

## 1. Red Fort

### Why in News?

- The Delhi High Court recently dismissed a petition filed by the widow of late Mirza Mohammed Bedar Bakht, great-grandson of last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, to hand over the possession of Red Fort to her.

### About:

- Red fort fuses architectural styles of the Timurids and the Persians.
- Red Fort has many structures that serve as fine examples of Islamic architectural style and Mughal architecture.
- Built By: Shah Jahan
- Architect: Ustad Ahmad Lahauri
- Architectural styles: Mughal, Indo-Islamic
- Current Status: UNESCO World Heritage Site On the Banks of River Yamuna,
- The Red Fort is known for its gardens and a water channel called The Stream of Paradise.

## 2. Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo

### Why in News?

- The Prime Minister of India has been recently conferred by Bhutan's highest civilian award, 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo' also known as "Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo".

### Highlights:

- The Announcement of the award coincided with the occasion of the 114th National Day of Bhutan.
- This is the highest decoration of Bhutan and is awarded in recognition of a lifetime of service to the people and the Kingdom of Bhutan.
- Order of the Dragon King was founded on 7th November 2008, to reward those who devoted a lifetime of service to the nation and people of Bhutan.
- The honours exist in two categories. Order of the Dragon King is the pinnacle of the honour system in Bhutan and also takes precedence over all other orders, medals and Decorations

### Other Recent Awards Won by our PM:

- **First Philip Kotler Presidential award (2019):** Offered to the leader of a nation.

- **Global Goalkeeper Award:** Honour by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (2019)
- Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award (2021): Awarded by the Cambridge Energy Research Associates CERA for commitment of leadership towards the future of Global Energy and the Environment.

### **3. Indian Desert Cat**

#### **Why in News?**

- An Indian Desert Cat has recently been spotted for the first time in Madhya Pradesh's Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR).



#### **Highlights**

- The Indian Desert Cat is also known as the Asiatic Wildcat or the Asian Steppe Wildcat.
- It's Scientific Name is *Felis silvestris Ornata*
- It is usually a creature of the Thar desert in Rajasthan, and inhabits scrub desert areas.
- The cat occurs in arid and semi-arid zones of western India which includes Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra up to Pune and Nagpur.
- This cat is found in deserts and can survive without water.
- The toes of the species have cushion-like hair which help it balance the fluctuating desert temperatures.
- It can be found mostly in scrub deserts, up to 2,000-3,000 m elevation, mountainous areas with sufficient vegetation, as well as temperate forests.
- The Asiatic wildcat usually occurs close to water sources but can also live in low-water areas. It does not seem to avoid cultivated areas and human settlements.
- It avoids vast deserts, dense forests and deep snow
- It possesses beautiful soft fur, hence, most sought after in the international fur trade.
- Hybridisation with domestic cats can lead to the loss of genetic information and is thought to be one of the main threats. Hybridisation was reported from Pakistan and Central Asia and is most likely also a problem in India.

- Another important threat is from poaching related to conflict with humans.
- Habitat destruction and reduced habitat quality remain important issues. The Asiatic wildcat is under heavy pressure due to land use changes.
- Rodenticides and other chemicals may also threaten it.
- It's Protection Status are IUCN Red List: Least Concern, CITES: Appendix-II and Wildlife protection Act's: Schedule-I.

#### **4. Breastfeeding Friendly Hospitals**

##### **Why in News?**

- The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) has recently launched the National Accreditation Centre (NAC) for Breastfeeding Friendly Hospitals.

##### **Highlights:**

- BPNI is a 30-year-old organisation for protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding in India, is a national organisation that works towards protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding of infants & young children.
- It is a new initiative where hospitals across the country will be certified as Breastfeeding Friendly.
- The move came in the wake of the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS) showing a further increase in caesarean deliveries.
- A caesarean delivery, also called a C-section, is a surgical procedure performed when a vaginal delivery is not possible or safe. During this procedure, the baby is delivered through surgical incisions made in the abdomen and the uterus.
- The objective is to assess the hospitals on policy, programmes and practises.
- It will help in reducing neonatal mortality and will impact our Infant Mortality Rate (IMR).
- Neonatal mortality is defined as death within the first 28 days of life.
- It is optimal for both mothers and babies. It can protect babies against infections and reduce the rates of later health problems like diabetes, obesity, and asthma.
- The protein present in breast milk is easily digested by the baby rather than in formula or cow's milk. Also, calcium and iron present in breast milk are more easily Absorbed.

- It is said that for mothers, breastfeeding helps the uterus to contract and bleeding to cease more quickly after delivery. Also, it reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer and helps to generate a great bond for Mothers with their Babies.
- Going by Approximately 24.5 million births annually, 14.2 million are deprived of the mother's milk and its benefits to the new-born and moms, violating the human rights of Mother and Child.

## **5. Can India become a technology leader?**

### **Why in News?**

- Every time a technology giant chooses an India-born techie as its leader, there is a justifiable swelling of pride in the country, but also some disappointment.

### **Why is India still not a Major Player in Technology?**

- The popular narrative is that India's failures are linked to its inability to make use of market-driven Growth Opportunities.
- Indeed, as of 2019, there were 2.7 million Indian immigrants in the U.S.
- They are among the most educated and professionally accomplished communities in that country.

### **Role of the state:**

- An invisible hand of the Government has been there to prop up each of the so-called triumphs of enterprise and the free market.
- Introduction of new generation technologies: Research by Mariana Mazzucato shows that the state has been crucial to the introduction of the new generation of technologies, including the computers, the Internet, and the nanotech industry.
- Public funding: Public sector funding developed the algorithm that eventually led to Google's success and helped discover the molecular antibodies that provided the Foundation for Biotechnology.
- The role of the government has been even more prominent in shaping the economic Growth of China, which is racing with the U.S. for supremacy in technology.
- Even while being hailed as the 'factory of the world', China had been stuck at the low value-adding segments of the global production networks, earning only a fraction of the price of the Goods it Manufactured.

- However, as part of a 2011 Government plan, it has made successful forays into ‘new strategic industries’ such as alternative fuel cars and renewable energy.
- China’s achievements came not because it turned ‘capitalist’, but instead by combining the strengths of the public sector, markets and globalisation.
- China’s state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were seen as inefficient and bureaucratic.
- However, rather than privatising them or letting them weaken with neglect, the Chinese state restructured the SOEs.
- On the other, SOEs strengthened their presence in strategically important sectors such as petrochemicals and telecommunication as well as in technologically dynamic industries such as electronics and machinery.

### What went Wrong in India’s Case?

- When India Inaugurated planning and industrialisation in the early 1950s.
- Public sector funding of the latest technologies of the time including space and atomic research and the establishment of institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) were among the hallmarks of that Effort.
- Many of these Institutions have over the years attained world-class standards.
- The growth of information technology and pharmaceutical industries has been the fastest in Bengaluru and Hyderabad.
- **Poor Education:** However, the roadblocks to progress have been many, including India’s Poor Achievements in school education.
- Missed opportunity to strengthen technological capabilities: In 1991, when India embraced markets and globalisation, it should have redoubled efforts to strengthen its technological capabilities.
- Low spending on research and development: Instead, the spending on research and development as a proportion of GDP declined in India from 0.85% in 1990-91 to 0.65% in 2018.
- In contrast, this proportion increased over the years in China and South Korea to reach 2.1% and 4.5%, respectively, by 2018.

### Positives for India:

- Higher enrollment for tertiary education: The number of persons enrolled for tertiary education in India (35.2 million in 2019) is way ahead of the corresponding numbers in all other countries except China.

- More graduates from STEM: Further, graduates from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programmes as a proportion of all graduates was 32.2% for India in 2019, one of the highest among all countries (UNESCO data).

### Way Forward:

- Increase spending on education: India needs to sharply increase its public spending to improve the quality of and access to higher education.
- An overwhelming proportion of tertiary students in India are enrolled in private institutions: it was 60% for those enrolled for a bachelor's degree in 2017, while the average for G20 countries was 33%, according to OECD.
- Improve technological capabilities: The 'Make in India' initiative will have to go beyond increasing the 'ease of business' for private industry.
- Indian industry needs to deepen and broaden its technological capabilities.
- India — which will soon have twice the number of Internet users as in the U.S. — is a large market for all kinds of new technologies.
- While this presents a huge opportunity, the domestic industry has not yet managed to derive the benefits.
- This will happen only if universities and public institutions in the country are strengthened and emboldened to enter areas of technology development for which the private sector may have neither the resources nor the patience.
- Strengthen the public sector: PSUs should be valued for their potential long-term contributions to economic growth, the technologies they can create, and the strategic and Knowledge assets they can build.
- A strengthened public sector will create more opportunities for private businesses and widen the entrepreneurial base. Small and medium entrepreneurs will flourish when there are mechanisms for the diffusion of publicly created technologies, along with greater availability of bank credit and other forms of Assistance.

## 6. MSP for all crops is Fiscally Unfeasible

### Why in News?

- Many political parties are demanding to make the minimum support prices (MSP) a legal instrument.

### Background of MSP:

- MSP regime had its genesis in 1965 when India was hugely short of basic staples and living in a “ship-to-mouth” situation.
- **Indicative Price:** It was an indicative price (not a legal price) and procurement of rice and wheat was done to support farmers when they were adopting new seeds (HYV technology) and domestic procurement was to feed the PDS.
- The government declares MSP for 23 crops: Seven cereals (paddy, wheat, maize, bajra, sorghum, ragi and barley), five pulses (tur, moong, chana, urad and masur), seven oilseeds (soybean, groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, sesamum, safflower, sunflower and nigerseed) and four commercial crops (sugarcane, cotton, jute and copra).

### Need to Rethink Procurement Policy:

- But now with granaries overflowing with rice and wheat, there is a need to rethink and redesign the procurement policy.
- In the crop year 2020-21, about 60 million metric tonnes (MMTs) of rice and 43 MMTs of wheat were procured by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and NAFED procured about 0.66 MMTs of pulses.

### The Increasing Cost of PDS:

- The main procurement by the government happens largely for rice and wheat to feed the public distribution system (PDS).
- The PDS issue prices of rice and wheat are subsidised by more than 90 per cent of their economic cost to the government.
- In 2020-21, the food subsidy bill was almost 30 per cent of the net tax revenue of the central government, reflecting clearly a huge consumer-bias in the system.
- Way forward: Unless this PDS is reformed either by restricting this to say the bottom 30 per cent of the population, or raising the issue prices to say half the economic cost of rice and wheat, giving a better deal to farmers is likely to blow up the fiscal position of the Central Government.

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### **The Cost of Legal MSP:**

- Assuming that only 10 per cent of the production of remaining crops (excluding sugarcane) is procured, it will cost the government about Rs 5.4 lakh crore annually to procure these other MSP crops.
- This cost is estimated on the basis of economic costs of operation that are usually about 30 per cent higher than the MSP (in case of rice and wheat it is 40 per cent).
- But it appears that despite this, market prices may stay below MSP, especially during the harvest time.
- It also raises the question why only these MSP crops, why not other agri-produce, say milk, the value of which is more than the value of rice, wheat and sugarcane combined.

### **Way Forward:**

- **PDP:** One may use price deficiency payments (PDP), implying that the government pays to farmers the gap between the market price and MSP, whenever market prices are below MSP.
- **Income support instead of Price Support:** It may be better to use an income policy on a per hectare basis to directly transfer money into farmers' accounts without distorting markets through higher MSPs or PDPs.

