

ECONOMY

❖ **The Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022**

❖ **CONTEXT:** The Indian Competition Act was passed in 2002, but it came into effect only seven years later. The Competition Commission primarily pursues three issues of anti-competitive practices in the market: anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominance and combinations. As the dynamics of the market changes rapidly due to technological advancements, artificial intelligence, and the increasing importance of factors other than price, amendments became necessary to sustain and promote market competition. Therefore, a review committee was established in 2019 which proposed several major amendments. The long-awaited Bill to amend the Competition Act, 2002, was finally tabled in the Lok Sabha recently.

❖ **What is the major change in dealing with new-age market combinations?**

- Any acquisition, merger or amalgamation may constitute a combination. Section 5 currently says parties indulging in merger, acquisition, or amalgamation need to notify the Commission of the combination only on the basis of 'asset' or 'turnover'.
- The new Bill proposes to add a 'deal value' threshold. It will be mandatory to notify the Commission of any transaction with a deal value in excess of ₹2,000 crore and if either of the parties has 'substantial business operations in India'.
- The Commission shall frame regulations to prescribe the requirements for assessing whether an enterprise has 'substantial business operations in India'.
- This change will strengthen the Commission's review mechanism, particularly in the digital and infrastructure space, a majority of which were not reported earlier, as the asset or turnover values did not meet the jurisdictional thresholds.
- When business entities are willing to execute a combination, they must inform the Commission. The Commission may approve or disapprove the combination, keeping in mind the appreciable adverse effect on competition that is likely to be caused.
- The Commission earlier had 210 days to approve the combination, after which it is automatically approved. The new Bill seeks to accelerate the timeline from 210 working days to only 150 working days with a conservatory period of 30 days for extensions. This will speed up the clearance of combinations and increase the importance of pre-filing consultations with the Commission.

❖ **What is gun-jumping?**

- Parties should not go ahead with a combination prior to its approval. If the combining parties close a notified transaction before the approval, or have consummated a reportable transaction without bringing it to the Commission's knowledge, it is seen as gun-jumping.
- The penalty for gun-jumping was a total of 1% of the asset or turnover. This is now proposed to be 1% of the deal value.

❖ **What challenge do combining parties face in open market purchases?**

- There have been several gun-jumping cases owing to the combining parties' inability to defer the consummation of open market purchases. Many of them argue that acquisitions involving open market purchase of target shares must be completed quickly, lest the stock value and total consideration undergo a change. If parties wait for the Commission's clearance, the transaction may become unaffordable.
- Similar to the European Union merger regulations, the present amendment Bill also proposes to exempt open market purchases and stock market transactions from the requirement to notify them to the Commission in advance. This is subject to the condition that the acquirer does not exercise voting or ownership rights until the transaction is approved and the same is notified to the Commission subsequently.

❖ **Does the amendment Bill address the issue of Hub-and-Spoke Cartels?**

- A Hub-and-Spoke arrangement is a kind of cartelisation in which vertically related players act as a hub and place horizontal restrictions on suppliers or retailers (spokes).
- Currently, the prohibition on anti-competitive agreements only covers entities with similar trades that engage in anti-competitive practices. This ignores hub-and-spoke cartels operated at different levels of the vertical chain by distributors and suppliers.
- To combat this, the amendment broadens the scope of 'anti-competitive agreements' to catch entities that facilitate cartelisation even if they are not engaged in identical trade practices.

❖ **What is the amendment to the 'settlements' and 'commitments' mechanisms?**

- The new amendment proposes a framework for settlements and commitments for cases relating to vertical agreements and abuse of dominance.
- In the case of vertical agreements and abuse of dominance, the parties may apply for a 'commitment' before the Director General (DG) submits the report.
- 'Settlement' will be considered after the report is submitted and before the Commission decides.
- According to the amendment, the Commission's decision regarding commitment or settlement will not be appealable after hearing all stakeholders in the case. The Commission will come out with regulations regarding procedural aspects.

❖ **What are the other major amendments?**

- In the amendment Bill, a provision called 'Leniency Plus' allows the commission to give an additional waiver of penalties to an applicant who discloses the existence of another cartel in an unrelated market, provided the information enables the Commission to form a prima facie opinion about the existence of the cartel.
- Other amendments include the appointment of the DG by the Commission rather than the Central government, giving the Commission greater control.
- According to the Bill, the DG has the power to conduct investigations, including raids.
- The Commission will only consider information filed within three years of the occurrence of the cause of action.
- For any false information filed, a penalty of five crore will be imposed, and for failure to comply with the Commission directions, a penalty of ₹10 crore will be imposed.
- Additionally, the Commission will develop guidelines regarding the amount of penalties for various competition violations.
- For an appeal to be heard by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) against the Commission's order, the party will have to deposit 25% of the penalty amount.
- ❖ **What next?**
 - By implementing these amendments, the Commission should be better equipped to handle certain aspects of the new-age market and transform its functioning to be more robust.
 - The proposed amendments are undoubtedly needed; however, these are heavily dependent on regulations that will be notified by the Commission later.
 - These regulations will influence the proposals. Also, the government needs to recognise that market dynamics change constantly, so it is necessary to update laws regularly.
- ❖ **Swiggy's moonlighting policy**
- ❖ **CONTEXT: Food delivery start-up Swiggy recently announced an "industry-first" policy of allowing its employees to take up gigs or projects outside of their regular employment at the company, during the hours away from work. Swiggy calls these new norms the "moonlighting" policy.**
- ❖ **What is moonlighting?**
 - Moonlighting is the act of working at an extra job beyond regular working hours, usually without the knowledge of the employer. Since the side job was mostly at nighttime or on weekends, it was referred to as moonlighting. The term gained popularity when workers in the US started seeking a second job beyond their regular 9-to-5 work for additional income.
- ❖ **What is Swiggy's moonlighting policy?**
 - According to Swiggy along with a full-time job at Swiggy, employees will be allowed to pick up additional projects outside work and the company will support them. For this purpose, the gigs or temporary work will be categorised.
 - The projects have been divided into two buckets A & B. List A projects are highly-sensitive, leveraging professional know-how. List B are projects that fall under the space of interests and hobbies, that are non-professional in nature.
 - According to the policy, projects that are picked up for economic consideration and/or fall under List A will need to be declared by the employee, and they can be taken up only if they are approved by Swiggy.
 - Any project or activity that is taken up outside office hours or on the weekend, without affecting productivity, and does not have a conflict of interest; can be picked up by the employees. The employee will have to declare a few necessary details so that the team can greenlight the project. For example, an employee involved in Data Science at Swiggy said she will work on an outside project on enabling a smart spaces platform based on Internet of Things intelligence.
- ❖ **Why do people moonlight, and is it legal?**
 - The main reason for going above and beyond an existing job is earning more money. Additionally, working in a different role can allow a person to develop new skills, explore related domains and connect with more people.
 - But employers are suspicious of this practice often because it can mean that a worker may not give their organisation the time it needs, and not give any extra time to either organisation. Holidays and time-off are also meant to rest a worker and improve their efficiency, but taking on another job could make this difficult.
 - In India, private companies usually do not allow holding multiple jobs. Shops and Establishment Acts of various states restrict double employment as well but vary in application especially when it comes to highly-specialised industries.
- ❖ **Has moonlighting increased recently?**
 - In the last two years, coronavirus-induced lockdowns increased the tendency to moonlight among workers in certain industries. This was because apart from financial insecurity at the time, working from home allowed a few categories of workers to get more work done, freeing up time for a second job. The gig economy concept has gained greater legitimacy in recent years, too.
 - It was recently reported in a Kotak Institutional Equities survey of 400 people across the IT and ITeS space, that 65 per cent of people knew of those pursuing part-time opportunities or moonlighting while working from home.
 - In an article in The Wall Street Journal, it was detailed how some IT workers, in particular, made use of this opportunity by doing the bare minimum at their jobs to juggle multiple responsibilities.

- Even though double employment is not banned in the US, many workers kept their second job discreet; some were fired when found out.
- A website called Over employed was also launched by an American worker for giving tips about managing two jobs and having community discussions around the topic with others planning on doing the same, even as the ethics of secretly taking another job were being debated.

HEALTH

❖ **Why the Lumpy Skin Disease continues to spread among cattle**

- ❖ **CONTEXT:** Several states, including Gujarat and Rajasthan, have been battling the outbreak of Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), a viral infection of cattle. Since the first LSD case was reported on April 23 2022 in Kutch, the disease has spread to 26 of Gujarat's 33 districts and has claimed more than 4,000 cattle heads. In Rajasthan, around 27,000 cattle heads have reportedly succumbed to the virus. Since 2019, outbreaks of the disease have been reported in 20 states of India.

❖ **The LSD virus**

- LSD is caused by the lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV), which is a virus of the capripoxvirus genus in the poxviridae family. Sheeppox virus and goatpox virus are the other members of the genus capripoxvirus.
- The LSDV mainly affects cattle — cow and its progeny, and the Asian water buffaloes.
- According to a 2021 report of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, LSD outbreaks occur in epidemics several years apart. As per the report, the existence of a specific reservoir for the virus is not known, nor is it known as to how and where the virus survives between epidemics.

❖ **Prevalence**

- According to the FAO report, LSD was long restricted to sub-Saharan Africa. However, over the past decade, it spread to the Middle East and Turkey. From 2015 onward, it has impacted the Balkan (southeast Europe) countries, Caucasus (eastern Europe) and Russia.
- LSD entered India, Bangladesh and China in July 2019. Since then, outbreaks of the disease have been reported from 20 Indian states – Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

❖ **Outbreaks in Gujarat**

- There were small outbreaks in Kheda, Anand in 2020 and 2021, but the state government managed to control them.
- The state animal husbandry department treated infected cattle and gave goat pox vaccine to healthy animals in peripheral areas and no casualty were reported back then.
- However, in 2022, since the first case was reported from Kaiyari, a village on the Indo-Pak border in Lakhpat taluka of Kutch on April 23, the LSD has virtually swept the entire state, infecting cattle of all breeds with buffaloes remaining safe largely.
- As of August 23, the number of officially reported cases stood at 1.11 lakh and 4281 deaths. Thus, the fatality rate is around 4 percent. Gujarat government officers claim the infectious disease entered the state from Rajasthan where the number of cases reportedly stands at 11 lakh and casualty 27,000.

❖ **How it spreads**

- The LSDV spreads through blood-sucking vectors like ticks and mites like houseflies, mosquitoes, etc. It also spreads through contaminated water, fodder and feed.
- Mosquito and housefly infestations remain at their peak during the monsoon, and veterinary scientists and government officers blame a very wet July for the rapid spread of the infection in Gujarat this year.
- Scientists have been advising isolation of infected animals from the healthy ones in an attempt to contain the spread of the virus.
- However, there is a problem of feral cattle in Gujarat, the state where cow slaughter is prohibited, and scientists say these free-ranging cattle could also be a reason for rapid spread of LSD.

❖ **Symptoms**

- LSDV attacks the circulatory system of an animal and causes vasculitis or inflammation of blood vessels and lesions in various organs like liver, lungs, spleen, lymph nodes etc.
- In turn, it causes epidermis, making the outer surface of the skin to get separated from dermis – the inner layer of the skin. This, in turn, leads to formation of lumps or nodules on an animal's body. Fever, increased mucus secretion, loss of appetite etc are among other symptoms.

❖ **How does it lead to death**

- A team has conducted post-mortem on eight carcasses in Kutch and Banaskantha and found that the virus had caused necrotic vasculitis or death of living tissues in local areas and fibrosis in various organs of infected cattle. Such a situation leads to failure of various organs, and eventually death.
- Also, the nodules may burst due to outer pressure or friction as skin covering such nodules is very thin. Such open wounds make animals susceptible to secondary – bacterial and protozoal – infections and development of magots and can prove fatal.

- Animals may also develop bronchopneumonia, impairing their respiratory system. The animal falls in a vicious cycle as it loses stamina due to loss of appetite and due to edema (swelling caused by accumulation of excess fluid in body tissues) in brisket and in turn, the disease becomes worse.
- ❖ **Risk to indigenous breeds**
- As per the 2019 Livestock census, total bovine population of Gujarat is 2.60 crore, including 1.49 crore cattle (1.14 crore of indigenous breeds and 35.19 lakh exotic) and 1.10 crore buffaloes. So, the majority are of indigenous breeds like Kankrej, Gir, Sahiwal, etc. but the state also has a sizable population of exotic/crossbred Jersey and HF cows.
- Kankrej, the coveted indigenous cattle breed of Gujarat known for being resistant to diseases and parasites, has been the worst hit by LSD, it could be due to the larger population size of this breed in the state.
- LSD infection has spread among Gir, another important cattle breed in Junagadh, Amreli, Jamnagar among other places, the higher mortality rates among these breeds could be due to genetic or hereditary susceptibility.
- ❖ **Government response**
- The state government has been ring-vaccinating healthy cattle heads in the five-km radius of an outbreak by administering them goat pox vaccine.
- LSD being a viral disease, there is no specific cure once an animal contracts the virus and therefore vaccination is the most effective tool.
- As of August 23, the government had vaccinated 47.53 lakh cattle heads and around 87,000 cattle heads have already recovered from LSD.
- Veterinarians are also administering drugs to alleviate symptoms of LSD in cattle.
- The government has facilitated setting up isolation centres for feral cattle in urban areas while prohibiting cattle fairs and exhibitions and transportation of cattle in the affected areas. On August 3, the government also set up a seven-member task force headed by Prof Naresh Kelawala.
- ❖ **Why the infection continues to spread**
- The taskforce has been focusing on why there were no casualties in the previous outbreaks in the state and why the mortality rate is high in the current wave. Collected samples of infected animals and sent them for genome sequencing of the virus to ascertain if there is a new mutant of LSDV at play.
- Another reason could be the interplay between LSDV's incubation period of around eight to 10 days when animals do not display any symptoms and around three-week time that the vaccine takes to give protection to a cattle. It takes around 21 days post the administration of vaccine dose to achieve immunity.
- ❖ **Economic impact**
- In cases of aggravated symptoms, cows stop producing milk and pregnant cows suffer miscarriages. According to Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), that markets dairy products under brand name Amul, concedes their cow milk collection has gone down. In August, it had reduced by around five percent in Kutch, the worst affected district.
- Amul also raised prices of milk on August 17. Besides, Kankrej bullocks are a prized breed among farmers and loss of any bullock in the mid of Kharif season can affect agricultural yields indirectly.
- ❖ **The 'tomato flu' outbreak and the Centre's advisory**
- ❖ **CONTEXT:** Days after a paper in The Lancet journal raised concerns over the rise in cases of the "new virus known as tomato flu" among children in India, the Union Health Ministry issued an advisory, asking States to take measures to prevent its spread. In a set of guidelines, the Centre referred to the disease as a probable variant of the hand, foot and mouth disease, or HFMD, which commonly occurs in children under 10 years of age and can also infect adults. As per the Lancet paper, India recorded around 100 cases of 'tomato flu' in children below nine years of age in less than three months. The transmission of the "highly contagious" yet "non-life-threatening virus" could lead to serious consequences by spreading to adults as well.
- ❖ **What does The Lancet report say?**
- Define the infection as a "new virus" that has emerged in Kerala in children younger than five years.
- The report, however, contradicts itself by also claiming the infection to be in an endemic state. 'Endemic' is a term used to refer to a disease which has spread in a limited area but has been around for some time.
- The report further claims that 'tomato flu' was first identified in the Kollam district of Kerala on May 6 2022. However, a study published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine in its Immunity, Inflammation and Disease journal in July says that cases of 'tomato fever' have been reported in the past in 2007 as well.
- The report does not mention a specific origin, type or cause of the infection. The report suggests that it may be an after-effect of chikungunya or dengue fever in children rather than a viral infection, or that the virus could also be a new variant of the HFMD — a common viral infection affecting young children that appears with fever, rashes or blisters on the skin and mouth sores.
- ❖ **What are experts saying?**
- As far as its etymology is concerned, the Lancet report claims that the 'tomato flu' is so named because of the "eruption of red and painful blisters throughout the body that gradually enlarge to the size of a tomato." Medical

experts have taken strong exception to this, saying that the usage of such terms is unscientific and misleading. They also clarify that the infection is not related to the consumption of tomatoes in any way.

- Tomato fever is a misleading colloquial name for hand, foot, and mouth disease. This is a mild viral illness commonly affecting young children typically below age 10. It is usually caused by a Coxsackie virus. Tomato flu' is caused by Coxsackievirus A16. It belongs to the Enterovirus family.
- HFMD is a frequent febrile rash illness of childhood caused by enteroviruses (EV): Coxsackie A16 (CA16), EV A71, Coxsackie A6, Coxsackie B and Echo viruses.
- ❖ **What did the advisory state?**
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare stated that the illness is a clinical variant of the HFMD. The Ministry clarified that the virus causing 'tomato flu' is not related to SARS-CoV-2, monkeypox, dengue, or chikungunya despite symptoms similar to those in viral infections.
- It seems the disease is a clinical variant of the so-called hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) that is common in school-going children. Infants and young children are also prone to this infection through the use of nappies, touching unclean surfaces as well as putting things directly into the mouth. It is a self-limiting illness and no specific medication exists for its treatment yet.
- A child infected with 'tomato flu' will have fever, rashes and pain in joints. The illness usually begins with a mild fever, poor appetite, malaise, and occasionally, a sore throat. Small red blisters appear one or two days after the fever and these sores are usually located on the tongue, gums, inside of the cheeks, palms and soles. In some cases, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, swelling of joints, body ache, and common influenza-like symptoms have also been noted.
- It advised isolation for five to seven days from the onset of any symptom to prevent the spread of infection.

PRELIMS

1. India's first observatory to monitor space activity to come up in Uttarakhand

- ❖ **CONTEXT: India's first commercial space situational awareness observatory, to track objects as small as 10 cm in size orbiting the earth, will be set up in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand by Digantara, a space sector start-up.**

- The space situational awareness (SSA) observatory will help India track any activity in space including that of space debris and military satellites hovering over the region.
- Currently, the United States is a dominant player in monitoring space debris with observatories in multiple locations and commercial companies providing additional inputs from across the world.
- The observatory in Uttarakhand will fill the crucial gap in SSA observations in the region as there is a lack of such facilities between Australia and southern Africa
- The high-quality observations, along with those of its partner ground-based sensor network, would help improve its ability to monitor events occurring in deep space, especially in the geostationary, medium-Earth, and high-Earth orbits.
- With this data, it would be able to reduce the potential for collisions between satellites and other spacecraft by making more accurate predictions of their location, speed, and trajectory.
- The observatory will also give India indigenous capabilities to monitor space activity over the subcontinent, as the war in Ukraine; several Russian satellites were seen hovering over the region.
- For example, Chinese satellites are seen over one particular region of India for a long time, having the indigenous capability to monitor such activities and not being dependent on countries like the U.S. is a plus for India.
- India has been monitoring space objects using multi-object tracking radars and the SSA observatory will be a huge boost in the sector.
- With the establishment of the observatory it will be able to supplement its space-based sensors in its mission to monitor satellites and debris in orbits ranging from Low Earth Orbit (LEO) to Geosynchronous Earth Orbit (GEO). This will also bring indigenous capabilities to the nation for both military and civilian applications.
- There is an increasing need for efficient collision avoidance systems in highly congested orbital regions like low earth orbit and geosynchronous earth orbit.
- This will improve the effectiveness of tracking and identifying pre-existing resident space objects (RSO), and will result in the creation of a hybrid data pool that will serve both the commercial and the defence sectors of the space industry.

2. Roots and meaning of mandala art, now on display in a park in Liverpool

- ❖ **CONTEXT: A spectacular 'Mandala' art installation, bigger than the size of a football field, currently covers a public park in Liverpool in the United Kingdom. Unveiled on August 12, the piece of land art called The Knowsley Mandala is made of natural elements, and is expected to last a month after which it will slowly fade away.**
- The artist behind the creation at Halewood Park Triangle is Yorkshire-based James Brunt, who is known for using natural materials found in forests, parks, and on beaches to create elaborate artworks that he photographs to document before they wither.



❖ **The art form**

- Mandala patterns are motifs that are centuries old, and are used to depict the cosmos. They have been adapted by artists the world over, each of whom has added their own interpretation to these designs.
- Literally meaning the “circle” or the “centre” in Sanskrit, mandala is defined by a geometric configuration that usually incorporates the circular shape in some form. While it can also be created in the shape of a square, a mandala pattern is essentially interconnected.
- Mandala is rooted in Hinduism and Buddhism. Mandala imagery first appeared in the Vedas (c. 1500-500 BC), and Buddhist missionaries travelling along the Silk Road are believed to have taken it to regions outside India. By the sixth century, mandalas were recorded in China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia and Tibet. Separately, native American peoples are believed to have used the mandala as representation of a deity or the cosmos, and as a spiritual form.

❖ **Its meaning**

- It is believed that by entering the mandala and moving towards its centre, one experiences a cosmic process of transforming the universe and that of moving from emotions of suffering to the feeling of joy.
- In Hindu philosophical systems, a mandala or yantra is usually in the shape of a square with a circle at its centre.
- A traditional Buddhist mandala is a circular painting that is meant to help its creator discover their true self.
- There are various elements incorporated within the mandala, each of which has its own meaning. For

3. Ulchi Freedom Shield

- South Korea and the United States began their biggest joint military drills since 2017, a tri-service exercise involving thousands of troops and live-fire exercises. Separately, Korea began four days of civil defence drills designed to boost government readiness. The twin exercises were “aimed at improving the country’s preparedness to match changing patterns of war, with evolving cyber threats against key facilities such as chip factories and supply chains.
- **Annual Exercise:** The drills, called the Ulchi Freedom Shield, are an annual military exercise that the two allies have held for many years to prepare for a possible conflict with North Korea, and were earlier referred to by the names Ulchi Freedom Guardian and Ulchi Focus Lens. Ulchi is a reference to the legendary Korean general Eulji Mundeok, who lived in the sixth-seventh centuries. The drills had been scaled back significantly because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and because President Yoon’s predecessor, President Moon Jae-in, had put his faith in the so-called “Sunshine Policy” towards Pyongyang, officially “The Reconciliation and Cooperation Policy Towards the North”.

instance, the eight spokes of the wheel (the Dharmachakra) represent the eight-fold path of Buddhism that brings liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

- The lotus flower depicts balance, and the sun represents the universe. Facing up, triangles represent action and energy, and facing down, they represent creativity and knowledge.

❖ **Mandala in modern Indian art**

- Deep-rooted in ancient philosophy, the mandala has attained varied forms in the hands of modern and contemporary Indian artists.
- While it continues to appear in Buddhist Thangka paintings, it has a central place in the works of even mainstream artists associated with tantric and neo-tantric spiritual movements.
- Choosing to transition from the more figurative depictions of the previous generations of Indian artists, Sohan Qadri and Prafulla Mohanty, in the 1960s, gained widespread recognition for their works that were imbued with tantric symbolism such as mandalas, which are also used in rituals of tantric initiation.
- While in some of his works Qadri represented the pictorial symmetry of the mandala, in others he arguably merged the concept with a symbolic representation of Kundalini, the divine energy believed to be located at the base of the spine. Playing with the symmetrical patterns, Biren De often painted light petals that merged to create circular forms in his interpretations of the mandala.
- G R Santosh often brought together aspects from mandala and geometric forms to create human figures.
- And the Bindu became the central theme in the works of S H Raza, who brought it global acclaim as the source of energy and life.

❖ **Mandala in therapy**

- As part of art therapy, participants are encouraged to create and colour mandalas. Studies have also been conducted to understand if mandalas can help reduce stress. Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung explored the psychological effects of mandalas and introduced it in psychotherapy. He saw the mandala as an expression of one’s innermost self, and asked his patients to draw and describe circular drawings. In the autobiographical book *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.

- **Non-Conventional Attack:** The drills will include a rehearsal of “scenarios such as responding to North Korea’s attacks on key industrial facilities including an airport, a semiconductor factory or a nuclear power plant. The training script reflects many of the actual combat situations being experienced in Ukraine, which has been defending its territory against Russia.
- **Threat From Pyongyang:** After eight missile tests in 2021 and only four in 2020, North Korea has fired an unprecedented number of missiles this year. The latest launch, on August 17, was the 18th test of 2022, in the course of which more than 30 missiles have been fired, including a suspected intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on May 25. And the country is preparing to conduct its seventh nuclear test later this year. The last test was conducted in September 2017. Before the joint drills, North Korea rejected the South’s proposal that Pyongyang give up its nuclear capabilities in phases, in return for economic benefits.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. What are the key features of the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy 2016? While mentioning achievements under the new IPR policy, also discuss issues related to it.

Introduction

Intellectual property rights are the rights given to persons over the creations of their minds. They allow creators, or owners, of patents, trademarks or copyrighted works to benefit from their own work or investment in a creation. If a country wishes to promote innovation and indigenous creativity, it needs to have a strong IPR regime. India was found lacking on this account for many years hence, the government came up with IPR policy 2016.

- The salient features of the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy 2016 are as follows:
 - It encompasses and brings all IPRs to a single platform.
 - By aiming to incorporate and adapt global best practices in the Indian scenario, it sets in place an institutional mechanism for implementation, monitoring, and review.
 - It suggested making the department of industrial policy and promotion (DIPP), the nodal agency for all IPR issues.
 - The ‘Cell for IPR Promotion & Management (CIPAM)’, set up under the aegis of DIPP, is to be the single point of reference for the implementation of the objectives of the National IPR Policy.
 - Films, music, industrial drawings will be all covered by copyright.
 - The Policy also seeks to facilitate domestic IPR filings, for the entire value chain from IPR generation to commercialization.
- The policy has many achievements to its credit since it has been implemented, which are as follows:
 - Improvement in Global Innovation Index Ranking from 81st in 2015 to 52nd place in 2019.
 - Strengthened institutional mechanism and Increase in Patent and Trademark Filings, Clearing Backlog/ Reducing Pendency in IP applications. In conjunction with WIPO, TISCs have been established in various institutions across different states.
- Most certainly, the national IPR policy was also intended to create a robust IP regime as a critical step towards a stronger and more competitive economy, however, there are still many issues that need to be resolved. These issues are as follows:
 - Section 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act 1970 (as amended in 2005) does not allow evergreening of patents which have been a cause of concern to the pharma companies. For example- On the basis of this clause patent for Novartis’ drug Glivec was rejected by the Indian Patent Office.
 - Issue of Compulsory licensing (CL): CL is problematic for foreign investors who bring technology as they are concerned about the misuse of CL to replicate their products.
 - Data Exclusivity: Foreign investors and MNCs allege that Indian law does not protect against unfair commercial use of test data or other data submitted to the government during the application for market approval of pharmaceutical or agro-chemical products.

Conclusion

Enforcement of the Copyright act is weak, and piracy of copyrighted materials is widespread. India has made a number of changes in its IPR regime to increase efficiency and the culture of innovation is taking center stage in the country. Still, India needs more reforms and better implementation of existing rules for creating a conducive environment for research and development in the country.

MCQs

1. Consider the following statements regarding Competition Commission of India (CCI).
 1. It is a non-statutory body of the Government of India.
 2. Members appointed by the Central Government including chairman.
 3. It is responsible for promoting competition throughout India and to prevent activities that have an appreciable adverse effect on competition in India.
 4. It has the power to carry out investigations if any e-commerce company uses their dominant position to stifle competition.
 5. It promotes the policy of predatory pricing.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1, 2, 3
- b) 2, 3, 4

- c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Three of the following statements correctly describe the duties of the Competition Commission of India. Find out the false statement.
- Limiting freedom of trade**
 - Eliminating practices that adversely affect competition
 - Promote and maintain competition
 - Protect the interests of consumers
3. With reference to Tomato Flu, consider the following statements;
- It is a non-contagious bacterial disease.
 - The disease is a clinical variant of the hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD).
 - It is a non-life-threatening flu spread among children below five years of age.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only**
 - 1 and 3 only
 - All of the above
4. Terms like “Coxsackie A16 (CA16), EV A71, Coxsackie A6, Coxsackie B” recently seen in news are associated with which of the followings?
- Bacteria
 - Fungus
 - Lichen
 - Virus**
5. The military exercise called “Ulchi Freedom Shield” often mentioned in news is an exercise between which of the following countries?
- India and Russia
 - USA and South Korea**
 - South Korea and North Korea
 - USA and North Korea
6. Thangka paintings recently mentioned in news, can be relate to which of the following?
- Buddhism**
 - Jainism
 - Islamic Art
 - European Art
7. India’s first commercial space situational awareness observatory to came up in which state or UTs?
- Jammu Kashmir
 - Ladakh
 - Himachal Pradesh
 - Uttarakhand**
8. Consider the following statements
- Recently ISRO decided to establish a Space Situational Awareness Observatory (SSA)
 - The SSA will able to track objects as small as 10 cm in size orbiting the earth
 - After the installation of SSA India will be the second country after United States in monitoring space debris.
- Select the correct statement/s using the codes given below
- 1 and 2 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 2 only**
 - 3 only
9. Recently Anang Tal lake declared monument of national importance, is situated in which state/UTs?
- Delhi**
 - Punjab
 - Rajasthan
 - Chandigarh
10. The gene called “CSA6” has been identified recently, hold the key to prevent infections in HIV and Cancer patients is related to which of the following?
- Virus species
 - Protozoa species
 - Fungal species**
 - Bacteria species