

1. Trade in Indian Rupee

Topic: Economy



In News: The Reserve Bank of India has allowed banks from 18 countries to open Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs) for settling payments in Indian rupees.

More on the Topic

- The SVRAs could be set up by **banks of partner countries by approaching Authorised Dealer (AD) banks in India that may get permission from the RBI after due procedure.**
- Russia has been a vocal proponent of using trade in local currency for the process of “de-dollarisation”, while India has been supporting the idea of trade in local currency to boost exports.
- The process of SVRAs began in July 2022 when the RBI announced that it has decided to put in place an additional arrangement for invoicing, payment, and settlement of exports/imports in Indian rupees.
- This announcement came in the backdrop of **the commodities crisis triggered by Western sanctions against Russia** after Russia launched the “special military operation” against Ukraine in February 2022.

What are Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs):

- SVRAs are bank accounts that allow **foreign banks to settle payments in Indian rupees.**
- This is important as it will help **boost India's exports and avoid wartime international sanctions** that hamper global trade flows.



Which countries are allowed to open SVRAs with Indian banks?

- Countries included are Botswana, Fiji, Germany, Guyana, Israel, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Oman, Russia, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, and UK.

About internationalisation of Rupee:

- The process of internationalising the rupee entails using it more frequently in cross-border transactions. Before moving on to capital account usage, it comprises promoting the use of the rupee in import and export trade as well as other current account operations.
- The dollar accounts for **88.3% of global foreign exchange market** turnover, followed by the euro, Japanese Yen and Pound Sterling; the rupee accounts for a mere 1.7%, underlining the need for pushing the currency much farther to get an international tag.

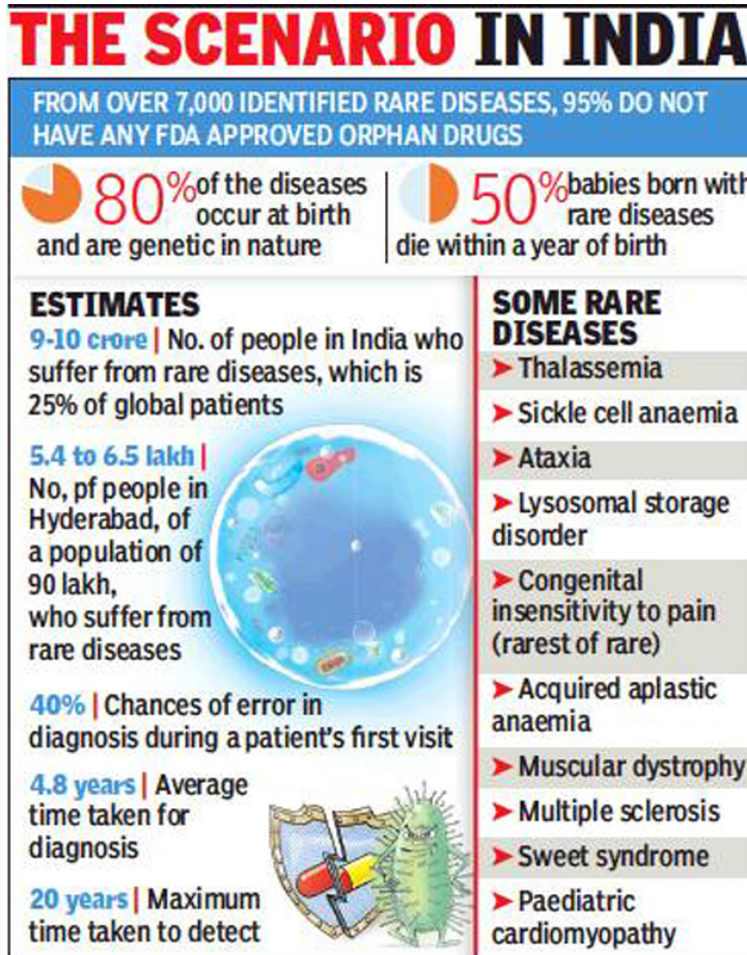
Significance of Internationalisation of the Indian Rupee:

- Currency risk is reduced for Indian enterprises when using the rupee in international dealings.
- The companies will be protected from currency volatility which will increase the likelihood that Indian companies will expand internationally.
- The requirement for maintaining foreign exchange reserves will decrease.
- India becomes less susceptible to outside shocks by reducing its reliance on foreign money.
- It will increase demand for the rupee in global trade. The value of the rupee will increase with its internationalisation.

Source: Indian Express

2. National Policy for Rare Diseases

Topic: Health



In News: The Health Ministry has added six rare diseases under National Policy for Rare Diseases.

More on the Topic:

- **The newly added diseases are** Laron's Syndrome, Wilson's disease, congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH), neonatal onset multisystem inflammatory disease (NOMID) Hypophosphatemic rickets and atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome (AHUS).

The salient features of NPRD, 2021 are:

- The rare diseases have been identified and categorized into 3 groups namely Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3.
- **Group 1:** Disorders amenable to one-time curative treatment.



- **Group-2:** Diseases requiring long term/lifelong treatment having relatively lower cost of treatment and benefit has been documented in literature and annual or more frequent surveillance is required.
- **Group 3:-** Diseases for which definitive treatment is available but challenges are to make optimal patient selection for benefit, very high cost and lifelong therapy.
- **Provision for financial support of up to Rs. 50 lakhs** to the patients suffering from any category of the Rare Diseases and for treatment in any of the Centre of Excellence (CoE) mentioned in NPRD-2021, outside the Umbrella Scheme of Rashtriya Arogaya Nidhi.
- Five Nidan Kendras have been set up for genetic testing and counselling services.
- **Centres of Excellence (CoEs) under NPRD** has been initiated for diagnosis, prevention and treatment of rare diseases
- Government has given **exemption from Basic Customs Duty to drugs or medicines, which are used in the treatment of Rare Diseases** when imported by Centres of Excellence (CoEs).
- The NPRD, 2021 has provisions for **promotion of research and development for diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases;** promotion of local development and manufacture of drugs and creation of conducive environment for indigenous manufacturing of drugs for rare diseases at affordable prices.

About Rare Diseases:

- A rare disease is a disease **that affects a small percentage of the population.**
- In some parts of the world, an orphan disease is a rare disease whose rarity means there is a lack of a market large enough to gain support and resources for discovering treatments for it, except by the government granting economically advantageous conditions to creating and selling such treatments. Orphan drugs are ones so created or sold.

Source: PIB

3. McMahon Line

Topic: International Relations



In News: Two United States Senators, have introduced a bipartisan resolution in the upper chamber of Congress reiterating that the US recognises the McMahon Line as the international boundary between China and India in Arunachal Pradesh.

More on the Topic:

- The McMahon Line serves as the **de facto boundary between China and India in the Eastern Sector.**
- It specifically represents **the boundary between Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet, from Bhutan in the west to Myanmar in the east.**
- China has historically disputed the boundary and claims the state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).

About the circumstances it was drawn:

- The McMahon Line was drawn during the Simla Convention of 1914, officially described as the Convention Between Great Britain, China, and Tibet.
- The McMahon Line delimited the respective spheres of influence of Tibet and British India in the eastern Himalayan region in what is today India’s Northeast and northern Myanmar. The border in this region was undefined prior to the signing of the convention.
- After the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26), the British gained almost complete control over the Assam Valley.



- By the time the 20th century dawned, Chinese influence over Tibet had significantly waned and the British were wary about Tibet falling into the Russian sphere of influence. In an effort to preclude Russian influence, the British led an expedition into Tibet and signed the Convention of Lhasa in 1904.
- At the same time, alarmed at Britain's growing influence in the region, China, at the fag end of Qing rule, also invaded, taking control of the southeastern Kham region.
- Notably, the Chinese campaign encroached upon the tribal regions north of the Assam Valley, pushing British officials to advocate extending British jurisdiction into the tribal territory.

About the Shimla Convention:

- The convention attempted **to settle the question of Tibet's sovereignty and avoid further territorial disputes in the region.**
- The treaty divided the Buddhist region into "Outer Tibet" and "Inner Tibet" – the former would "remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa under Chinese suzerainty", though China was not allowed to interfere in its affairs.
- The latter would be under the direct jurisdiction of the newly formed Republic of China.
- The latter of these newly decided boundaries would later be called the McMahon Line after McMahon, the chief British negotiator.
- Arguing that Tibet had no independent authority to enter into international agreements China did not sign the agreement.

What has the status of the McMahon line been since 1914?

- While there were disputes regarding the McMahon line from the very beginning, after the communists took power in 1949, **they pulled China out of all international agreements and the so-called "unequal treaties"** that had been imposed on it during its "century of humiliation", and demanded a renegotiation of all its borders.
- During the 1962 Sino-Indian War, **China was able to quickly overpower India and make deep inroads into Indian territory across the McMahon Line.**
- However, its forces retreated to pre-war positions after the unilateral ceasefire was announced on November 21.

Source: Hindu



4. IndiaAI ecosystem

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: Meity has formed a task force to draft roadmap for IndiaAI ecosystem.

More on the Topic:

- INDIAai (The National AI Portal of India), a **joint venture by MEITY, NEGD and NASSCOM**, has been set up to prepare the nation for an AI future.
- It is **the single central knowledge hub on artificial intelligence and allied fields** for aspiring entrepreneurs, students, professionals, academics, and everyone else.
- The portal focuses on creating and nurturing a unified AI ecosystem for driving excellence and leadership in India's AI journey, to foster economic growth and improve lives through it.
- IndiaAI platform **will focus on promoting Indian Startups, Research and Innovation**.
- AI is expected to add USD 967 billion to the Indian economy by 2035.

Source: Indian Express

5. PM MITRA Scheme

Topic: Government Schemes



In News: The Ministry of Textiles will shortly name the States identified for implementation of Prime Minister MITRA (Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel) scheme.

More on the Topic:

- PM MITRA Parks will offer **an opportunity to create an integrated textiles value chain right from spinning, weaving, processing/dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing at 1 location.**
- It will give a boost to the five F (farm, fibre, factory, fashion, foreign) vision of the Prime Minister.
- Integrated Textile Value chain at 1 location will reduce logistics cost of Industry
- Intended to generate ~1 lakh direct and 2 lakh indirect employment per park
- Sites for PM MITRA Parks will be selected by a Challenge Method based on objective criteria.

Source: Business Standard

6. Black Sea Grain Deal

Topic: International Relations



In News: Russia has agreed to 60-Day Black Sea Grain Deal Extension.

More on the Topic:

- The Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian ports, also called the Black Sea Grain Initiative, is an agreement between Russia and Ukraine made with Turkey and the United Nations during the 2022 at the onset of Russia Ukraine conflict.
- Deal was to provide for a **safe maritime humanitarian corridor for Ukrainian exports** (particularly for food grains and fertilizer including ammonia) from three of its key ports, namely, Chornomorsk, Odesa and Yuzhny/Pivdennyi on Black Sea.

Source: Business Standard



7. Doha Programme of Action (DPoA)

Topic: International Relations



In News: The Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) concluded with adoption of the 'Doha Political Declaration' by the world leaders.

More on the Topic:

- The declaration made by the head of the states is a key outcome of the second part of LDC5 conference held under the theme “From Potential to Prosperity” at Qatar.
- With just under eight years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the declaration focuses on implementing the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) — the 10-year **plan to put the world’s 46 most vulnerable countries back on track to achieving the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**.
- DPoA (2022-2031) consisted of **six key focus areas** including eradicating poverty, leveraging the potential of science and technology to fight against multidimensional vulnerabilities and to achieve the SDGs, addressing climate change, environmental degradation, recovering from COVID-19 pandemic and building resilience against future shocks for risk-informed sustainable development.

Source: Business Standard
