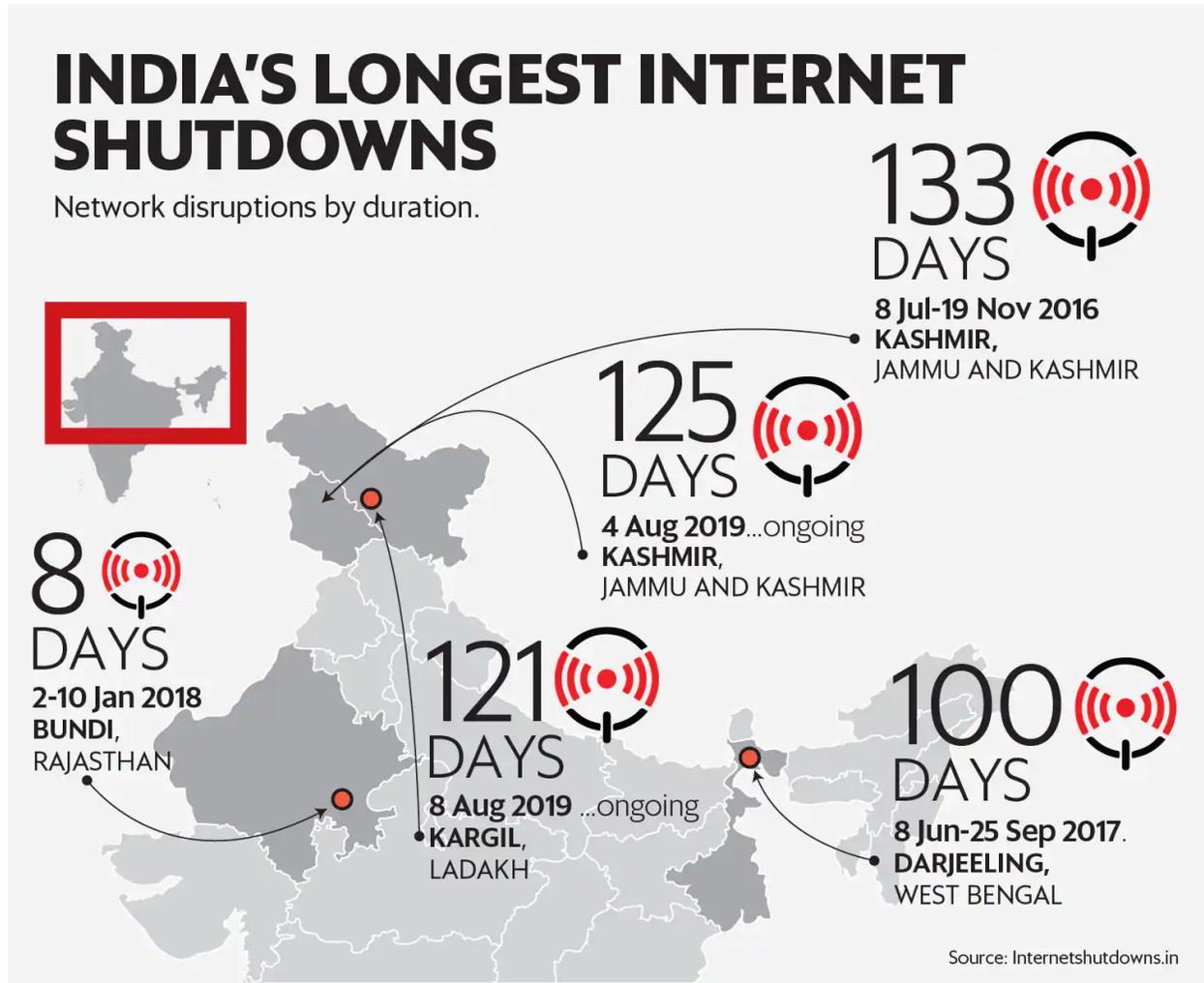


1. India's Internet Shut Downs



Topic: Social Justice/Governance

In News: Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) has scrutinised India's high number of internet shutdowns.

More on the Topic

- **Highlights of the Report:**
- Since 2018, India has shut down its internet more than any other country in the world.
- Local authorities used internet shutdowns in response to protests(53 cases), to prevent cheating in school examinations(37 cases), in response to communal violence(18 cases).
- Of 28 states in the country, 18 shut down the internet at least once in the last three years.
- Eleven states out of these did not publish suspension orders as directed by the Supreme Court.



- The total number of shutdowns does not include internet shutdowns in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir "where the authorities continued to shut down the internet more than any other place in the country."
- The most number of shutdowns were observed in Rajasthan.

Consequences of shutdowns:

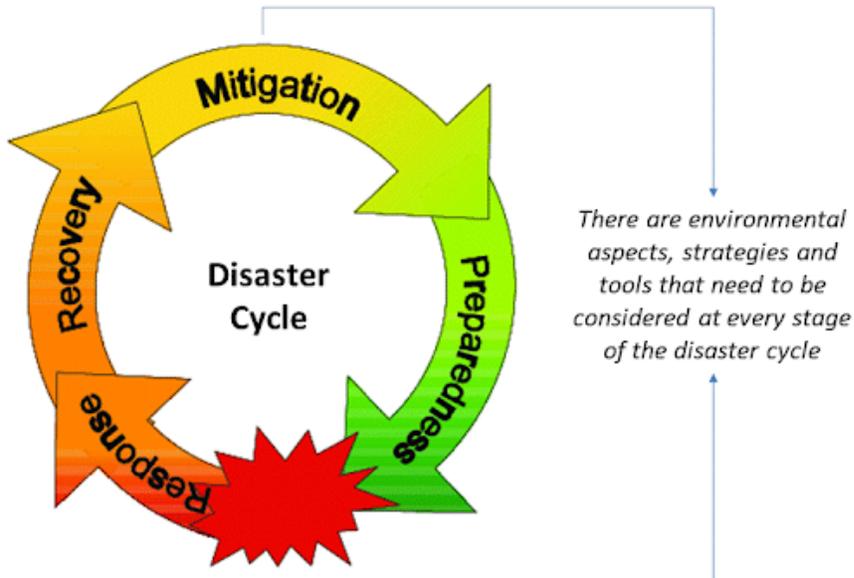
- **The National Food Security Act**, that provides subsidized food grains, requires internet as all people eligible for subsidized food rations were obliged to link their ration card with Aadhaar, the country's biometric identity system.
- Internet shutdowns also make it much harder for rural communities to conduct basic banking, pay utility bills, and to apply for and access official documents.
- **Impact on the Economy:** India is amongst the most impacted nations, losing more than US \$2 billion to internet shutdowns, almost double the combined loss of 20 other countries mentioned in it.
- With increase in the reliance by business and trade on digital technologies the consequences by internet shutdowns will be huge.
- **Fundamental Rights:** The fundamental rights such as right to speech, right to dissent, right to conduct business etc. are being violated.
- **Impact on availing Fundamental Services:** Several government schemes like the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** have moved towards digitising its benefits. Attendance checks and wage payments for the scheme required adequate internet access.
- Internet disruptions affected the implementation of MGNREGA.

Laws regulating Internet Shutdown?

- Internet Shutdowns may be defined as any disruption in access to the internet services most of which deals with mobile internet.
- As per the report provided by Quarterly Indicators Performance Report by TRAI, more than 90% Indians access the internet through the mobiles.
- Currently, suspension of telecom services (including internet shutdowns) is governed by **Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency & Public Safety) Rules, 2017, notified under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.**
- 2017 Rules provide for temporary shutdown of telecom services in a region on grounds of public emergency (up to 15 days at once).
- The law empowers senior bureaucrats from the home ministry and Centre and state levels to order shutdowns.

Source: DH

1. Cyclone Mitigation Measures



In News: Amid cyclone Biparjoy India's Disaster Management system is applauded for its effectiveness and efficiency.

More on the Topic:

- India is highly vulnerable to natural hazards particularly cyclones, floods, earthquakes, drought and landslides due to the following reasons,
- A long coastline of about 7,516 km of flat coastal terrain
- Shallow continental shelf, high population density
- Geographical location and physiological features of its coastal areas in the North Indian Ocean (NIO) Basin

Mitigation Approach to Cyclones:

- Mitigation means measures taken prior to the impact of a disaster to minimize its effects. Mitigation measures for cyclone include both structural and non-structural measures.
- **Hazard mapping:** A hazard map will illustrate the areas vulnerable to the cyclone, and associated storm surge and flood in any given time. It will be useful to estimate the severity of the cyclone and potential damage intensities in the region.
- **Land use planning:** Land use planning should be systematically considered for cyclones so that least critical activities are placed in vulnerable areas.



- **Engineered structures:** Structures need to be built to withstand wind forces. The public infrastructures including buildings for electricity services, communication facilities, etc. should be engineered structures.
- **Retrofitting Non-engineered Structures:** A large portion of Indian people lives in self-designed non-engineered buildings. The knowledge on how to strengthen non-engineered buildings should be shared with the community.
- **Cyclone Shelters:** Cyclone Shelters are necessary for areas vulnerable to recurrent cyclones
- **Flood management:** Embankments along the rivers, sea walls along the coasts may keep water away from the flood plains. Water flow can be regulated through construction of reservoirs, check dams and alternate drainage channels/routes.
- **Improving vegetation cover:** Improvement of the vegetation will increase water infiltration capacity of the soil, keep the soil intact and prevent erosion and slow runoff , act as a wind breaker. Coastal shelterbelt plantations can be developed to break severe wind speeds as it minimizes devastating effects.
- **Mangrove plantation:** Mangroves protect the coastal area from storm surge and wind which accompanied with cyclones. The tangle of branches slows the flow of water. Mangroves also help in erosion-control and coastal conservation.
- **Saline embankments:** Another activity that can be taken up as part of the community-based mitigation are **construction of saline embankments to protect habitation, agriculture crop and important installations** along the coast from sea water inundation due to storm surge.
- **Raised embankment or levees:** Raised embankments above high flood or storm surge level need to be identified or constructed within an easily accessible place which can serve as an assembly point for various activities in normal weather and as good shelter in stormy weather and high violent floods.
- **Early warning system:** Provide cyclone forecasting, tracking and warning systems
- **Awareness of the public:** The governments at all levels should initiate programs bringing awareness about the natural calamities and making provisions for higher local participation in the mitigation process.

Source: Hindu

3. Central Bureau of Investigation

Topic: Polity and Governance



In News: The Tamil Nadu government has withdrawn the general consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to carry out probe in the state.

More on the Topic:

- CBI is governed by The Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, and it must mandatorily obtain the consent of the state government concerned before beginning to investigate a crime in a state. The consent of the state government to CBI can be either case-specific or “general”.
- General consent is normally given by states to help CBI to conduct a seamless investigation of corruption cases against central government employees in their states
- This essentially means **consent by default and CBI may begin investigations into a case in a state with the premise that consent has been already given to it.**
- In case Specific consent, CBI would have to apply to the state government in every case.
- If specific consent is not granted, the CBI officials will not have the power of police personnel when they enter that state.
- **Withdrawal is not applicable to cases in which the investigation is already in progress.**

Exceptions:

- The Supreme Court and High Courts can order CBI to investigate a crime anywhere in the country without consent of the state.

- Consent does not apply in cases where someone has been caught red-handed taking a bribe.

About CBI:

- CBI was recommended by the **Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption**.
- **Motto:** Industry, Impartiality and Integrity.
- It derives its power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
- It Was **set up in 1963 by a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs** but now it works under Ministry of Personnel, Pension and Public Grievances. **CBI is not a statutory body.**
- CBI is **headed by a Director and assisted by a special director or an additional director.**
- It has a number of joint directors, deputy inspector generals, superintendents of police and all other usual ranks of police personnel.

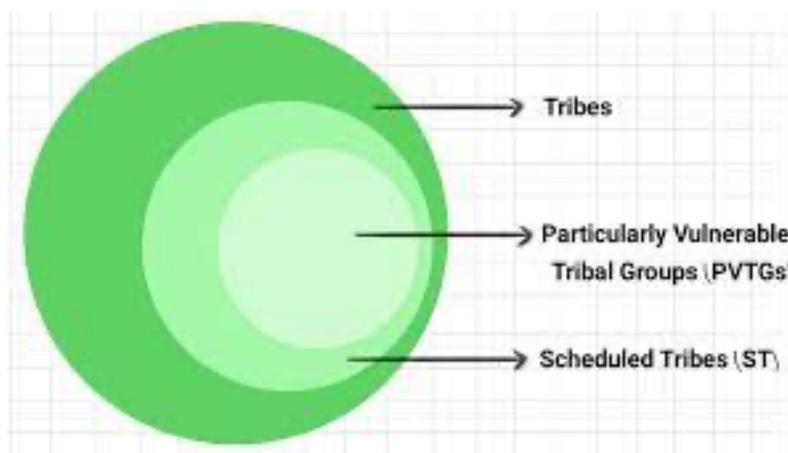
Functions:

- CBI investigates crime of **corruption, economic offences and serious and organized crime other than terrorism.**
- Provides assistance to the **Central Vigilance Commission and Lokpal.**
- Nodal police agency in India, which coordinates investigation on behalf of **Interpol Member countries.**

Source: Hindu

4. Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

Topic: Culture/Social Justice



In News: The Union government is now looking to design a survey that can gauge the Human Development Index (HDI) specifically for about 28 lakh people of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) living in over 22,000 villages across the country.

More on the Topic:

- Government will collect information about the changes in their lives and document it.

- It will be used to make a database from it at the village-level.
- It will in turn help to draw up an HDI for primitive tribal groups.
- This will also help to quantify how government policies are changing their lives.”

About Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups:

- PVTGs are more vulnerable among the tribal groups. Due to this factor, more developed and assertive tribal groups take a major chunk of the tribal development funds, because of which PVTGs need more funds directed for their development.
- Presently, there are 75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes, spread over 17 states and one Union Territory (UT), in the country (2011 census).

Government of India follows the following criteria for identification of PVTGs.

- Pre-agricultural level of technology
- Low level of literacy
- Economic backwardness
- A declining or stagnant population.

Source: Hindu

5. Bio-Stimulants

Benefits of bio stimulants in vegetable production



Topic: Science and Technology

In News: The Ministry of Agriculture has published draft guidelines for the registration of various categories of bio-stimulants.

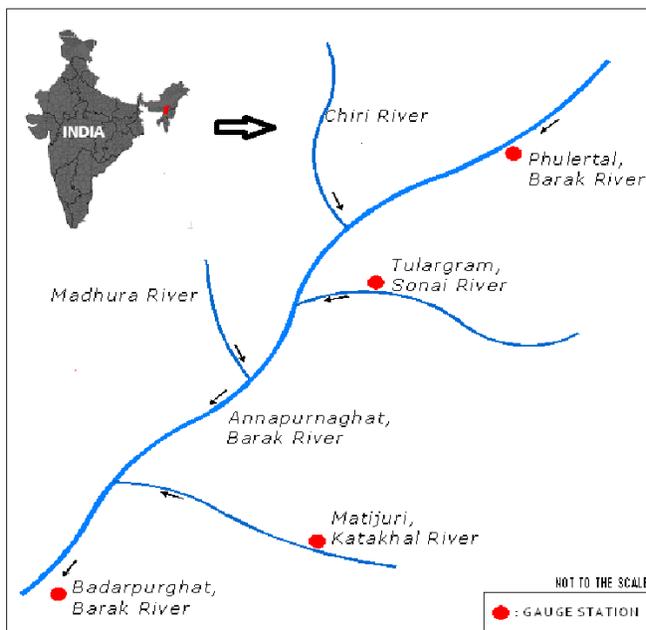
More on the Topic:

- Bio-stimulants are substances, microorganisms, or combinations thereof that **enhance the physiological processes in plants, leading to improved nutrient uptake, growth, yield, nutrition efficiency, crop quality, and stress tolerance.**
- Unlike pesticides or plant growth regulators, which fall under the Insecticides Act, 1968, bio-stimulants serve to stimulate plant processes without directly providing nutrients.
- These product reduce the need for fertilizers and increase plant growth, resistance to water and abiotic stresses.

Source: Hindu

6. Sonai River and Barak River

Topic: Geography



In News: India and Bangladesh have agreed to construct a Bailey bridge over the River Sonai.

More on the Topic:

- The river originates in Assam and is considered as a part of the Barak River system.
- It is the only left bank tributary of the Barak river and joins it at Dugripar Village.
- The Barak Bhuban wildlife sanctuary is located between the Barak and the Sonai rivers.

About Barak River:

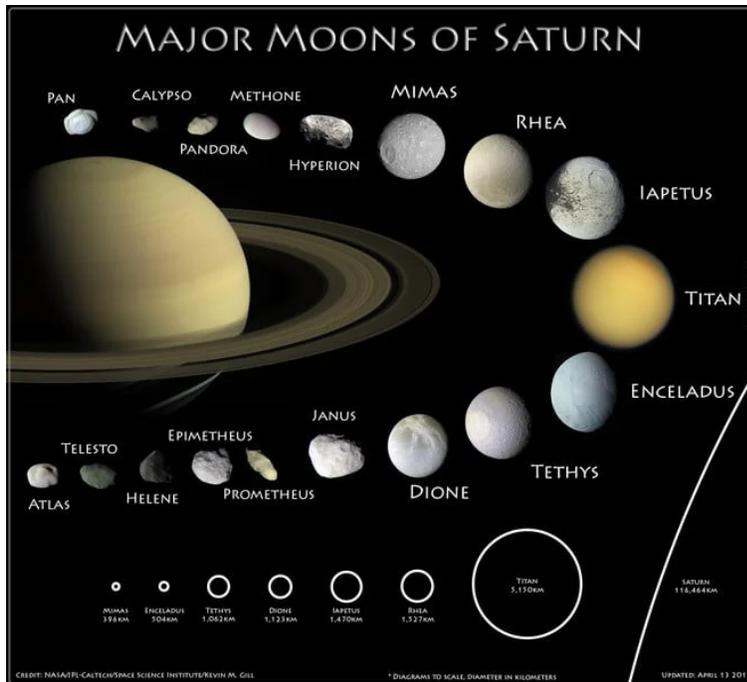
- Barak rises in the **Manipur hills** and enters the plains near **Lakhipur, Assam**
- The river enters Bangladesh as **Surma and Kushiara.**

- Later, the river is called the **Meghna** and receives the combined flow of the Ganga and Brahmaputra.
- The principal tributaries of Barak are the Jiri, the Dhaleswari, the Singla, the Longai, the Sonai and the Katakhal.

Source: Hindu

7. Saturn's moon Enceladus

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: For the first time, phosphorus, the rarest of six elements upon which life as we know it depends has been found in Saturn's moon Enceladus.

More on the Topic:

- **NASA's Cassini spacecraft** is responsible for the discovery.
- Enceladus is the **second nearest of major regular moons and the brightest of all moons of Saturn.**
- Enceladus harbors **an enormous ocean of liquid water underneath an icy crust.**
- Scientists have previously found other key building blocks of life in the moon's ocean including **carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, sulfur and oxygen.**
- However, **phosphorus, which teams up with sugars to form a skeleton to DNA molecules and also helps repair and maintain cell membranes,** had so far been not detected.

Source: Hindu