

## ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

**Context:** ASEAN has been unable to act in dealing with the crisis in Myanmar which has been ongoing for 4 years now.



### About ASEAN:

- It is an **inter-governmental grouping** aimed at promoting **political and economic cooperation** and regional stability among its members and other countries in Asia.
- It was **established in 1967** in Bangkok with the signing of the **ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)** by **five members (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand)**.
- Presently it has **10 members**.
- **Headquarters:** Jakarta, Indonesia.

### Institutional mechanism:

- **ASEAN Summit:** Meets annually to discuss regional issues and set policy directions.
  - Chaired by an annually rotating presidency.

- **ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC):** Oversees the implementation of ASEAN agreements and decisions.
- **ASEAN Secretariat:** Supports and facilitates ASEAN's activities and initiatives.
- **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF):** Platform for dialogue and cooperation on political and security issues among ASEAN member countries and their partners.
  - **India** joined ARF in 1996.
- **Decision Making:** It is done through **consultation and consensus**.
- **ASEAN Future Forum:**
  - Proposed by **Vietnam** at the 43rd ASEAN Summit in 2023.
  - It is a common platform for ASEAN member states as well as partner countries to share new ideas and policy recommendations.
  - **India** is a founding member.

Source: Four years on, Myanmar and its continuing nightmare (The Hindu)

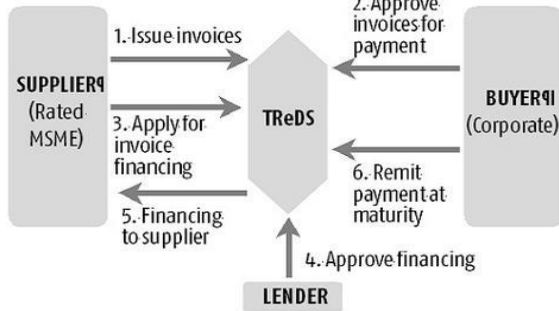
## TRADE RECEIVABLES DISCOUNTING SYSTEM (TReDS)

**Context:** The Economic Survey has pointed out various schemes for the promotion of MSMEs.

### About TReDS:

- It is an **electronic platform** for facilitating the **financing/discounting of trade receivables of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** through multiple financiers.

- These receivables can be due from corporates and other buyers, including Government Departments and Public



Sector Undertakings (PSUs).

- **Purpose:** To allow MSME sellers to discount invoices raised against major corporations, which helps them manage their working capital demands. The platform enables MSMEs to receive payments more quickly.

**Participants:**

- **Sellers, buyers, and financiers** are the participants on a TReDS platform.
- **Only MSMEs** can participate as **sellers** in TReDS.
- **Corporates, Government Departments, PSUs,** and any other entity can **participate as buyers** in TReDS.
- **Banks, NBFC - Factors, and other financial institutions,** as permitted by the RBI, can participate as **financiers** in TReDS.
- RBI has not made it compulsory for any buyer, seller, or financier to participate in TReDS.
- The Government has made it compulsory for certain segments of companies to mandatorily register as buyers on the TReDS platform(s).
- The government directive, however, does not make it compulsory for these entities to perform transactions in TReDS.

**Functioning:**

- Creation of a Factoring Unit (FU) - standard nomenclature used in TReDS for invoice(s) or bill(s) of exchange - containing details of invoices/bills of exchange.
- Acceptance of the FU by the counterparty - buyer or the seller, as the case may be;
- Bidding by financiers;
- Selection of best bid by the seller or the buyer, as the case may be;
- Payment made by the financier (of the selected bid) to the MSME seller at the agreed rate of financing/discounting;
- Payment by the buyer to the financier on the due date.

Source: Regulatory framework holding back MSMEs, limiting growth, innovation (The Hindu)

**NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

**Context:** The tiger population in India has rose 30% in the last two decades.



**About the National Tiger Conservation Authority:**

- It is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC).**
- It was **established in 2006** under **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.**

**Objectives:**

- Providing **statutory authority to Project Tiger** so that compliance of its directives becomes legal.
- Fostering accountability of Center-State in management of Tiger Reserves by providing a basis for MoU with States within the federal structure.
- Providing for an **oversight by Parliament**.
- **Addressing livelihood interests of local people** in areas surrounding Tiger Reserves.

**NTCA Composition:**

- Minister in charge of MoEFCC (as Chairperson),
- Minister of State in MoEFCC (as Vice-Chairperson),
- three members of Parliament, the Secretary (MoEFCC), and other members.

**Tiger**

- Royal Bengal Tiger (**Panthera Tigris**) is the **National animal of India**.

**Subspecies of Tiger:**

- The continental (*Panthera tigris tigris*)
- The Sunda (*Panthera tigris sondaica*)

**Habitat:** Tropical rainforests, evergreen forests, temperate forests, mangrove swamps, grasslands, and savannas.

**Countries Where Tiger Population Is Found:**

- Found only in **13 Tiger Range countries** – India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Russia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.
- As per the latest report by **IUCN**, the tiger has gone extinct in **Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam**.

**Protection Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered

- **CITES:** Appendix I
- **WPA 1972:** Schedule I

**Conservation Efforts**

- **International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA):** For conservation of seven big cats, namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma (Launched by India)
- **Tx2 campaign:** Launched by **WWF**; stands for ‘Tiger times 2’, signaling the goal to **double the tiger population by 2022**.
- **Project Tiger:** Launched in 1973
- **Tiger Census:** Every 4 years

**Threats:** Habitat loss, Poaching and illegal trade, Human-Wildlife conflict

**Tigers In India**

- India has the **largest population**
- Largest population has been found in Central Indian Highlands & Eastern Ghats Landscape

- **Tiger Reserves:** India now has **57 tiger reserves**
- Ratapani Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh is the latest.
- Nagarjunsagar (Andhra Pradesh) is the largest, while Bor (Maharashtra) is the smallest.

*Source: India’s tiger population rose 30% over two decades (The Hindu)*

**ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)**

**Context:** Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso recently withdrew from the ECOWAS.

**About ECOWAS:**

- It is a **regional grouping** aimed to promote economic integration and shared development of the West African sub-region.



- It was **established in May 1975** by 15 West African countries in Lagos, Nigeria.
- Founding members:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sénégal, and Togo.
- Headquarters:** Abuja, Nigeria.

**Major Initiatives:**

- ECOWAS established its **free trade area** in 1990 and adopted a common external tariff in January 2015.
- It has also worked to address some security issues by developing a peacekeeping force for conflicts in the region.
- Troops were initially sent to Liberia in 1990 during its civil war and to Sierra Leone in 1997 following the overthrow of a democratically elected government.

Source: Three military-run states leave West African bloc - what will change? (BBC)

**PLACES IN NEWS**

**Guantanamo Bay**

- It forms an **inlet of the Caribbean Sea**, indenting **southeastern Cuba**.

- It is a large and well-sheltered bay, it has a narrow entrance to a harbour and capable of accommodating large vessels.



- Guantánamo Bay Ports:** It is served by the ports of **Caimanera and Boquerón**.
- The strategic importance of the bay—close to the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti that **links the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean Sea and Panama**.
- Guantanamo Bay, widely known as **“Gitmo,”** has been used to **house terrorism suspects** since the September 11, 2001, attacks, but it also has a small, separate facility known as the Migrant Operations Centre.
- This center has historically held migrants intercepted while attempting to enter the US by boat, primarily from Haiti and Cuba.
- The facility occupies only a small part of the base and currently lacks the capacity to house the 30,000 detainees.

**Point Nemo**



- Point Nemo**, also known as the **Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility**, holds the distinction

of being the **farthest point from any landmass on Earth.**

- This remote point lies in the **South Pacific Ocean** and is named after **Captain Nemo**, the sailor from Jules Verne's famous novel **Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea.**
- Situated approximately **2,688 km** from the nearest landmass, this isolated point is famous for its **extreme remoteness**, with the closest human presence often being aboard the International Space Station above.
- The nearest land in each direction is:
  - To the north lies **Ducie Island**, part of the Pitcairn Islands (British Overseas Territory).
  - To the northeast is Motu Nui, one of the Easter Islands (Chilean dependency).
  - To the south is Maher Island, part of Antarctica.
- Due to its isolation, the waters around Point Nemo have very little marine life, and the region falls within the **South Pacific Gyre**, known for having some of the clearest and least biologically active ocean waters.
- Due to its remoteness and relative lack of marine traffic, Point Nemo has become a **popular location for space agencies to dispose of space junk.**

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**Q1. How many of the following nations are members of ASEAN?**

1. Laos
2. South Korea
3. Vietnam
4. Brunei

**Choose the correct answer:**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**Q2. Consider the following statements with reference to the National Tiger Conservation Authority:**

1. It was established in 1972 under the Wildlife Protection Act.
2. The Prime Minister is the chairperson of the Authority.
3. It oversees Project Tiger and promotes conservation via tiger reserves.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Q3. How many of the following countries are presently members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)?**

1. Gambia
2. Niger
3. Ghana
4. Burkina Faso

**Choose the correct answer:**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Guantanamo Bay:**

1. It forms an inlet of the Caribbean Sea along the coast of Panama.
2. It has become famous as a US detention facility for terrorism suspects after the 9/11 attacks.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q5. Consider the following statements regarding Point Nemo:**

1. It is the farthest point from any landmass on Earth, located in the South Atlantic Ocean.
2. The nearest human presence to Point Nemo is often astronauts aboard the International Space Station.
3. The region around Point Nemo is biologically rich due to its isolation.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 3 only

**Answers:**

1. (c)
2. (c)
3. (b)
4. (b)
5. (c)