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सत्यमेव जयते



MK Yadav Sir

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INDIA'S SOVEREIGN RATING

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

S&P Global Affirms India's BBB- Rating with Stable Outlook

'Sound economic fundamentals will be sufficient to offset govt's weak fiscal performance'

Our Bureau

New Delhi: S&P Global Ratings affirmed India's long-term 'BBB-' and A-3 short-term sovereign rating with a stable outlook, citing sound economic fundamentals that will underpin growth over the next 2-3 years.

The agency said India's sovereign credit ratings were anchored by its dynamic, fast-growing economy, strong external balance sheet, and democratic institutions supporting policy predictability and compromise.

"The stable rating outlook reflects our expectation that India's sound economic fundamentals will be sufficient to offset the government's weak fiscal performance, helping to sustain elevated government funding needs and a high-interest burden over the next 24 months," S&P Global said in a statement on Thursday.

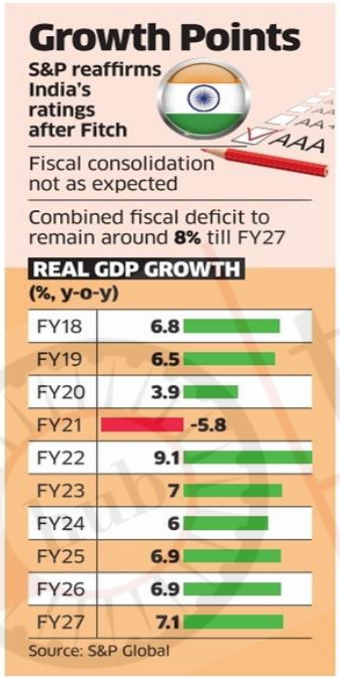
Last week Fitch Ratings also affirmed India's sovereign rating at 'BBB-' with a stable outlook.

S&P Global expects the Indian economy to grow at 6% in the current fiscal and accelerate to 6.9% over the next two years.

"Surging capital expenditure clude its monetary tightening campaign, and consider a moderately easier stance before the end of fiscal 2024," S&P Global said.

FISCAL AND EXTERNAL OUTLOOK

S&P sounded caution on the fiscal situation saying, "despite strong revenue gains, India's fiscal consolidation has trailed that of regional peers at a similar rating level."



Context: S&P Global Ratings affirmed **India's long-term 'BBB-' and A-3 short-term sovereign rating** with a stable outlook, citing sound economic fundamentals that will underpin growth over the next 2-3 years.

Key Points

- Recently, Fitch Ratings also affirmed **India's sovereign rating at 'BBB-'** with a stable outlook.
- India's sovereign credit ratings were anchored by its **dynamic, fast-growing economy, strong external balance sheet, and democratic institutions** supporting policy predictability and compromise.
- India's **sound economic fundamentals** will be sufficient to offset the government's weak fiscal performance, helping to sustain elevated government funding needs and a high-interest burden over the next 24 months.

Sovereign Credit Rating

- **About**: A sovereign credit rating is an **independent assessment** of the creditworthiness of a country or sovereign entity.
  - Sovereign credit ratings **take the overall economic conditions** of a country into account, including the **volume of foreign, public and private investment, capital market transparency, and foreign currency reserves.**
  - Sovereign credit ratings can **give investors insights** into the level of risk associated with investing in the debt of a particular country.
  - Some Credit Rating Agencies: **Moody's, S & P, Fitch etc.**
- **Strength of India's sovereign rating:**
  - Zero sovereign default history.
  - Extremely low foreign currency denominated debt of the sovereign.
  - Comfortable size of its foreign exchange reserves that can pay for the short term debt of the private sector as well as the entire stock of India's external debt including that of the private sector.
- **Regulating Authority**: All the credit rating agencies in India are regulated by **SEBI (Credit Rating Agencies) Regulations, 1999 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.**

LIVE MINT

Page 2

STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Infrastructure)

India to import 9 mn barrel of oil for its strategic reserve

Bloomberg
feedback@livemint.com

India is considering refilling its strategic hoard of crude oil, joining the US as the world's top guzzler begins to rebuild its depleted stockpiles after a period of drawdown.

India plans to import about 1.25 million tonnes (9.2 million barrels) of oil to fill empty reserves, said people with knowledge of the matter, who asked not to be identified as the information isn't public.

The grades and timing are still under discussion, one of the people said. It's unclear if India, which has emerged as a major buyer of Russian crude since the Ukraine invasion, will choose to buy cargoes from the OPEC+ producer, or its traditional suppliers in West Asia.

The US and India are making plans to beef up reserves—the back-up for emergencies such as acute global outages or price spikes—as benchmark prices trade near the lowest in more than a year. Brent is around 45% lower from its 2022 high as demand concerns hang over the market.

An oil ministry spokesman didn't immediately reply to phone call and text message seeking comments.



India allocated ₹5,000 cr in its budget earlier this year toward filling stockpiles. REUTERS

India plans to fill about one-quarter of its reserve spread across two sites in Visakhapatnam and Mangalore. India has strategic storage in three locations with capacity to hold about 5.33 million tonnes. The capacity is not much considering India imported 232.4 million tonnes crude in the year ended 31 March.

India allocated ₹5,000 crore in its budget earlier this year toward filling strategic stockpiles.

The International Energy Agency said in February that the funds could cover purchases of about 10 million barrels of Russian crude, or around 7 million barrels of non-sanctioned oil.

The country last added to its strategic stockpiles in 2020 after oil crashed due to Covid lockdowns, buying crude at an average price of $19 a barrel.

The South Asian nation initiated a plan early last year to allow local and foreign companies to lease space that could accommodate around 8 million barrels at two underground locations.

However, India's refiners were unwilling to pay what the government was asking to rent the space, one of the people said.

Discussions about leasing storage were also held with Saudi Aramco and Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. (Adnoc), but they didn't progress, according to Parliament documents.

Adnoc signed a deal in 2017 to lease some space, enough for almost 6 million barrels.

India is seeking to increase its reserve capacity by 6.5 million tonnes, but progress has been slow due to issues related with land acquisition.

Context: India **plans to import** about 1.25 million tonnes (9.2 million barrels) of oil to fill empty reserves.

- India is considering **refilling its strategic hoard of crude oil,** joining the US as the world's top guzzler begins to rebuild its depleted stockpiles after a period of drawdown.

Strategic petroleum reserves

- **About**: These are essentially **huge stockpiles of crude oil** to keep the wheels of the country running in crunch situations.
  - The **petroleum reserves are strategic** in nature and the crude oil stored in these reserves will be used during an oil shortage event, as and when declared so by the Government of India.
- **SPR programme**:
  - **First phase**: The Government through its special purpose vehicle, the **Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited (ISPRL),** has set up petroleum storage facilities with a total capacity of 5.33 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) at 3 locations, namely:
    - **Visakhapatnam (1.33 MMT)**
    - **Mangaluru (1.5 MMT)**
    - **Padur (2.5 MMT),** and all the storage facilities have been filled with crude oil.
  - **Second Phase**: The government has approved the setting up of two **additional commercial-cum-strategic facilities** with a total storage capacity of 6.5 MMT underground storage at Chandikhol (4 MMT) and Padur (2.5 MMT) in July 2021, on PPP Mode.



PIB MAY 19

SAGAR PARIKRAMA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Agriculture)

Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Shri Parshottam Rupala launches Sagar Parikrama Yatra Phase-V

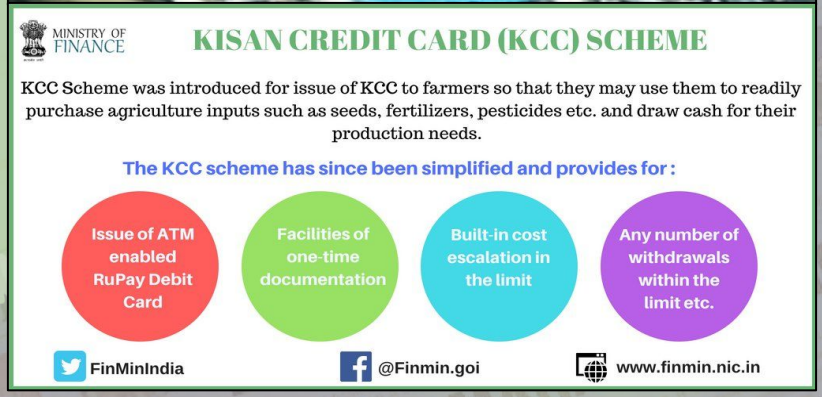
Context: The Union Minister of Fisheries launched the **Sagar Parikrama** Yatra Phase-V in Karanja, Raigad, Maharashtra.

- The Sagar Parikrama Yatra Phase-V would be proceeding towards coastal regions are like **Gateway of India, Karanja (Raigad District), Mirkarwada (Ratnagiri District), Devgad (Sindhudurg District), Malvan, Vasco, Mormugaon, Canacona (South Goa).**

Sagar Parikrama

- **About**: It is an initiative by Government of India, with an **aim to resolve the issues of the fishers,** other stakeholders and facilitate their economics upliftment through various fisheries schemes and programs being implemented by the Government of India such as Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) and Kisan Credit Card (KCC).
  - 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 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 P**hase –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.
  - **Phase III Program of 'Sagar Parikrama'** started on 19th Feb 2023 from Surat, Gujarat, and ended on 21st Feb 2023 at Sasson Dock, Mumbai.
  - **Phase IV program** started from Mormugao Port, Goa on 17th March 2023 and ended on 19th March 2023 in Mangalore.





INDIAN EXPRESS

Page 1

PORTFOLIO OF THE MINISTERS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Polity & Governance)

CABINET RESHUFFLE

After repeated swipes at SC, Rijiju is out of Law Ministry

Gets Earth Sciences; colleague Baghel moved to Health & Family Welfare

APURVA VISHWANATH & LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, MAY 18

KIREN RIJIJU who, as Union Law Minister, became the vocal face of what was seen as the Government's protracted push-back against the higher judiciary, was moved out of the Law Ministry Thursday and replaced by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and MoS Culture Arjun Ram Meghwal.

According to a communique issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan, Rijiju, 51, was allocated the Ministry of Earth Sciences portfolio. And hours after Meghwal was given independent charge of the Ministry of Law and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE STANDOFF



"A few retired judges... maybe three or four... part of that anti-India gang, they are trying to make judiciary play role of the opposition party... nobody will escape."
INDIA TODAY CONCLAVE
IN MARCH 2023

"...For judges, the public does not elect them, so they cannot change them. But the people are watching you. Your judgments, the way judges function..."
TISHAZARI BAR EVENT
IN JANUARY 2023

Context: Kiren Rijiju was **removed as Union Law Minister,** he has been replaced by Arjun Ram Meghwal.

- The President, as advised by Prime Minister, has allocated portfolios among ministers in the Union Council of Ministers.
- The portfolio of the Ministry of Earth Sciences be assigned to Kiren Rijiju.

Council of Ministers

- **Constitutional Provisions**: **Article 74 and Article 75 of the Indian Constitution** deal with the Council of Ministers.
  - **Article 74(1)** states that there shall be a Council of Ministers with a Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President. Thus, the **Indian Constitution itself recognizes a Council of Ministers.**
- **Origin**: **Indian Councils Act 1861** introduced the portfolio system.
  - **Lord Canning** was the Governor-General and Viceroy at the time
- **Key Features**: All ministers are **appointed by the President** on the advice of the Prime Minister.
  - The **President of India administers the oath** of office to the Council of Ministers.
  - They along with the Prime Minister of India **form 15% of the total strength** of the lower house i.e. Lok Sabha. (The number cannot exceed 15%)
  - **91st Amendment Act** provided for the disqualification of the minister when he stands disqualified as a member of Parliament.
  - A Minister c**eased to exist as one if he is not a member of either house** of Parliament for six consecutive months.
  - **Parliament decides the salary and allowances** of the council of ministers.
  - The Council is **collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha**.
- **Types of Ministers**: As per the Indian **constitution**, the **Ministers are not divided based on their ranks** but in practice in India. There are four types of Ministers:
  - Cabinet Ministers
  - Minister of State with independent charge
  - Minister of State
  - Deputy Minister
- **Powers of the Council of Ministers:**
  - Formulation of policies
  - Administering and Maintaining Public order
  - To aid and advice the President
  - Execution of laws and decisions passed by the Union Government

TIMES OF INDIA

Page 1

CWUR'S GLOBAL 2000 REPORT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Education)

29 of top 64 Indian varsities slip in this year's global rankings

Inadequate Funding Is Affecting Their Research Performance While Well-Funded Chinese Universities Are Climbing The Ladder Rapidly

Hemali.Chhapia
@timesgroup.com

The Center for World University Rankings (CWUR) – publisher of the largest academic ranking of global universities – has drawn attention to the rise of academia in China and inadequate research funding in India in its 2023 report.

Analysing 62 million outcome-based data points across 20,531 universities this year, it has based its findings on four factors: quality of education (25%), employability (25%), quality of faculty (10%), and research performance (40%).

The good news is that 64 Indian universities, led by the Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad, feature on the list. On the downside, Indian institutions are struggling to keep their place, just as up to 80% of American universities and 60% of those in the UK have slid from their ranks due to intensified global competition from well-funded institutions, particularly those in China.

INDIA'S TOP 10 IN 2023

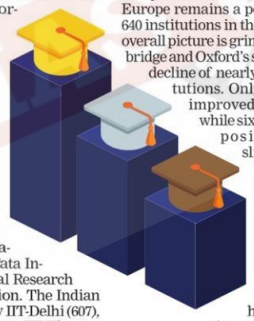
National Rank	Institution	Global Rank	Previous Global Rank	Score
1	Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad	▲ 419	421	75.2
2	Indian Institute of Science	▼ 494	491	74.3
3	Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay	▲ 554	564	73.7
4	Indian Institute of Technology-Madras	▼ 570	559	73.6
5	Tata Institute of Fundamental Research	▼ 580	563	73.5
6	Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi	▲ 607	608	73.2
7	University of Delhi	▼ 621	591	73.1
8	Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur	▲ 721	734	72.3
9	Panjab University	▼ 759	730	72.0
10	Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur	▲ 823	834	71.5

"Efforts must be made to ensure that India attracts top academics and students, that increasing enrolment numbers at universities come alongside increases in teaching capacity, and that tertiary education expenditure as a percentage of the national GDP steadily grows in the years to come. —Nadim Mahassen, CWUR president

Mixed Bag For India

In CWUR's 'Global 2000' report, 32 universities from India improved from last year and three kept their places, but 29 dropped in the rankings. Not a single Indian university is among the top 10 in Asia. The main factor for the decline of nearly half of the Indian universities is research performance amid intensified global competition from well-funded institutions.

While IIM-A rose two spots to 419th place, it declined in the quality of education indicator. Indian Institute of Science fell three spots to 491, while Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay climbed 10 spots to 554th, ahead of IIT-Madras at number 570. Tata Institute of Fundamental Research was at the 580th position. The Indian top 10 is rounded off by IIT-Delhi (607), University of Delhi (621), IIT-Kharagpur (721), Panjab University (759), and IIT-Kanpur (823).



most represented country with 332 institutions – three less than last year. Canada has 40 institutions in the table, led by the University of Toronto at number 23.

Europe Loses Ground

Europe remains a power player with 640 institutions in the top 2000, but the overall picture is grim. In the UK, Cambridge and Oxford's success masks the decline of nearly 60% of the institutions. Only 32 universities improved from last year, while six maintained their positions and 55 slipped. Of Russell Group's 24 research-intensive universities, six rank higher than last year, four have maintained their spots, and 14 rank lower. Overall, the UK has 93 representatives – one less than last year – in the Global 2000.

France has five universities in the top 50 – two less than the UK. The top moving up, two maintaining their positions, and 27 falling in the rankings. The top Russian university this year is Moscow State University, ranking 217th worldwide.

The top 10 universities in Europe this year are: Cambridge (UK, 4th), Oxford (UK, 5th), UCL (UK, 19th), PSL (France, 21st), Imperial College (UK, 29th), ETH Zurich (Switzerland, 30th), Paris Saclay (France, 32nd), Copenhagen (Denmark, 35th), Karolinska Institute (Sweden, 38th), and Paris City University (France, 39th).

Japan Leads Asia

It is a mixed picture for Asia. China's rapid rise in the standings is due to the country's continued investment in higher education, especially under the Double First-Class University Plan. Ninety-six percent of Chinese universities rank better than last year, led by Tsinghua University at number 44. All nine institutions of the C9 League, the Chinese version of the US Ivy League, saw improvements this year. In total, China has 314 representatives among the world's top 2,000 universities, up from 302 a year ago. While the University of Tokyo is still Asia's highest

Context: The **Center for World University Rankings (CWUR)** – publisher of the largest academic ranking of global universities - has drawn attention to the rise of academia in China and inadequate research funding in India in its 2023 report.

India's Performance

- In CWUR's 'Global 2000' report, **32 universities from India improved** from last year and three kept their places, but 29 dropped in the rankings. Not a single Indian university is among the top 10 in Asia.
- The main factor for the decline of nearly half of the Indian universities is **research performance amid intensified global competition** from well-funded institutions.
- While IIM-A rose two spots to 419th place, it declined in the quality of education indicator. Indian Institute of Science fell three spots to 4 91, while **Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay** climbed 10 spots to 554th, ahead of IIT-Madras at number 570.
- **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research** was at the 580th position.
- The **Indian top 10** is rounded off by IIT-Delhi (607), University of Delhi (621), IIT-Kharagpur (721), Panjab University (759), and IIT-Kanpur (823).

Center for World University Rankings

- **About**: It is **based in the United Arab Emirates and publishes global university rankings** measuring the quality of education and training for students as well as the prestige of the faculty members and the quality of their research. Samplings do not come from surveys and university data submissions.
- **Mechanism**: Instead, the rankings rely more on **outcome-based samplings,** coupled with a Subject ranking in 227 subject categories.
    - The Subject portion of the ranking is **based on the number of research articles** in top-tier journals with data obtained from Clarivate Analytics.
    - In the United States, the CWUR evaluates and ranks over 1,300 universities and 2,000 worldwide.

BUSINESS STANDARD

Page 4

SENIOR CITIZEN SAVINGS SCHEME

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Social Justice)

Senior citizens scheme sees investment of over ₹10K cr in April

ARUP ROYCHOUDHURY
New Delhi, 18 May

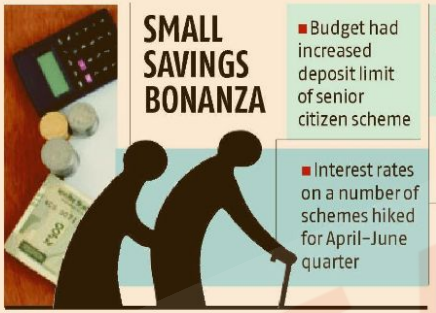
The government's decision to expand the upper limit of the Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS) and hike the interest rate appears to have worked, with the scheme having garnered upwards of ₹10,000 crore in April, Business Standard has learnt. This is more than three times the amount the scheme received in previous years.

"We are seeing a bonanza and have got a very good report in the first month of the expanded senior citizen scheme. It was in excess of ₹10,000 crore. Normally in the past, for the first month, we have had around ₹3,000 crore," a top official said.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech increased the maximum deposit limit for SCSS to ₹30 lakh from ₹15 lakh and for Monthly Income Account Scheme to ₹9 lakh from ₹4.5 lakh for single accounts and to ₹15 lakh from ₹9 lakh for joint accounts.

She had also announced a one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, that would be made available for a two-year period up to March 2025. "This will offer deposit facility upto ₹2 lakh in the name of women or girls for a tenor of 2 years at fixed interest rate of 7.5 per cent with partial withdrawal option."

Additionally, the Centre hiked the interest rate for a number of small savings schemes for the June quarter. The interest rate for SCSS was increased to 8.2 per cent from 8 per cent, and that of the monthly income scheme was increased to 7.4 per cent from 7.1 per cent.



The official quoted above said that data was still awaited on the performance of the monthly income account scheme, but the response was expected to be good. "We are also telling the banks to operationalise the Mahila Samman scheme as quickly as possible. The post offices have already operationalised it," the person said.

The official added that there are always more new investments by citizens in small savings schemes at the beginning of a financial year. One can always argue that ₹10,000 crore may not be had in the subsequent months. But whatever we get, it should be healthy figures," the official said. A good inflow of investment into the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF) bodes well for the Centre as it is the second largest source of financing the fiscal deficit, the shortfall between the sovereign's revenue and expenditure. The largest source of financing the deficit is the amount the centre borrows from the debt markets. The net market borrowing for FY24 stands at ₹11.88 trillion.

For the NSSF, the Centre expects net receipts — or the amount out of the total NSSF corpus that will be used to finance the deficit — of ₹4.71 trillion, as per Budget documents. "We expect to meet that target," the official said. The opening balance of NSSF, as on April 1, was ₹27.69 trillion. Top officials including Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth have said that the Centre is unlikely to increase its borrowing plans for the current fiscal year, thus expressing confidence that the fiscal deficit target of 5.9 per cent of GDP will be met, in spite of global macroeconomic headwinds.

Context: The government's decision to expand the upper limit of the **Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS)** and hike the interest rate appears to have worked, with the scheme having garnered upwards of ₹ 10,000 crore in April.

- This is more than three times the amount the scheme received in previous years.
- Union Finance Minister in her Budget speech **increased the maximum deposit limit for SCSS** to ₹ 30 lakh from ₹ 15 lakh and for Monthly Income Account Scheme to ₹ 9 lakh from ₹ 4.5 lakh for single accounts and to ₹ 15 lakh from ₹ 9 lakh for joint accounts.

Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS)

- **About**: SCSS was launched with the main aim of **providing senior citizens in India a regular income** after they attain the age of 60 years old.
- **Eligibility**:
  - Indian citizens **above the age of 60 years.**
  - Retirees in the **age bracket of 55-60 years** who have opted for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) or Superannuation.
  - Retired defence personnel **above 50 years and below 60 years of age.**
- **Maturity**: It has a maturity period of **five years**. But, a depositor can extend one's maturity period for another three years.
- **Number of accounts**: **Individuals** are allowed to operate more than one account by themselves or open a joint account with their spouse.
- **Deposit Limits:** Eligible investors can make a **lump sum deposit.**
- **Minimum Deposit**: Rs. 1,000 (and in multiples thereof)
- **Maximum Deposit**: Rs. 15 Lakh or the amount received on retirement, whichever is lower(**Increased to Rs 30 lakh in Budget 2023)**.
- **Interest Payment**: Under SCSS, the interest amount is paid to the account holders **quarterly**.
- **Premature withdrawal:** After one year of opening the account, **premature withdrawal is allowed.**
  - Deposits in SCSS qualify for deduction u/s 80C of Income Tax Act.

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MAY 19

GHARIALS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)



Context: The **World Wildlife Fund**-Pakistan (WWF-Pakistan) confirmed reports of gharials being present **(Gavialis gangeticus)** in Punjab, the country's most populous province.

- The confirmation means the **crocodilian** unique to the Indian subcontinent is now back in an area from which it was once extirpated.
- There had been unconfirmed sightings of gharials in **Okara (near the Ravi river) and Head Sulemanki (on the Satluj river, just two kilometres from the Indian border)** nearly a year ago.

Gharials

- **About**: Gharials are a type of **Asian crocodilian** distinguished by their long, thin snouts.
  - Crocodilians are a group of reptiles that includes **crocodiles, alligators, caimans, and more.**
- **India has three species of Crocodilians namely:**
  - **Gharial**: IUCN Red List- Critically Endangered
  - **Mugger crocodile**: IUCN- Vulnerable.
  - **Saltwater crocodile:** IUCN- Least Concern.
    - All the three are **listed on Appendix I of CITES** and Schedule I of the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.**
    - However, **Saltwater Crocodile populations** of Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea are included in Appendix II of CITES.
- **Habitats include**: Fresh waters of the northern India - **Chambal river, Ghagra, Gandak river and the Sone river (Bihar).**
  - Population of Gharials is a **good indicator of clean river water.**
- **Conservation Efforts:** Breeding Centres of Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, National Chambal Sanctuary (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).

World Wildlife Fund

- **About**: It is an **international non-profit organization** dedicated to the preservation and conservation of nature and its different species.
  - Founded on 29th April 1961.
  - Its precursor organisation was the **Conservation Foundation.**
  - WWF **Logo is the Panda.**
- **Campaigns launched by WWF**: Earth Hour and Debt-for-Nature Swap.
- **Report and Index**: **Living Planet Report** (started in 1998) is published by the WWF every two years.
  - It is based on the **Living Planet Index** which is a measure of the state of the world's biological diversity based on population trends of vertebrate species in terrestrial, freshwater, and marine habitats.
- **WWF India**: Established as a **Charitable Trust** on 27 November, 1969, WWF India set out with the aim of reducing the degradation of Earth's natural environment and building a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

THE HINDU

Page 14

ROHINGYA REFUGEE STATUS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Population & Associated Issues)

'Rohingya refugees in India under arbitrary detention, denied exit permissions'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India is not allowing exit permissions for Rohingya refugees who have completed refugee status determinations with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and "gained approval from third countries for resettlement", says a new report titled "A shadow of refuge: Rohingya refugees in India".

The report, jointly prepared by The Azadi Project, a women's rights non-profit, and Refugees International, an international NGO that advocates for the rights of stateless people, was released in New Delhi on Thursday.

The report notes that "instead of refusing exit visas, India can help facilitate more resettlement opportunities" by advocating for resettlement in ally countries and other European nations at forums such as the G-20 summit. On the one hand, they are disallowed from leaving when they get a chance to resettle in another country; on the other, the Rohingya in India are vilified as "illegal migrants", face growing "anti-Muslim and anti-refugee xenophobia", and live under constant fear of being deported back to Myanmar.

The report urges India to recognise the Rohingya as 'refugees with a right to asylum'

Among the biggest challenges faced by Rohingya refugees in India, who number at least 20,000, is arbitrary detention. Once picked up, they are held in "holding centres" where conditions are "deplorable", the study says.

Fear of deportation

Actual and threatened deportations have also fostered a sense of fear within the Rohingya community, prompting some to return to camps in Bangladesh. Though the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the International Genocide Convention obligate India not to return the Rohingya to Myanmar, "the Supreme Court accepted the government's arguments that the Rohingya were a threat to national security and refuses to stop deportation", the report noted.

The report details the harsh living conditions of the Rohingya in slum-like settlements with no safe running water or toilets, and no access to basic healthcare, education for children, or employment opportunities.

While earlier the UNHCR cards had provided access to some level of education and livelihoods, and to protection from detention and deportation, now the government has taken a stand that "UNHCR refugee status without valid travel documents is of no consequence in India".

The report also sets out several recommendations. Firstly, it urges India to formally recognise the Rohingya in India as "refugees with a right to asylum rather than as illegal migrants".

Short of this, the least that India could do is "a simple acknowledgement of residency" by recognising UNHCR cards as "sufficient for accessing basic education, work, and health services or provision of Aadhaar cards to refugees as proof of residency".

Context: India is not allowing exit permissions for **Rohingya refugees** who have completed refugee status determinations with the **UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** and "gained approval from third countries for resettlement," says a new report titled 'A Shadow of Refuge: Rohingya Refugees in India'.

- The report, jointly prepared by The **Azadi Project,** a women's rights non-profit and Refugees International, an international NGO that advocates for the rights of stateless people.

Recommendations in the report

- It urges India to **formally recognise the Rohingya** in India as "refugees with a right to asylum rather than as illegal migrants".
- To make this happen, India needs to sign the **Refugee Convention** and establish a domestic law on refugees and asylum.
- India could do is "a simple acknowledgement of residency" by **recognising UNHCR cards** as "sufficient for accessing basic education, work, and health services or provision of Aadhaar cards to refugees as proof of residency."

Rohingyas

- **About**: Rohingya, an ethnic group**, mostly Muslim**, hail from the Rakhine province of **western Myanmar and speak a Bengali dialect.**
  - **Myanmar has classified them as** "resident foreigners" or "associate citizens.
  - They were forced to **leave Myanmar i**n large numbers after several waves of violence, which first began in 2012.
  - The Rohingya first came to Delhi in 2012.
- **India's stand on refugees**: India is **not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention** relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol.
  - **All foreign undocumented nationals are governed as per:**
    - The Foreigners Act, 1946
    - The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939
    - The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920
    - The Citizenship Act, 1955.

DTE

MAY 19

JALLIKATTU

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Art & Culture)



Jallikattu, Kambala can go on in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, rules Supreme Court

Apex court upheld constitutional validity of amendments by 3 states to animal cruelty act

NEXT NEWS >

By Rajat Ghai
Published: Thursday 18 May 2023

Context: The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of amendments made to the Prevention of Cruelty To Animals Act by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra to allow cultural events such as **Jallikattu, Kambala and bullock-cart racing.**

Highlights of the judgement

- The amendments had been passed by the state governments after the apex court had banned Jallikattu and similar activities in 2014 in the case **Animal Welfare Board of India vs A Nagaraja & Ors.**
- The bench held that these amendments were not a **"colourable piece of legislation".**
- The state legislature had the legislative power to make these amendments in accordance with **Entry 17 to List III of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution.**
- It added that the laws provided enough safeguards against the infliction of cruelty to animals and punishments.
- It refrained from saying whether Jallikattu was a part of cultural heritage under **Article 29 of the Indian Constitution and deserved protection.**

Jallikattu

- **About**: A **tradition over 2,000 years old**, Jallikattu is a **competitive sport** as well as an event to honour bull owners who rear them for mating.
  - Jallikattu is **celebrated in the second week of January,** during the **Tamil harvest festival, Pongal.**
- **Jallikattu belt:** The bull-taming sport is **popular in Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Theni, Pudukkottai and Dindigul** districts - known as the Jallikattu belt.
  - It is a violent sport in which **contestants try to tame a bull for a prize**; if they fail, the bull owner wins the prize.
- **Significance**: Jallikattu is considered a traditional way for the peasant community to **preserve their pure-breed native bulls.**
  - **Kangayam, Pulikulam, Umbalachery, Barugur and Malai Maadu** are among the popular native cattle breeds used for Jallikattu.
- **Prizes**: A **dhoti, a towel, betel leaves, bananas and a cash prize of Rs 101.** Over the last two decades, the prizes have included grinders, a fridge and small furniture.
- **Other states status:** Except in **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**, where bull-taming and racing continue to be organised, these sports **remain banned in all other states** including Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra due to the 2014 ban order from the Supreme Court.

Legal Aspects

- **Legal scrutiny**: Jallikattu first came under legal scrutiny in 2007 when the **Animal Welfare Board of India and the animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)** moved petitions in the Supreme Court against Jallikattu as well as bullock cart races.
- **Ban in the state:** The Tamil Nadu government worked its way out of the **ban by passing a law in 2009,** which was signed by the Governor.
- **Prohibition**: In 2011, the Central government added bulls to the **list of animals whose training and exhibition is prohibited.**
- **SC Judgement:** In May 2014, the Supreme Court **banned the bull-taming sport,** ruling on a petition that cited the 2011 notification.
- **Lifted the ban:** In 2017, the Tamil Nadu government released an ordinance amending the central Act and **allowing Jallikattu in the state**; this was later ratified by the President.

PIB

MAY 19

PRADHAN MANTRI SANGRAHALAYA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Art & Culture)

PM shares article by Union Minister Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey about Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya

Context: The Prime Minister has shared an article by Union Minister about **Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya.**

Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya

- **About**: Prime Minister inaugurated the **Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya in New Delhi on April 14, 2022.**
  - The Sangrahalaya, located at the **iconic Teen Murti complex,** was inaugurated as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav - a 75-week celebration launched to mark 75 years of Independence.
- **Key Features:**
  - The museum building integrates the Teen Murti Bhawan in New Delhi, **designated as Block I, with the newly-constructed Block II.**
  - The total area of the two blocks is over **15,600 square metres.**
  - There are **43 galleries** in the Sangrahalaya.
  - The **logo of the Sangrahalaya,** meanwhile, shows hands holding the dharma chakra, symbolising the nation and democracy.
  - The museum design incorporates **sustainable and energy conservation practices** and no tree was felled or transplanted during the course of work on the project.
  - The museum has a **capacity of about 4,000.**
  - For Indians, an entry ticket will cost ₹100 through online booking and ₹110 for offline.
  - Foreigners will be charged ₹750.
- **On display:**
  - **From the freedom struggle to the framing of the Constitution**, the museum will have displays that showcase stories of how the respective Prime Ministers steered the nation.
  - Personal items, gifts and memorabilia like medals, **commemorative stamps, speeches of PMs and anecdotal representations** of ideologies will be on display at the museum.
  - The **families of the former Prime Ministers** were contacted for information about them.
  - The Sangrahalaya will also include the **Nehru Museum.** It has been upgraded with a technologically advanced display to showcase the life and contributions of the country's first PM, Jawaharlal Nehru.
  - Several **gifts received by him** from all over the world are on display for the first time.
  - The Sangrahalaya will **use holograms, virtual reality, augmented reality, multi-touch, multimedia, interactive kiosks**, computerised kinetic sculptures, smartphone applications, interactive screens, experiential installations etc, to make the exhibition content interactive.
  - Content displayed at the museum has been collated from information collected from **Prasar Bharti, Doordarshan, Film Division, Sansad TV, Ministry of Defence, and Indian and foreign media houses.**

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