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## JAN 2022-APR 2023

# UPSC EPFO 2023

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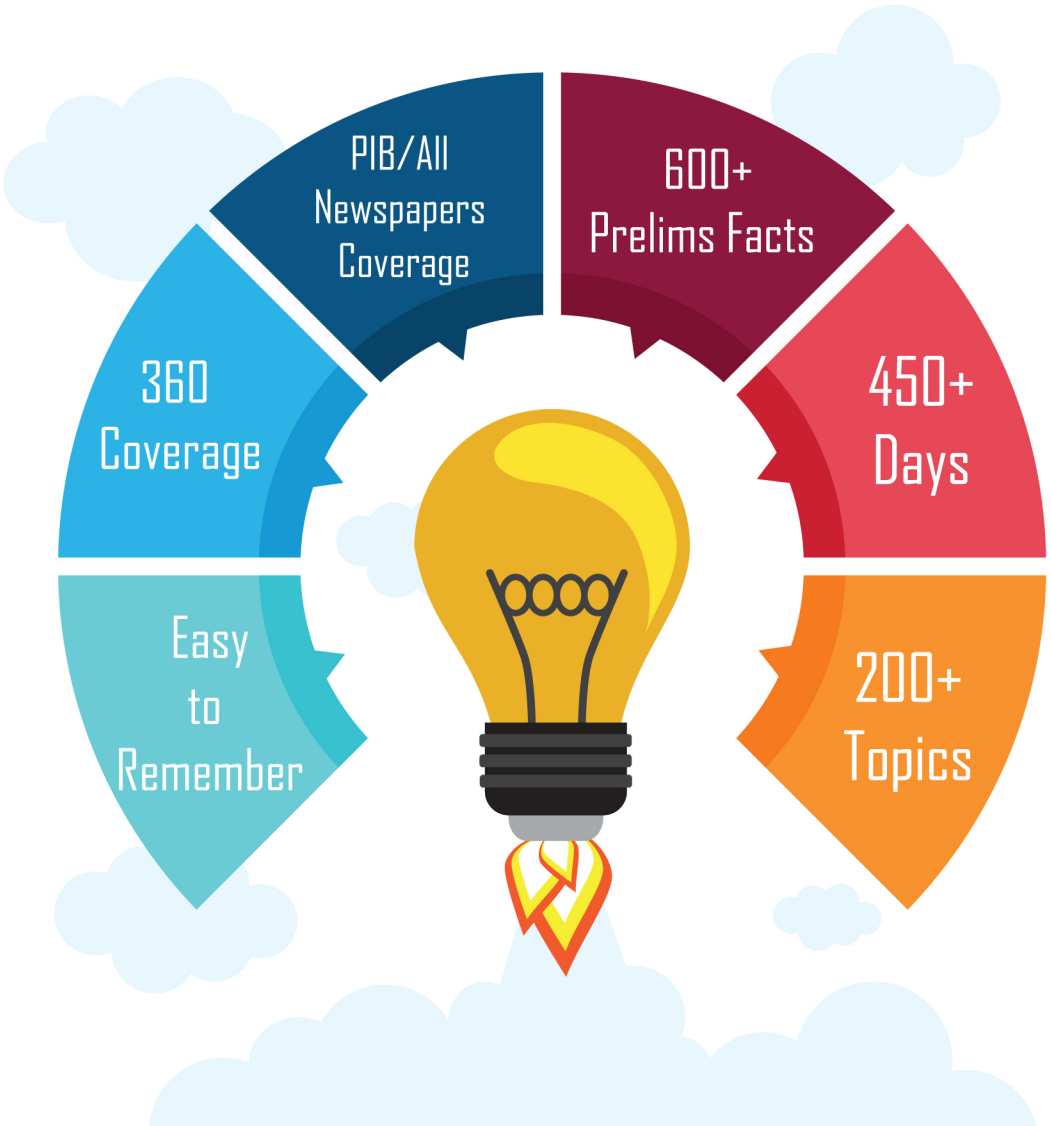

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# History & Culture

## Vaikom Satyagraha

- Vaikom Satyagraha was a historic non-violent movement against untouchability and caste discrimination in the country.
- The Satyagraha took place between March 30, 1924 and November 23, 1925 and also marked the start of temple entry movements across India.
- The movement was spearheaded by Congress leader T.K. Madhavan, as an opposition against social injustice.
- The Congress Untouchability Committee decided to start the movement at the Mahadeva temple in Vaikom, because of the temple board's extremely stringent rules regarding entry.
- On March 30, 1924, the Satyagrahis walked towards the forbidden public roads in Vaikom. They were stopped by the police.

## Hakki-Pikki tribes

- Out of these nationals, more than 100 belong to the Hakki Pikki tribe from Karnataka.
- They are a nomadic tribe living across western and southern India. Hakki means 'bird' in Kannada, and Pikki translates to 'catchers'.
- Traditionally, a tribe of bird catchers and hunters, who mostly lived in forest areas, the members now dwell in Karnataka's Mysuru, Davangere, Kolar, Hassan and Shivamogga districts.
- Hakki Pikkis are a matriarchal community where the groom gives dowry to the bride's family.
- Hakki Pikkis were displaced from forests and resettled around Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mandya and borders of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

## Thirunelly temple

- It is also referred to as the 'Kashi of the South' and is considered as an important pilgrimage center for Hindus.
- It is located at the confluence of three rivers – Papanasini, the holy river, which is believed to have the power to wash away sins, Kudamurutti, and Koothappuzha.
- The temple structure has a history dating back to the 15th century AD, and stories related to the architecture and style of the temple are associated with it.

## World's first Palm-leaf Manuscript Museum in Kerala capital.

- Kerala Chief Minister(CM) Pinarayi Vijayan has inaugurated the Palm leaf Manuscript Museum with modern audio-visual technology at the renovated Central Archives, Fort area in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- Billed as the world's first palm leaf manuscript museum, the facility is essentially a repository of curious nuggets of administrative, socio-cultural and economic facets of Travancore spanning a period of 650 years till the end of the19th century, besides documents relating to territories of Kochi in the state's middle and Malabar further north.

- The museum, which opened last week, has 187 manuscripts chronicling a mine of stories based entirely on primary sources: Documents written on cured and treated palm leaves consigned to the corners of the records rooms.

## Lavani Dance

- NCP leader Ajit Pawar has directed members of his party to not organise raunchy public shows in the name of Lavani, a folk song-and-dance performance that is popular in Maharashtra.
- Lavani became well known outside Maharashtra — throughout India and even outside the country — following its use in popular media such as cinema.
- Over the past few years, with the explosion in the use of social media, short clips of dances have become very popular.
- There are several sub-genres of Lavani, of which the most popular is the Shringarik (erotic) kind, in which the lyrics are often teasing, with sensuous dance steps and delicate gestures employed to convey erotic meaning.

## Banjara Dharmaguru Santh Sevalal Maharaj Jayanti

- For the first time ever, the year long commemoration of birth anniversary of Santh Sevalal Maharaj , the Spiritual & Religious Leader of Banjara Community is being celebrated by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- Like every year, this year also Banjaras from all over the country are gathering in Delhi to celebrate this birth anniversary.
- A special train has also been run from Karnataka, in which more than 2500 people of the Banjara community of Karnataka, Telangana, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have reached Delhi.
- Santh Sevalal Maharaj was born on 15 February 1739 at Surgondankoppa in Shivamogga district of Karnataka.
- He is considered a social reformer and spiritual teacher of the Banjara community.

## Vedic Heritage portal

- The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) has recently launched the Vedic Heritage Portal, a digital repository of vedic knowledge and traditions from across the country.
- This portal is the result of a seven-year effort and an estimated cost of Rs 5 crore.
- The Vedic Heritage Portal is a one-stop solution for researchers and others who seek information about the Vedic heritage of India.
- It was launched by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy during the IGNCA's 36th Foundation Day celebrations.
- The Vedic Heritage portal now has audio-visual recordings of the four Vedas. These recordings contain over 18,000 mantras of the four Vedas, with a total duration of over 550 hours.

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# Polity & Governance

## Forest Amendment Bill

- The Bill seeks to redefine "forests", and many experts feel that it is being done to open up forest tracts for infrastructure and development work that may cause lasting damage to the environment.
- The Forest Conservation Amendment Bill, 2023 reflects the twin objectives of creating forest-based carbon sinks for mitigating climate change and creating land for compensatory afforestation to accommodate the diversion of forests for industrial and infrastructure projects.
- The Bill creates a framework by which forest conservation laws do not affect the rolling out of large projects, most of which are being implemented by private corporations or through public-private partnerships.

## National Electricity Plan (2022-27)

- The Electricity Act 2003 stipulates that the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) shall prepare a National Electricity Plan in accordance with the National Electricity Policy and notify such plan once in 5 years.
- The fresh draft, in a tacit admission of the ground realities, cites the need for fresh coal-based capacity ranging from 17 GW to nearly 28 GW till 2031-32.
- Battery Energy Storage systems (BESS) especially based on Lithium-ion batteries are one of the storage options.

## PM inaugurates Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of Central Bureau of Investigation in New Delhi

- He released a Postage Stamp and Commemorative Coin marking the Diamond Jubilee Celebration year of CBI and also launched the Twitter handle of CBI.
- He also released the updated Administration Manual of CBI, an Almanac on Bank Frauds – case studies and learning,
- In pursuit of justice - Supreme Court Judgements in CBI Cases and a handbook on International Police cooperation for the exchange of foreign located intelligence & evidence.
- As part of the celebrations, the Prime Minister also inaugurated the newly constructed office complexes of CBI in three cities – Shillong, Pune, and Nagpur.

## Government releases pre-draft of National Curriculum Framework for schools

- The ministry launched the NCF for foundational stage (NCF-FS) for children between ages 3-8 years in October 2022. In continuation of that policy, the next NCF for school education is being prepared.
- Revamping class 10 and 12 board exams, aligning the shift from 10+2 structure to 5+3+3+4 structure and emphasis on developmental perspectives suggesting curricular and pedagogical shifts at different stages — foundational, preparatory, middle and secondary — are among the recommendations made in the pre-draft.
- The NCF has been revised four times - in 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005.
- The new proposed revision will be the fifth of the framework.

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## Indian Space Policy 2023

- This new space policy seeks to regulate and boost private sector participation in the space sector.
- The ISP also looks to increase investments in the space sector from private companies.
- Private sector companies will now be able to build rockets, satellites and launch vehicles, data collection and dissemination.
- Private sector will gain access to end-to-end space activities. The focus of the Space Policy would be to increase the participation of the private players in the space sector.
- The global space industry is worth over $500 billion, with the United States and China spending the most.
- India currently accounts for only 2% of it.

## Sagarmala Innovation and Start-up Policy

- This draft policy aims at nurturing start-ups and other entities to co-create the future of India's growing maritime sector.
- This entails intensive collaboration of the organizations to build a strong eco-system facilitating innovation and Startups in the country that will drive sustainable growth and generate large scale employment opportunities.
- This enhances the cooperation and coordination between academic institutions, public sector, private sector and convergence of different schemes and programs to groom fresh ideas and approaches to resolve the issues and challenges.

## AAP gets 'national party' status

- A national party tag allows an organisation to get a common poll symbol across the country, more star campaigners, free air time on national broadcasters for election campaigns and by convention office space in Delhi.
- The Commission said AAP has been named as a national party as it fulfilled the condition of Para 6B(iii) of the Symbols Order 1968 that accords such status to a state party based on electoral performance in four states — Delhi, Goa, Punjab and most recently in Gujarat.

## National Credit Framework

- The NCrF is a broad enabling framework for all regulatory organizations and all universities, including institutions of national importance.
- They will be free to notify their detailed implementation guidelines with flexibility for catering to their academic requirements.
- It is a meta-framework to seamlessly integrate the credits earned through school education, higher education, and vocational and skill education.
- Credit is the recognition that a learner has completed a prior course of learning, corresponding to a qualification at a given level.

## NCPCR issues guidelines for assessment of child suspects in heinous offences

- To determine whether a child should be treated as a minor or not in criminal cases which come under the "heinous" offences category of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
- Child suspects should be assessed by a team of experts, including a child psychologist or psychiatrist, a medical doctor, and a social worker.
- The assessment should take into account the child's age, developmental stage, and maturity level, as well as any history of trauma or abuse.

## Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023

- The Supreme Court had issued several orders emphasizing that the relocation of dogs was not permissible.
- The rules mandate the implementation of Animal Birth Control programmes for stray dogs by local bodies, municipalities, municipal corporations, and panchayats.
- Effective implementation of the rules can help reduce the stray dog population and address animal welfare issues.
- Municipal corporations must jointly implement the Animal Birth Control and Anti Rabies Programmes.

## Policy for the Medical Devices Sector

- The Cabinet also approved establishing 157 nursing colleges as was announced in this year's Union budget, a move that is likely to create 15,700 more nursing seats in the country.
- Currently, India has 1, 18,000 BSc nursing seats. Since 2014, the government has added 157 new medical colleges and each of these will have a nursing college attached with at least 100 seats.
- The salient features of the policy include strategies to promote medical device sector that will be cover five broad areas of policy interventions— regulatory streamlining; enabling infrastructure; facilitating research and development and innovation; attracting investments in the sector; and human resource development.

## PM Modi To Inaugurate 3-Day Raisina Dialogue

- The 8th Edition of the Raisina Dialogue will be held in New Delhi.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Dialogue.
- Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni will join the inaugural session as the Chief Guest.
- The theme of the 2023 Edition of Dialogue is "Provocation, Uncertainty, and Turbulence: Lighthouse in the Tempest.
- The Raisina Dialogue 2023 will witness the participation of representatives from over 100 countries including Ministers, Military Commanders, Captains of the Industry, Technology Leaders, Scholars on Strategic Affairs, Experts from leading Think Tanks and Youth. This year's edition assumes special significance coming against the backdrop of India's G20 Presidency.

## Supreme Court verdict on ECI appointments

- A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court recently unanimously ruled that a high-power committee consisting of the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India must pick the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs).
- **Article 324(2)** reads: "The Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners, if any, as the President may from time-to-time fix and the

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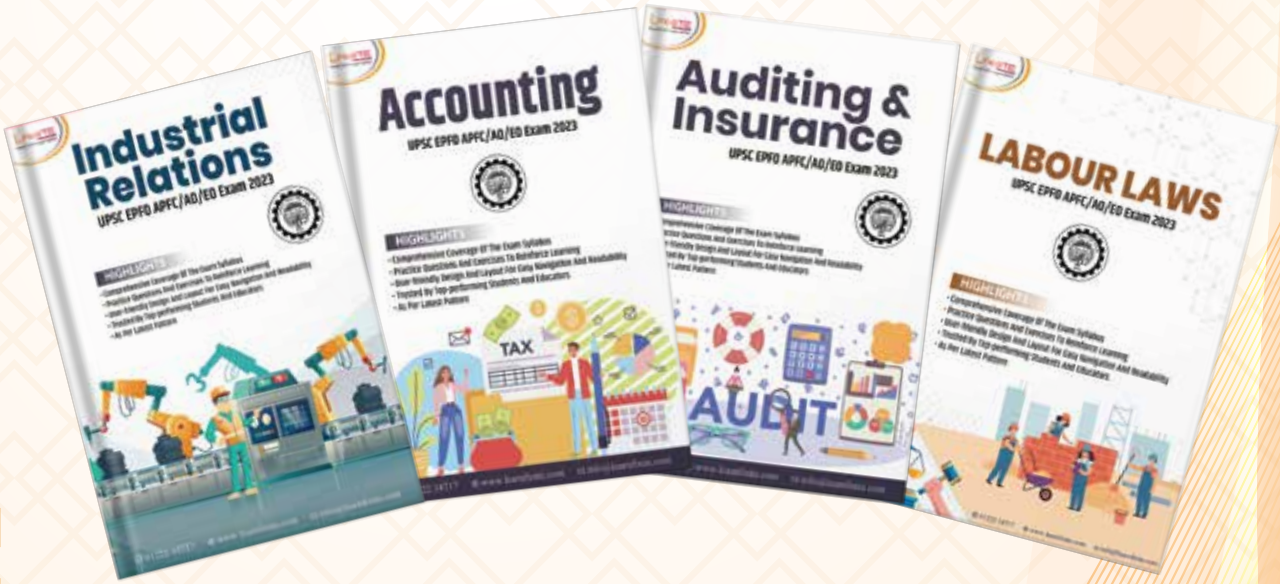



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appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf by Parliament, be made by the President."

## Back Centre releases guidelines for celebrities, social media influencers

- The Department of Consumer Affairs, under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, has released a set of guidelines called "Endorsements Know-hows!" .
- The guidelines will help celebrities, influencers, and virtual influencers on social media platforms that they do not mislead their audiences when endorsing products or services.
- The guidelines state that the disclosure must be placed in the endorsement message in a manner that is clear, prominent, and extremely hard to miss.
- Disclosures should not be mixed with a group of hashtags or links.
- For endorsements in a picture, disclosures should be superimposed over the image enough for viewers to notice.

## Centre opposes recognition of same-sex marriage in SC citing personal laws

- The Supreme Court of India (SC) recently referred the pleas seeking legal validation of same-sex marriages to a five-judge constitution bench for adjudication.
- It also referred to Article 145(3) of the Constitution.
- **Article 145(3)** of the Constitution says there should be at least five judges to hear cases that involve "a substantial question of law as to the interpretation" of the Constitution, or any reference under Article 143, which deals with the power of the President of India to consult the SC.
- The Centre pointed out that "recognition of marriage necessarily brings with it right to adopt and other ancillary rights".
- Therefore it is "necessary that such issues are left for being decided by the competent Legislature where social, psychological and other impacts on society, children etc., can be debated.

## Bar council allows foreign lawyers, legal firms to practice in India

- The Bar Council of India (BCI) recently allowed foreign lawyers and law firms to practice in India on a reciprocity basis.
- Reciprocal laws are statutes of one state that give rights and privileges to the citizens of another state if it extends similar privileges to the citizens of the former.
- According to the rules, a foreign lawyer or law firm is not entitled to practice law in India without registering with the BCI.
- Foreign lawyers will only be allowed to advise on international laws and will not be permitted to appear before any Indian courts and tribunals.
- A primary qualification required from them is a certificate from the competent authority of their country that they are entitled to practice law in that country.

## Inter-services Organisations Bill

- The commander-in-chief and officer-in-command of the inter-services organisations will soon be able to exercise control over all the personnel serving/attached under their command but belonging to different services.

- The government has introduced a bill titled 'Inter-services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill' in the Lok Sabha to this effect.
- The proposed Bill will essentially empower the Heads of the Inter-services Organisations to exercise effective command, control and discipline on all personnel of regular Air force, Army and Navy and to persons of other, who are serving in or attached to an Inter-services Organisation, without amending the respective Acts.

## Rajasthan Right to Health Bill

- The Rajasthan Assembly passed 'the Right to Health Bill' despite protests by private doctors, making it the only state in India to legislate the right to health.
- According to the bill's provisions, every resident will have the right to emergency treatment and care "without prepayment" at any "public health institution, health care establishment and designated health care centres".
- The government will reimburse the health care provider if a patient does not pay the charges after emergency care, stabilisation and referral.
- A patient, during emergency treatment such as for accidents, emergencies due to snake or animal bite and any other, as decided by the State Health Authority, will be treated without prepayment by public health institutions, health care establishments and designated health care centres.

## Disqualification MPs

- Recently, an MP (Member of Parliament) was sentenced to two years in jail in a 2019 Defamation Case over his remarks about another political leader by the Surat Court.
- Article 102 of the Constitution establishes the conditions to disqualify a member of the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha.
- According to Article 103, the President is the final authority on matters relating to the disqualification of Members of Parliament under the provisions of Article 102(1).
- The President should take the opinion of the Election Commission and act accordingly in such cases.
- Under the provisions relating to the Anti-Defection Act, the matter is decided by the Speaker or Chairman of the House.
- Disqualified Mps can challenge the decisions of disqualification in the High Courts.

## Par panel recommends new law to define power, functions of CBI

- A parliamentary committee has said that an existing law governing the federal probe agency has "many limitations" and there is a need to enact a new legislation to define its status, functions and powers.
- The department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice said that according to the provisions of the DSPE Act, the consent of the state government is a prerequisite for any investigation by the CBI and as on date, nine states have withdrawn the general consent.
- The panel said that vacant posts in the CBI are not being filled up at the required pace and recommended that "every effort should be made to fill up vacancies at the earliest".
- A total of 1,709 posts are vacant in the CBI against its sanctioned strength of 7,295.

## Guillotine in Parliament

- The Finance Bill 2023, which gives effect to the tax proposals for the fiscal year beginning April 1, was passed in the Lok Sabha with 45 amendments as opposition members were protesting.
- The Guillotine Parliamentary Procedure is a process used in Parliament or state assemblies to group together and expedite the passage of financial business.
- During the Budget session, the procedure is used to save time when all the clauses of a measure cannot be discussed in the allotted time.
- Each Bill is allotted a specific amount of time for consideration in Parliament.
- A Bill is usually composed of several clauses. Once the allotted time to discuss the clauses of the Bill is over, the Speaker of the House rolls out guillotine closure.

## Election Commission begins delimitation of constituencies in Assam

- The Election Commission recently said it has started the delimitation process of Assembly and parliamentary constituencies in Assam.
- Census data of 2001 will be used for the process. A delimitation exercise refers to demarcating boundaries of Assembly and parliamentary constituencies as well as civic wards.
- At present, Assam has 14 Lok Sabha, 126 Assembly and seven Rajya Sabha seats.
- Under Article 82, Parliament is to enact a Delimitation Act after every Census.
- Once the Act is in force, the Union government sets up the Delimitation Commission.
- The Commission is supposed to determine the number and boundaries of constituencies in a way that the population of all seats, so far as practicable, is the same.
- The Commission is also tasked with identifying seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

## Election Commission develops EVM prototype for migrants

- The election Commission of India (ECI) has developed a prototype for the Remote Electronic Voting Machine (RVM) aimed to facilitate voting for domestic migrants across India.
- The Commission in association with a renowned Public Sector Undertaking is now ready to pilot a Multi Constituency Remote Electronic Voting Machine (RVM) for facilitating participation of domestic migrants from their remote locations itself i.e., the places of their current residence for purposes of education/employment, etc., for voting for their home constituencies.
- This modified form of EVM can handle up to 72 multiple constituencies from a single remote polling booth.
- The ECI has invited all eight recognized national and 57 state political parties to a demonstration of the RVM on January 16th.

## Karnataka reclassifies Vokkaligas, Lingayats to raise their OBC quota share

- Recently, Karnataka has categorized the two dominant communities, Vokkaligas and Lingayats, as “moderately backward” from the “backward” category in a move that could increase their share in reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC).
- Karnataka currently has 32% quota for OBC, and 17% and 7% quota for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, respectively, taking the total to 56%.
- The Panchamasali sub-sect of Veerashaiva Lingayats has demanded inclusion in the 2A category which has 15% quota from their current 3B category which has 5% quota.
- The Vokkaliga community, which is currently in the 3A category, will be moved to a newly-created 2C category with 4% reservation.

- And the Lingayat community, which is in the 3B category, will now be in a new 2D category with 5% reservation.

## Draft rules for online gaming

- A self-regulatory body, mandatory know-your-customer norms for verification, and a grievance redressal mechanism are among the key proposals in the draft rules for online gaming.
- Online games will have to register with a self-regulatory body, and only games cleared by the body will be allowed to legally operate in India.
- The revenue of the Indian mobile gaming industry is expected to reach $5 billion in 2025.
- The industry grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 38 per cent in India between 2017-2020, as opposed to 8 per cent in China and 10 per cent in the US.
- It is expected to grow at a CAGR of 15 per cent to reach Rs 153 billion in revenue by 2024.

## NMC releases draft rules for timetable, duration, grades, and papers

- The National Medical Commission recently issued the proposed draft regulations related to the National Exit Test (NExT).
- As per the draft regulation, the objective of these regulations is to bring uniformity in the summative evaluation across the country with reference to the minimum common standards of education and training of a medical graduate.
- The NExT will comprise two separate exams called 'Steps'.
- The minimum marks for passing shall be 50 per cent of the total marks in each subject in Step 1.
- The criteria to pass Step 2 shall be satisfactory demonstration of competencies that are evaluated.
- All the students who have completed the final MBBS course from a Commission-recognised medical college would be eligible to appear in the exam.

## National Geospatial Policy 2022

- The National Geospatial Policy 2022 recently notified is aimed to set up high resolution topographical survey and mapping, with a high-accuracy Digital Elevation Model (DEM) for the country by 2030.
- This is a vibrant initiative to promote the Start-Up & reduce the last mile dependencies on the foreign soil.
- Geospatial data play a vital role in a wide spectrum of frequencies for critical data management applications, such as military operations, disaster and emergency management, environmental monitoring, land and city planning.
- The Geospatial Data Promotion and Development Committee (GDPDC) will have representatives from various Departments and Ministries, including a Department of Defence Representative.

## UGC released draft guidelines to set up foreign educational campuses in India

- The University Grant Commission (UGC) has unveiled draft norms to allow foreign universities to set up campuses in India.
- The draft rules namely, the University Grants Commission (Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India) Regulations 2023 is intended to regulate the entry and operations of Foreign Universities to conduct various degrees, diplomas and certificate programmes.