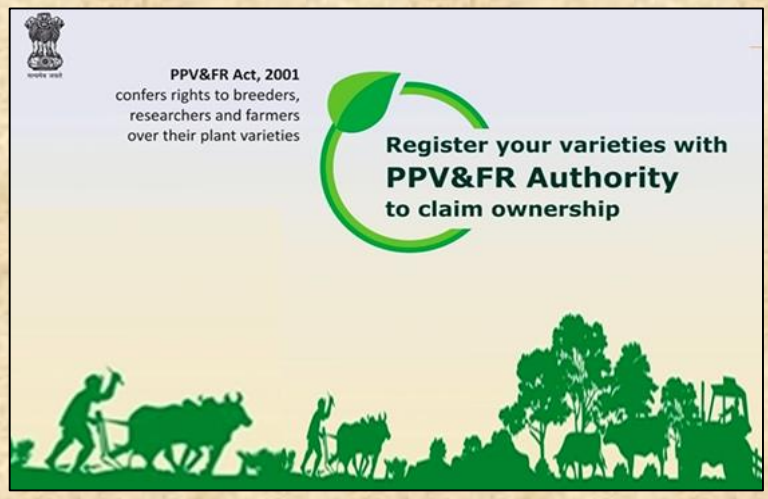
Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001

- Recently, the Union Home Minister chaired the 26th Eastern Zonal Meeting in Patna.
- Addressing the representatives of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha Mr. Shah appealed to all members to work with the spirit of cooperative federalism for all-round development.



About Zonal Councils

- In the light of the vision of Pandit Nehru, five Zonal Councils were set up vide Part-III of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956.
- The present composition of each of these Zonal Councils is as under:
- **The Northern Zonal Council,** comprising the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh;
- **The Central Zonal Council,** comprising the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;
- **The Eastern Zonal Council,** comprising the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal;
- **The Western Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli;
- **The Southern Zonal Council,** comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- **Note:-** The North Eastern States i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland are not included in the Zonal Councils and their special problems are looked after by the North Eastern Council, set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972.

Organisational Structure of Zonal Councils:

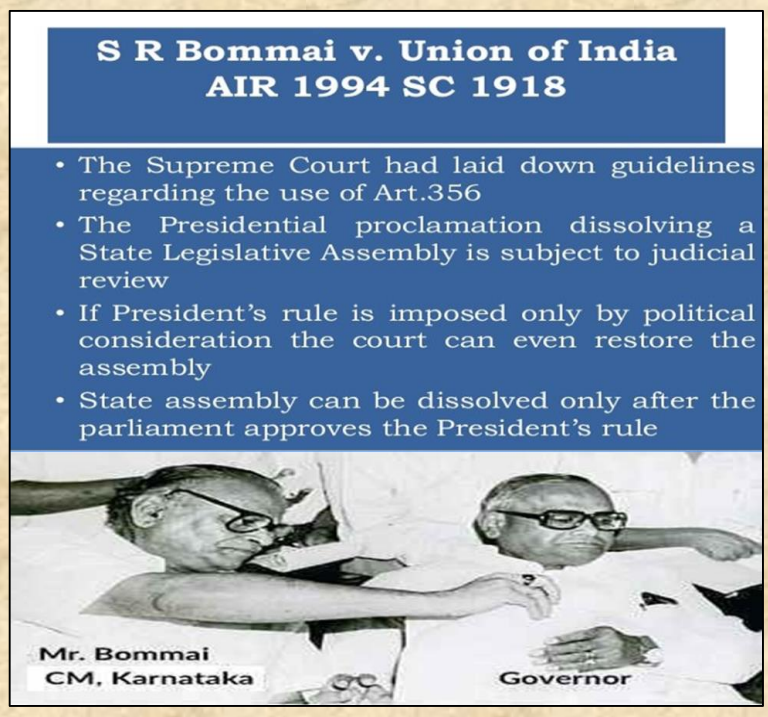
- **Chairman** - The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
- **Vice Chairman-** The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
- **Members-** Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
- **Advisers-** One person nominated by the Planning Commission for each of the Zonal Councils, Chief Secretaries and another officer/Development Commissioner nominated by each of the States included in the Zone.
- Union Ministers are also invited to participate in the meetings of Zonal Councils depending upon necessity.

SR Bommai Judgment

- Recently, in upholding the abrogation of Article 370, the Supreme Court relied heavily on its landmark 1994 judgment in SR Bommai v Union of India.

About SR Bommai v Union of India Case

- In 'SR Bommai v Union of India', the Supreme Court interpreted Article 356 of the Constitution, which contains provisions for the imposition of President's rule in a state.
- In Bommai, a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court interpreted Article 356 of the Constitution to define the contours of proclamation of President's rule.
- Article 356 contains provisions "in case of failure of constitutional machinery in States", including that for the imposition of President's rule.



- The SC unanimously held that the President's proclamation can be subject to judicial review on grounds of illegality, malafide, extraneous considerations, abuse of power, or fraud.
- While the President's subjective appraisal of the issue cannot be examined, the Court said that the material relied on for making the decision can be reviewed.
- The verdict also made Parliamentary approval necessary for imposing President's rule.
- Only after the proclamation is approved by both Houses of Parliament can the President exercise the power.

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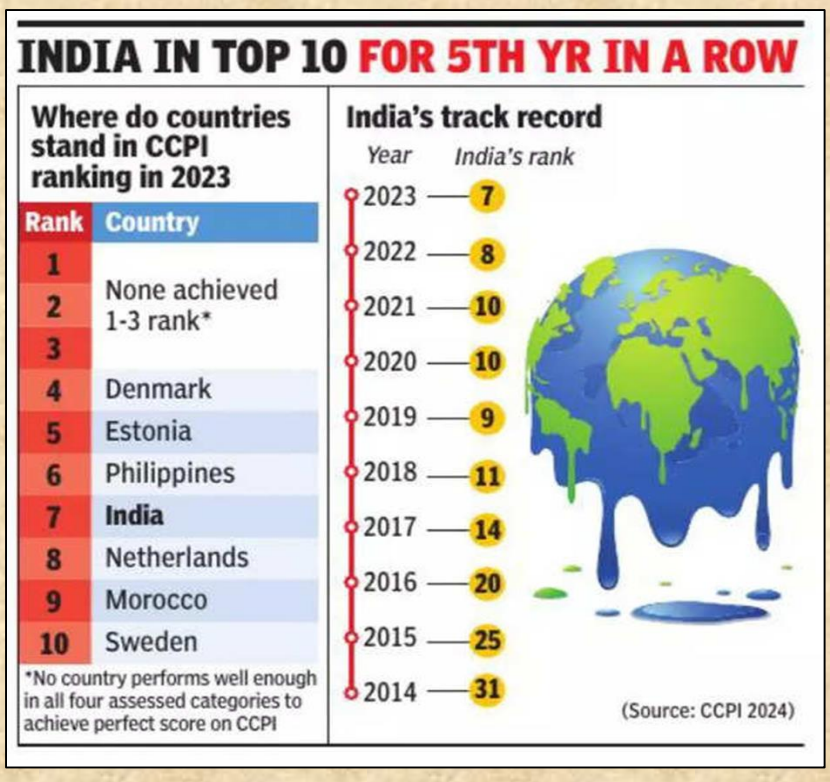
- Till then, the President can only suspend the state legislature.
- If the Parliament does not approve the proclamation within two months, then the government that was dismissed would automatically stand revived.
- Bommai is still the settled law on when and how President's rule can be imposed.
- It was invoked in recent cases challenging President's rule in Uttarakhand (2016) and Arunachal Pradesh (2016), both of which were overturned by the Supreme Court.

❖ The Kashmir Reference

- A key question in the Kashmir case was whether Article 370 could have been abrogated when the state was under President's rule.
- The erstwhile state had been under President's rule since 2018, and the question before the court was whether the President could give consent to the revocation of J&K's special status.

Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)

- India ranked 7th in this year's Climate Change Performance Index and also remained among the highest performers.



❖ Key Highlights

- India has received a high ranking in the greenhouse gas Emissions and Energy Use categories, but a medium in Climate Policy and Renewable Energy, as in the previous year.
- Denmark retained the top spot with a remarkable score of 75.59%, showcasing consistent commitment to climate action.
- Estonia and the Philippines secured the second and third ranks, with scores of 72.07 and 70.70, respectively.
- India followed closely with a score of 70.25%, demonstrating significant improvement from the previous year's score of 67.35.

❖ Global Trends in Climate Performance

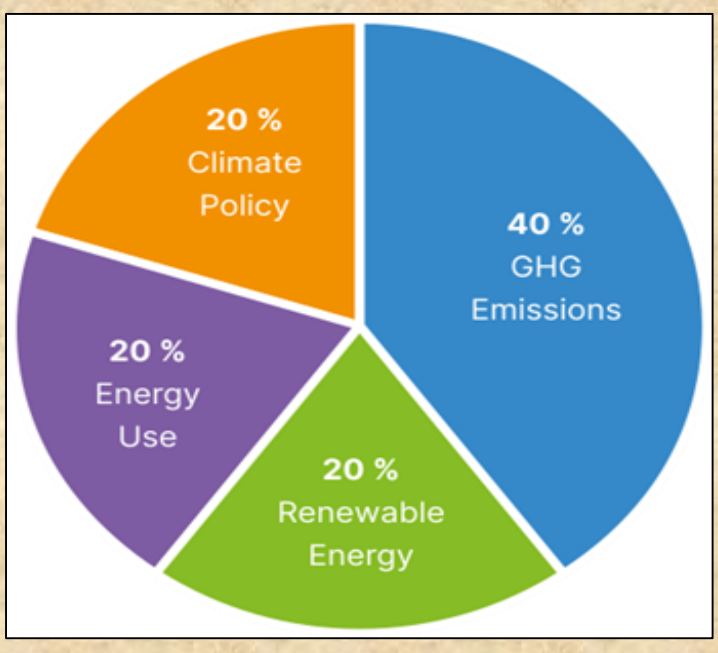
- Most developed countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, and Italy, showed a decline in climate performance compared to the previous year.
- Saudi Arabia ranked at the bottom (67th), while the COP28 host country, the United Arab Emirates, occupied the 65th position.

❖ About CCPI

- It was **published by** three environmental non-governmental organizations viz. **Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute and the Climate Action Network (CAN) International.**
- The CCPI **evaluates 63 countries and the European Union**, which together generate over 92 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Using standardized criteria, the CCPI looks at **four categories**, **with 14 indicators:**
  - Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Renewable Energy, Energy Use, and Climate Policy.
- It tracks the implementation of the Paris Agreement by various countries.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs)

- Recently, Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) injected ₹26,505 crore into the Indian equity markets in the first six trading sessions of December.



❖ About FPIs

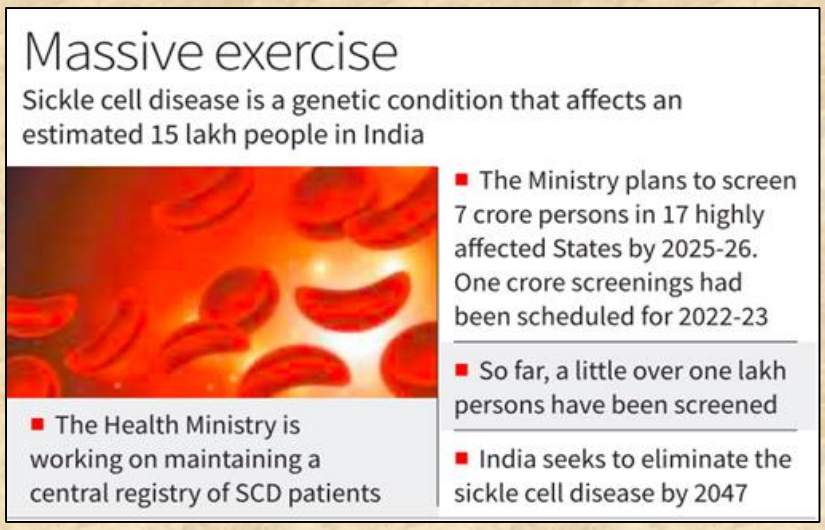
- Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) consists of securities and other financial assets held by investors in another country.
- FPI holdings can include stocks, ADRs, GDRs, bonds, mutual funds, and exchange traded funds.
- It does not provide the investor with direct ownership of a company's assets & is relatively liquid depending on the volatility of the market.
- Investments of NRIs don't come under FPI.
- Along with foreign direct investment (FDI), FPI is one of the common ways to invest in an overseas economy.
- FDI and FPI are both important sources of funding for most economies.

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❖ About FDI

- ❑ Foreign direct investment (FDI) is when a **company takes controlling ownership** in a business entity in another country.
- ❑ With FDI, foreign companies are **directly involved with day-to-day operations** in the other country.
- ❑ This means they aren't just **bringing** money with them, but also **knowledge, skills and technology.**

Sickle Cell Disease



- ➢ Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved two gene therapies for sickle cell disease, making one of them the first treatment in the United States based on the Nobel Prize-winning CRISPR gene editing technology.
- ➢ Casgevy, developed by partners Vertex Pharmaceuticals (VRTX.O) and CRISPR Therapeutics (CRSP.BN), and bluebird bio's (BLUE.O) Lyfgenia were approved for people aged 12 years and older.

❖ About Sickle Cell Disease

- ❑ Sickle cell disease is a genetic disorder in which the red blood cells of the patient turn into a sickle-shaped crescent shape, become rigid and sticky, and get clogged in the blood vessels.
- ❑ The capacity of these cells to carry oxygen reduces, which leads to excruciating pain and organ damage in the affected patients.
- ❑ **Treatment**
  - Bone marrow or stem cell transplantation.
- ❑ **Side Note**
  - Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is widespread among the tribal population in India where about 1 in 86 births among STs have SCD.
  - India aims to eliminate sickle cell anaemia by 2047.

PM Vishwakarma Scheme



- ➢ Recently, data from the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) shows that the PM Vishwakarma Scheme, launched by the Centre, has received over 21 lakh applications in two and a half months.

❖ About the Scheme

- ❑ It is a new scheme with an outlay of Rs 13,000 crore and is fully funded by the Central government.
- ❑ Under the scheme the government will provide support to workers engaged in traditional crafts and skills.
- ❑ Families associated with 18 different sectors will be helped in all possible ways, the PM said. These include:
  - Carpenters, Boat Makers, Armourers, Blacksmiths, Hammer and Tool Kit Makers, Locksmiths, Goldsmiths, Potters, Sculptor, Stone breakers, Cobblers (Shoesmiths/ Footwear artisans), Masons (Rajmistri), Basket/Mat/Broom Makers/Coir Weavers, Doll & Toy Makers (Traditional), Barbers, Garland makers, Washermen, Tailors, Fishing Net Makes.
- ❑ The scheme is to help enhance the skills of workers employed in these fields and help them avail loans easily to aid their earnings.
- ❑ Under the scheme, the Vishwakarma workers will be registered for free through Common Services Centres using the biometric-based PM Vishwakarma portal.
- ❑ **They will then be provided**
  - Recognition through the PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card, given skill upgradation involving basic and advanced training.
  - A toolkit incentive of ₹15,000, Collateral-free credit support up to ₹1 lakh (first tranche) and ₹2 lakh (second tranche) at a concessional interest rate of 5%,
  - Incentive for digital transactions and marketing support.
- ❑ **Nodal Ministry :** Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.**

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