

All-India Judicial Service (AIJS)

- Recently, an article in a prominent news paper discusses the proposition of creating an All-India Judicial Service (AIJS), a centralized recruitment system for judges at the additional district and district levels across Indian states.
- President Droupadi Murmu recently suggested that AIJS could help diversify the judiciary.



❖ About AIJS

- ❑ Article 312 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of an All-India Judicial Service (AIJS), along the lines of the central civil services.
- ❑ **Process**
 - The Rajya Sabha can declare through a resolution that it is necessary or expedient to create a service in “national interest”.
 - The resolution should be supported by at least two-thirds of its present and voting members.
 - The Parliament “may by law provide for the creation of one or more all India services (including an all India judicial service) common to the Union and the States”.
 - Parliament may regulate the recruitment and service conditions of persons appointed to any such service.
- ❑ Article 312 (2) states that the AIJS cannot include any post inferior to that of a district judge, as defined in Article 236.
 - A district judge can include a city civil court judge, additional district judge, joint district judge, assistant district judge, chief judge of a small cause court, chief presidency magistrate etc.

❖ The Present System of Selection

- ❑ Articles 233 and 234 of the Constitution of India deal with the appointment of district judges and place it in the domain of the states.
- ❑ The selection process is conducted by the State Public Service Commissions and the concerned High Court, since HCs exercise jurisdiction over the subordinate judiciary in the state.
- ❑ Panels of HC judges interview candidates after the exam and select them for appointment.
- ❑ All judges of the lower judiciary up to the level of district judges are selected through the Provincial Civil Services (Judicial) exam.
- ❑ PCS (J) is commonly referred to as the judicial services exam.

Forex Reserves

- Recently, India’s forex reserves jumped \$2.816 billion to \$606.859 billion.

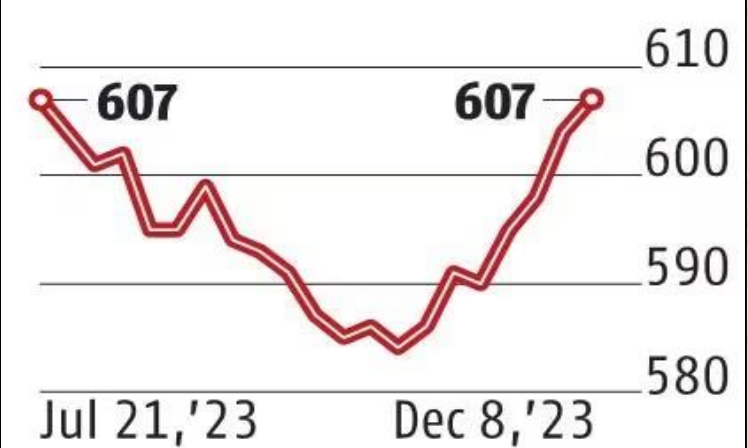
❖ About Foreign Exchange Reserves

- ❑ Foreign Exchange Reserves or Forex reserves are **assets such as foreign currencies, gold reserves, treasury bills, etc retained by a central bank or other monetary authority.**
- ❑ The **majority of foreign exchange reserves are held in US dollars.**
- ❑ **India's foreign exchange reserves include**
 - Foreign Currency Assets.
 - Gold Reserves.
 - Special Drawing Rights (SDR).
 - Reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

❑ Significance

- Forex **reduces** the likelihood of **balance-of-payments crises.**
- It helps **preserve economic and financial stability** against pressures on exchange rates and disorderly market conditions, and **create space for policy autonomy.**
- To ensure that RBI has **backup funds** if their national currency rapidly devalues or becomes altogether insolvent.
- If the value of the Rupee decreases due to an increase in demand of the foreign currency then RBI sells the dollar in the Indian money market so that **depreciation of the Indian currency can be checked.**
- A country with a good stock of forex has **a good image at the international level** because the trading countries can be sure about their payments.
- A good forex reserve **helps in attracting foreign trade and earns a good reputation** in trading partners.

ON THE RISE AGAIN (Forex reserves in \$ bn)



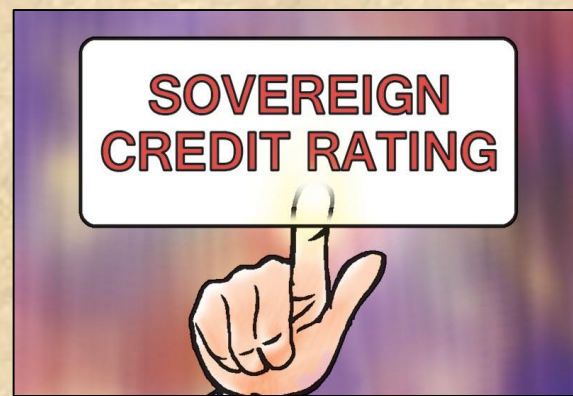
Source: RBI; Compiled by BS Research Bureau

Sovereign Credit Rating

- India's Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) in its recent paper has raised concerns about the sovereign credit rating system.

❖ Sovereign Credit Rating

- ❑ Credit rating involves evaluating the creditworthiness of a borrower, which could be an individual, a company, or a country.
- ❑ Governments issue debt instruments like government bonds to borrow funds.
- ❑ Creditworthiness refers to the ability of a government to repay its debt without default.
- ❑ Sovereign credit ratings provide insights into the risk associated with investing in a country's debt instruments, including political risks.
- ❑ The three most influential credit rating agencies are Standard & Poor's, Moody's, and Fitch Ratings.
- ❑ When evaluating a country's creditworthiness, agencies consider economic and financial indicators like economic growth, fiscal policies, public debt levels, political stability, and external trade position.
- ❑ **Significance**
 - A good credit rating helps a country access funding for development projects in the international bond market.
 - Countries with good credit ratings attract more foreign direct investment.
 - It influences borrowing costs in global financial markets, with higher-rated governments able to borrow at lower interest rates, saving money in interest payments.

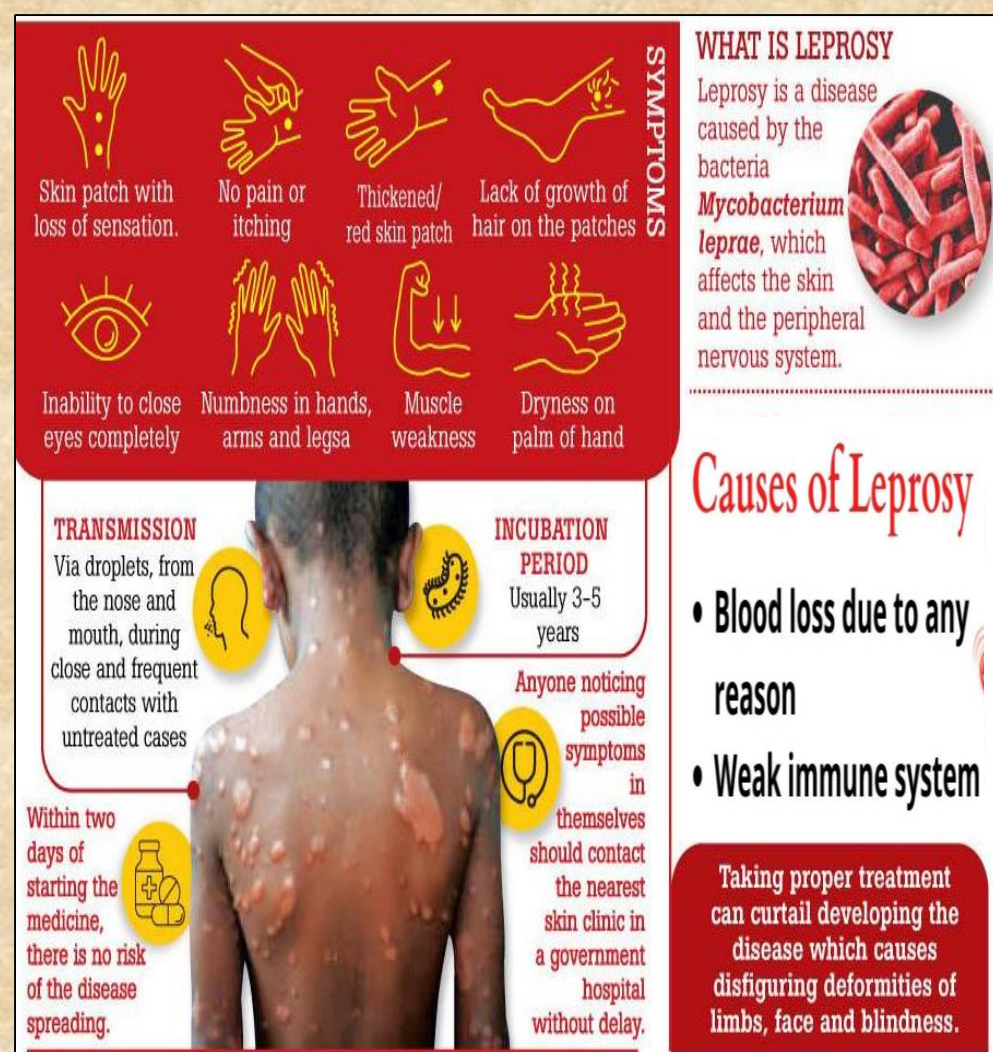


Leprosy

- Recently, the Odisha government declared leprosy a reportable disease in the state.

❖ About Leprosy

- ❑ Leprosy is **also known as Hansen's disease**.
- ❑ It is an infectious disease which is **caused by a bacillus Mycobacterium leprae**.
- ❑ The disease has been **named after Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen** who was a **Norwegian physician**.
- ❑ Hansen proved that **leprosy is not a hereditary disease** but is caused by a bacterium.
- ❑ The disease is a **curable disease** and treatment at the early stage can prevent any disability.
- ❑ It can **cause a progressive and permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes** if it is left untreated.
- ❑ The **incubation period of the disease is 5 years usually**.
- ❑ Symptoms of the disease can be seen within 1 year but it could also **take 20 years or even more years** to occur.



Strait of Gibraltar

- Iran has recently threatened to close the Strait of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea unless Israel stops bombing Gaza.

❖ About Strait of Gibraltar

- ❑ The Strait of Gibraltar is a narrow strait that connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea and separates Europe from Africa.
- ❑ On the northern side of the Strait are Spain and Gibraltar (a British overseas territory in the Iberian Peninsula), while on the southern side are Morocco and Ceuta (a Spanish autonomous city in northern Africa).



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- ❑ Until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the Strait of Gibraltar served as the only access point to the Mediterranean Sea.
- ❑ Due to its location, the Strait is commonly used for illegal immigration from Africa to Europe.
- ❑ The Strait of Gibraltar is 8 miles wide at its narrowest point, around 26 miles wide on its western end, and 14 miles wide on its eastern side. The depth of the strait varies between 1,000 and 3,000 feet.
- ❑ An important port located on the strait is the Moroccan port of Tanger-Med, near Tangier.
- ❑ Winds
 - The winds in the strait tend to be either easterly or westerly.
 - Shallow cold-air masses, invading the western Mediterranean from the north, often stream through as a low-level, high-speed easterly wind, known locally as a levanter.

INS Imphal

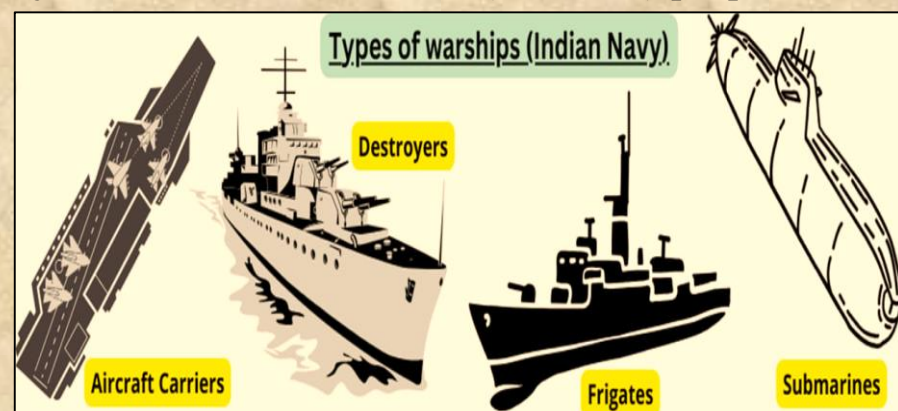
- INS Imphal (Pennant D68), the third of four warships of Project 15B that together form the Visakhapatnam class stealth-guided missile destroyers, is set to be commissioned into the Indian Navy on Tuesday (December 26).

❖ About Project 15B

- ❑ Between 2014 and 2016, the Indian Navy commissioned three guided missile destroyers of Kolkata class under a project codenamed '15A'.
- ❑ The Kolkata class included INS Kolkata, INS Kochi and INS Chennai. These ships were a step ahead of their precursor Delhi class of ships, which included INS Delhi, INS Mysore and INS Mumbai, built under Project 15 and commissioned between 1997 and 2001.
- ❑ Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL), one of India's key Defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), has built all these ships.
- ❑ A ship class signifies a group of ships built with similar tonnage, usage, capabilities and weaponry.
- ❑ For building the advanced variants of the Kolkata class guided missile destroyers, a contract for construction under the project codenamed '15B' was signed in January 2011.
- ❑ The lead ship of Project 15B, INS Visakhapatnam (Pennant No D66), was commissioned into the Indian Navy in November 2021 and the second ship INS Mormugao (D67) in December 2022.
- ❑ The fourth ship, D69, which when commissioned will be christened INS Surat, was launched in May last year.
- ❑ The class is identified by its lead ship, in this case INS Visakhapatnam.

❖ About INS Imphal

- ❑ INS Imphal is a potent and versatile platform equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, including surface-to-air missiles, anti-ship missiles, and torpedoes.
- ❑ It is constructed by Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai.
- ❑ The ship is fitted with a modern surveillance radar which provides target data to the gunnery weapon systems of the ship.
- ❑ The INS Imphal is equipped with BrahMos surface-to-surface missiles, with a displacement of 7,400 tonnes and an overall length of 164 meters. INS Imphal is powered by Combined Gas and Gas (COGAG) propulsion.
- ❑ It is capable of achieving speeds over 30 knots (56 km/hour).
- ❑ INS Imphal boasts of a high indigenous content of medium range surface-to-air missiles, anti-submarine indigenous rocket launchers, and 76mm super rapid gun mount.
- ❑ The ship's anti-submarine warfare capabilities are provided by indigenously developed rocket launchers, torpedo launchers, and anti-submarine warfare helicopters.



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