## AIIB

- India asked Beijing-based AIIB to scale up investments in areas like clean energy and infrastructure.
- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank that aims to improve economic and social outcomes in Asia.
- The bank currently has 103 members, including 16 prospective members from around the world.
- The bank started operation after the agreement entered into force on 25 December 2015, after ratifications were received from 10 member states holding a total number of 50% of the initial subscriptions of the Authorized Capital Stock.
- The United Nations has addressed the launch of AIIB as having the potential for "scaling up financing for sustainable development" and improving the global economic governance.
- The starting capital of the bank was US$100 billion, equivalent to 2⁄3 of the capital of the Asian Development Bank and about half that of the World Bank.
- The bank was proposed by China in 2013 and the initiative was launched at a ceremony in Beijing in October 2014.
- It received the highest credit ratings from the three biggest rating agencies in the world, and is seen as a potential rival to the World Bank enables IMF.
- AIIB enable clients to build Infrastructure for Tomorrow (i4t) green infrastructure with sustainability, ability, innovation, and connectivity at its core.
- We do this by unlocking finance that brings this vision to fruition.
- As a multilateral development bank focused on developing Asia, but with members from all over the world, our investments in infrastructure and other productive sectors seek to foster sustainable economic development, create wealth and improve infrastructure connectivity.

**THE HINDU**

## Dirty bombs

**What is a dirty bomb?**

- A dirty bomb is a mix of explosives, such as dynamite, with radioactive powder or pellets.
- When the dynamite or other explosives are set off, the blast carries radioactive material into the surrounding area.
- A dirty bomb is not the same as an atomic bomb

- An atomic bomb, like those bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, involves the splitting of atoms and a huge release of energy that produces the atomic mushroom cloud.
- A dirty bomb works completely differently and cannot create an atomic blast.
- Instead, a dirty bomb uses dynamite or other explosives to scatter radioactive dust, smoke, or other material in order to cause radioactive contamination.
- What are the main dangers of a dirty bomb?
- The main danger from a dirty bomb is from the explosion, which can cause serious injuries and property damage.
- The radioactive materials used in a dirty bomb would probably not create enough radiation exposure to cause immediate serious illness, except to those people who are very close to the blast site.
- However, the radioactive dust and smoke spread farther away could be dangerous to health if it is inhaled.
- Because people cannot see, smell, feel, or taste radiation, you should take immediate steps to protect yourself and your loved ones.

**THE HINDU**

## Blyth's horseshoe bat

- A colony of bats was evicted from a Manipur cave system with a Palaeolithic past to make it tourist-friendly, a zoological study that recorded new fauna in the State has said.
- The Khangkhui, locally called Khangkhui Mangsor, is a natural limestone cave about 15 km from Ukhrul, the headquarters of Ukhrul district.
- The cave was also used as a shelter by the local people during the Second World War after the Japanese forces advanced to Manipur and the adjoining Nagaland.
- Blyth's horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus lepidus) is a species of bat in the family Rhinolophidae. It is found across southern Asia from Afghanistan to Vietnam
- The Blyth's horseshoe bat population on Tioman Island, Malaysia, is known to fly and hunt in the forest during the day and night.
- Blyth's horseshoe bat is widely distributed in South and Southeast Asia, and has been documented in the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

## IRNSS/NAVIC

**About IRNSS/NAVIC**

- IRNSS is an independent regional navigation satellite system being developed by India.
- It is designed to provide accurate position information service to users in India as well as the region extending up to 1500 km from its boundary, which is its primary service area.
- An Extended Service Area lies between primary service area and the area enclosed by the rectangle from Latitude 30 deg south to 50 deg North, Longitude 30 deg East to 130 deg East.
- IRNSS will provide two types of services, namely, Standard Positioning Service (SPS) which is provided to all the users and Restricted Service (RS), which is an encrypted service provided only to the authorised users.
- The IRNSS System is expected to provide a position accuracy of better than 20 m in the primary service area.

**Some applications of IRNSS are:**

- Terrestrial, Aerial and Marine Navigation
- Disaster Management
- Vehicle tracking and fleet management
- Integration with mobile phones
- Precise Timing
- Mapping and Geodetic data capture
- Terrestrial navigation aid for hikers and travellers.
- Visual and voice navigation for drivers.

**THE HINDU**

## GEAC AND GM CROPS

- The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) that functions under the Union Environment Ministry has yet again cleared the proposal for commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) mustard.
- "The environmental release of mustard hybrid Dhara Mustard Hybrid (DMH-11).
- The Government of India has very strict guidelines to test and evaluate the agronomic value of the GM crops so as to protect the interests of the farmers.
- These guidelines address all concerns with regard to the safety of GM seeds.
- The regulatory system for GM crops as operative in the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology (Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation; RCGM), and Ministry of Environment and

Forests (Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee; GEAC) has guidelines to consider the GM crops on case-by-case basis towards testing.

**About GM CROPS**

- Transgenic plants have genes inserted into them that are derived from another species.
- BENEFITS- improved shelf life, improved nutrition (golden rice- rich in vitamin A-Gene is derived from from the bacterium Erwinia uredovora); stress resistance, insect resistance etc.

**PRODUCTION OF BIOFUEL**

- Algae is used for the production
- Modified jatropha

**USEFUL PRODUCTS**

- Bioplastic- use of potato
- Oilseed can be modified to produce detergent.

**POTENTIAL RISK**

- Allergenicity
- May impact human health
- Loss of indigenous crops
- Some have toxic properties

**ADVANTAGE GM**

- Increasing population and food security
- Drought resistant
- Salinity tolerance
- Nutrition

**DISADVANTAGES**

- More safety testing
- More use of pesticides and pesticide resistance
- Impact on consumer behavior

**REGULATION**

- CODEX Alimentarius–The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of internationally recognized standards, codes of practice, guidelines, and other recommendations published by the Food and Agriculture Organization relating to food, food production, food labelling, and food safety
- Sanitary and phytosanitary measures
- GEAC

**THE HINDU**

## Industrial Investment

- Last month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asked captains of industry what was holding them back from investing in manufacturing.
- In the hope of revitalizing private investment, the government had in September 2019 cut the tax rate for

domestic companies from 30% to 22% if they stopped availing of any other tax SOP (standard operating procedure)

**Analysis**

- The export story will be under threat because of the global slowdown, the government's ability to support domestic demand would also be limited as the fiscal deficit comes down.
- Because of the K-shaped recovery, private consumption is only concentrated in some parts of the income pyramid."
- What makes a K-shaped recovery different is that while some parts of the economy may enjoy a booming recovery immediately following the recession, others may remain mired in sluggish growth or even continue to decline.
- capital expenditure by the government is a precursor to private investment but that it would take a sustained trend in public spending, for about half a decade at least, to help kindle enthusiasm in the private sector.
- Private companies invest when they are able to estimate profits, and that comes from demand.

**THE HINDU**