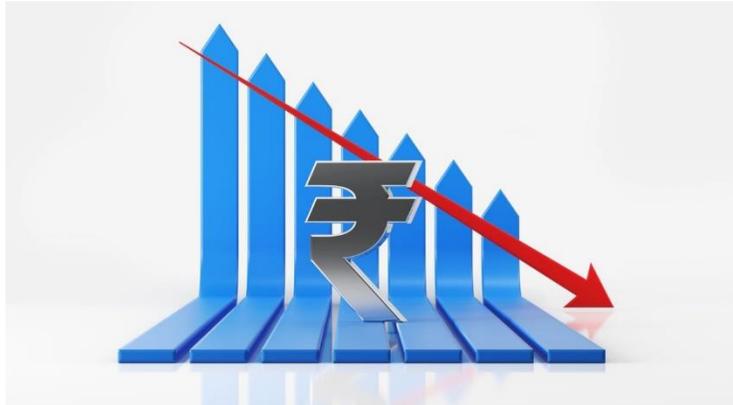


1. Depreciation of Rupee

Topic: Economy

In News: The Rupee slipped to 76.97/\$ recently, hitting its all-time low before rebounding following a possible intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



More on the Topic:

- The RBI has been intervening aggressively in the foreign exchange markets by selling dollars, which resulted in the foreign exchange reserves dip.
- The country's foreign exchange reserves also dropped to \$598 billion for the week ended April 29, down from its all-time high of \$642 billion in the week ended September 3, 2021.

What is currency depreciation?

- Currency depreciation is **the loss of value of a country's currency with respect to one or more foreign reference currencies**, typically in a floating exchange rate system in which no official currency value is maintained
- **Causes:** In a floating exchange rate system, a currency's value goes up (or down) if the demand for it goes up more (or less) than the supply does.
- In the short run this can happen unpredictably for a variety of reasons, including the balance of trade, speculation, or other factors in the international capital market.
- For example, a surge in purchases of foreign goods by home country residents will cause a surge in demand for foreign currency with which to pay for those goods, causing a depreciation of the home currency.
- **Economic effects:**
- **Positive Effects:** Depreciation of a currency **tends to increase a country's balance of trade** (exports minus imports) by improving the competitiveness of domestic goods in foreign markets while making foreign goods less competitive in the domestic market by becoming more expensive.
- **Negative Effects:** It poses risk of imported inflation, and may make it difficult for the central bank to maintain interest rates at a record low for longer.
- Reduction in Forex reserves as RBI sell them to arrest depreciation of rupee.

About Forex Reserves:

- Foreign Exchange reserves or Forex reserves are assets such as foreign currencies, gold reserves, treasury bills, Other Government Securities etc retained by a central bank or other monetary authority.
- **RBI is the custodian of the Foreign exchange reserves in India.**

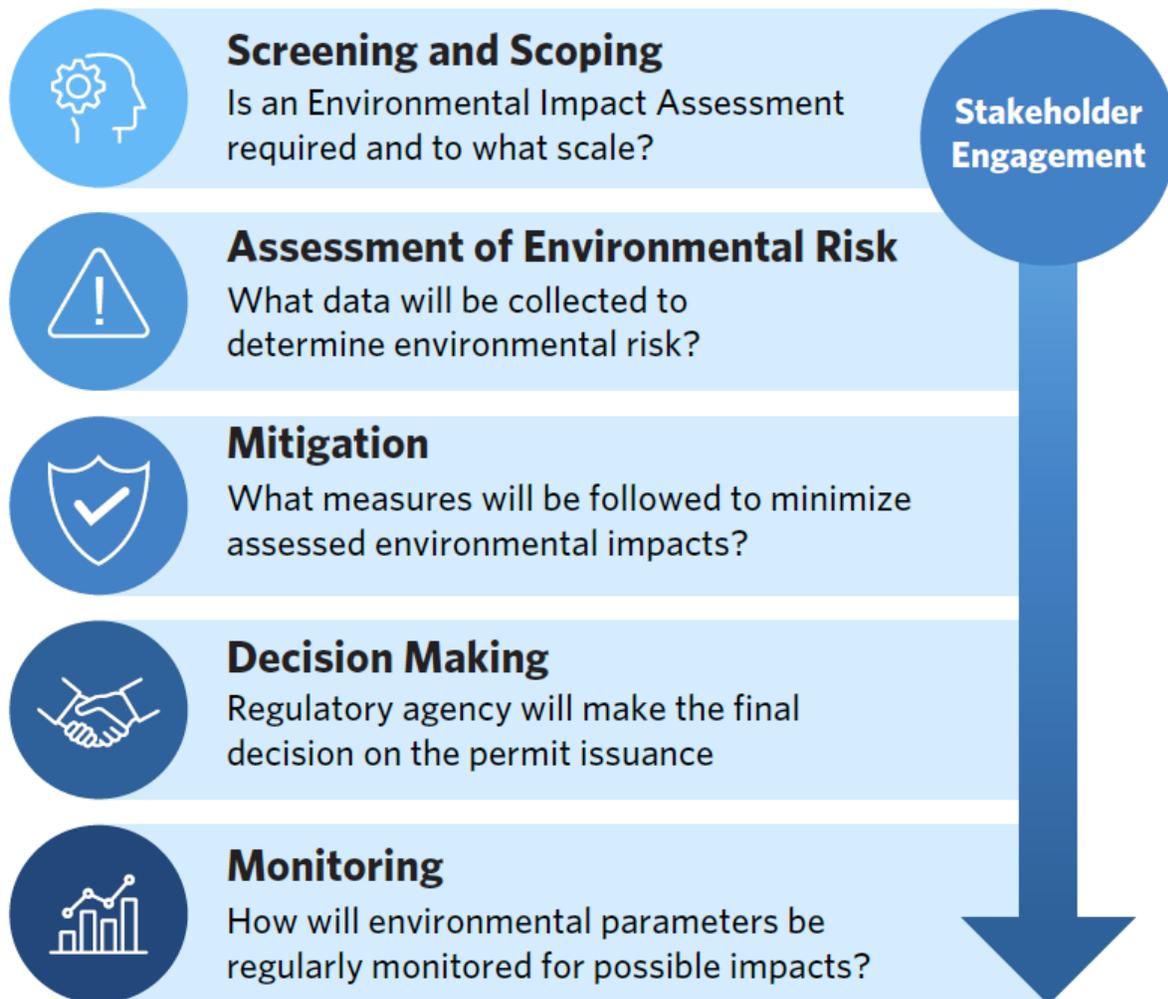
- Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 set the legal provisions for governing the forex reserves in India.
- **It checks the balance payments and influences the foreign exchange rate** of its currency and maintains stability in financial markets.

Source: Indian Express

2. Environment Impact Assessment

Topic: Environment and Ecology

Environmental Impact Assessment



In News: Central Government has questioned whether any environmental impact study has been carried out for approving projects in the vicinity of Jog Falls.

More on the Topic:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.
- **EIA was first introduced in India in 1978** with regard to the various river valley projects all over the country and later expanded to include various other developmental procedures in its scope.
- **EIA is now mandatory for over 30 classes of projects.**

Objectives of EIA:

- It aims to **predict environmental impacts at an early stage** in project planning and design, find ways and means to reduce adverse impacts, shape projects to suit the local environment and present the predictions and options to decision-makers.
- EIA **systematically examines both beneficial and adverse consequences of the project** and ensures that these effects are taken into account during project design.
- It helps to identify possible environmental effects of the proposed project, proposes measures to mitigate adverse effects and predicts whether there will be significant adverse environmental effects, even after the mitigation is implemented.
- Properly conducted EIA also **lessens conflicts by promoting community participation**, informing decision makers, and helping lay the base for environmentally sound projects.

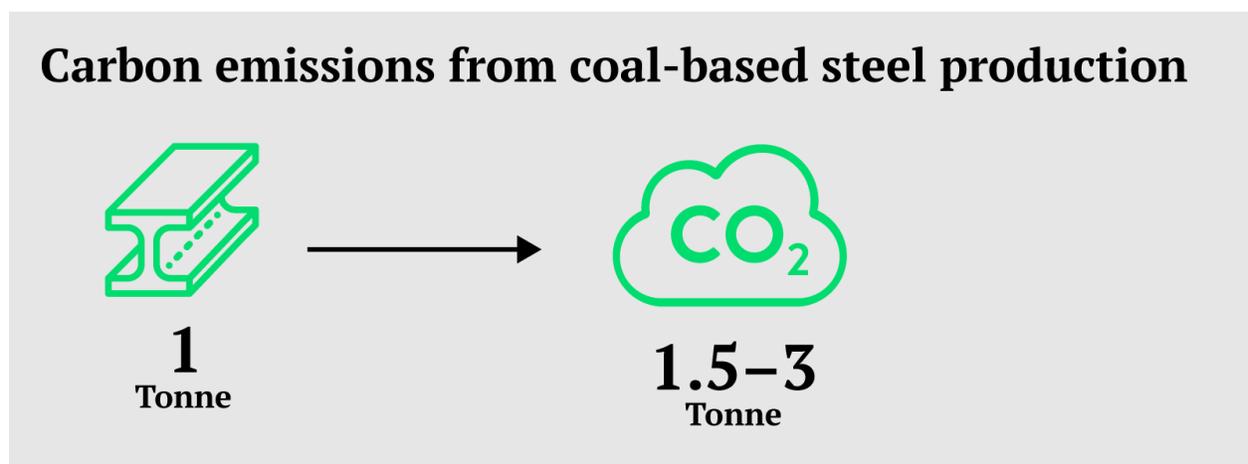
About Jogfalls:

- Jog Falls is a waterfall on the Sharavati river located in the Western Ghats in Shivamogga District, Karnataka.

Source: Indian Express

3.Green Steel

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: The Parliamentary Consultative Committee meeting for Ministry of Steel was convened recently to brainstorm on the topic “Transition towards Green Steel”.



More on the Topic:

- The common takeaway was that **green steel is simply steel with the lowest carbon footprint currently possible**, which will vary from producer to producer and will continue to evolve over time.
- This can be done through **usage of gas in place of coal, recycling steel etc.**
- To move towards 'Green Steel', the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry has launched **Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project in the Eastern India**, which can provide gas to all the Steel plants, located in the area.
- The gas will help in replacing coal in steel making process as usage of coal leads to large amount of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

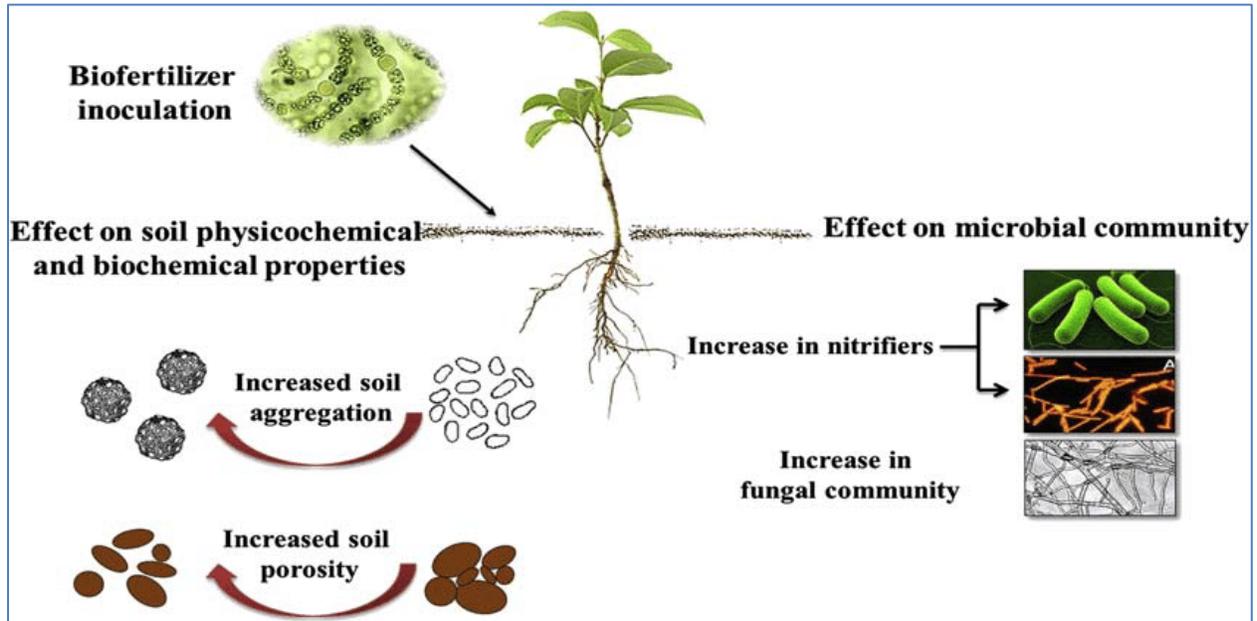
Why Green Steel is important for India:

- Iron and Steel sector is specially challenging with regard **to reduction in Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions**, as use of fossil fuel based energy & reductant is deeply embedded in the production process.
- The emissions from the Indian iron & steel industry is higher primarily due to **higher usage coal based energy source and as reductant.**
- It is thus **imperative for the Indian steel industry to reduce its emissions substantially** and pressure to reduce it is growing by the day in view of the commitments made in the COP26.

Source: Indian Express

4. The State of Biofertilizers and Organic Fertilizers in India

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: The State of Biofertilizers and Organic Fertilizers in India was released by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a Delhi-based think-tank.

More on the Topic:

- Availability, quality and uptake of bio fertilisers and organic fertilisers in India is poor.
- These non-chemical options are considered critical to the transition from chemical-based to sustainable farming practices like organic and natural farming. Availability of cost-effective quality biofertilisers and organic fertilisers is, therefore, of utmost importance. However, these sectors have been neglected over the years.
- Both the sectors have so far received limited attention and support by the central and most state governments, compared to the chemical fertiliser sector.
- The government subsidy received by the chemical fertiliser sector was to the tune of Rs **1.3 lakh crore** in 2020-21, while the budget allocated to the **entire organic fertiliser and biofertilisers sector was limited to a few hundred crores.**
- **India has become the second-highest producer and consumer of chemical fertilisers** in the world. Per hectare chemical fertiliser consumption has been increasing over the years, including in the last two decades.
- **The country's soil health is also poor:** The soil sample test results showed severe and widespread deficiency of organic carbon, macronutrients and micronutrients in Indian soils.

- **The Union government has several schemes and programmes to promote biofertilisers and organic fertilisers.** Some of these schemes are aimed at supporting farmers, while others support manufacturers.
- **But only a very small part of these schemes contribute to the sector.** The potential of these schemes is not being fully utilised.
- **There is a lack of data on companies, their registered products, authorisations given and production details of various types of manufacturers** related to biofertilisers and organic fertilisers sector.
- State governments may have kept the records, but compiled countrywide information is lacking.
- More than 90 per cent of the country-wide production of carrier-based solid biofertilisers is limited to only five states. Same is the case with liquid biofertilisers.
- Data for years 2018–19 showed **Karnataka as the biggest producer of organic fertilisers**, and this single state contributed 94 per cent share in countrywide production.
- There is a widespread availability of inferior quality as well as spurious biofertiliser and organic fertiliser products across the country.

What is Bio Fertilisers:

- In nature, there are a number of useful soil micro organisms which can help plants to absorb nutrients.
- Their utility can be enhanced with human intervention by selecting efficient organisms, culturing them and adding them to soils directly or through seeds.
- The cultured micro organisms packed in some carrier material for easy application in the field are called bio-fertilisers. Thus, the critical input in Biofertilisers is the micro organisms.
- Rhizobium, Azotobacter, Azospirillum and blue green algae(BGA) have been traditionally used as Biofertilizers.

What is Organic Fertiliser?

- Organic fertilizers are fertilizers that are naturally produced. Fertilizers are materials that can be added to soil or plants, in order to provide nutrients and sustain growth.
- Examples: Manure. It is made from animal excreta(cow dung & goat droppings), Compost (It is organic matter decomposed through composting)

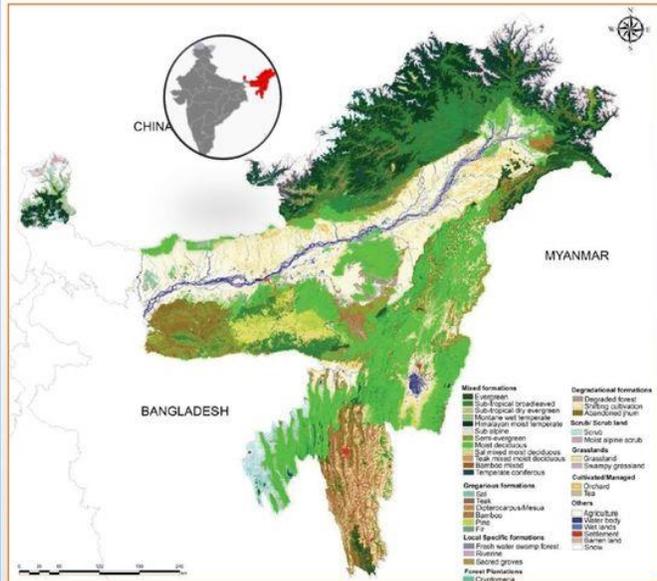
Source: Business Standard

5. North East Capacity Building

Topic: Government Schemes



Total Geographical Areas (TGA)	263181 Sq. km. (8% of India's TGA)
Total states/districts	8/110
Total population	45587982 as per 2011 census
Population density	148 /Sq. km
Languages spoken	220
Traditional agriculture	Jhum / shifting cultivation
Biodiversity hotspot	51 forest types, 6 out of 9 vegetation types found in NE, 8000 out of 15000 species of flowering plants, highest species diversity in NE (AP – 5000 7 Sikkim – 45000), 800 out of 1500 endangered floral species reported in NE
Average annual Rainfall	~ 2000 mm
Average road density	66 km/ 100 Sq. km.



Socio-economic development in the region governed by MDoNER's (Ministry for Development of North Eastern Region) and North Eastern Council (NEC).

In News: Union Minister of State for Electronics & IT and Entrepreneurship & Skill Development launched the NECB 2.0 project

More on the Topic:

- It aims for capacity building and training in digital skill sets and industry demanding technologies for various sections of society in the North East states.
- **Main objective is the overall upliftment of socio economic status of the North East citizens by creating smart ecosystem.**
- National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) is the implementation agency through its centres at Agartala, Aizwal, Gangtok Guwahati, Imphal, Itanagar, Kohima and Shillong.

Source: Business Standard

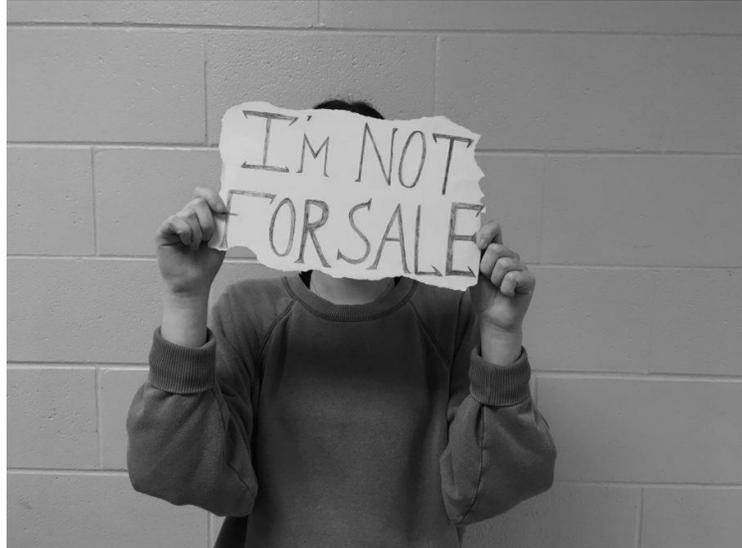
6. Human Trafficking

Topic: Social Justice

In News: Railway Protection Force (RPF) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Association for Voluntary Action (AVA) for a trafficking free nation.

More on the Topic:

- Railway Protection Force has been discharging responsibility as mandated by the Standardized Operating Procedure for **rescue of children issued by Ministry of Railways** and working with other stakeholders **to rescue more than 50,000 children since 2018 under “Operation Nanhe Farishte”**.
- It has recently launched **“Operation AAHT” to take stringent action against human trafficking** through rail and has been rescuing victims of Human Trafficking from the clutches of traffickers.
- In course of its action against traffickers, **it has rescued more than 1400 minors** including 298 minor girls from the clutches of traffickers.
- RPF has also set up **Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs)** at more than 740 locations across India instructed to take action against Human Trafficking in coordination of other agencies in this field.



Source: Hindu