individual extension activities such as distribution of pamphlets, conducting of awareness campaign in vernacular languages, newspaper articles, advertisement, etc.

Sagar Parikrama

- **About**: It is an initiative of Government of India, aiming to **resolve the issues of the fishers and other stakeholders** and facilitate their economic upliftment through various fisheries schemes and programs being implemented by the Government of India such as PMMSY.
  - Sagar Parikrama is an evolutionary journey **envisaged in the sea across the coastal belt demonstrating solidarity** with all fisherfolk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholders as a spirit of 75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Ministry of **Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.**
  - The Parikrama shall be accompanied by the State Fisheries officials, Fishermen representatives, Fish-Farmers entrepreneurs, stakeholders, professionals, officials and Scientists from across the nation.
- **Coverage**: Phase III program of 'Sagar Parikrama' will cover mainly the **coastal areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat.**

TOBACCO CONTROL IN INDIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Health)

India Can Drive Positive Change to Control Tobacco Use

Company embarking on transformation to provide a vastly better solution for adults who smoke

Team ET

India can help drive positive change for the rest of the world and, as chair of the G20, be a prime example for emerging economies to control tobacco consumption, said Jacek Olczak, CEO of Philip Morris International.

"India is no stranger to harm reduction. It has led the world in embracing policies that reduce harm, has earned the reputation as a world leader in tobacco control. Nevertheless, there are still more than a hundred million people here who smoke," he said at the Economic Times Global Summit in Delhi on Saturday.

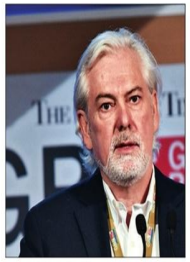
He said India could achieve the same results as a few other countries by making better choices available to smokers.

"What if, like in Japan, 35% people move to less harmful forms of tobacco consumption? That would mean 35 million adults in India having better alternatives to cigarettes. That would also mean reducing the burden on the healthcare systems," he said.

Olczak said there are 200 million users of oral tobacco users in India. "We have seen the impact of India adopting science and technology at scale, in the context of the pandemic, unified payments systems, many other areas," he said. "This pioneering approach can also apply to tobacco consumption reduction and bring a massive public health breakthrough."

SMOKE-FREE WORLD

India has led the world in embracing policies that reduce harm, has earned the reputation as a world leader in tobacco control



Drawing attention to Phillip Morris, he said his company has been "a leading player in the cigarette market; now we are intentionally leaving behind that, embarking on a transformation to provide a vastly better solution for adults who smoke."

The global tobacco maker has committed to realise a smoke-free future, he said.

"Since 2008, we have invested more than $10 billion in researching, developing and commercialising better products. Now our smoke-free products are adopted in 74 markets," Olczak said.

Clearly, the best thing smokers can do is to quit smoking, he said.

"But what many people do not know is that the primary cause of smoking-related problems is combustion–which triggers the release of high levels of harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke."

Olczak added that thanks to advances in science and technology, it is now possible to eliminate combustion and replace it with controlled heating at much lower temperatures, and significantly reduce harmful chemicals.

Context: India can help drive positive change for the rest of the world and, as chair of the G20, be a prime example for emerging economies to **control tobacco consumption**, said CEO of Philip Morris International.

- As per the WHO study titled "**Economic Costs of Diseases and Deaths Attributable to Tobacco Use in India"** it has been estimated that the economic burden of diseases and deaths attributable to tobacco use of tobacco in India was as high as Rs. 1.77 lakh crores, amounting to approx 1 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Control Measures in India

- **National Health Policy 2017:** It sets an ambitious target of **reducing tobacco use by 30 per cent by 2025**, which has been devised keeping in view the targets for control of NCDs.
- **WHO Framework**: Ratification of the **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).**
- **National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP):** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) in 2007- 08 in 42 districts of 21 States/Union Territories of the country.
- **Other steps:** Measures like the **displaying large warnings covering 85% of the area on packs of tobacco products,** the introduction of a dedicated helpline for assisting people to quit tobacco, combating the menace of e-Cigarettes through a Statute on Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes and like devices, regulation of display and use of tobacco products in films and television programs.

- **Cigarettes Act, 1975**: Tobacco control legislation in India dates back to the Cigarettes Act, 1975 which **mandates the display of statutory health warnings** in advertisement and on cartons and cigarette packages.
- **Delhi Prohibition of Smoking and Non-Smokers Health Protection Act:** It was passed in the Delhi assembly in 1997 and became the model for Central Legislation b**anning smoking in public places** in 2002, on the directions of the Supreme Court.
- **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade, Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act (COTPA) 2003**: The comprehensive tobacco control legislation aims to **provide smoke-free public places** and also places restrictions on tobacco advertising and promotion.
- **Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Bill, 2019**: It **prohibits production**, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement of e-cigarettes.
- **Tobacco Quitline Services:** These **toll-free quitline services** (1800-112-356) were initiated in 2016 and were expanded in September 2018.
    - These are now available in 16 languages and other local dialects from 4 centres.

TIMES OF INDIA

Page 1

Malabar drill to be held off Aus for first time

The Malabar naval exercise, the most visible manifestation of the expanding military interoperability among the Quad countries, will be conducted off Australia for the first time this August, **reports Rajat Pandit.** India will send its frontline warships and the P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft. All four Quad countries—India, Australia, the US and Japan—have declared their intent to deter any "coercion" in the Indo-Pacific in the face of China's aggressive and expansionist behaviour in the region.

The Malabar exercise began as an India-US endeavour in the 1990s. FLAP OPP

MALABAR NAVAL EXERCISE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - International Relations)

Context: The **Malabar naval exercise,** the most visible manifestation of the expanding military interoperability among the **Quad countries**, will be conducted off Australia for the first time this August.

- India will send its frontline warships and the **P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft.**
- All four Quad countries - India, Australia, the US and Japan - have declared their intent to deter any "coercion" in the IndoPacific in the face of China's aggressive and expansionist behaviour in the region.

Malabar Exercise

- **About**: Malabar Exercise started off in 1992 as a **bilateral naval exercise between Indian and US navies.**
  - The first Malabar Exercise in the **Bay of Bengal** took place in 2007.
  - In 2015, **Japan joined** the exercise Malabar, making it a trilateral naval exercise.
  - In 2020, the **Australian Navy had joined the Malabar Exercise,** making it a quadrilateral naval exercise. Earlier, Australia joined the exercise in 2007.
  - Singapore and Australia have been non-permanent members previously.
- **Objectives**: The aim of the Malabar Exercise of India, US, Japan and Australia is to **coordinate for free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.**
- **Annual Exercise:** It takes place annually in the **Indian Ocean and Pacific Oceans alternatively**.
- **Activities**: This exercise includes **a diverse range of activities** such as fighter combat operations and maritime interdiction operations.

Other Joint Maritime Exercise

- **INDRA Exercise:** India and Russia. It is a **bi-annual bilateral exercise** that began in 2003.
- **Varuna Exercise:** India and France. It is an **annual exercise** usually held in the Indian Ocean or Mediterranean Sea. The last exercise was held in 2021 in the Arabian Sea.
- **Milan Exercise**: First held in 1995. It is a **biennial Multilateral event**. The last exercise was held in 2018, had a participation of 16 countries. It is usually held in **Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- **IBSAMAR**: It is a maritime exercise held by **India, South Africa, and Brazil.**
- **SIMBEX**: India and Singapore. **Held annually** since 1994.
- **SLINEX** : India and Sri Lanka. The first exercise took place in 2004.

DTE

FEB 20

MENSTRUAL LEAVE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Issue related to Women)

Viva Espana: Spain's decision to allow menstrual leave should inspire judgement on SC PIL next week, says activist

In India as well as sub-Saharan Africa, the taboo surrounding menstruation often causes girls to drop out of schools and education despite it being a completely natural biological function

NEXT NEWS >

By Rajat Ghai
Published: Friday 17 February 2023



Menstruation

- Menstruation marks the **beginning of a woman's reproductive years.**
- From the time when she has her **first period,** or a few days before, she can become pregnant.
- Menstruation will end with **menopause**, usually **between the ages of 45 and 55 years.**
- The menstrual cycle is the **monthly series of changes a woman's body** goes through in preparation for the possibility of pregnancy.
- A woman has two ovaries, each of which contains a number of eggs. Every month during the reproductive years an egg will be released, a process called **'ovulation'**.
- Also, every month, the womb prepares a lining in case the egg should become **fertilized**.
- If the egg does not become fertilized, the lining is not needed and, together with the egg, it will be shed. We see this **shedding as blood.**
- This is what we call a **'period'**. If the egg is fertilized, the womb will need the **lining, and it will not be shed.** This is why periods stop when pregnancy begins.

Context: The Spanish parliament February 16, approved legislation that made **Spain the first country in Europe** to entitle workers to paid menstrual leave.

- The legislature also expanded abortion and transgender rights for teenagers in the traditionally Catholic country.
- **Japan was the first country** to implement this policy in 1947.

Menstrual leave in India

- **No Law**: India **doesn't have any policy for menstrual leave** in place as of now.
- **Government initiatives**:
  - In 1992, **the government of Bihar, the first state**, has granted women employees two days of paid period leave, during which time they are free to choose any day of the month for a day off without providing a reason.
  - The **Menstruation Benefits Bill, 2018** which stipulates 2 days of menstrual leave and better rest facilities at the workplace is yet to receive assent.
  - In 2022, **Kerala government announce**d that it will grant menstrual leave for female students in all state universities under the Department of Higher Education as part of the government's "commitment to realise a gender-just society".
- **Private initiatives**:
  - Mumbai-based companies, **Gozoop and Culture Machine**, became the first private companies in 2017 to introduce the first day of period (FOP) leave in India.
  - **Zomato** has introduced menstrual leaves for up to 10 days a year for its women and transgender employees.
  - **Swiggy and Byju's** have also introduced similar policies.
- **Recent developments:** A historic decision in faraway Spain on February 16, 2023, should inspire judgement next week when the Supreme Court (SC) of India hears a **public interest litigation (PIL)** seeking direction to all the State governments to frame rules for menstrual pain leaves, a veteran gender activist has told Down To Earth (DTE).

INDIAN EXPRESS Page 14

POPLAR TREES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

NOVEL EXPERIMENT: A FOREST OF GM POPLARS TO BEAT CLIMATE CHANGE

IN A low-lying tract in the pine belt of southern Georgia in the US, an experiment is underway to use, for the first time, genetically modified (GM) poplar seedlings that will grow wood at turbocharged rates while slurping up carbon dioxide from the air.

These poplars may be the first GM trees planted in the US outside of a research trial or a commercial fruit orchard. Just as the introduction of the "Flavr Savr" tomato in 1994 introduced a new industry of GM food crops, the planters of the poplars hope to transform forestry.

Living Carbon, a San Francisco-based biotechnology company that produced the poplars, intends for its trees to be a large-scale solution to climate change. The four-year-old company has attracted an investment of $36 million.

Living Carbon has yet to publish peer-reviewed papers; its only publicly reported results come from a greenhouse trial that lasted just a few months. These data have some experts intrigued, but stopping well short of a full endorsement.

Biologists in Living Carbon's lab tinkered with how trees conduct photosynthesis. While photosynthesis has profound impacts on the Earth, as a chemical process it is far from perfect. Numerous inefficiencies prevent plants from capturing and storing more than a small fraction of the solar energy that falls onto their leaves.

Those inefficiencies, among other factors, limit how fast trees and other plants grow, and how much carbon dioxide they soak up. Scientists have spent decades trying to take over where evolution left off.

Living Carbon's research has been inspired by the work of University of Illinois geneticist Donald Ort, who announced in 2019 that he and his colleagues had genetically hacked tobacco plants to photosynthesize more efficiently. The researchers added genes from pumpkins and green algae to induce tobacco seedlings to recycle toxins produced as a photosynthesis byproduct into more sugars, producing plants that grew nearly 40% larger.



Genetically-modified poplar trees are hand-planted in Vidalia, Georgia last week. *The New York Times*

Living Carbon grew engineered poplars in pots, and reported in a non-peer reviewed paper last year that its tweaked poplars grew more than 50% faster than non-modified ones over five months in the greenhouse.

The company's researchers created the greenhouse-tested trees using a bacterium that splices foreign DNA into another organism's genome. But for the trees they planted in Georgia, they turned to an older and cruder technique known as the gene gun method, which essentially blasts foreign genes into the trees' chromosomes.

Dr Ort called Living Carbon's results "encouraging", but added that the notion that greenhouse results will translate to success in the real world is "not a slam dunk".

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Context: On Feb 20, in a low-lying tract of **southern Georgia's pine belt**, a half-dozen workers planted row upon row of twig-like **poplar trees.**

- These weren't just any trees, though: Some of the seedlings being nestled into the soggy soil had been genetically engineered to grow wood at **turbocharged rates while slurping up carbon dioxide from the air.**

Key Points

- The poplars may be the **first genetically modified trees** planted in the United States outside of a research trial or a commercial fruit orchard.
- Just as the introduction of the Flavr Savr tomato in 1994 introduced a new industry of genetically modified food crops, the t**ree planters hope to transform forestry.**
- **Living Carbon**, a San Francisco-based biotechnology company that produced the poplars, intends for its trees to be a large-scale solution to climate change.

Poplar trees

- **About**: Poplar trees, also known as **cottonwood trees,** are deciduous flowering trees found in the Northern Hemisphere.
  - The **Russian poplar tree** (Populus deltoides) is a native of North America (not Russia).
  - These trees are dioecious- i.e. they have separate male and female trees.
- **Poplar trees in India**: Poplar trees are both **exotic and indigenous in India.**
  - The exotic species are cultivated on a large scale in **Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, J&K and Bihar.**
  - The **Russian poplar was introduced in 1982** under a social forestry project funded by the World Bank.

THE HINDU

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UROOSI

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)

Fighting seismic threats in Kashmir the Mughal style

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Disturbing images from Turkey that show mountains of rubble piled up on the streets two weeks after the devastating earthquake, have reminded denizens of Srinagar that the city is on the National Centre for Seismology's Zone-V, meaning it is at a very high risk for earthquakes.

One way of saving lives in case of a natural calamity is to reconnect with older methods of architecture and construction.

Uroosi, a Mughal-era home architectural element, is one such. Uroosis are wooden shutters used as partition walls within homes, instead of concrete walls.

Ehtisham Qalander, who runs a 39-year-old company called SQ that has been reviving waning techniques and craft in wood, sees the dreadful scenes from Turkey as an opportunity to alter the way of building in Kashmir. He hopes that people will go back to the traditional ways of home construction in the Valley. In the past year, he has constructed eight *Uroosis* and is raising awareness of its value on social media.

"Most indigenous techniques and elements of construction in Kashmir had greater utility than luxury. *Uroosi* is one such, where wooden shutters could be rolled up to make one room, or rolled down from hanging grooves in ceiling chambers, to partition the space into separate areas," Mr. Qalander said.



A five-storey house with extensive use of woodwork and wooden partition walls in Srinagar's Safa Kadal area. PEERZADA ASHIQ

Uroosi work includes octagonal and decagonal ornamental pillars too. Jalali House is a landmark in Srinagar that has this architectural element.

Uroosi is believed to be a Persian term meaning 'hidden bride'.

"The rolling down of planks with intricate carving is as mesmerizing as a bride's appearance during weddings," said Mr. Qalander, who graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, with a degree in polymer science and engineering.

His company is seeing an increasing number of projects, especially on the third and ground floor, as these are areas where people assemble. Those who commission them appreciate both its ornamental and practical value.

"The only difference is that earlier it was deodar pine wood that was used extensively and now it's walnut," Mr. Qalander added.

Context: A Mughal-era architectural feature called **Uroosi** is one of Kashmir's answers to the seismic threat it faces.

- **Devastating earthquake in Turkey** have brought back Srinagar's realisation that the city is on the National Center for **Seismology Zone-V,** meaning it is at a very high risk for earthquakes.

Uroosi

- Uroosi are **wooden shutters** used as partition walls within homes, instead of concrete walls.
- Uroosi is believed to be a Persian term meaning **'hidden bride'.**
- The rolling down of planks with intricate carving is as mesmerizing as a **bride's appearance during weddings.**
- The only difference between **ornamental and practical value** is that earlier it was deodar pine wood that was used extensively and now it's walnut.
- Architect traces the introduction of Uroosi in Kashmir to **Mughal emperor Shah Jahan** for the influence it still retains.
- It bears a resemblance to **Japan's houses** where wooden walls are used as partition walls.
- It has the ability to **absorb seismic shocks and withstand it**. These wooden walls also significantly reduce load on the structure.
- **Dhajji Diwari or 'patchwork quilt wall'** in Persian, is another indigenous technique of earthquake-resistant construction.
- A **criss-cross of thin timber frames** is filled with mud mortar, stone, and ballast, but this too is waning in Srinagar.

DTE FEB 20

JAPAN ARCHIPELAGO

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)

The Japanese archipelago now has double the islands from 1987; here is why

Digitalisation, inclusion of lake and riverine islands and the 2011 Tohoku quake, all could be reasons



Japan archipelago

- **About**: Japan is primarily **made up of four islands** known as the 'Home Islands' - **Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku.**
- **Locations**: In the north, Hokkaido is bounded by the Russian-administered Kuril islands while Kyushu is bordered by the Ryukyu group (Okinawa and other islands) that reach up to Taiwan.
- **Mythological facts**: According to the Japanese creation myth, the **Shinto gods Izanagi and Izanami** dipped a coral blade into the sea. When it came up, a few drops fell back and formed the Japanese archipelago.
- **Population**: While the country's population is concentrated in the four **'Home islands',** the sheer number of islands makes Japan the fourth-largest island nation globally.

Context: The **Japanese archipelago**, one of the world's prominent island groups that lies just off the coast of Eurasia, now has 14,125 islands, according to the Japanese government.

- The survey used the **definition of 'island'** as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- It states that an island is a "naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water, which is above water at high tide."

Reason behind the increase in the number of islands

- Globally, there are about **seven major tectonic plates**, which keep on moving.
  - They move away from each other, collide or slide past each other.
  - The consequence of these movements can be the appearance or disappearance of islands.
- When the **2004 Sumatra Earthquake** took place, the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago got almost a metre closer to India. The islands then drifted back but not to the same position.
- The counting of river and lake islands during the current recount could be one reason.
- The other could be the **2011 Tohoku Earthquake in Japan**. It could have removed or added small islands.
- Small pieces of land just above the **waterline** can show up as islands when one takes an electronic photograph from a satellite.
- With sea levels going up, many islands will disappear in due course of time.
- So if Japan were to do a recount some years down the line, the figure arrived at will be different.

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