

28<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2024

## 1. Child Marriages in India GS 2 (Social Issues)

- **Why in News:** Union Women and Child Development Minister announced a substantial reduction in child marriages in India, from **47.4% in 2006** to **23.3% in 2019-21**, attributed to the **Prevention of Child Marriage Act (2006)**.

- **Child Marriages in India**

- In India, **child marriage reduced from 47.4% in 2005-06 to 26.8% in 2015-16**.
- In the last five years, it declined by 3.5% points to reach 23.3% in 2020-21, according to the latest National Family Health Survey-5 data.
- There is a growing trend for decline in the overall prevalence of child marriage, but 23.3% is still a disturbingly high percentage in a country with a population of 141.2 crore.
- Eight States have a higher prevalence of child marriage than the national average:

- **West Bengal, Bihar and Tripura** top the list with more than 40% of women aged 20-24 years married below 18, according to NFHS data.

- Some States have shown a reduction in child marriages, like **Madhya Pradesh** (23.1% in 2020-21 from 32.4% in 2015-16), **Rajasthan** (25.4% from 35.4%) and **Haryana**.

- **Global Scenario:**

- According to data from UNICEF, the **total number of girls married in childhood stands at 12 million per year**.
- The 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals aim to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations, under goal 5.
- While it is encouraging that in the past decade great progress has been made in South Asia, where a girl's risk of marrying before she is 18 has dropped by more than a third, from nearly 50% to below 30%, it is not enough, and progress has been uneven.

- **Impact of Child Marriage**

- While child marriage is considered a human rights violation and a recognised form of sexual and gender-based violence, the **adverse impact of child marriage is manifested across maternal and child health**.
- Recently, 10 infants died at Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital in a span of 24 hours.
- The hospital authorities said the majority of the children were born with extremely low birth weight.
- Murshidabad, one of the economically poorer districts of the State, has one of the highest numbers of child marriages in West Bengal.
- The NFHS - 5 points out that 55.4% of women aged 20-24 years are married before the age of 18 years in the district.
- The district saw a rise from NFHS-4 numbers, which stood at 53.5 %.

- **Legal Intervention in India**

- There are several laws including the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** and the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012**, which aim at protecting children from violation of human and other rights.
- The **Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021** seeks to **increase the marriage age of women from existing 18 years to 21 years**.

- **Why Minimum Age of Marriage for Females should be Increased?**

- Lack of access to education and employment
  - Women face inequalities when it comes to access to education and employment as a consequence of their early marriages.

### Around two lakh child marriages were prevented in a year, says WCD Ministry

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Child marriages in India halved from 47.4% to 23.3% in 2019-21 since the introduction of the Prevention of Child Marriage Act in 2006, said Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi here on Wednesday.

The Minister said around two lakh child marriages were prevented in the past one year, even as one in five girls in India is married before reaching the legal age of 18.

Recent reports by the United Nations note that, globally, the most significant decline in child marriage rates have been observed in South Asian countries, India being a significant contributor. Ms. Devi said in her address while launching the Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat Abhiyan (child marriage-free India campaign) here. However, despite the progress, there was no room for complacency, she said.

#### Focus on 7 States

The 'Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat' campaign will focus on the seven States with high burden of child marriages – West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh – and nearly 300 high-burden districts where child marriage rates are high compared with the national average.

The campaign will call on every State and Union Territory to devise an action plan aimed at reducing the child marriage rates below 5% by 2029.

A key feature of the campaign is the launch of the 'Child Marriage Free Bharat' portal, meant to raise awareness, report cases, and monitor progress.

"Guided by the past experiences of BBVP [Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save daughter, educate daughter) Programme] and the recent judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the 'Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat' campaign aims to bring all stakeholders together to spread awareness up to the grassroots and bring attitudinal change towards ending child marriage," Ms. Devi said.

The Union Minister added that apart from laws, "we must also focus on raising awareness because legislation alone cannot eradicate this issue".

We cannot stop until India is completely free of child marriages, she added, calling for active participation from citizens.

- It is often the case that women are denied access to education and an economic means of livelihood after entering into the institution of marriage at an early age.
- Increasing the minimum age for marriage will lead to more women pursuing higher education and opt for employment.
- Impact of early marriage on health of women and children:
  - An early age of marriage and consequent early pregnancies have a substantial impact on the nutritional levels of mothers and their children, along with their overall health and mental wellbeing.
  - Underage mothers are at a higher risk of reproductive health challenges, malnutrition, postpartum haemorrhage, and a susceptibility to sexually transmitted diseases.
- **Schemes/ Policies for Preventing Girl Child Marriage:**
  - **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY):**
    - Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY), was launched in 2015, in order to promote the welfare of girl child.
    - It encourages parents **to invest and build funds for the future studies and marriage expenses of the girl's children.**
  - **Balika Samridhi Yojana:**
    - Balika Samridhi Yojana is another central government scheme to support girls in financially vulnerable sections of society.
    - This scheme ensures the enrolment and retention of girl child in primary and secondary schools.
    - It aims at the **prosperity of a girl's child and provides them with a better quality education.**
  - **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**
    - Among all the other girl's child welfare schemes, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is the most popular.
    - This scheme celebrates girl children, literally translating to Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl child. It believes in women empowerment and creating an inclusive ecosystem for the same.
    - This scheme is **to promote girl children's safety before and after they are born.**
- **News Summary:**
  - Union Women and Child Development Minister announced a substantial reduction in child marriages in India, from **47.4% in 2006 to 23.3% in 2019-21**, attributed to the **Prevention of Child Marriage Act (2006)**.
  - Speaking at the launch of the **Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (Child Marriage-Free India Campaign)**, she highlighted the prevention of over **two lakh child marriages** in the past year alone.
  - **Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Abhiyan Goals:**
    - Focus on seven high-burden states (West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh) and 300 districts with above-average child marriage rates.
    - **Aim to reduce child marriage rates to below 5% by 2029.**
    - Launch of the '**Child Marriage Free Bharat**' portal for awareness, reporting, and progress monitoring.
  - **Global Context:**
    - India significantly contributed to South Asia's reduction in child marriage rates, according to UN reports.
  - **Challenges and Solutions:**
    - Education continuity for girls
    - Skill development and employment
    - Nutritional and reproductive health
    - Safety, anti-trafficking, and social protection
    - Awareness campaigns are critical, as laws alone cannot eradicate the issue.



## 2. 'Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat' Campaign GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** The Union Minister of Women and Child Development recently launched the "Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Campaign".
- **About 'Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat' Campaign**
  - It was launched by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, Government of India.
  - It seeks to engage multiple stakeholders in a **collective effort to eliminate child marriage in India**.
  - It will **focus on the seven high-burden states: West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam and Andhra Pradesh** and nearly **300 high-burden districts** where child marriage rates are **high as compared to the national average**.
  - The campaign will call on every **State and Union Territory to devise an action plan aimed at reducing the child marriage rates below 5% by 2029**.
  - Child marriage **rates dropped** from 47.4% in 2006 to 23.3% in 2019-21, according to government data.
  - A **key feature** of the initiative is the launch of the **Child Marriage Free Bharat portal**, a platform to **raise awareness, report cases, and monitor progress**.
  - The portal is designed to **facilitate effective monitoring of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs)** by strengthening supervision and evaluation mechanisms to ensure their active role in preventing child marriages and supporting affected individuals.
  - People will be able to **register their complaints** pertaining to child marriage, and these will be directed straight to the concerned CMPOs anywhere in the country.
  - All States have been directed to log on to the portal and register the CMPOs so that there is **real-time monitoring of cases**.
  - **Nodal officers** will be assigned at the Centre for monitoring the portal.
  - It seeks to **enhance public access to information**, making it easily available to enable better communication and support.

### Cyclonic storm brewing over the Bay of Bengal to bring heavy rain over T.N. till December 1

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

With the cyclonic storm brewing over the Bay of Bengal predicted to reach near the north Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coast by Saturday, heavy rain is likely to continue over coastal areas of Tamil Nadu till Sunday.

The Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC), Chennai, has issued orange and yellow alerts, which indicate rainfall of heavy to very heavy intensity, for various coastal districts including Chennai on Thursday.

The RMC has, however, downgraded the red alert issued for Cuddalore, Mayiladuthurai, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Karaikal to an orange alert, indicating isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall till 8.30 a.m. on Thursday.

There has been a delay in the weather system intensifying into a cyclonic storm.

According to the RMC, the deep depression over Southwest Bay of Bengal moved slowly north-north-westwards at a speed of 3 kmph during the past six hours, and lay centred about 100 km east-north-



**Blown away:** A buoy that was washed ashore by high tides on the Marina beach in Chennai on Wednesday. R. Kozu

east of Trincomalee, 320 km southeast of Nagapattinam, 420 km southeast of Puducherry, and 500 km south-southeast of Chennai, as of 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday.

It is very likely to move north-northwestwards, skirting the Sri Lankan coast, and intensify into a cyclonic storm during the next 12 hours. It will continue to move north-northwestwards and reach near the north Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coast as a deep depression around November 30 morning.

Cuddalore and Mayiladuthurai may experience extremely intense rainfall of above 24.4 cm till 8.30 a.m. on Thursday. Kan-

cheepuram, Cuddalore, Chengalpattu, Villupuram, and Puducherry may receive intense rainfall of up to 24 cm in isolated places. Twelve other districts, including Chennai, Tiruvarur, Karaikal, Tiruvarur, and Nagapattinam, would receive heavy rainfall. A similar pattern would occur over the coastal region and north Tamil Nadu from November 29 to December 2.

In the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday, Nagapattinam saw the heaviest rainfall of 19 cm. S. Balachandran, Additional Director General of Meteorology, Chennai, said the doppler weather radar in Karaikal was tracking the system.

## 3. Cyclone Fengal GS 3 (Disaster Management)

- **Why in News:** A **depression** over the **Bay of Bengal** has intensified into a **deep depression**, bringing heavy rainfall to Chennai and several districts in Tamil Nadu. The **Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)** has predicted that the system will further intensify into a **cyclone (Cyclone Fengal)**.
- **Cyclone:**
  - A cyclone is a mature, organized system of clouds and thunderstorms featuring a clearly defined circulation pattern.
  - They are caused by **atmospheric disturbances** around a **low-pressure area** distinguished by swift and often destructive air circulation.
  - They form over warm ocean waters and are characterized by low pressure at the center, called the "eye," surrounded by strong, rotating winds.
  - **Cyclones are classified as:**
    - extra tropical cyclones (also called temperate cyclones)
    - tropical cyclones

- **Worldwide terminology:** Cyclones are given many names in different regions of the world. They are known as:
  - **Typhoons** in the China Sea and Pacific Ocean
  - **Hurricanes** in the West Indian islands in the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean
  - **Tornados** in the Guinea lands of West Africa and southern USA.
  - **Willy-willies** in north-western Australia
  - **Tropical cyclones** in the Indian Ocean
- **Exposure of Indian subcontinent to Cyclones**
  - The Indian subcontinent (**8041 kilometres**) is one of the worst affected regions in the world.
  - It is exposed to nearly 10 per cent of the world's tropical cyclones.
  - Of these, the majority of them have their initial genesis over the **Bay of Bengal** and strike the East coast of India. On an average, five to six tropical cyclones form every year.
  - More cyclones occur in the **Bay of Bengal than the Arabian Sea and the ratio is approximately 4:1.**
  - Cyclones occur frequently on both the coasts (the West coast - Arabian Sea; and the East coast - Bay of Bengal).
  - Tropical cyclones occur in the months of **May-June and October-November.**
- **Key Concepts:**
  - **Depression:** A depression is a **low-pressure area** in the atmosphere where the air pressure is lower than the surrounding regions.
    - This typically leads to the movement of air from high-pressure areas to low-pressure areas, causing clouds, moisture accumulation, and rainfall.
    - Depressions are the weakest form of cyclonic systems and are associated with moderate to heavy rainfall, but they are not yet severe enough to be classified as cyclones.
    - Depressions are common in tropical regions and form over warm oceans.
  - **Deep Depression:** When a depression intensifies further, it becomes a deep depression.
    - In this stage, the system is characterized by stronger winds (usually around 55-75 km/h), more defined low-pressure areas, and increased rainfall.
  - While still not as severe as a full-fledged cyclone, a deep depression can cause significant weather disturbances, including heavy rainfall, strong winds, and flooding in affected areas.

#### 4. Schooling in India in Times of Poor Air Quality GS 2 (Education)

- **Why in News:**
  - In November 2024, the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) mandated a shift from physical to online learning in Delhi schools due to severe air pollution
  - This decision, rooted in concerns over health risks associated with the poor Air Quality Index (AQI), raises critical questions about its scientific validity, practicality, and consequences
  - While addressing pollution is imperative, linking school closures to air quality highlights deeper issues regarding the treatment of education, children's rights, and public health.
- **The Impact of Poor Air Quality and Limitations of the Current Approach**
  - **The Continuum of Health Risks**
    - The harmful effects of air pollution are not limited to AQI levels above 400, which are deemed 'severe.'
    - Even at moderate levels (AQI 51-100), pollution starts to affect vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing health conditions.

**Schooling in India in times of poor air quality**

**Dr. Chandrasekhar Lalitha**  
a medical doctor who specialises in early childhood development, literacy, and preventive medicine. He has over 30 years of work experience with the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

**Dr. Ramkesh Gidhari**  
a former Director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, and a specialist in respiratory medicine.

**Policy must be people-centric**  
From a larger social angle, most of the actions recommended as a part of GRAP, adversely and disproportionately, impact the poor and the vulnerable in terms of equity for the poor and the marginally as well as learning and nutritional outcomes. This is a reminder that whatever is done in the name of the policy should have a people-centric and pro-poor focus. Air quality and school functioning need a holistic approach. India had one of the longest school closures during the COVID-19 period and we need to learn from those mistakes. There was another article on this, in this daily, by one of our writers, 'Building back to a better learning catastrophe', April 26, 2022.

**Schools are the source of air pollution.** Rather, there is far greater loss than benefit from school closures. While there are valid reasons for implementing other measures under GRAP to improve the AQI, closing schools for physical classes makes the least sense. It has happened for the last eight years, but now is the time that school functioning is defined from GRAP measures. Nelson Mandela had said, 'There can be no better revolution of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.' When it comes to handling air quality and the functioning of schools, Indian States and society seem to be failing in their responsibility and their duties.

**Adopt a science-based approach**  
First, schools should not be made to switch to online classes, no matter what the level of AQI is. The focus should be on keeping the school functional and ensuring learning continuity. This could be done with some mitigations such as completely halting all outdoor activities in schools where the AQI is poor. Everyone should take appropriate personal protective measures, such as use of purifiers and face masks, taking into account recommendations by age, and pre-existing health issues. Those who have pre-existing respiratory health issues are likely to benefit more from mask wearing, specifically in a polluted and open space.

**Second, to attend school, there is no need for a uniform directive for mask wearing.** Schools are not the source of pollution. Arguably, air quality is different in different schools than what is done at home. So, if children and parents wear a face mask at home, they can wear it at school as well. Else, no additional mandatory mask wearing measure is needed. There is a need to remember that face masks can also have negative effects, such as causing a skin allergy and other discomforts. So, one should keep in mind the benefits and the associated risks, also, except for medical recommendations, children younger than 12 years should not be made to wear face masks. During periods of severe or above AQI, children who have pre-existing health issues or any other parents who wish to keep their children at home, should be given an 'opt-out' option from physical classes, and the rest of the children should have the opportunity for learning continuity.

**Third, in schools or other settings which have functional air purifiers, mask wearing is not going to provide any additional advantage.** For such settings, i.e., schools, ensuring that the classrooms

**The oversized idea of face masks**  
Poor air quality mostly affects us because of the issue of face masks. Even before GRAP stages III and IV recommended the suspension of physical classes,



- This **arbitrary emphasis on 'severe' AQI as the threshold for action risks normalising the health effects of prolonged exposure to AQI levels between 51 and 399.**
- **Such exposure can lead to respiratory issues,** cardiovascular problems, and developmental delays, especially in children.
- **Children: The Most Vulnerable Group**
  - Children are **particularly susceptible to air pollution due to their developing respiratory systems** and higher metabolic rates.
  - Unlike adults, **children breathe more air relative to their body weight,** increasing their exposure to pollutants.
  - **This vulnerability makes it imperative to protect children from poor air quality,** however, this protection cannot be achieved merely by closing schools and asking them to stay indoors.
  - **Many children, especially those from low-income families, live in cramped, poorly ventilated homes** where indoor air quality can be as bad as or worse than outdoor air.
  - For these children, **schools equipped with air purifiers may offer relatively safer breathing environments.**
- **Socioeconomic Disparities in Exposure**
  - Children from **underprivileged backgrounds often bear the brunt of its effects**
  - **They are more likely to live in densely populated areas** with high pollution levels and lack access to clean indoor air.
  - While **wealthier families can afford air purifiers** and other mitigative measures, **disadvantaged families rely on public spaces** like schools to provide their children with a safer environment.
  - Therefore, **closing schools during high-pollution days disproportionately affects these children,** exacerbating health and educational inequities.
- **The Limitations of the Current Approach**
  - The current strategy of using GRAP measures, including the closure of schools during severe air pollution, **reflects a reactive rather than proactive approach.**
  - **While the intention is to shield children from the worst effects of pollution, the policy overlooks the broader context:** poor air quality is a constant, not an episodic, issue.
  - By **focusing only on extreme AQI levels, policymakers fail to address the chronic exposure** that harms children throughout the year.
  - This **myopic approach results in minimal health benefits** while causing significant disruptions to education and exacerbating societal inequities.
- **GRAP Policy and Its Broader Implication**
  - **Disproportionate Impact on the Vulnerable**
    - The **closure of schools** during periods of severe pollution **disrupts educational access, particularly for children from low-income families** who lack the technological resources to transition smoothly to online learning.
    - For many such children, **schools are not only centres for education but also places where they receive essential services such as mid-day meals** and a safer environment.
    - **Shifting classes online deprives them of these benefits,** exacerbating pre-existing inequalities in education and health outcomes.
  - **Education as a Collateral Victim**
    - **India experienced one of the longest school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic,** resulting in significant learning losses and developmental setbacks.
    - **Repeating these closures for pollution-related reasons reflects a failure** to learn from past mistakes.
    - **Education is a fundamental right and should not be treated as expendable** in the face of environmental challenges.
    - **Instead, policies must ensure that children can continue their education safely,** regardless of external circumstances.

- **The Problem with Temporary Fixes**
  - The decision to close schools in response to extreme AQI levels **highlights a reactive policy approach that addresses symptoms rather than root causes.**
  - While GRAP seeks to mitigate immediate health risks, **it fails to provide long-term solutions to pollution.**
  - **School closures may reduce children's exposure to polluted air temporarily, but they do nothing to address the chronic pollution problem** that remains pervasive throughout the year.
  - **Such measures may even create a false sense of progress,** diverting attention from the systemic reforms needed to tackle the pollution crisis comprehensively.
- **Long-Term Implications for Society**
  - The way a society treats its children reflects its values and priorities.
  - Closing schools during high pollution days not only disrupts education but also **sends a message that children's development is secondary to short-term policy goals.**
  - **Nelson Mandela's assertion that the soul of a society is revealed by its treatment of children** highlights the moral and ethical dimensions of this issue.
  - **By failing to invest in solutions that protect both education and health, society risks creating a generation that is less equipped to tackle the challenges of the future,** including environmental degradation itself.
- **Effectiveness of Online Learning and Masks for Children**
  - **Shifting Schools to Online: A Flawed Substitute**
    - Schools are more than academic institutions; **they create holistic development through social interaction, extracurricular activities, and life skills.**
    - **Online education, while a necessary alternative during emergencies, is an inadequate substitute** for in-person learning, especially for younger children.
    - **Prolonged screen time can harm children's cognitive and physical development,** while the absence of mid-day meals affects their nutrition.
  - **Questions on the Role of Masks**
    - The **recommendation for children to wear face masks during periods of high pollution also warrants scrutiny.**
    - **Scientific evidence during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that masks were not universally necessary for children under five** and were only recommended, not mandated, for those aged six to eleven.
    - For classrooms with functional air purifiers, masks add little benefit; **Instead, schools should adopt a more personalised approach, considering factors like pre-existing health conditions.**
    - Blanket advisories not only lack scientific backing but can also cause unnecessary discomfort and stigmatisation among children.
- **Way Forward: A Science-Based and People-Centric Approach**
  - To address the issue holistically, **schools must remain open with necessary mitigations.**
  - **Outdoor activities can be suspended,** and classrooms equipped with air purifiers should maintain sealed environments to ensure clean air.
  - **Mask policies should be individualised rather than universal,** prioritising children with respiratory conditions or other vulnerabilities.
  - **Hybrid models, often misinterpreted as a license for convenience, must not replace the emphasis on physical schooling.**
  - **Innovative solutions are needed to ensure that learning remains active, interactive, and inclusive.**
- **Conclusion**
  - **Shifting schools to online learning as a response to poor air quality is a reactive and ineffective measure** that overlooks scientific evidence and socio-economic realities.
  - **A more nuanced, science-based approach is essential, one that safeguards children's education and well-being** without compounding the inequities already exacerbated by pollution.
  - **Only by valuing schools as indispensable spaces for development can society truly fulfil its responsibility to its youngest and most vulnerable members.**

## 5. First phase of One Nation One Subscription approved GS 2 (Governance)

### • Why in News:

- The Union Cabinet has allocated ₹6,000 crore for the 'One Nation One Subscription' initiative.
- This program aims to centralize journal subscriptions for approximately 6,300 government-run higher education institutions (HEIs), providing equitable access to 13,000 scholarly journals through a unified platform. It seeks to **enhance academic resource availability across India.**

### • Current Access to Journals in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

#### ○ Library Consortia System

- HEIs access journals through 10 library consortia managed by various ministries.
- Library consortia are collaborations among libraries to share resources and meet common needs.
- E.g., INFLIBNET Centre in Gandhinagar, under the Ministry of Education, manages the UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium.
- This consortium provides access to selected scholarly electronic journals and databases across disciplines.

#### ○ Individual Subscriptions

- HEIs also subscribe to journals independently, supplementing consortium-based access.

#### ○ Access Statistics

- Currently, around 2,500 HEIs have access to approximately 8,100 journals through consortia and individual subscriptions.

### • What is One Nation One Subscription (ONOS) initiative?

#### ○ Background

- Prime Minister Modi's 2022 Independence Day address emphasized the importance of research and development for India's progress, calling for **"Jai Anusandhan" to drive innovation and scientific exploration.**
- Aligned with this vision, the National Education Policy (2020) highlights research as a key driver for educational and national excellence.
- The establishment of the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)** underscores the government's commitment to fostering a strong research culture.
- Building on these initiatives, the Union Cabinet has approved the ONOS scheme, **granting nationwide access to international research articles and scholarly journals.**

#### ○ Objective

- The ONOS scheme aims to streamline and centralize journal access for all state and central government HEIs, replacing the fragmented system currently in place.

#### ○ Implementation Timeline

- The platform will go live on **January 1, 2025**, consolidating access to thousands of journals under a single system.

#### ○ Key Features:

- **Access to 13,000 Journals:** Journals from 30 international publishers, including Elsevier Science Direct, Springer Nature, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, IEEE, and more, will be available.
- **Unified Registration:** HEIs will need to register on the platform to access the journals.
- **Implementing Agency:** Information and Library Network Centre (INFLIBNET) Centre has been designated as the implementing authority
- **Funding and Pricing:** The central government has allocated **₹6,000 crore** for the initiative covering three years (2025–2027).

- A single subscription price was negotiated with each publisher for all institutions.

## What is govt's 'One Nation One Subscription' initiative?

**EXPLAINED**

**What is the need for ONOS?**  
The ONOS scheme has been launched for three reasons:  
■ To expand access to the best scholarly journals for 55 lakh to nearly 13 crore students, faculty and researchers across roughly 6,300 government universities, colleges, research bodies, and Institutions of National Importance (INIs).  
■ To avoid duplication of journal subscriptions across different library consortia, and individual HEIs which would reduce expenditure on overlapping resources.  
■ To provide better bargaining power when negotiating with publishers through single subscription for all government HEIs. The official said, "We have been meeting with representatives of different publishers over the last two years, and during this time, we have worked to register the best price. As a result, the total cost of Rs 4,000 crore per year for 13,000 journals has been reduced to Rs 1,000 crore."

**What happens next?**  
The Centre will now negotiate Article Processing Charges (APCs) with journal publishers. APCs, also known as publication fees, are charges authors must pay to publish in certain journals. Scientific journals have various ways of generating revenue: journal publishing, editorial, operational, peer review, and other fund-raising. One-way journals typically charge authors for the article processing, known as the APC.  
According to government estimates, authors in India paid nearly Rs 180 crore to journal publishers in APCs in 2023. Similar to the government's registered single subscription for all government HEIs, it now aims to do the same for APCs. The Centre believes the approach will reduce overall costs. The government is yet to decide if ONOS will cover private HEIs also, the official said.



- **Additional Subscriptions:** HEIs seeking access to journals beyond the 13,000 available can continue subscribing to them individually.
- **Dedicated portal:** A dedicated portal, "One Nation One Subscription," will serve as the gateway for institutions to access these resources.
- **Role of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**
  - The access and usage of subscription will be regularly monitored by the ANRF.
  - It will also contribute to the expansion of publications by Indian authors in participating.
- **Plans for future expansion**
  - The first phase included all 6,300 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and research institutes under both central and state governments.
  - In the second phase, the government plans to expand this to the remaining higher education institutions in the country, both public and private.
  - Phase 3 will expand the access of ONOS to the entire country.
- **Benefits of the ONOS Scheme**
  - **Broader Access to Scholarly Resources**
    - Expands access to top-tier scholarly journals for **1.8 crore students, faculty, and researchers** across approximately **6,300 government HEIs**, including those in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
    - Extending benefits to students residing in tier-2 and tier-3 cities will help in reducing the knowledge gap between urban and rural students.
  - **Elimination of Resource Duplication**
    - Avoids overlapping subscriptions across various library consortia and institutions, reducing **excess expenditure** on duplicate resources.
  - **Enhanced Bargaining Power**
    - Consolidates subscription under one platform, allowing the government to **negotiate better deals** with publishers.
    - Example: Negotiations reduced the initial cost of ₹4,000 crore per year for 13,000 journals to **₹1,800 crore annually**.
  - **Data-Driven Utilization and Planning**
    - Enables the Centre to monitor journal usage across HEIs, aiding **long-term planning** and promoting better utilization of resources in inactive institutions.
  - **Alignment with national goals**
    - The scheme aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), and the government's Viksit Bharat@2047 vision.

## 6. Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire deal GS 2 (International Relations)

- **Why in News:**
  - Israel and Lebanon have entered into a ceasefire. This happened a day after Israel's security cabinet approved a US-backed proposal to end the 13-month-long conflict that escalated in September.
  - This ceasefire has been modeled after UNSC Resolution 1701 from the 2006 conflict.
- **UNSC Resolution 1701**
  - **Overview of UNSC Resolution 1701**
    - UNSC Resolution 1701, adopted on August 11, 2006, seeks to end hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel, establish a buffer zone, and achieve a permanent ceasefire.
  - **Historical Context**
    - The resolution aimed to complete **Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon along the Blue Line and Golan Heights**, following its partial withdrawal in 2000.
    - Triggered by Hezbollah's attack in July 2006, which killed three Israeli soldiers and kidnapped two, the ensuing war lasted over a month, causing significant casualties (1,000+ Lebanese and 170 Israelis).



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- **Additional Factors Influencing the Decision**
  - **Civil-Military Dynamics in Israel**
    - Former Defense Minister and the IDF Chief of Staff advocated for a ceasefire, questioning the government's military objectives.
  - **Strategic Challenges in Lebanon**
    - Prolonged military presence in Lebanon risks wearing down the IDF and strengthening Hezbollah's domestic support.
  - **Hezbollah's Resilience**
    - Despite heavy losses, Hezbollah retained the capability to strike, launching 250 rockets two days before the ceasefire.
    - Israel's symbolic achievement of reaching the Litani River was followed by a ceasefire to avoid a prolonged and costly conflict.

