

## Prelim Bits 17-02-2024 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

### Schengen Area

*Recently, Kosovo secured visa-free access to the Schengen zone in Europe, world's largest zone of free movement*

- **Schengen agreement** - A treaty, signed ***in 1985 in Schengen***, by France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Netherlands and came ***into force in 1995***.

**Schengen** is a village in Luxembourg, bordering France and Germany.

- **Aim** - To abolish internal border checks and to provide a single set of rules for controls at the external borders in Schengen area.
- **Parties** - 27 countries
- **Membership** - It has allowed both EU and non-EU countries.
- Today, 23 of 27 EU countries are parties except Cyprus and Ireland but Bulgaria and Romania to join in March, 2024.
- It includes non-EU States like Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.



*United Kingdom (UK) is a non-EU and non-Schengen Country.*

- **Schengen Visa** - It is issued *for short stays under 90 days*.
- **Benefits** - Freedom to travel to other European nations without border checks.
- Alongside the single currency adopted by 20 EU countries, Schengen visa is the most visible symbol of European integration.
- **Challenges** - The *flow of migrants and asylum seekers* is seen as a threat to internal security and affected member states use the Schengen Borders Code to introduce internal border controls.

### Quick facts

- **Kosovo** - A Balkan nation which broke away from Serbia in 1999 and declared

independence in 2008.

- It has not been accorded legal statehood by the UN and denied recognition by Russia and China.
- **Balkan countries** - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

## Reference

[The Hindu| Kosovo joining Schengen Area](#)

## National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)

Recently, Vice-Chairman (Chairman in-charge) of the NCSC submitted its annual report 2022-23 to the President of India.

- It is a **constitutional body under Article 338** of the Constitution of India.
- **Aim** - To provide safeguards against the exploitation of SCs and Anglo Indian communities and to promote & protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests.
- **Composition (5)** - Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and 3 other Members.
- **Appointed by** - **President**, by warrant under his hand and seal.
- President may by rule determine the conditions of service and tenure of office of all the members.

**89<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act (2003)**, separated the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes into 2 separate commissions - National Commission for SC and National Commission for ST (NCST).

- **Powers and Function** - It shall have the power to regulate its own procedure.
- To investigate and monitor all matters relating to all safeguards provided for the SCs and to evaluate their working.
- To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the SCs.
  - It has all the **powers of a civil court** like summoning attendance, requiring documents, receiving evidences, requisition public copy from court or office and examining the witnesses.
- To advise on the planning process of socio-economic development and to evaluate the progress under the Union and any State.
- To discharge such other functions as the President may, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by the rule specify.
- The Union and every State Government shall consult the Commission on all major policy matters affecting SCs.
- **Report** - Presented to the President, annually and at such other times as the

Commission may deem fit where it recommends measures that should be taken by the Union or any State.

*National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) under **Article 338 (A)** and National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) under **Article 338 (B)** are constitutional bodies for the protection and development of STs and BCs of India respectively.*

## References

1. [PIB| Annual Report of NCSC](#)
2. [Constitution of India| Article 338 of Indian Constitution](#)

## Army Martial Arts Routine (AMAR)

*Recently, a Punjab Regiment unit deployed close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Kibithu in eastern Arunachal Pradesh, demonstrated their martial arts training to a group of visiting journalists.*

- **AMAR** - A unique and standardised mixed martial arts (MMA) programme to train soldiers in basic and advanced techniques and manoeuvres of MMA.
- **Induction of martial arts** - Post the Galwan conflict in 2020, the Udhampur-based Northern Command introduced the Israeli-origin martial art **Krav Maga**.
- Later units picked up different martial arts based on their affiliations.
  - **The Ghatka** - By the Punjab regiment
  - **The Khukri dance** - By the Gorkha Regiment
  - **The Kalari Payattu** - By the Madras regiment
- **Aim** - To improve soldier readiness and close-quarters fighting skills by focussing on offensive assault training and the ability to counter sharp-edged weapons.

**Battle Preparedness and Efficiency Test (BEPT)** is a mandate for all personnel up to 45 years of age once in every quarter. One has to run 5 km in 25 minutes for up to 30 years of age and for those above 30 years up to 40, additional 2 minutes are given.

Important Martial Arts	Origin State
Kalaripayattu	Kerala
Gatka	Punjab
Kuttu Varisai	Tamil Nadu
Silambam	Tamil Nadu
Thang-ta	Manipur

## References

1. [The Hindu | Indian Martial arts Training for Army troops](#)
2. [Times of India | Indian Martial Art Forms](#)

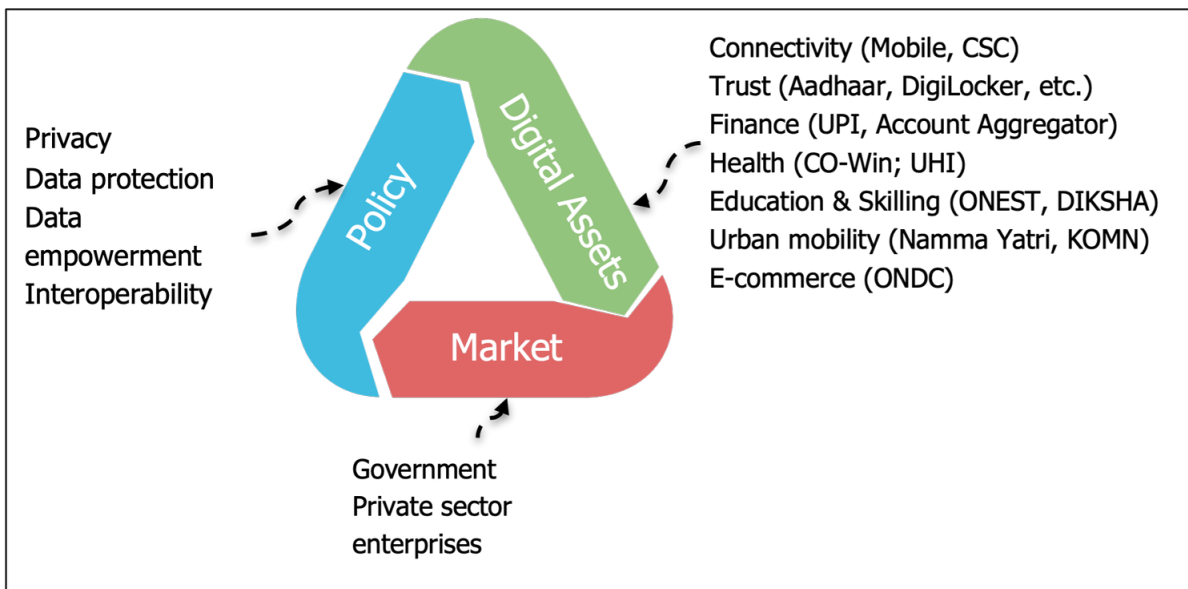
## India's open-sourced DPIs

India and Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation to share India's open-sourced DPIs.

- **India Stack Solutions** - It is India's open-sourced DPI, a democratic and inclusive *set of open Application Programming Interface (APIs)* that stack upon each other to address various social challenges arising from economic underdevelopment.
- **Digital public infrastructure (DPI)** - It is a set of *shared digital utilities* powered by interoperable open standards providing *equal access to drive innovation, inclusion,* and competition at scale having open, transparent, and participatory governance.

**Open source software (OSS)** is software with a source code that that anyone can inspect, modify, and enhance with its original rights.

- **Digital public goods (DPGs)** - A set of digital assets *made freely available* allowing anyone to build and operate their own DPIs in a faster, cheaper, and interoperable manner.
- **India's DPI framework**



- **Significance** - DPI approach can *reduce implementation cost* thereby increasing society-wide impact of digitalisation.
- It can *make India genuinely a leader of the Global South*, as is evident from the fact that 8 countries have already signed MoU for the stack.

India has launched [Global DPI Repository \(GDPIR\)](#), a virtual repository of DPI

voluntarily shared by G20 members and beyond. Currently, the GDPIR features 54 DPIs from 16 countries.

## References

1. [PIB| India Signs MoU with Columbia to Share India's DPI](#)
2. [Business Today| India's DPI goes Global](#)

## Operations of Railway Protection Force

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) undertake various operations to safeguard railway property, passenger areas, and the well-being of travellers.

- **Railway Protection Forces** - It is established through ***RPF Act, 1957*** and was amended in 1985 to make RPF *an Armed Force*.
- **Aim** - To ensure a *safe and comfortable travel experience* for all rail passengers and thereby upholding the values of integrity, compassion, and responsibility.

Operation	Objective	Significance
<b>Nanhe Faristey</b>	Rescuing Lost Children	Reuniting the children in need of care and protection with their families.
<b>Jeevan Raksha</b>	Saving Lives	Saving the lives of passengers who had accidentally fallen while de-boarding or boarding moving trains.
<b>Meri Saheli</b>	Empowering Women Passengers	Providing security assurance to lady passengers.
<b>Uplabdh</b>	Cracking Down on Touts	Arresting touts and Seizing future reserved railway tickets.
<b>NARCOS</b>	Combating Drug Crimes	Arresting drug peddlers and seizing narcotics.
<b>Yatri Suraksha</b>	Protecting Passengers	Supplementing police in preventing and detecting crimes against passengers.
<b>Sanraksha</b>	Ensuring Safety	Maintaining passenger safety from perilous acts of stone pelting on running trains.
<b>Seva</b>	Assisting Those in Need	Assisting elderly, sick or injured passengers during their rail travels.
<b>Satark</b>	Curbing Illegal Goods Transport	Seizing illegal tobacco products, illegal liquor and unaccounted cash, gold and silver.

*In addition to this, RPF promptly addressed security-related passenger complaints through Rail Madad Portal and the Helpline (No. 139 integrated with Emergency Response Support System No. 112).*

## References

1. [PIB| Operation of RPF](#)
2. [RPF| Railway Protection Force](#)

