

NEWS TODAY

India's E-commerce market is expected to grow to \$325 billion by 2030: Invest India

- **Invest India** also highlighted that India will become the **3rd largest online retail market** by scale in 2030.
 - ⊕ Invest India is the **National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency**. It is set up as a non-profit venture under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- **Current Status of E-commerce:** In 2022, sector was worth \$70 billion and makes about 7% of India's total retail market.
- **Key E-commerce models:**
 - ⊕ **Inventory Based:** In it, Inventory of goods and services is **owned by an e-commerce entity** and is sold to the consumers directly.
 - ◆ FDI is **not permitted**.
 - ⊕ **Market Based:** In it, an e-commerce entity provides an **information technology platform to connect buyers and sellers**. E.g. Amazon
 - ◆ **100% FDI under automatic route** is permitted.
- **Key Drivers of E-commerce:**
 - ⊕ **Increase in internet penetration** (52% as of 2022)
 - ⊕ **Promotion of Digital infrastructure** (like eKYC and Unified Payments Interface)
 - ⊕ **Rise of rural-led Value e-commerce** (by 2026 over 60% of e-commerce demand is predicted to come from tier 2-4 towns and rural India).
- **Key Challenges:** Digital divide in many regions, piracy and counterfeit products, domination by foreign entities such as Amazon etc.

Key Initiatives to Promote e-commerce

- **Draft e-Commerce Policy:** Aims to create a facilitative regulatory environment for growth of e-commerce sector.
- **Open Network for Digital Commerce:** It open source e-commerce network that connects shoppers, platforms, and retailers.
- **Others:** Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020; National Logistics Policy, 2022, India Stack etc.

Tobacco prices surge in India

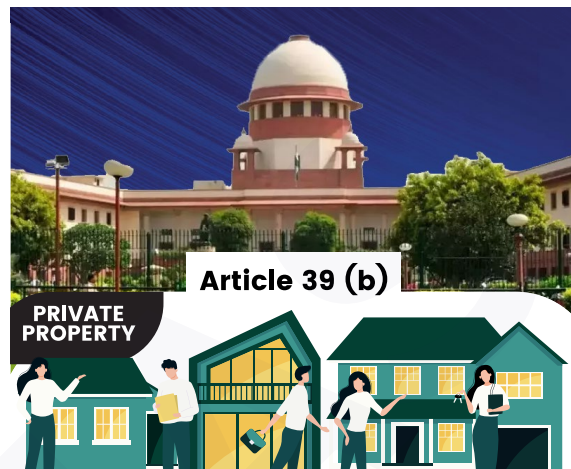
- **Reasons for the Rise in Price**
 - ⊕ Decrease in crop production in major tobacco-producing countries like Brazil, Zimbabwe and Indonesia due to extreme weather conditions.
 - ⊕ China imposed restrictions on tobacco exports to safeguard its local cigarette industry.
- **Tobacco In India**
 - ⊕ India is 2nd largest producer and exporter.
 - ⊕ **Temperature:** Between 20° to 27°C is required.
 - ⊕ **Rainfall:** When grown as a rainfed crop then requires at least about **500 mm of well-distributed rainfall** during the crop growing season. (Usually not grown in the area if rainfall exceeds 1200 mm).
 - ⊕ **Soil:** Sandy or sandy loam soil. Cigarette-tobacco growing areas of Andhra Pradesh are an exception in that the crop is grown on heavy black soil.
 - ⊕ **Some of the varieties cultivated in India** are
 - ◆ **Flue-cured Virginia (FCV)** tobacco in Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka;
 - ◆ **Bidi Tobacco** in Gujarat, Karnataka & Andhra Pradesh.
 - ◆ **Cigar & Cheroot** in Tamil Nadu & West Bengal
 - ◆ **Pikka Tobacco** in Orissa
- **Significance:** Livelihood security to 36 million people, earn foreign exchange (4% of the country's total agri-exports), Government revenue (10% of the total excise revenue collection from all sources) etc.

Tobacco Control in India

- **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003:** Prohibits smoking in public places; ban on sale of tobacco products to minors, etc.
- ⊕ **Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2022-** Provided images for display on package with health warnings.
- **Other steps:** India became a Party to the **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (2005)**, **National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP)**, etc.

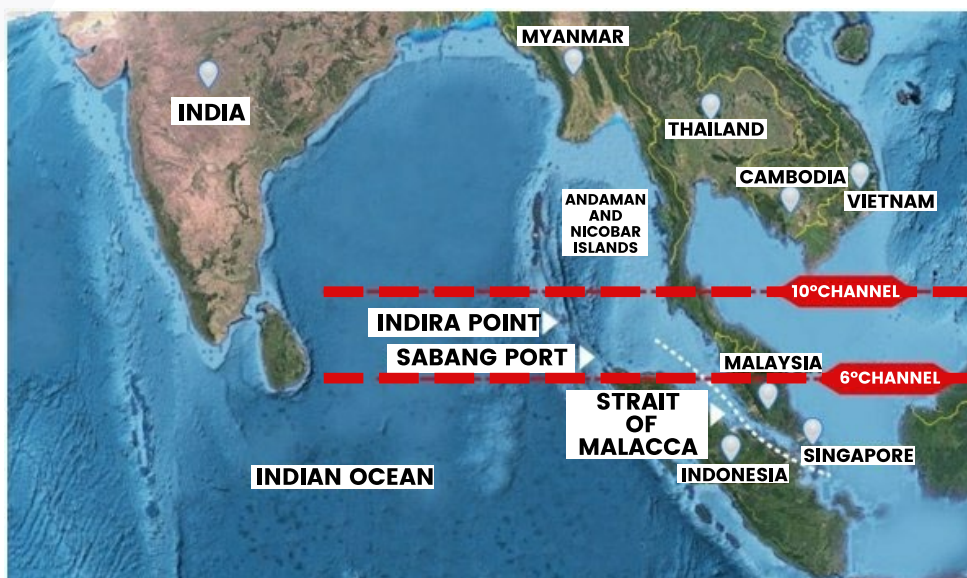
Can private properties be considered 'material resources of the community' under Article 39 (b) of the constitution? Case in Supreme Court?

- **Article 39(b) in the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)** says that "the state shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing- that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good".
- The court will also ponder upon the **legal sanctity of Article 31C of the Constitution in the wake of the Minerva Mills judgment.**
 - ⊖ Article 31C **protects a law made under Articles 39(b) and (c) empowering the State to take over material resources of the community**, including private properties, for distribution to subserve the common good.
 - ◆ Article 39(c) states that "the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment".
 - ⊖ **In the Minerva Mills case of 1980**, SC had declared two provisions of the 42nd Amendment which restricted the Judicial Review, as unconstitutional.
 - ◆ Any constitutional amendment from being 'called in question in any court on any ground' and
 - ◆ **Accorded precedence to the Directive Principles of State Policy over the fundamental rights of individuals,**



75 year of diplomatic ties between India and Indonesia

- The foundation of diplomatic ties between both the countries was laid by visit of the Indonesian President in 1950 and the **Treaty of Friendship (1951).**
- **Key Aspects of Relationships:**
 - ⊖ **Political:**
 - ◆ Both countries were part of **Bandung Conference 1955** which led to establishment of the **Non-Aligned Movement (1961).**
 - ◆ Established **Strategic Partnership** in 2005, later elevated to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.**
 - ◆ Both countries cooperate in common groups like G20, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), East Asia Summit, United Nations etc.
 - ◆ Indonesia is part of **India's Act East Policy (2014).**
 - ⊖ **Trade**
 - ◆ Indonesia has emerged as **India's largest trade partner** in ASEAN region.
 - ◆ India is the **second largest buyer of crude palm oil from Indonesia.**
 - ⊖ **Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific**
 - ◆ Indonesia is **strategically** located between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
 - ◆ Under **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** initiative, India is helping development of port infrastructure (E.g. Sabang port).
 - ◆ **Joint Military Exercises:** Samudra Shakti, India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT)
 - ⊖ **Cultural**
 - ◆ Hinduism and Buddhism (acting as a **soft power**) have key influence over the culture of Indonesia.



RBI releases updated "Guidance Note on Operational Risk Management and Operational Resilience" for Regulated Entities (REs)

- The **Guidance Note** is based on the **Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) principles document (2021)**.
 - ⊖ It has replaced the **Guidance Note of 2005**.
- **Need for Guidance Note:** Rising frequencies of **Operational Risks (ORs)**.
 - ⊖ **OR** is defined as the **risk of loss** resulting from **failed internal processes, people and systems or from external events**.
 - ◆ E.g. Information Technology threats, geopolitical conflicts, etc.
- **Key highlight of guidelines:**
 - ⊖ **Coverage:** It includes **REs** such as **Commercial banks, non-banking financial companies, cooperative banks, and All India Financial Institutions**.
 - ◆ Earlier Note was **applicable only** to Scheduled Commercial Banks.
 - ⊖ **Emphasis on three lines of defence Model:** It includes
 - ◆ **Business unit (first line):** A **third party** Responsible for managing the risks of products, services, etc.
 - ◆ **Organizational Operational Risk Management Function (OORF) (Second line):** To promote a sound Operational Risk management culture.
 - ◆ **Audit function (Third line):** Provides an independent assurance to works of the other two defence lines.
 - ⊖ **Third-party dependency management:** A third party is any external company, individual, etc. that provides **critical goods or services to an organization**.

About Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS)

- It is the **primary global standard setter** for the **prudential regulation of banks** and provides a forum for regular **cooperation on banking supervisory matters**.
- Its 45 members comprise central banks and bank supervisors from 28 jurisdictions.

ISRO study reveals evidence for enhanced possibility of water ice in polar craters of Moon

- The presence of ice will be crucial for constraining the uncertainties in selecting future landing sites and long-term human presence.
 - ⊖ For astronauts landing on the Moon, water is necessary not only to **sustain life** but also for purposes such as **generating rocket fuel**.
- **Key-findings of study**
 - ⊖ **Origin of ice:** Study confirms the hypothesis that the primary source of **sub-surface water ice** in the **lunar poles** is due to volcanic activity in the Imbrian period (approx. **3850–3800** Million years ago).
 - ⊖ The finding also supports a previous study by Chandrayaan-2 related to presence of water ice.
- **India's contribution in finding water on Moon**
 - ⊖ **2009:** ISRO's **Chandrayaan-1** detected signs of hydrated minerals in the form of oxygen and hydrogen molecules in sunlit (illuminated by direct light from the sun) areas of the Moon.
 - ⊖ **2018:** Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3), an instrument onboard **Chandrayaan-1** provided by NASA, played a key role in identifying water on the Moon.
 - ◆ **M3 revealed multiple confirmed locations of water ice** in permanently shadowed (part that never see sunlight) regions of the moon.

About Chandrayaan Missions

- **Chandrayaan-1, 2008:** To study the chemical, mineralogical and photogeologic mapping of the Moon.
- **Chandrayaan-2, 2019:** For studying surface geology, composition and exospheric measurements of Moon.
- **Chandrayaan-3, 2023:** To demonstrate end-to-end capability in soft landing and roving on the south pole of lunar surface.

Also in News



Supersonic Missile-Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART) system

- **SMART** system was successfully flight-tested from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.
- **About SMART**
 - ⊖ It is a Next-generation **missile-based light-weight torpedo delivery system**.
 - ◆ A **torpedo** is a type of missile or bomb fired underwater.
 - ⊖ **Developed by:** **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
 - ⊖ It is a **canister-based missile system** and is **equipped with parachute-based release system**.
 - ⊖ It consists of **advanced sub-systems** like two-stage solid propulsion system, electromechanical actuator system, etc.
 - ⊖ It will enhance the **anti-submarine warfare capability** of the Indian Navy far beyond the conventional range of lightweight torpedo.



Antarctic Treaty

- India is set to host the prestigious 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting.
 - ⊖ Meeting will be organised by the **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)**, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- **About Antarctic Treaty:**
 - ⊖ Signed in **1959** and entered into force in **1961**.
 - ⊖ **Total Parties** to the Treaty is **56**.
 - ⊖ India **signed the treaty** and received the consultative party status in 1983.
 - ◆ Enacted **Indian Antarctic Act, 2022**, reaffirming its commitment to the Antarctic Treaty.
 - ⊖ **Key provisions:** Antarctica shall be used for peaceful purposes, Freedom of scientific investigation, etc.
- **Key Protocol and Conventions:**
 - ⊖ Protocol on Environment Protection (Madrid Protocol) to the Antarctic Treaty, 1991
 - ⊖ Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, 1980



Quarks

- Scientists have reported that the inside of most massive neutron stars is most likely made of quark matter.
 - ⊕ **Neutron stars** are formed when a massive star runs out of fuel and collapses.
- **About Quarks:**
 - ⊕ These are **elementary particles**. Like the electron, they are **not made up of any other particles**.
 - ⊕ These **can't exist in isolation**. They can only be found in clumps (groups) of **two or three** and such clumps of quarks are called **hadrons**.
 - ◆ A quark's antiquark clump is called a **meson**.
 - ⊕ These are the **ultimate building blocks of visible matter** in the universe.
 - ⊕ **There are six types of quarks:** up, down, top, bottom, strange, and charm.



Passive funds

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India** has raised the investment limit for passive funds like Index Funds and Exchange-traded funds (ETFs) in companies belonging to the sponsor group from **25% to 35% of their total assets**.
 - ⊕ **Passive Funds** are the funds which invest in a **particular Index** in a similar proportion to generate returns similar to the Index.
- **Benefits:** Help in accurate reflection of the index's performance in the fund, can provide wider investment options, etc.



Cultural and legal significance of marriage

- Supreme Court in a case highlight the cultural and legal significance of wedding ceremonies in Indian society.
 - ⊕ A Hindu marriage is a **samskara** and a sacrament which **has to be accorded** its status as an institution of great value in Indian society.
- The judgment emphasised that **simply registering a marriage without the performance of these rites** does not confer upon it the legitimacy of a Hindu marriage under the law.
 - ⊕ The **Hindu Marriage Act, of 1955**, solemnly acknowledges both the material and spiritual aspects of this event in the **married couple's lives**.



Peucetia chhapparajirvin

- Scientist have found the **green lynx spider** in **Tal Chhapar Wildlife Sanctuary** in Churu District of Rajasthan, which was never discovered earlier and is named as **peucetia chhapparajirvin**.
 - ⊕ This spider is nocturnal and feeds on small insects.
- The lynx spiders are among the major predators of insects occurring in low shrubs and herbaceous vegetation.
- They are important predators of **plant-damaging insects**.
- It is also an **important predator of insect pests of the forest ecosystem**.



Blue Hole

- Researchers found evidence that Taam Ja' Blue Hole is the deepest in the world.
 - ⊕ It is located in **Mexico's Chetumal Bay**, on the eastern side of the **Yucatán Peninsula**.
- **About Blue hole**
 - ⊕ These are water-filled **caverns** that form **below the seafloor**. These are often found in coastal areas where the bedrock is prone to erosion.
 - ⊕ They develop as ocean water seeps through **cracks, dissolving minerals** as they go, leading to sinkholes. Over time, they can grow quite large.
- **Other Prominent Blue Holes:** Dragon Hole in the South China Sea, Great Blue Hole near Belize and the Dahab Blue Hole (Egypt).



Middle-power

- Middle powers, lacking a universally agreed-upon definition, typically rank below great powers but **exert influence over global politics**.
 - ⊕ Great powers are countries with a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.
- Middle powers have extensive **diplomatic, economic, multilateral, and military heft**.
- They comprise:
 - ⊕ **Global North countries** like Australia, Canada and South Korea.
 - ⊕ **Global South nations** like India, Argentina, Brazil and Indonesia.
- **Significance:** Strengthen multilateralism; represent the voice of the global south, etc.

Places in News



Lebanon (Capital: Beirut)

- According to reports, many people died in the conflict between **Hezbollah group** and **Israel** along Lebanon border.
- **Physical Features:**
 - ⊕ Located in **West Asia**.
 - ⊕ Bounded by **Syria** (north and east), **Israel** (south), and the **Mediterranean Sea** (west).
 - ⊕ Shares **maritime borders with Cyprus**
- **Geographical Features:**
 - ⊕ **Physiography:** **Al-Biqā valley** lies between the **Lebanon Mountains** in the west and the **Anti-Lebanon Mountains** in the east. It is part of the great **East African Rift System**.
 - ⊕ **Highest Peak:** Qurnat al-Sawdā
 - ⊕ **Major rivers:** Līānī River, Orontes, etc.

