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## Internal & Extra Budgetary Resources

- IEBR is an important part of the Central plan of the Government of India and constitutes the resources raised by the PSUs through profits, loans, and equity.
- The global economic slowdown has affected the profits of the PSUs and has hampered their resource generation capacities.
- In 2009-10 the Total Central Plan Outlay was Rs.406, 912 crores. It consisted of the Gross Budget Support (GBS) for the Central Plan to the tune of 218,901 crores (53.8%) and IEBR of Central Public Sector Units (CPSUs) to the tune of 188,011 crores (46.2%).
- The share of government support for the Central Plan Outlay for 2011-12 continues to be high at 56.6% while the increase in IEBR has been marginal due to the global economic slowdown.

## Special Drawing Right (SDR)

- **Supplementary Foreign Exchange Reserves** are defined and maintained by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and are known as **Special Drawing Rights (SDR)**.
- The Special Drawing Right (SDR) is an interest-bearing international reserve asset created by the IMF in 1969 to supplement other reserve assets of member countries.
- The **SDR is based on a basket of international currencies comprising the U.S. dollar, Japanese yen, euro, pound sterling, and Chinese Renminbi.**
- It is not a currency, nor a claim on the IMF, but is potentially a claim on freely usable currencies of IMF members.
- The value of the SDR is not directly determined by supply and demand in the market but is set daily by the IMF on the basis of market exchange rates between the currencies included in the SDR basket.



- It can be held and used by member countries, the IMF, and certain designated official entities called "prescribed holders"—but it cannot be held, for example, by private entities or individuals. Its status as a reserve asset derives from the commitments of members to hold, accept, and honor obligations denominated in SDR.
- The SDR also serves as the unit of account of the IMF and some other international organizations.

## Off – Budget Borrowing

- Off-budget borrowings are loans that are taken not by the Centre directly, but by another public institution that borrows in the direction of the central government.
- **Such borrowings are used to fulfill the government's expenditure needs.**
- But since the liability of the loan is not formally on the Centre, the loan is not included in the national fiscal deficit.
- This helps keep the country's fiscal deficit within acceptable limits.
- The most sought after detail in the Budget is the level of fiscal deficit, which is keenly watched by rating agencies, both inside and outside the country.
- This number is the most important metric to understand the financial health of any government's finances.
- This is why most governments want to restrict their fiscal deficit to a respectable number.
- One of the ways to do this is by resorting to "off-budget borrowings".
- Public sector banks are also used to fund off-budget expenses. For example, loans from PSU banks were used to make up for the shortfall in the release of fertilizer subsidies.

## Preferential Trade Agreement

- This is the term used in the **WTO for trade preferences, such as lower or zero tariffs**, which a member may offer to a trade partner unilaterally.

- These include the **Generalized System of Preferences schemes**, under which developed countries grant preferential tariffs to imports from developing countries.
- In this type of agreement, two or more partners give preferential right of entry to certain products.
- This is done by reducing duties on an agreed number of tariff lines.
- Here a positive list is maintained i.e. the list of the products on which the two partners have agreed to provide preferential access.
- Tariffs may even be reduced to zero for some products even in a PTA. India signed a PTA with Afghanistan.

## Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs)

- It is a mechanism that allows a set quantity of specific products to be imported at a low or zero rate of duty.
- They are established under trade agreements between countries. The TRQ commitment does not apply any limits on the quantity of imports of a product.
- The commerce ministry's arm Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has introduced an online system for traders who seek tariff rate quota (TRQ) for imports, a move aimed at promoting ease of doing business in the country.
- The TRQ is a mechanism that allows the import of a set quantity of specific products.
- Tariff quotas are used on a wide range of products but most are in the agriculture sector. Cereals, meat, fruit and vegetables, and dairy products are the most common, and sugar is also protected in most producing countries.

## Tokenization

- Tokenization refers to the **replacement of actual card details with a unique alternate code called the 'token'**, which is unique for a combination of card, token requestor (i.e. the entity which accepts a request from the customer for

tokenization of a card and passes it on to the card network to issue a corresponding token) and identified device.

- Normally, in a tokenized card transaction, parties/stakeholders involved are merchants, the merchant's acquirer, card payment network, token requestor, issuer and customer.
- However, an entity, other than those indicated, may also participate in the transaction.
- It aims at improving the safety and security of the payment system.
- The Reserve Bank had earlier permitted 'tokenization' services, under which a unique alternate code is generated for transaction purposes, on mobile phones and tablets of cardholders.
- **RBI had issued guidelines on "Tokenization – Card transactions" in 2019**, permitting authorised card networks to offer card tokenization services to any token requestor, subject to conditions.
- Prior to the latest circular, the facility was available only for mobile phones and tablets of interested cardholders.
- A tokenized card transaction is considered safer as the actual card details are not shared with the merchant during transaction processing.

## Akash Prime

- The **Defence Research and Development (DRDO)** tested a new version of the Akash Missile – 'Akash Prime' – from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha
- **Akash is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile (SAM)** system.
- It is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and produced by Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- It can target aircraft up to 50–80 km away, at altitudes up to 18,000 m.
- It has the capability to neutralise aerial targets like fighter jets, cruise missiles and air-to-surface missiles as well as ballistic missiles.
- It is in operational service with the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force

- In comparison to the existing Akash System, Akash Prime is equipped with an indigenous active Radio Frequency (RF) seeker for improved accuracy.
- Other improvements also ensure more reliable performance under low temperature environments at higher altitudes.

## National Pension System (NPS) Diwas

- **Pension regulator Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** is set to observe the National Pension System (NPS) Diwas.
- PFRDA also started a campaign under 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' in order to promote pension and retirement planning.
- NPS Diwas will be observed for a carefree azad retirement.
- NPS subscribers will enjoy the benefits, power of compounding and will reap many of the benefits after retirement.
- PFRDA will organise campaigns with the aim of encouraging every citizen to plan for creating a financial cushion in order to ensure for oneself a financially sound future after retirement.
- The campaign also seeks to create awareness regarding pension planning among the public.
- It also aims to cover all eligible citizens under a pension scheme in order to fulfil the vision of pensioned society for India.
- PFRDA is the regulatory body working under the **jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance**. It looks after overall supervision and regulation of pension across India.
- It is the **regulator of the National Pension System** and also ensures orderly growth & development of the pension market.

## Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana – (RKVY)

- **The Ministry of Railways** launched Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana (RKVY) under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yoana (PMKVY).



- The scheme is designed to address the aspirations of the youth and aptitude of the candidates vis-à-vis the Industrial requirements. “Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana” is launched to further empower the youth by providing them entry level skill training in Railway Training Institutes.
- This is a **skill development programme**, where training will be provided to youth with a special focus on jobs that are relevant to the Railways.
- The training will be provided in four trades viz. Electrician, Welder, Machinist and Fitter and other trades will be added by zonal railways and Production units based on regional demands and needs assessment.
- Training will be provided to apprentices under the Apprentice Act 1961.
- The scheme will not only improve the employability of the youth but also upgrade the skills of the self-employed and those who are working with contractors through reskilling and up-skilling.

## National Action Plan for dog Mediated Rabies Elimination by 2030 (NAPRE)

- The **Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare along with the Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying** has launched NAPRE on World Rabies Day.
- The Rabies is also known as “Hadakwa”, “mad dog disease” or “Hydrophobia”.
- The Ministers urged all the States and UTs to make Rabies a notifiable Disease.
- They also launched “Joint Inter-Ministerial Declaration Support Statement” for Elimination of Dog mediated Rabies from India by 2030 through One Health Approach.

## Rabies

- **Rabies is a viral disease** that causes inflammation of the brain in humans and other mammals.





- **Rabies is caused by lyssaviruses**, including the rabies virus and Australian bat lyssavirus.
- It can spread to people and pets if they are bitten or scratched by a rabid animal.
- **Symptoms:** nausea, vomiting, violent movements, uncontrolled excitement, fear of water, an inability to move parts of the body, confusion, and loss of consciousness.
- **Rabies is 100% fatal but 100% vaccine preventable.** 33% of global rabies deaths are recorded in India.

## Aapda Mitra

- **NDMA has been implementing a central sector scheme namely Aapda Mitra** since May 2016 with a focus on training of 6000 community volunteers (200 volunteers per district) in disaster response in selected 30 most flood prone districts of 25 States of India.
- The scheme aims to provide the community volunteers with the skills that they would need to respond to their community's immediate needs in the aftermath of a disaster thereby enabling them to undertake basic relief and rescue tasks during emergency situations such as floods, flash-floods and urban flooding.

## The objectives of the scheme:

- Development and Standardization of training modules at National Level;
- Development of Information Knowledge Management System at National level linked to States/UTs;
- Training institutions to be empanelled by respective States/UTs at the State/UT level;
- To train 6000 community volunteers in life saving skills of disaster response (flood relief and rescue), coordination, assistance, and provide personal protective equipment and emergency responder kits;



- To create a Community Emergency Stockpile/Reserve at the district/block level containing essential light search and rescue equipment, medical first aid kits, etc;
- To disseminate training and education tools developed under the project to more flood prone districts in subsequent phases of the scheme.

## NASA Lucy Mission

- Spacecraft will be launched from **“Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida”** on October 16, 2021.
- This spacecraft would obtain new insights into the formation of the solar system 4.5 billion years ago.
- The spacecraft has been named as Lucy. It was named after an ancient fossil which provided insights into the evolution of human species.
- Mission Lucy will be launched with the objective of investigating the group of rocky bodies that are circling the Sun in two swarms- one preceding Jupiter and the other trailing behind it.
- Mission Lucy will go for a 12-year journey after receiving boosts from Earth's gravity. The 12-year journey will be completed across eight different asteroids including one in the Main Belt between Mars & Jupiter and seven Trojans. Spacecraft will fly by its target objects within 400 kilometres of their surfaces.
- It will use onboard instruments and a large antenna to investigate the geology of target objects. It will be the first solar-powered spacecraft at a distance of 400 kms. Total cost of the mission is \$981 million.

## Real Effective Exchange Rate

- The real effective exchange rate (REER) is the weighted average of a country's currency in relation to an index or basket of other major currencies.
- The weights are determined by comparing the relative trade balance of a country's currency against each country within the index.



- A REER is the NEER adjusted by relative prices or costs, typically captured in inflation differentials between the home economy and trading partners.
- An increase in a nation's REER is an indication that its exports are becoming more expensive and its imports are becoming cheaper. It is losing its trade competitiveness.

## Fishing Cat

- The fishing cat is listed as **'Endangered' on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Red List.**
- Fishing cats are almost twice the size of a house cat. They are generally found in the marshy wetlands of northern and eastern India and on the mangroves of the east coast.
- Wetlands are the favourite habitats of the fishing cat. In India, fishing cats are mainly found in the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans, on the foothills of the Himalayas along the Ganga and Brahmaputra river valleys and in the Western Ghats.

## Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary

- **The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has notified the Eco-sensitive zone of the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary (Assam).
- It is one of the largest freshwater lakes in Assam and the **State's only Ramsar site besides being an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International.**
- It is located southwest of Guwahati city, Assam, and is the erstwhile **water channel of River Brahmaputra.**
- The lake expands up to 30 sq. km in summer and reduces to about 10 sq. km in the winter. The wildlife sanctuary measures 4.1 sq. km within this wetland (beel).
- It constitutes a unique habitat for aquatic flora and avian fauna.



- It has both biological and environmental importance besides being the only major storm-water storage basin for Guwahati city.
- It provides a means of livelihood for a number of local families.
- Recently, six young girls from the fishing community from Assam have developed a biodegradable and compostable yoga mat called 'Moorhen Yoga Mat'.
- **Deepor Beel is one of the largest freshwater lakes** in Assam and the State's only Ramsar site besides being an Important Bird Area.
- The wetland has for decades been threatened by a railway track set to be doubled and electrified on its southern rim, a garbage dump, and encroachment from human habitation and commercial units.

## India Plastic Pact

- The **Plastics Pact was launched by India**, the first Asian country to do so.
- It's a collection of efforts that bring together all of the relevant players at the national or regional level to execute plastic-eradication solutions.
- In 2018, the United Kingdom announced the first Plastics Pact.
- Through innovation, we will be able to remove needless and harmful plastic packaging.
- To increase the amount of plastic packaging that is reused, collected, and recycled.
- The Worldwide Fund for Nature-India (WWF India) and the Confederation of Indian Industry have collaborated on this project (CII).
- Goals and Objectives: Commitments to create a circular plastics system by 2030.
- Complement India's other significant renewable energy projects and attempts to reduce single-use plastics.
- Plastic packaging must be 100% reusable or recyclable.

## Indian Wild Ass Sanctuary

- **Indian Wild Ass Sanctuary** also known as the Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the **Little Rann of Kutch in the Gujarat state of India.**
- It is spread over an area of 4954 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The wildlife sanctuary was established in 1972 and came under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- The sanctuary is one of the last places on earth where the endangered wild ass sub-species Indian Wild Ass (Khur) (*Equus hemionus khur*) belonging to Asiatic Wild Ass species Onager (*Equus hemionus*) can be spotted.
- The main threat faced by the sanctuary is the illegal salt panning activity in the area. 25% of India's salt supply comes from panning activity in the area.

## Indian Wild Ass

- The Indian wild ass (*Equus hemionus khur*), also called the Ghudkhur, Khur or Indian onager in the local Gujarati language, is a subspecies of the onager native to Southern Asia.
- It is currently listed as Near Threatened by IUCN.
- The Indian wild ass population has risen by 37%, reveals data released by the Gujarat forest department. The population has reached 6,082, according to the census conducted in March 2020.
- Gujarat, the world's only abode of Asiatic lions, is also the sole home of Indian wild asses. Indian Wild Ass Sanctuary is one of the last places on earth where the Indian Wild Ass can be spotted.

## Eravikulam National Park

- **Eravikulam National Park is located along the Western Ghats in the Idukki district of Kerala.** The terrain consists of high-altitude grasslands interspersed

with sholas. Anamudi, 2,695 meters, the highest peak in south India is inside this park

- It was **declared a Sanctuary in 1975** with the intention of protecting the indigenous population of Nilgiri Tahr and declared as a National Park in 1978.
- This is also the land of “Neelakurinji”, a flower that blooms once in twelve years.
- **Anamudi (2695 m), South India’s highest peak** is situated in this park.
  - Three major types of plant communities found in the park are: Grasslands, Shrub Land and Shola Forests.

## Tarball

- Tarballs are dark-coloured, sticky balls of oil that form when crude oil floats on the ocean surface. Tarballs are formed by weathering of crude oil in marine environments.
- They are transported from the open sea to the shores by sea currents and waves. Some of the balls are as big as a basketball while others are smaller globules.
- Tarballs are usually coin-sized and are found strewn on the beaches. However, over the years, they have become as big as basketballs and can weigh as much as 6-7 kgs.
- Wind and waves tear the oil slick into smaller patches that are scattered over a much wider area. Various physical, chemical and biological processes (weathering) change the appearance of the oil.
- Tarballs are formed from brown carbon, emitted during the burning of fossil fuels.
- Until now, black carbon was found to be transported long distances by wind to the Himalayan atmosphere; there was not sufficient direct evidence for primary BrC in the Himalayan atmosphere.

## Flue-gas Desulphurization (FGD)

- **Removal of Sulfur Dioxide is called Flue-gas Desulphurization (FGD).**



- It seeks to remove gaseous pollutants viz. SO<sub>2</sub> from exhaust flue gases generated in furnaces, boilers, and other industrial processes due to thermal processing, treatment, and combustion.
- Flue gas desulfurization removes sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates from flue gases.

## Manda Buffalo

- The **National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources** (NBAGR) has recognized the **Manda buffalo, found in the Eastern Ghats and plateau of Koraput region of Odisha**, as the 19th unique breed of buffaloes found in India.
- The Manda are resistant to parasitic infections, less prone to diseases and can live, produce and reproduce at low or nil input systems.
- These buffaloes have ash grey and grey coats with copper-coloured hair.
- The lower part of the legs up to the elbow is light in colour with copper-colored hair at the knee. Some animals are silver-white in colour.
- Four breeds of cattle – Binjharपुरi, Motu, Ghumusari and Khariar – and two breeds of buffalo – Chilika and Kalahandi – and one breed of sheep, Kendrapara, have already received NBAGR recognition.

## Brahmani River Basin

- Environmentalists have expressed concern over the massive diversion of fresh water from the Brahmani river basin, which could pose a grave threat to the famous mangrove vegetation in Odisha.
- The Brahmani is a major seasonal river in the Odisha state of eastern India.
- The Brahmani is formed by the confluence of the Sankh and South Koel rivers.
- Proportionate fresh water flow from the Brahmani river basin and the Kharasrota river keep the salinity level of the water along the shore down.
- The **Brahmani, known as South Koel** in its upper reaches, rises near Nagri village in Ranchi district of Jharkhand.

- The **important tributaries of Brahmani joining it from left are the Karo, and the Shankh** whereas the Tikra joins from right.

## Glacial Lake Outburst Flood

- A **Glacial Lake Outburst Flood**, or GLOF, is a sudden release of water from a lake fed by glacier melt that has formed at the side, in front, within, beneath, or on the surface of a glacier.
- According to the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**, glacial retreat due to climate change occurring in most parts of the Hindu Kush Himalaya has given rise to the formation of numerous new glacial lakes, which are the major cause of GLOFs.

## State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)

- **State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) is constituted under the section 48 of (1) (a) of DM act 2005** as a primary fund available with State Government for responses to notified disasters.
- The Central Government contributes 75% of SDRF allocation for general category States/UTs and 90% for special category States. The annual contribution is released in two equal instalments as per the recommendation of the finance commission.
- SDRF shall be used only for meeting the expenditure for providing immediate relief to the victims.
- The Centre has released the first instalment of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to States, in the wake of the second wave of Covid -19 that has claimed thousands of lives since April 2021.
- Normally, the first instalment is released in June as per the recommendations of the Finance Commission.



## Karman Line

- The Karman line is an attempt to define a **boundary between Earth's atmosphere and outer space**.
- The line is named after Theodore von Kármán (1881–1963), a Hungarian American engineer and physicist, who was active primarily in aeronautics and astronautics.
- He was the first person to calculate the altitude at which the atmosphere becomes too thin to support aeronautical flight and arrived at 83.6 km (51.9 miles) himself.
- The Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) defines Karman Line as the altitude of 100 kilometres (62 miles; 330,000 feet) above Earth's mean sea level.
- However, other organizations do not use this definition. There is no international law defining the edge of space, and therefore the limit of national airspace.
- For instance, the US Air Force and NASA define the limit to be 50 miles (80 km) above sea level.
- The line is approximately at the turbopause, above which atmospheric gases are not well-mixed.

## Guillain Barre Syndrome

- Guillain Barre Syndrome is a very rare autoimmune disorder.
- A disorder in which the immune system, in an attempt to kill the coronavirus, accidentally starts attacking the peripheral nervous system.
- The peripheral nervous system is a network of nerves that lead from the brain and spinal cord to different parts of the body. Attacking them can affect limb functions.
- GBS is caused by bacteria or viral infection.
- In the past, patients of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome showed GBS symptoms, as did those infected with Zika, HIV, Herpes virus and Campylobacter jejuni.



- The syndrome's first symptoms are a tingling or itching sensation in the skin, followed by muscle weakness, pain and numbness.
- The symptoms may emerge first in feet and hands.
- A person then starts experiencing reflex loss and paralysis, which may be temporary, but can last for 6-12 months or longer.

## Aluminum-Air Battery

- Aluminum-air batteries utilize oxygen in the air which reacts with an aluminum hydroxide solution to oxidize aluminum and produce electricity.
- Aluminum-air batteries are said to be a lower-cost and more energy-dense alternative to lithium-ion batteries, which may reduce the cost of an electric vehicle.
- This battery cannot be recharged like a lithium-ion battery. Therefore, large scale operation of aluminum-air battery based vehicles will require the wide availability of battery swapping stations.
- However, aluminum-air battery-based electric vehicles run 400 km. or more at a time, while the fully charged lithium-ion battery can be useful only for 150-200 km.
- It is noteworthy that State-owned Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. has entered into a joint venture with Israel-based battery technology startup Phinergy to develop Aluminum-air technology based battery systems for electric vehicles and stationary storage, as well as hydrogen storage solutions.

## Anthrax

- It is a disease caused by a bacterium called *Bacillus anthracis*.



- It occurs naturally in both animals and humans in many parts of the world, including Asia, southern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Australia.
- Anthrax bacteria survive in the environment by forming spores
- People get infected with anthrax when spores get into the body. When spores get inside the body, they can get activated. When they become active, the bacteria can multiply, spread out in the body, produce toxins (poisons), and cause severe illness.
- Symptoms include black sore, headaches, fever, breathing difficulties, vomiting of blood, diarrhea.
- Anthrax responds well to antibiotic treatment but vaccines are necessary as the infection can cause death within two-three days leaving no scope for diagnosis and treatment.
- The anti-anthrax vaccines available in the market generate an immune response against a Bacillus protein-protective antigen – a protein that helps in transport of bacillus toxins inside the cells.

## HELINA (Helicopter based NAG)

- HELINA (Helicopter based NAG) is a third generation fire and forget class anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system mounted on the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).
- The system has all weather day and night capability and can defeat battle tanks with conventional armour as well as explosive reactive armour.
- The HELINA missile can engage targets both in direct hit mode as well as top attack mode. HELINA Weapon Systems is being inducted into the Indian Army (IA).
- A variant of the HELINA Weapon System called DHRUVASTRA is being inducted into the Indian Air Force (IAF).



- Nag is a third-generation, fire-and-forget, anti-tank guided missile developed by DRDO to support both mechanized infantry and airborne forces of the Indian Army.
- It is an all-weather condition with day and night capabilities and with a minimum range of 500m and a maximum range of 4 km.
- Nag can be launched from land and air-based platforms. The land version is currently available for integration on the Nag missile carrier (NAMICA).
- DRDO has developed nag Missiles under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program.

## Dhauliganga

- Dhauliganga also known as Dhauli river is one of the six source streams of the Ganga river. It originates from DeovanHimani and flows along gahrwal division of uttarakhand.
- It rises at an altitude of 5070 metres in Niti Pass at chamoli district of uttarakhand.
- It meets Alaknandariver at VishnuPrayag at the base of Joshimath Mountains.
- Major Hydroelectric projects situated at Tapovan, Maleri Jhelum, Jhelum Tamak in chamoli district.

## Strait of Gibraltar

- Gibraltar is a British Overseas Territory.
- It is located at the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula. It is bordered to the north by Spain.
- It is a narrow strait that connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea and separates Gibraltar and Peninsular Spain in Europe from Morocco and Ceuta (Spain) in Africa.
- The landscape of Gibraltar is dominated by the Rock of Gibraltar (made of Jurassic limestone) at the foot of which is a densely populated town area.

## Climate Finance Leadership Initiative (CFLI) India Initiative

- The Indian and UK governments recently agreed to a new tie-up, Climate Finance Leadership Initiative (CFLI) India initiative, which is backed by the City of London Corporation and led by Bloomberg's CFLI, at the 11th UK-India Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) held via video conference between finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her British counterpart Rishi Sunak.
- Which aims to work with financial institutions, corporates, and existing sustainable finance initiatives to accelerate efforts to mobilise capital into India.

## Shankhalipi

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) discovered remains of an ancient temple dating back to the Gupta period (5th century) in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Etah district.
- The stairs of the temple had 'shankhalipi' inscriptions, which were deciphered by the archaeologists as saying, 'Sri Mahendraditya', the title of Kumaragupta I of the Gupta dynasty.
- Two decorative pillars close to one another, with human figurines have been discovered at Bilsarh site.
- The discovery becomes significant since only two other structural temples from the Gupta age have been found so far – Dashavatara Temple (Deogarh) and Bhitargaon Temple (Kanpur Dehat).

## Global Methane Pledge

- The US President has announced the Global Methane Pledge, which is an US-EU led effort to cut methane emissions by a third by the end of this decade.
- The announcement has come ahead of 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP26) of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Glasgow, UK.
- This will also help in abiding by the targets of the Paris Climate deal.
- The pact between the US and the EU sets a target of cutting at least 30% from global methane emissions, based on 2020 levels, by 2030.
- If adopted around the world, this would reduce global heating by 0.2C by the 2040s, compared with likely temperature rises by then.

## Methane

- Methane is the simplest hydrocarbon, consisting of one carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms (CH<sub>4</sub>).
- It is flammable, and is used as a fuel worldwide.
- Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas.
- Approximately 40% of methane emitted is from natural sources and about 60% comes from human-influenced sources, including livestock farming, rice agriculture, biomass burning and so forth.