

For UPSC CSE



MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE



August 2025 (**PRELIMS**)

YOUR SIMPLIFIED GUIDE TO CURRENT AFFAIRS

A Note to Our Readers

Dear Readers,

Welcome to **Simply Current Affairs Magazine** - your **trusted companion** in the ever-evolving journey of UPSC preparation. With UPSC preparation becoming more dynamic each year, the need for a **clear, exam-focused resource** is greater than ever. Our magazine has been designed with this very purpose - to **give you clarity from complexity**.

Each month, we present **two focused editions** - one dedicated **exclusively to Prelims** and the other exclusively to Mains. The content for the Prelims Magazine is carefully curated from authentic and diverse sources such as **The Hindu, Indian Express, Down To Earth, Press Information Bureau (PIB), All India Radio (AIR), DD News, and Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)**, ensuring coverage that is both relevant and reliable.

What makes this magazine stand apart is the **integration of Previous Year Questions (PYQs)**. Statements highlighted in orange are those that have appeared directly in UPSC Prelims, and the related PYQs are compiled at the end of the magazine for you to attempt as a test.

Our goal is simple - to provide a **concise, self-preparation-friendly comprehensive resource** that empowers aspirants, particularly those preparing independently, to **approach current affairs with confidence and clarity**.

We hope this magazine serves you well in your preparation journey.

With best wishes,
Team Simply Current Affairs

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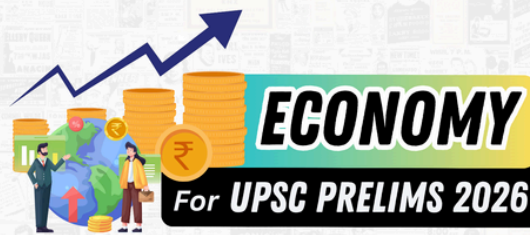
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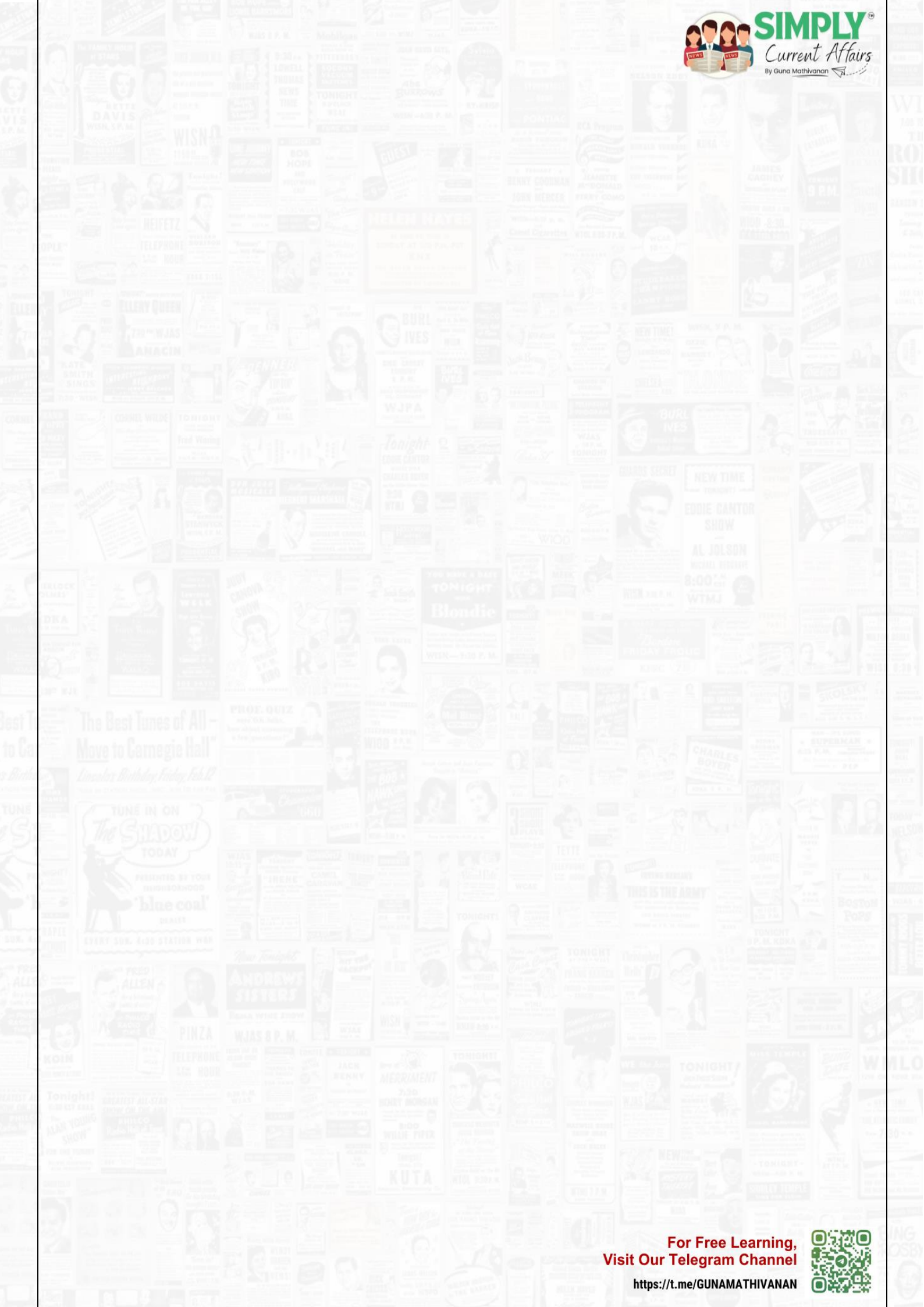


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SCHEMES

1) MERITE Scheme

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| <p>News</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Union Cabinet has given its approval to implement the Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education (MERITE) scheme in 275 institutions across the country – 175 engineering institutes and 100 polytechnic colleges. |  <p>MERITE SCHEME</p> |
| <p>About</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme will emphasise skills to improve employability through a comprehensive approach. The initiative is expected to benefit around 7.5 lakh students by enhancing access to improved academic resources, infrastructure, and industry-aligned training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key interventions include offering internship opportunities, updating curricula to align with industry requirements, organising faculty development programmes, and setting up research hubs. | |
| <p>Nodal Ministry</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education | |
| <p>Funding</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MERITE would work as a Central Sector Scheme with external assistance from the World Bank in the form of a loan. | |






2) Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan

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| <p>News</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched the Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan – envisaged as the world's largest tribal grassroots leadership programme. | |
| <p>Nodal Ministry</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Tribal Affairs | |



| | |
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| Objectives  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aimed at empowering tribal communities, strengthening responsive governance, and creating local leadership opportunities across the country. The mission seeks to mobilize 2 million grassroots change leaders across 1 lakh tribal-dominated villages, who will strengthen last-mile service delivery, grievance redressal, and citizen engagement. The initiative also aims to institutionalise Adi Sewa Kendras in all tribal-dominated villages as a one-stop centre for service delivery. <div data-bbox="1098 208 1511 472">  <p>Adi KARMAYOGI 2 Million Sparks</p> </div> |
| Features  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Adi Karmayogi cadre will be structured to include Adi Karmayogis (government functionaries serving at the grassroots), Adi Sahayogis (youth leaders, teachers, doctors and social workers) and Adi Saathis (tribal leaders, SHG members and volunteers). Villagers and officers will co-create the Tribal Village Vision 2030, aligned with national and international commitments towards sustainable development goals and inclusive development. |

3) Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana

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| News  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government of India has launched a new Employment-Linked Incentive Scheme, officially titled Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY). |
| About  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme will provide incentive of up to Rs 15,000 in two instalments to newly employed youth and upto Rs 3000 per month per new employee to employers for creation of new job opportunities. |
| Objective  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With an outlay of Rs 1 lakh crore, the scheme aims to support creation of over 3.5 crore jobs in two years. |
| Implementation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme will be operated by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). |
| Features  | <p>Part A – Support to First-Time Employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeting first-time employees registered with EPFO, this Part will offer one-month EPF wage up to Rs 15,000 in two installments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 1st instalment will be payable after 6 months of service and the 2nd instalment will be payable after 12 months of service and completion of a financial literacy programme by the employee. Employees with salaries up to Rs 1 lakh will be eligible for the incentives. |



- All payments to the first time employees will be made through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode** using **Aadhaar Bridge Payment System (ABPS)**.

Aadhaar Payment Bridge System:

- It is a unique payment system implemented by **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, which uses **Aadhaar number** as a central key for **electronically channelizing the Government subsidies and benefits** in the **Aadhaar Enabled Bank Accounts (AEBA)** of the intended beneficiaries.

Part B – Incentives for Employers:

- This part will **encourage generation of additional employment in all sectors**, with a **special focus on the manufacturing sector**.
- The Government will **incentivize employers, up to Rs 3000 per month, for two years**, for each additional employment with salaries up to Rs 1 lakh, sustained for at least six months.
 - For the **manufacturing sector**, incentives will be extended to the **3rd and 4th years** as well.
- Payments to the employers under Part B will be made **directly into their PAN-linked Accounts**.

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation:


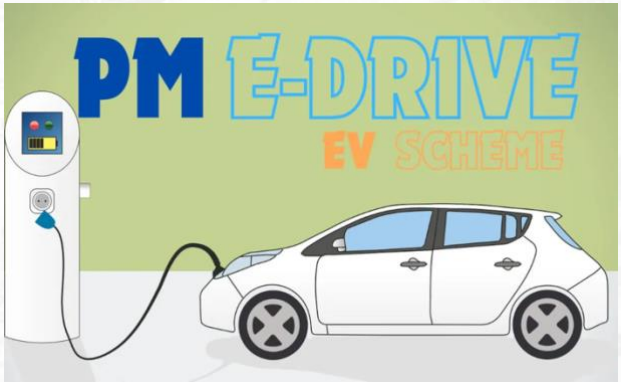




- EPFO is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Labour & Employment**.
- It administers the **Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952** and the **Schemes framed thereunder (Employees' Provident Funds Scheme 1952, Employees' Pension Scheme 1995, and Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme 1976)** under the overall supervision of the **Central Board of Trustees (CBT)**.
 - CBT is a **tripartite body** having representatives from employer organisations, employee unions and Central & State Governments.
 - The **Union Minister for Labour & Employment** is the **Chairman** of the Board.

Employees' Provident Fund:

- EPF is a **government-backed retirement savings scheme** aimed at providing financial stability to employees after retirement. It is **managed by EPFO**.
- The EPF allows **both the company and the employee to contribute an equal amount towards savings**. The accumulated amount in the EPF grows over time until the employee's retirement.
- **Every salaried employee earning up to ₹15,000 per month** is required to contribute to the EPF, with the **company and the employee making equal contributions**.
- Each year, the **government sets the interest rate** on the EPF, which is typically revised by the **EPFO Central Board of Trustees** in consultation with the **Ministry of Finance**.
- The **accumulated balance** in the EPF account can only be withdrawn upon **retirement, job change, or in certain emergencies**.










4) PM E-DRIVE Scheme

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| About  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme was launched in 2024 to provide impetus to the green mobility & development of EV manufacturing eco-system in the country. It replaced the earlier FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) Scheme, which began in 2015 to promote hybrid and electric vehicle technologies in India.  |
| Nodal Ministry  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Heavy Industries |
| Objectives  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme aims to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in India, focusing on electric two-wheelers (e-2Ws), electric three-wheelers (e-3Ws), e-ambulances, electric buses, and other emerging EV categories. The scheme also aims to establish robust charging infrastructure, and strengthen the EV manufacturing ecosystem in the country. |
| Features  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the scheme, demand incentives are primarily provided to buyers (consumers/end users) of electric vehicles in the form of an upfront reduction in the purchase price of EVs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Heavy Industries has introduced E-vouchers for Electric vehicle buyers to avail the demand incentive under the scheme. |
| Why in News?  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government has extended the duration of the PM E-DRIVE Scheme from two years to four years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme will now be implemented until 31 March 2028. |




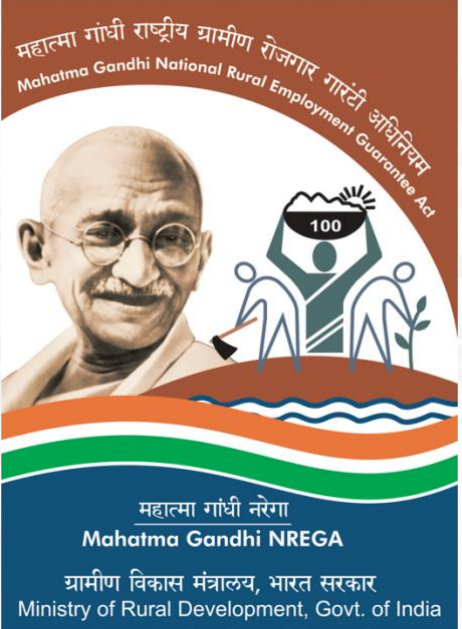


5) PM-DAKSH

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| About  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PM-DAKSH is a Central Sector Scheme launched in 2020-21. |
| Nodal Ministry  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MOSJ&E) |
| Objective  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main objective of the Scheme is to enhance the competency level of the target groups to make them employable both in self-employment and wage-employment for their socio-economic development. |
| Target Group  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target group under this scheme are marginalized persons of Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes (OBC), Economically Backward Classes (EWS), De-notified Tribes (DNT) and Safai karamcharis including waste pickers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under this scheme, any OBC and EWS candidates whose annual family income is less than Rs. 3.00 lakh is eligible to get training whereas there is no income limit for the candidates belonging to SC/DNT/Safai karamcharis. The age criterion of the scheme is between 18-45 years. |
| Features  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under this scheme, eligible target groups are being provided skill development training programmes on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Up-skilling/Re-skilling (ii) Short Term Training Programme (iii) Long Term Training Programme and (iv) Entrepreneurship Development Program. |
| Implementation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme is implemented by three Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) of MOSJ&E: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC) & National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC). |
| Why in News?  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the PM-DAKSH Scheme, over 1.8 lakh individuals have received skill training. |





6) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS





6.1. MGNREGS

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| <p>About</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA) was enacted in 2005 to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Another aim of MGNREGA is to create durable assets (such as roads, canals, ponds, and wells). The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) was initiated to implement the mandates of the Act. |  |
| <p>Nodal Ministry</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Rural Development is monitoring the entire implementation of the MGNREGS in association with state governments. | |
| <p>Features</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MGNREGS is a demand-driven programme where provision of work is triggered by the demand for work by wage-seekers. In addition to 100 days of guaranteed employment, there is a provision for upto additional 50 days of unskilled wage employment in a financial year in drought/natural calamity notified rural areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State Governments may make provision for providing additional days beyond the period guaranteed under the Act from their own funds. Roughly one-third of the stipulated work force must be women. Work site facilities such as creche, drinking water and shade have to be provided. Employment is to be provided within 5 km of an applicant's residence, and minimum wages are to be paid. If work is not provided within 15 days of applying, applicants are entitled to an unemployment allowance. MGNREGA wage rates vary from state to state and are revised by indexing them to the Consumer Price Index-Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) for a particular state. Social Audit of works by Gram Sabha is mandatory, which lends to accountability and transparency. | |
| <p>Implementation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MGNREGA is to be implemented mainly by gram panchayats (GPs). | |






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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans and decisions regarding the nature and choice of works to be undertaken, the order in which each work is to be triggered, site selection etc. are all to be made in open assemblies of the Gram Sabha and ratified by the GP. |
| Funding Pattern  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Act incentivises States to provide employment, as 100 per cent of the unskilled labour cost and 75% of the material cost of the programme is borne by the Centre. |

6.2. Vigyan Dhara



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| About  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vigyan Dhara scheme was launched in January 2025 as a central sector scheme by merging three schemes of the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T). |
| Nodal Ministry  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Science and Technology |
| Aim/ Objective  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote S&T capacity building as well as research, innovation and technology development towards strengthening the Science, Technology and Innovation ecosystem in the country. |
| Components  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme has three broad components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science and Technology Institutional and Human Capacity Building, Research and Development and Innovation, Technology Development and Deployment. The scheme also promotes gender parity in S&T and encourages women's participation through targeted programs. The scheme will further involve internships for 11th and 12th classes and fellowships for Undergraduate and Post Graduate PhD and Post Doc Research. |







6.3. Ayushman Bharat

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| About  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayushman Bharat is a flagship scheme of Government of India to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Launched in 2018, the mission adopts a continuum of care approach that addresses health needs comprehensively across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. |
| Nodal Ministry  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health and Family Welfare |
| Components  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayushman Bharat consists of two inter-related components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ayushman Arogya Mandir Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first component of Ayushman Bharat involves establishing AAM, previously known as Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs). These AAMs offer a broad spectrum of healthcare services, including preventive, promotive, rehabilitative, and curative care. These centres are being created by upgrading existing Sub Health Centres (SHCs) and rural and urban Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to enhance accessibility to healthcare in both rural and urban areas. The goal is to bring healthcare services closer to communities by offering Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC). 2. Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PM-JAY is the world's largest publicly funded health assurance scheme. It provides health coverage of up to Rs. 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization (across public and private empanelled hospitals) to cover 12 crore poor and vulnerable families. The households included are based on the deprivation and occupational criteria of Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 for rural and urban areas respectively. To ensure that nobody is left out (especially women, children and elderly) there is no cap on family size and age in the scheme. The benefits of INR 5,00,000 are on a family floater basis which means that it can be used by one or all members of the family. The benefit cover will also include 3 days of pre-hospitalization and 15 days post-hospitalization expenses such as diagnostics and medicines. A defined transport allowance per hospitalization will also be paid to the beneficiary. |




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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of the scheme are portable across the country and a beneficiary covered under the scheme will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any empanelled public/private hospitals across the country. The cost of implementation of PM-JAY is shared between the Central and State Governments. |
| Implementation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the national level to manage, the National Health Authority has been set up. It is an attached office of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with full functional autonomy. NHA is governed by a Governing Board chaired by the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare. To implement the scheme at the State level, State Health Agencies (SHAs) in the form of a society/trust have been set up by respective States. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SHAs have full operational autonomy over the implementation of the scheme in the State including extending the coverage to non SECC beneficiaries. |
| Recent Update  | Expansion of PM-JAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In March 2024, the eligibility criteria under the scheme were expanded to include 37 lakh Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) and their families. Further, in October 2024, the government broadened the scope of PM-JAY to extend coverage to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above, irrespective of their socio- economic status. |





6.4. Vibrant Villages Programme

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| About  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vibrant Villages Programme-I (VVP-I) was launched in 2023 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme by the Government of India for comprehensive development of the select villages along the northern border in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Union Territory of Ladakh. |  |
| Objective  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objective of the programme is to create sufficient incentives for people to stay on in the selected villages. | |
| Features  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme envisages focused areas of interventions in the select villages for creation of opportunities for livelihood generation through promotion of tourism & cultural heritage, skill development & entrepreneurship and development of cooperative societies. The interventions also include providing road connectivity to unconnected villages, village infrastructures, health facility, education infrastructure, renewable energy, television & telecom connectivity. | |







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| Recent Update  | Vibrant Villages Programme-II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government of India approved the Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II) in April, 2025 as a Central Sector Scheme for comprehensive development of select strategic villages located in blocks along the international land borders (ILB), other than the Northern border already covered under VVP-I. The programme shall be implemented in the States/UTs of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, J&K (UT), Ladakh (UT), Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The objective of the programme is to create better living conditions and adequate livelihood opportunities to ensure prosperous and safe borders, control trans-border crime and assimilate the border population with the nation and inculcate them 'as eyes and ears of the border guarding forces', crucial for internal security. The interventions would be border-specific, state and village specific, based on Village Action Plans prepared in a collaborative approach. |
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6.5. Samarth

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| About  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samarth (Scheme for Capacity Building in Textiles Sector) is a demand driven and placement-oriented umbrella skilling programme launched in 2017. |
| Nodal Ministry  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Textiles |
| Objectives  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samarth aims to incentivize and supplement the efforts of the industry in creating jobs in the organized textile and related sectors, covering the entire value chain of textiles, excluding Spinning and Weaving. In addition to the entry level skilling, a special provision for upskilling/ re-skilling programmes has also been operationalized under the scheme. |
| Implementation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme is implemented through Implementing Partners (IPs) comprising of Textile Industry/ Industry Associations, State government agencies and Sectoral Organizations of Ministry of Textiles like DC/ Handloom, DC/Handicrafts and Central Silk Board. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: The Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises also runs an initiative called "SAMARTH," which was launched to support women-owned MSMEs by providing skill development and market development assistance. </div> |








6.6. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana

| | |
|---|--|
| About  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) is a Central Sector umbrella scheme launched in 2017-18. PMKSY aims at creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet to boost the overall development of the food processing sector. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> Did you know? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Food Processing Sector currently accounts for around 1.39 per cent of the total Gross Value Added (GVA) and contributed 7.93 per cent and 9.46 per cent of GVA in the Manufacturing and Agriculture sectors respectively in 2023-24. </div> |
| Nodal Ministry  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) |
| Objectives  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of modern infrastructure for food processing; Create effective backward and forward linkages - linking farmers, processors and markets; Create robust supply chain infrastructure for perishables. |
| Schemes under PMKSY  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated Cold Chain & Value Addition Infrastructure Creation/Expansion of Food Processing/Preservation Capacities Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Clusters Food Safety & Quality Assurance Infrastructure Human Resources & Institutions Operation Greens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operation Greens launched in 2018 initially focused on stabilizing prices of Tomato, Onion, and Potato (TOP) by offering financial help for transport and storage. Later, the scope of Operation Greens was further expanded to include 22 perishable products. The scheme aims to protect the growers of fruits and vegetables from making distress sales. |



6.7. Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>About</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance” (RAMP) is a World Bank supported Central Sector Scheme aimed at improving access of MSMEs to market, finance and technology upgradation by enhancing the outreach of existing MSME schemes. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Did you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector is the second largest employer after Agriculture and employs about 11.1 crores people spread across manufacturing, trade, and service sectors. </div> |
| <p>Objectives</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAMP also aims at promoting Centre-State collaboration by providing grants to States for preparation of Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), which is a roadmap developed by the respective State/UT for development of the MSME sector in the State. <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  <p>उत्थान, उन्नयन, उत्कृष्टता सूक्ष्म, लघु एवं मध्यम उद्यम मंत्रालय भारत सरकार</p> </div> |
| <p>Implementation</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched in 2022, RAMP is being implemented by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. |
| <p>Funding</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAMP receives result- based funding from the World Bank. |



INITIATIVES

1) e-Shram Portal

About

- The **Ministry of Labour and Employment** launched e-Shram portal (eshram.gov.in) in **2021** for creation of a **comprehensive National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW)** seeded with Aadhaar.
- It is meant to **register and support the unorganised workers** by providing them a **Universal Account Number (UAN)**.
- It will also have **details of name, occupation, address, occupation type, educational qualification, skill types etc.** for **optimum realization of their employability** and **extend the benefits of the social security schemes** to them.



Who can register in eShram Portal?

- Any individual satisfying following condition can register on the portal:
 - An **unorganised worker**.
 - Any worker who is a **home-based worker, self-employed worker or a wage worker** working in the **unorganised sector** and **not a member of the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) or Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)**, is called an unorganised worker.
 - **Age** should be between **16-59 years**.
- There are **no income criteria** for registering on e-Shram. However, the worker **should not be an income tax payee**.

Why in News?

- Around 31 crore unorganised workers have registered on e-Shram portal.

2) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

2.1. DigiLocker

About

- DigiLocker is a flagship initiative **under the Digital India program** aimed at providing **secure cloud-based storage of essential documents** (like Aadhaar, driving license, marksheets) to citizens.
 - *The Digital India program was launched in 2015 with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.*
- It was launched in **2015** by the **Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY)** as a **paperless solution** meant to ensure that a user can access their documents online in order to prove their identity and their credentials at any given moment.



- The issued documents in DigiLocker system are **deemed to be at par with original physical documents** as per the Information Technology (Preservation and Retention of Information by Intermediaries providing Digital Locker facilities) Rules, 2016.
- DigiLocker is designed with **robust security measures** to ensure data and privacy protection. Key practices include:
 - **2048-Bit SSL Encryption:** Ensures secure data transmission.
 - **Multi-Factor Authentication:** Includes OTP, biometric, and PIN validation for sign-up and sign-in.



- **ISO 27001 Certified Hosting:** Data is stored in secure, certified facilities.

2.2. Rashtriya Gokul Mission

About

- The Government of India is implementing Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) since 2014 for **development and conservation of indigenous breeds, genetic upgradation of bovine population and enhancement of milk production and productivity** thereby making milk production more remunerative to farmers.

Did you know?

- RGM is crucial for upliftment of rural poor as **more than 80% low producing indigenous animals are with small and marginal farmers and landless labourers.**
- The Mission is implemented by the **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying** under the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.**

Objectives of RGM

1. To **enhance productivity** of bovines and **increase milk production.**
2. To **propagate use of high genetic merit bulls for breeding purposes.**
3. To **enhance Artificial insemination coverage.**
4. **To promote indigenous cattle & buffalo rearing and conservation.**

Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission

- In March 2025, the Union Cabinet approved the Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission to further enhance the mission's objectives.

2.3. MY Bharat

About

- Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) is an initiative of the **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** to **empower Indian youth** in the age group of **15-29 years** through **social mobility, educational equity, and practical skills.**

- It was launched in **2023** as an **autonomous body** to provide an overarching institutional mechanism for **youth development and youth-led development.**
- It is a '**Phyigital Platform**' (physical + digital) comprising physical activity along with an opportunity to connect digitally.
- MY Bharat offers **experiential learning programs**, complementing theoretical knowledge with practical work exposure.

2.4. Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram

About

- Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) is a program to **improve the overall quality of life of children** and **provide comprehensive care to all the children** in the community.
- It was launched in **2013** by the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.**

RBSK

RASHTRIYA BAL SWASTHYA KARYAKRAM
राष्ट्रीय बाल स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम
FROM SURVIVAL TO HEALTHY SURVIVAL

- This program involves **screening of children from birth to 18 years of age** for **four Ds - Defects at birth, Diseases, Deficiencies and Development delays**, spanning **32 common health conditions for early detection and free treatment and management**, including surgeries at tertiary level.
- Children diagnosed with identified health conditions are provided **early intervention services and follow-up care** at the **district level.**



POLITY

1) National Sports Governance Act, 2025

What's in the news?

- President Droupadi Murmu has given assent to the National Sports Governance Bill, 2025 which seeks to recognize national sports bodies and regulate their functioning.

Highlights of the Act

- The Act provides for the establishment of the **National Olympic Committee, National Paralympic Committee, and National and Regional Sports Federations** for each designated sport.
 - The national bodies will have **affiliation with respective international bodies**.
- The Act provides that **every national sports body** will have a **general body**, consisting of an equal number of representatives from each affiliate member and certain ex-officio members.
 - It will have an **executive committee** consisting of **up to 15 members**, with **at least two outstanding sportspersons and four women**.
- The Act **empowers the central government** to establish a **National Sports Board** which will **grant recognition** to the national sports bodies and **register** their affiliate units.
- The Act also provides for constituting a **National Sports Tribunal** to adjudicate sports related disputes.
 - The tribunal will consist of: (i) a **chairperson** who is **sitting or former Judge of the Supreme Court or the Chief Justice of a High Court**, and (ii) **two members** who are **persons of eminence** with experience in sports, public administration, and law.
 - The tribunal will have the **powers of a civil court** and decide disputes ranging from **selection to election involving federations and athletes**.
 - Once instituted, the tribunal's decisions can **only be challenged in the Supreme Court**.
 - The tribunal **shall not have jurisdiction** to adjudicate any dispute or conflict arising during the **Olympic**

Games, Paralympic Games, Commonwealth and Asian Games, or any other similar events organised by any international federations.

2) National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025

What's in the news?

- Parliament has passed the **National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025** which seeks to **amend the National Anti-Doping Act, 2022**.
- The original 2022 Act had set up the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)** to conduct testing and enforcement, while establishing the **National Board for Anti-Doping in Sports** to oversee the agency and advise the government on policy.
- The latest amendment bill **strengthens the National Anti-Doping Act, 2022**, grants the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)** **greater autonomy** in line with World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) requirements.
- The changes also bring India's framework **closer to global standards** under the **UNESCO Convention against Doping in Sport**.

UNESCO's International Convention against Doping in Sport:

- The Convention is a multilateral treaty by which States agree to adopt **national and international measures to prevent and eliminate doping in sport**.
 - Doping** is the consumption of certain prohibited substances by athletes to enhance performance.
- The Convention was entered into force in 2007. **India** is a signatory to the Convention.

Highlights of the Bill

- Central Government Gains Appeal Panel Authority:** The 2022 Act requires the **National Board for Anti-Doping in Sports** to constitute: (i) a **Disciplinary Panel** to determine the consequences of rule violations, and (ii) an **Appeal Panel** to hear appeals against decisions of the Disciplinary Panel.



- The amendment Bill **transfers the power** to constitute the Appeal Panel from the Board to the **central government**.
- **Enhanced Autonomy for Anti-Doping Bodies: Oversight powers of the National Board** over the Disciplinary and Appeal Panels have been **removed**, granting **NADA's leadership operational independence** from sports federations, government departments, and related agencies.
- **Limited Right to Appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS):** Only select bodies like WADA, International Olympic Committee, and international sports federations can now **appeal against a decision of the Appeal Panel to CAS**, restricting the previous open right.

Court of Arbitration for Sport:

- CAS is an **international institution** that acts as a **neutral and independent mediator** to resolve sports-related disputes.
- It was founded in **1984** by the **International Olympic Committee**, in **Lausanne, Switzerland**.

- **Direct Appeal to CAS in Specific Cases:** For **international-level cases**, affected parties including athletes and key agencies may **directly appeal CAS**.

Other Significant Changes

- The Bill **adopts the World Anti-Doping Code's definitions and schedules**, giving them the force of law in India.
- It makes **WADA accreditation mandatory for all doping testing laboratories** in the country.

3) Parliament Passes Five Key Maritime Bills

What's in the news?

- The Parliament has passed **five key bills** in the recent Monsoon Session that **overhauled colonial-era maritime laws** and will **boost the Blue Economy, enhance trade efficiency, and align with global standards**.
- The new bills are the **Bills of Lading 2025, the Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill 2025, the Coastal Shipping Bill 2025, the**

Merchant Shipping Bill 2025, and the Indian Ports Bill 2025.

Bills of Lading, 2025

- The Bills of Lading, 2025 will **replace the Indian Bills of Lading Act, 1856** and aims to **update and simplify the legal framework for shipping documents**.
- A **bill of lading** refers to a document issued by a freight carrier to a shipper. It contains details including the type, quantity, condition, and destination of goods being carried.

Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2025

- The legislation **replaces a century-old Indian Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 1925**, aligning Indian law with international maritime conventions.
- The bill **adopts the Hague-Visby Rules**, a globally accepted maritime standard for the international carriage of goods by sea.
- By replacing complexity with clarity, the legislation is expected to **simplify maritime trade laws, reduce litigation risks, and enhance transparency and commercial efficiency** in cargo movement by sea.

Coastal Shipping Bill, 2025

- The Bill is set to unlock the vast potential of India's **11,098 kms long strategic coastline**, spanning nine coastal states and four union territories and is central to the country's ambition of **increasing coastal cargo share to 230 million metric tonnes by 2030** (from the current 162 million metric tonnes).
- It introduces a **simplified licensing system for coastal shipping** and lays down the **framework for regulating foreign vessels** engaged in coasting trade.
- The Bill requires the **central government** to prepare a **National Coastal and Inland Shipping Strategic Plan** within **two years** to guide future infrastructure development and policy direction.
- The legislation also provides for the creation of a **National Database for Coastal Shipping**, enabling real-time access to authentic and regularly updated data.

Merchant Shipping Bill, 2025

- **Replacing the outdated Merchant Shipping Act, 1958**, the new Bill ensures **comprehensive adoption of India's**



obligations under major international conventions, **reduces compliance burdens** and **enhances safety in navigation and life** at sea.

- *Merchant shipping refers to the transport of goods and passengers by sea for commercial purposes, distinct from military or naval activities.*
- The bill **expands the eligibility criteria for ownership** of merchant shipping vessels and provides for **investigation and enquiries on marine casualties**.
- It **empowers the central government to take charge and detain vessels** within India or in coastal waters as a vessel without nationality, if such vessel is not legally entitled to fly the flag of a state or has lost such a right.

Indian Ports Bill, 2025

- The Indian Ports Bill, 2025 seeks to **replace the colonial-era Indian Ports Act, 1908** and provides for **regulating of port operations** with quality effort, sustainability and cooperative federalism.
- It aims to **establish and empower State Maritime Boards** for effective management of **ports other than major ports**, establish the **Maritime State Development Council** (comprising representatives from both Central and State governments) for fostering structured growth and development of the port sector.
- To resolve conflicts efficiently without overburdening the judicial system, the Bill mandates the formation of **Dispute Resolution Committees (DRCs)** by **state governments**.
- The Bill requires **ports to adhere to global maritime conventions** such as **MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships)** and the **Ballast Water Management Convention**.

MARPOL Convention:

- It is the **main international convention** covering **prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes**.
- It was adopted at the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** in 1973.

- The **technical requirements** of MARPOL are included in **six separate Annexes**.
- **India** is a **party** to the MARPOL Convention.

Ballast Water Management Convention:

- Ballast water is **fresh or saltwater held in the ballast tanks and cargo holds** of ships. It is used to **provide stability and manoeuvrability** during a voyage when ships are not carrying cargo, or when more stability is required due to rough seas.
 - This ballast water often contains **biological materials**, including plants, animals, viruses, and bacteria, many of which are **invasive species**. When these are introduced to new marine environments, they may **harm the local marine environment**.
- To **combat the problem of invasive species from ballast water**, the **International Maritime Organization** adopted the **International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments** (Ballast Water Management Convention) in 2004.
- It **requires ships to manage their ballast water to a standard** that ensures harmful organisms and pathogens are not transferred between ecosystems.
- **India is a party** to the Convention.

4) Civil vs. Criminal Cases in India

Context

- Recently, the Supreme Court has twice intervened in instances in which High Courts allowed criminal proceedings to continue in what were essentially civil disputes.

Civil & Criminal Law

- The distinction between civil and criminal law is **fundamental in India's legal system**. They **differ** in terms of their **purpose, parties involved, and procedure**.
- Civil law is designed to **resolve disputes between private individuals or organisations**. Civil cases, known as **suits**, typically involve **disagreements over rights and duties** of the parties to the case towards each other.



- The goal is **not to punish but to provide a remedy**, usually in the form of **monetary compensation** (called **damages**) or a **specific action** ordered by the court to a party to do or not to do something (called an **injunction**).
 - **Examples** of civil cases include property disputes, contract breaches, family law matters like divorce and child custody, and cases for recovery of money.
- In a civil suit, the **person who files** the case is called the **plaintiff**, and the **person against whom** it is filed is the **defendant**.
- Criminal law deals with **acts that are considered offences against the state or society** as a whole.
- The **objective** is to **punish the offender and deter others** from committing similar crimes.
- The **state**, represented by a **prosecutor**, initiates criminal proceedings against the accused. If found guilty, the accused can face **penalties** ranging from fines to imprisonment and even death.
 - **Offences** like theft, cheating, assault and murder fall under criminal law.

Distinction

- A **key distinction** between civil and criminal cases is with regards to the **burden of proof**.
 - In a **civil case**, the **plaintiff must prove** their case on a **"preponderance of probabilities"**, meaning their version of events is more likely to be true than the defendant's.
 - In a **criminal case**, the **prosecution** has the **much higher burden** of proving the guilt of the accused **"beyond a reasonable doubt"**.

5) Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025

What's in the news?

- President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025, recently passed by the Parliament.
- The objective of the Act is to **protect individuals**, especially youth and vulnerable populations, from the **adverse social, economic, psychological and**

privacy-related impacts of online money games.

Did you know?

- Government data suggests that **Indians are losing around ₹15,000 crore every year** due to **"Real Money Games" (RMGs)**.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has linked RMGs to **compulsive behaviour, psychological distress, financial hardship, and an overall disruption of family life**.

Highlights of the Act

- The Act has proposed **three categories for online games** — **e-sports, social gaming and Real Money Games**.
- While the Act aims to **encourage e-sports and online social games**, it seeks to **prohibit harmful online money gaming services, advertisements, and financial transactions** related to them.
- The Act **empowers the Central government** to notify and constitute a **regulatory authority** to recognise, categorise, and register online games.
- The **Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN)** will be tasked with blocking or disabling apps that continue to provide banned money gaming services in India, and if needed, it may rope in **Interpol** to bring in offshore operators of money gaming platforms.

Definitions

- The Act defines an **online money game** as an **online game played regardless of whether it is based on skill, chance or both**, and is played after a **fee-payment** or with an **expectation of winning money or other stakes** (can include credits, coins, tokens, virtual money, etc. which can be converted to money).
 - Under such a definition, variants of popular games like Poker, Rummy, Fantasy Cricket, and Ludo would be classified as RMGs.
- With respect to **e-sports**, the Act defines them as **games which are recognised under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025** and are **registered with the proposed regulatory authority**.



- Examples include games like Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty.
- While there is **no legal definition of social gaming**, it is included in the broader category of online games defined as games played on an electronic or digital device and operated as a software through the Internet.
 - The government can facilitate the development and availability of online social games for recreational and educational purposes.

Punishment

- Advertising and promotion of online money games is strictly prohibited.
 - Offering or facilitating such games can lead to **imprisonment of up to three years and a fine of up to one crore rupees**.
- Under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, offences shall be **cognisable and non-bailable**.
 - *A cognizable offence is a crime for which a police officer can arrest the perpetrator without a warrant.*
 - *Non-bailable offence is a crime for which bail is not a right and the discretion lies with the court to either grant it or not.*

6) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

6.1. Removal of Chief Election Commissioner of India

About ECI

- The Election Commission of India is an **autonomous constitutional authority** responsible for **administering Union and State election processes** in India.
- The body administers elections to the **Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President** in the country.

Composition

- Originally the commission had only a **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)**. It currently consists of **CEC and two Election Commissioners**.
- All Election Commissioners have **equal say in the decision making of the Commission**. If the CEC and other ECs differ

in opinion on any matter, such matters shall be decided according to the **opinion of the majority**.

- They enjoy the **same status and receive salary and perks** as available to **Judges of the Supreme Court of India**.

Appointment

- According to **The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023**, the **Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners** are appointed by the **President** upon the **recommendation of a selection committee**, which consists of:
 1. Prime Minister
 2. A Union Cabinet Minister
 3. Leader of Opposition or leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha.
- The Act also states that a **search committee**, headed by the **Cabinet Secretary**, will propose a panel of names to the selection committee.
- **Eligibility:** The Act specifies that candidates must:
 1. Be persons of integrity
 2. Have knowledge and experience in the management and conduct of elections
 3. Be or have been a Secretary (or equivalent) to the government.
- They have **tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier.

Removal:

- **Article 324** of the Constitution provides the **Chief Election Commissioner** with **security of tenure**.
 - He cannot be removed from his office except in the **same manner** and on the **same grounds** as a **judge of the Supreme Court**.
- However, the **same constitutional provision is silent** about the procedure for removal of the two Election Commissioners.
 - It only provides that they cannot be removed from office **except on the recommendation of the CEC**.



6.2. Electricity Act, 2003

About

- The Electricity Act, 2003 replaced the Electric Supply Act, 1948 and the Electricity Regulatory Commission Act, 1998 to **consolidate the laws relating to generation, transmission, distribution, trading and use of electricity.**

Key Provisions

- The Act provided the framework for the **dismantling of the State Electricity Boards** and the **separation of generation, transmission and distribution into separate companies** to introduce competition and improve efficiency.
- Electricity generation was delicensed**, while **transmission and distribution remained licenced and regulated activities.**
- The Act provided the **overall framework for promoting and sustaining the growth of renewable energy sources** in India.
- Under the Act, **license for generation and techno-economic clearance are not required**, except for large hydro-generation projects.
- The Act introduced provisions for **open access**, allowing heavy users to choose their electricity supplier.
- It reconstituted **State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs)** at the state level and the **Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)** at the national level as **regulatory bodies** with the task of **regulating tariffs, ensuring compliance** with regulations, **resolving disputes**, and **promoting competition** in the power sector.
- The Act established the **Appellate Tribunal for Electricity** as the apex judicial body envisaged to appeal against any decision of any adjudicating officer or the regulatory commission.
 - Appeals** against the appellate tribunal's order can be made within 60 days in the **Supreme Court.**
- The Act also reconstituted the **Central Electricity Authority (CEA)** as the **apex**

advisory body on technical matters related to electricity.

6.3. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012

Key Provisions

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 was enacted by Government of India to **safeguard children from sexual abuse and sexual offences.**
- The Act defines a **child as any person below the age of 18 years.** This is a **gender-neutral regulation.**
- The Act is a **comprehensive law** to provide for the protection of children from the **offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography.**
- The Act provides **mandatory reporting, child-friendly mechanisms** for reporting, recording of evidence and investigation, **speedy trial of offences** and **designated special courts.**
- The Act provides for **stringent punishments** which have been **graded as per the gravity of offence.**
 - The offence is considered **grave** if it is committed by a police officer, public servant, any member of the staff at a remand home, protection or observation home, jail, hospital or educational institution, or by a member of the armed or security forces.
- POCSO puts the **burden of proof on the accused** rather than the victim.
 - The onus is on the accused to prove that he/she is innocent rather than on the child to prove that the crime took place.
- The Act was **amended in 2019** to introduce **more stringent punishment** including the **death penalty** for committing sexual crimes on children.
- The **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is mandated to monitor the implementation of the POCSO Act.



National Commission for Protection of Child Rights:

- NCPCR is a **statutory body** under the **Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005** to **protect the child rights and other related matters**.
- Established in 2007, the Commission is mandated to **monitor the proper and effective implementation** of:
 - Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012;
 - Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and
 - Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
- The commission works under the aegis of the **Ministry of Women and Child development**.
- The Commission is vested with the **powers of a civil court** when investigating child rights violations.

Constitution:

- The commission consist of the following members namely:-
 - A **chairperson** who, is a person of eminence and has done a outstanding work for promoting the welfare of children; and
 - **Six members**, out of which **at least two** are **women**, are appointed by the Central Government from amongst persons of eminence, ability, integrity, standing and experience in Education; Child health or related fields.



ECONOMY

1) Small Finance Banks

About

- Small Finance Banks (SFBs) are **specialised financial institutions** established with the primary goal of **fostering financial inclusion** by offering **basic banking services** of acceptance of deposits and lending to **underserved and unbanked segments** of society.
- The concept of SFBs was introduced in the **Union Budget 2014-15**.
- Regulated by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, SFBs **bridge the financial gap in rural and semi-urban areas**, focusing on **small business units, small and marginal farmers**, micro and small industries and unorganised sector entities.
- These banks basically work as **savings vehicles** as well, as they are engaged in offering **credit facilities** through their advanced technology & low-cost operations.

Regulations

- The **minimum paid-up equity capital** for SFBs shall be **Rs. 200 crore**
- SFBs are **subject to all prudential norms and regulations of RBI** as applicable to existing commercial banks including requirement of maintenance of Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR).
- SFBs are required to open **at least 25% of its branches in unbanked rural centres**.
- Further, these banks are required to **lend at least 75 per cent of their adjusted net bank credit (ANBC)** to sectors eligible for classification as **priority sector lending (PSL)** by the RBI.
- **At least 50 per cent of its loan portfolio** should constitute **loans and advances of upto Rs. 25 lakh**.

Why in News?

- The Reserve Bank of India has granted in-principle approval to **AU Small Finance Bank** to **transition into a Universal Bank**.
- The universal bank status will allow AU Bank to offer a **wide range of financial services and products** under one roof

without many restrictions unlike a small finance bank.

2) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

2.1. Stablecoins

What are stablecoins?

- Stablecoins are a **class of cryptocurrencies**, with their **values linked to assets**.

Cryptocurrency:

- Cryptocurrency is a **digital payment system** that doesn't rely on banks to verify transactions. It's a **peer-to-peer system** that can enable anyone anywhere to send and receive payments. Instead
- Cryptocurrencies run on a **distributed public ledger** called **blockchain**, a record of all transactions updated and held by currency holders.
- Units of cryptocurrency are created through a process called **mining**, which involves using computer power to solve complicated mathematical problems that generate coins.

- Unlike better known **cryptocurrency coins** such as Bitcoin (BTC) and Ether (ETH), whose values can **wildly rise and fall** due to investor sentiments and other factors, **stablecoins are designed to maintain relatively steady prices**.
- This is achieved through the process of **"pegging" the stablecoin to an asset** such as fiat currency (like U.S. Dollars, EU Euros, etc.), a commodity (like gold), other cryptocurrencies (such as Bitcoin), by regulating their value via computer algorithms, or by mixing multiple strategies.
 - While the price of Bitcoin might rise or fall in the coming years, a USD-pegged stablecoin should ideally remain around \$1.
- Stablecoins are **different from CBDCs, or Central Bank Digital Currencies**, which are digital currencies officially issued and controlled by a government's central bank.



- Meanwhile, stablecoins can be **privately issued** and can also be **pegged to foreign currencies**.

Regulations

- **India has not passed a law** specifically for stablecoins. Instead, stablecoins fall under **general virtual asset guidelines and anti-money-laundering (AML) rules**, without clear definitions.

2.2. Global Capability Centres

What are GCCs?

- Global In-house Centres or Captives (GICs) or Global Capability Centres (GCCs), are mainly **offshore centres established by multinational corporations (MNCs)** to provide **various services to their parent organisations** such as IT, finance, R&D, and customer support.
 - **Example:** Microsoft India Global Delivery, Amazon India Development Center, etc.

- GCCs are significant for achieving **cost savings, increasing collaboration** between parent companies and their offshore affiliates, and **accessing talent pools**.
- Unlike typical outsourcing organisations, since GCCs are **part of the parent organisation**, they are integrated into the company's processes and provide better control, and ownership of work and intellectual property.

India - Global Hub for GCCs

- India has firmly established itself as the **global hub for GCCs**, hosting nearly 1,700 out of approximately 3,200 such centres worldwide, around **53% of the global total**.
- Originally designed for **IT support and back-office operations**, Indian GCCs have evolved into **centres of innovation, research, and product development**, driven by **abundant skilled labour force** and **lower operational cost**.



ENVIRONMENT

1) International Big Cat Alliance

About

- The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) is a **multi-country, multi-agency coalition** launched with the main objective of **conservation of seven major big cat species**: the **Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma**.
- The IBCA was launched by the **Government of India** in **2023**, during an event commemorating the **50th anniversary of Project Tiger**.
 - 'Project Tiger' is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** of the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change** to provide **funding support to tiger range States**, for **in-situ conservation of tigers** in designated tiger reserves.
- The **membership** of the IBCA is **open to all UN member countries**, especially those that host these species, and to non-range countries that are interested in supporting big cat conservation efforts.



- IBCA aims to create a **global platform for conservation cooperation, knowledge sharing, and technical and financial support** to halt the decline of big cat populations and safeguard biodiversity.
- IBCA governance consists of an **Assembly of Members, Standing Committee** and a

Secretariat with its Head Quarter in India.

Significance

- **Apex predators regulate prey populations**, which helps maintain the health of landscapes and **prevents overgrazing** that can lead to ecological calamities like wildfires and disease.
- Protecting big cats also **safeguards the habitats they roam**, which are home to many other species.
- The **comprehensive effects** of conserving these species can include **mitigating natural disasters, conserving soil, controlling pandemics, supporting climate adaptation and contributing to climate change mitigation** by storing and sequestering carbon.

What are 'Big cats'?

- 'Big Cat' is a term that is used in informal speech to apply to any large species of the family *Felidae*. Usually, it applies to the members of the genus *Panthera*.
- These include:
 1. **Tiger** (*Panthera tigris*)
 2. **Lion** (*Panthera leo*)
 3. **Jaguar** (*Panthera onca*)
 4. **Leopard** (*Panthera pardus*)
 5. **Snow Leopard** (*Panthera uncia*)
- Two other cats — **Puma** (*Puma concolor*) and **Cheetah** (*Acinonyx jubatus*) — are not part of *Panthera*. But they are usually included in most listings of 'big cats'.
- The **Indian subcontinent** has been historically home to the **Bengal tiger, Asiatic lion, Indian leopard, Indian/Asiatic cheetah** as well as **Snow leopard**.
- The **cheetah** was **declared extinct** in 1952. In 2022, the Government of India embarked on an ambitious programme to **introduce African cheetahs** to the **Kuno National Park** in **Madhya Pradesh**.

Funding Mechanism

- **India** has committed to provide a **total grant assistance of \$100 million**, for **5 years**, post which the IBCA is **expected to**



sustain itself through membership fees, and contributions from bilateral and multilateral institutions and the private sector.

Why in News?

- **Nepal** has officially joined the International Big Cat Alliance.

2) Ethanol Blending Programme

Biofuels

- Biofuels are liquid or gaseous fuels produced from **renewable biomass resources** that are **generally high in sugar** (such as sugarcane, **sugarbeet**, sweet sorghum), **starch** (such as corn and **cassava**) or **oils** (such as soybeans, rapeseed, coconut, sunflowers, and palms).
- The two most commonly used biofuels are **ethanol and biodiesel**.
- **Categories of Biofuels:**
 1. **First generation Biofuels:** Mainly produced from **food crop feedstock** such as corn, sugarcane.
 2. **Second generation Biofuels:** Comes from **non-food sources** such as agricultural waste, wood, waste vegetable oil.
 3. **Third generation Biofuels:** Sourced from **micro-organisms** like algae.
 4. **Fourth generation Biofuels:** From **genetically modified (GM) organisms or crops** to enhance biofuel production.

National Policy on Biofuels, 2018

- The National Policy on Biofuels, formulated by the **Ministry of New & Renewable Energy** in **2018**, seeks to **mainstream biofuels within the energy and transportation sectors**.
 - This initiative is vital to **reducing India's dependency on imported fossil fuels** and **ensuring energy security** in an **environmentally sustainable manner**.
- The Policy categorises biofuels as "**Basic Biofuels**" viz. First Generation (1G) bioethanol & biodiesel and "**Advanced Biofuels**" - Second Generation (2G) ethanol, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to drop-in fuels, Third Generation (3G) biofuels, bio-CNG etc. to enable extension of appropriate financial and fiscal incentives under each category.

- The Policy allows **use of surplus food grains for production of ethanol** for blending with petrol.
- The Policy was **amended in 2022** to accelerate the deadline for achieving a **20 percent ethanol blending rate in petrol (E20)**, moving it from 2030 to the more ambitious target of **2025-26**.
- Additionally, the amendment **broadens the scope of eligible feedstocks for biofuel production**.

Did you know?

- India successfully achieved **20% ethanol blending in petrol** in **July 2025**, five years ahead of its original target set for 2030.

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has reaffirmed its commitment to the Ethanol Blending Programme, addressing concerns about the impact of 20% ethanol-blended petrol.

More on News

- The Ministry stated that E20 offers **better acceleration, better ride quality** and **lowered carbon emissions** by **approximately 30%** as compared to E10 fuel.
- With a **higher octane number of about 108.5** versus petrol's **84.4**, ethanol-blended fuels are **suited for modern high-compression engines**.
 - *Octane number indicates the fuel's resistance to combustion from pressure and heat. The higher the number, the more stable the fuel.*

Other Benefits

- Beyond performance, the ethanol blending programme **reduces greenhouse gas emissions, cuts crude oil imports, and increases farmer incomes**.
 - From 2014-15 to July 2025, blending by public sector oil companies saved over **₹1.44 lakh crore in foreign exchange** and avoided about **736 lakh metric tonnes of CO₂ emissions** (equivalent to planting 30 crore trees).
 - A **NITI Aayog study** found that **greenhouse gas emissions from sugarcane-based ethanol are 65% lower than petrol**.



- Biofuels and natural gas are also part of the country's commitment to achieve **net zero emissions by 2070**.
- The initiative has also **boosted rural economies, eliminated sugarcane arrears, improved maize cultivation viability**, and contributed to **reducing farmer suicides**, particularly in regions like Vidarbha.
- The government's current roadmap keeps **E20 in place until October 31, 2026**. Any move beyond will follow consultation with automakers, ethanol producers, fuel suppliers, and other stakeholders.

3) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

3.1. Fly Ash

What is Fly Ash?

- Fly ash is defined as the **non-combustible inorganic impurities from coal combustion**, primarily composed of **silica, aluminum oxide, iron oxide, and lime**.
- Coal-fired power plants account for **74% of India's total power generation** and the country generates **over 300 million tonnes of fly ash annually**.
- Despite significant efforts to utilise this waste, a **substantial portion remains unutilised**, leading to various **environmental and health hazards**.



Impacts of Fly ash

- Fly ash particles, being **very fine**, can become **airborne** and contribute to **air pollution**.
- **Inhalation** of these particles can cause **respiratory issues and other health problems**.
 - Studies have linked **exposure to fly ash with cardiovascular diseases** due to the presence of heavy metals and other toxic substances.
- Fly ash contains **toxic metals such as arsenic, lead, and mercury**, which can exacerbate these health risks.
- **Improper disposal** of fly ash can lead to the **contamination of surface and groundwater**.
- Fly ash contains **heavy metals** that can **leach into water sources**, posing a risk to aquatic life and human health.

Government Measures

- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change** has **mandated the use of fly ash in construction activities**, such as in the production of **cement, bricks, and road construction**.
- The **amendments to Fly Ash Notification of 2021** mandates **100% fly ash utilisation from coal-based thermal power plants**.

Other Uses

- Fly ash is an **inexpensive replacement for Portland cement in concrete** and using it improves strength, segregation and ease.
- Fly ash also has the potential for **land reclamation, mine filling** and even for **specific agricultural applications**, subject to proper testing and regulations to ensure safety and effectiveness.



SPECIES IN NEWS

1) Asian Giant Tortoise

About

- The Asian Giant Tortoise (*Manouria emys*) is the **largest tortoise in mainland Asia**.
- It is distributed across Tropical and subtropical mountainous evergreen forests in **India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia**.
- These tortoises appear a **grayish brown**, and become **more charcoal colored** as they **mature into adulthood**.



- It is known for its **unique behaviour of building and guarding leaf-litter nests above ground**, to help **camouflage the eggs** and **provide insulation** needed for **successful hatching**.
 - *A leaf-litter nest is basically an egg laying mound made from dry forest leaves and organic matter.*
- They are known to **feed on forest greens, shoots, leaves, fungi, worms, etc.**
- Also known as the “**small elephants of the forests**” they help in **seed dispersal and forest regeneration**, by scattering seeds in fruits through consumption and excretion.

Did you know?

- The Asian Giant Tortoise is considered to be **one of the oldest tortoise lineages** in the world. And these ancient tortoises **share an interesting behavior with many crocodilians** - to protect their eggs and maintain appropriate temperatures for incubation.

Conservation Status:



- IUCN Red List: **Critically Endangered**
- Wildlife Protection Act (2022): **Schedule I**.

Why in News?

- The Asian giant tortoise was recently reintroduced into the **Zeliang Community Reserve in Nagaland**.

Community Reserves:

- Community reserves in India are **protected areas** established under the **Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act of 2002**.
- Community reserves can be **declared by the State Government in any private or community land** (not within a National Park, Sanctuary or a Conservation Reserve) where an **individual or a community has volunteered** to conserve wildlife and its habitat.
- Once found in large numbers, the Asian giant tortoise was almost wiped out from Nagaland more than a decade ago due to poaching and habitat loss.

2) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

2.1. Fishing Cat

About

- The fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) is a **medium sized wild cat**, about twice the size of a domestic cat.
- It comprises a **deep yellowish grey fur with black lines and spots**.
- **Males are larger than females**.
- It is a **nocturnal creature** (primarily active during the night) and a **good swimmer**.

Geographical Distribution

- It is primarily found in **wetland and mangrove habitats**, even recorded in highly urbanised landscapes and montane forests.





- In **India**, fishing cats have a patchy distribution along the **Eastern Ghats, Sundarbans** in **West Bengal**, **Chilika lagoon** and surrounding wetlands in **Odisha**, **Coringa** and **Krishna mangroves** in **Andhra Pradesh**.

Conservation Status:



- IUCN Red List: **Vulnerable**
- Wildlife Protection Act (2022): **Schedule I.**

- This unique species of wild cat is found distributed in patches **across South and Southeast Asia** and is found in **Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Cambodia, Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh** and **Myanmar**.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1) India-UN Global South Capacity Building Initiative

About

- The India-UN Global Capacity Building Initiative was announced in **2023** on the margins of **78th Session of United Nations General Assembly**.
- The initiative aims to **share India's development experiences, best practices and expertise** with **partner countries in the Global South** through capacity building and training programs to help **accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- Initiatives include a range of actions, from **skills training and knowledge-exchanges to pilot projects** in partner countries, implemented through the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC)**.

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation:

- ITEC is the **leading capacity building platform** of the **Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India**.
- Instituted in **1964**, ITEC is one of the oldest institutionalized arrangements for **international capacity building** having trained more than 200,000 officials from 160+ countries in both the civilian and in the defence sector.

Why in News?

- India has launched the first set of four development projects under the "India-UN Global Capacity Building Initiative," aimed at supporting countries of the Global South in meeting Sustainable Development Goals.

2) Azerbaijan and Armenia Peace Agreement

Background

- Armenia and Azerbaijan are two neighboring countries in the **South Caucasus region** that were once part of the **Soviet Union**.
- Both the countries have been locked in conflict since the 1980s over **Nagorno-Karabakh**, an Armenian-majority

mountainous region internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan.



Why in News?

- **Azerbaijan and Armenia** signed a **US-brokered peace agreement** that would move them toward a full normalization of their relations.
 - The agreement commits both sides to cease hostilities permanently, open full diplomatic relations, and respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- As part of the deal, the US will also help build a **major transit corridor** that will be named the **Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity**.
 - That route will **connect Azerbaijan and its autonomous Nakhchivan exclave**, which are separated by a 32-km-wide patch of **Armenian territory**. This demand from Azerbaijan had held up peace talks in the past.
 - For **Azerbaijan**, a major producer of oil and gas, the route also provides a **more direct link to Turkey and onward to Europe**.

3) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

3.1. Five Eyes Alliance

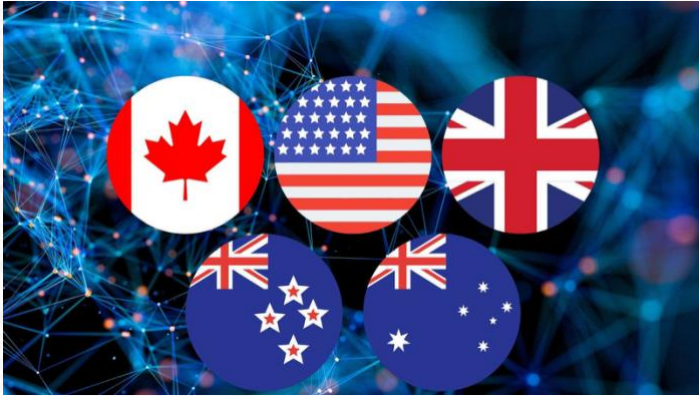
About

- The 'Five Eyes' is a collaborative **intelligence-sharing network** comprising five English-speaking nations: **United**



States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

- The alliance was established during the aftermath of World War II.



- It enables various agencies from all five countries share human intelligence, signal intelligence, security intelligence, geospatial intelligence and defence intelligence.



ORGANISATIONS

1) ASEAN

About

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a **regional intergovernmental organisation** consisting of **10 countries** to promote economic stability in Southeast Asia.
- ASEAN was established in **1967** in **Bangkok** with the signing of the **ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)**.
- Its members are **Thailand, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, Myanmar, Philippines, Brunei Darussalam and Vietnam.**

Did you know?

- ASEAN was established during the **Vietnam War** so as to help contain the spread of communism.
- In the Cold War era, ASEAN played a role in maintaining the social and political stability of the region.



Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)



- The **Chairmanship** of ASEAN **rotates annually** between the member countries.
- The **ASEAN Secretariat** is located in **Jakarta, Indonesia.**

ASEAN Regional Forum

- The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was established in 1994 as an important **platform for security dialogue in the Indo-Pacific.**
- It comprises **27 members** including **India.**

Why in News?

- Indian and ASEAN officials held talks on review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA).

About AITIGA

- AITIGA was signed between India and ASEAN in 2009 as the first step toward **easing tariff barriers** between the two regions.
 - Following this, in 2014, the **ASEAN-India Trade in Services Agreement (AITISA)** and the **ASEAN-India Trade in Investment Agreement (AITIA)** were signed by India and ASEAN.
 - These three agreements are collectively known as the **ASEAN-India Free Trade Area or AIFTA.**
- Since AITIGA's implementation, bilateral trade has grown significantly, with **ASEAN representing approximately 11% of India's total global trade.**
- However, the agreement **adversely impacted India**, particularly because of its **weak provisions for "rules of origin"** that led to **massive dumping of Chinese goods** via ASEAN countries.
 - *Rules of origin refer to the criteria employed by national governments to determine that a product was genuinely made in a certain country, so it can qualify for preferential tariffs.*
- India has also raised concerns about the **inequality in tariff lines opened**, where India opened up about 71% of its lines, while ASEAN countries offered considerably less, including Indonesia at just 41%.



- This imbalance has contributed to a **widening trade deficit**, which reached **\$45.2 billion** in FY25.

2) Central Ground Water Board

About

- The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) is the **apex organization** of the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** dealing with groundwater and related issues.
- Established in **1970**, CGWB's mandate is to develop and disseminate technologies, and monitor and implement national policies for the **scientific and sustainable development and management of India's ground water resources**.
- The headquarters of CGWB is situated in **Faridabad, Haryana**.

Why in News?

- The **2024 Annual Groundwater Quality Report** released by the **Central Ground Water Board (CGWB)** has revealed **alarming levels of groundwater contamination**.

Did you know?

- In India, nearly **85% of rural drinking water** and about **62% of irrigation requirements** are fulfilled through groundwater sources.

Findings of the Report

- **More than 20% of groundwater samples** collected from 440 districts across India were found **contaminated with nitrates**, largely due to the **overuse of chemical fertilisers** and **leaching from septic systems**.
- **Fluoride** has been detected at **levels exceeding the World Health Organization (WHO) limit of 1.5 mg/L**, causing widespread **skeletal fluorosis**—a debilitating condition that causes joint pain, bone deformities, and stunted growth, particularly in children.
- Over 13% of tested samples also **exceeded safe limits for iron**, contributing to **gastrointestinal and developmental disorders**.

- **Uranium**, once confined to select geological zones, is **increasingly detected due to excessive groundwater extraction and fertiliser use**.
- **Heavy metals**—lead, cadmium, chromium, mercury—enter groundwater from **unchecked industrial discharges**, causing **developmental delays, anaemia, immune system issues, and neurological damage**.

3) Eurasian Economic Union

About

- The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is an **international economic union and free trade zone** comprising countries located in **northern Eurasia - Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia**.



- The EAEU provides for the **free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor**; and pursues **coordinated, harmonized, and single policy** in the specified sectors of the economy.
- The economic union was established via the **Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union** and entered into force in 2015.

Why in News?

- India and the Eurasian Economic Union have signed the **Terms of Reference (ToR)** to launch negotiations on a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
- Both sides noted the **growing trade turnover** between India and the EAEU,



which stood at **USD 69 billion** in 2024, registering a 7 percent increase over 2023.

4) Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

About

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a **ten-member intergovernmental organization**, established in **2001** by the leaders of **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan**.
 - These countries, **except Uzbekistan**, had been members of the **Shanghai-5 group** formed in 1996. In 2001, **Uzbekistan** was admitted as a member.
 - In **2017**, at the Summit in **Astana, India and Pakistan** officially joined SCO as full-members.
 - **Iran and Belarus** were admitted as members in 2023 and 2024 respectively.
- In **2002**, the **Charter of SCO** was signed at the meeting of the Council of Heads of States in **St. Petersburg**.

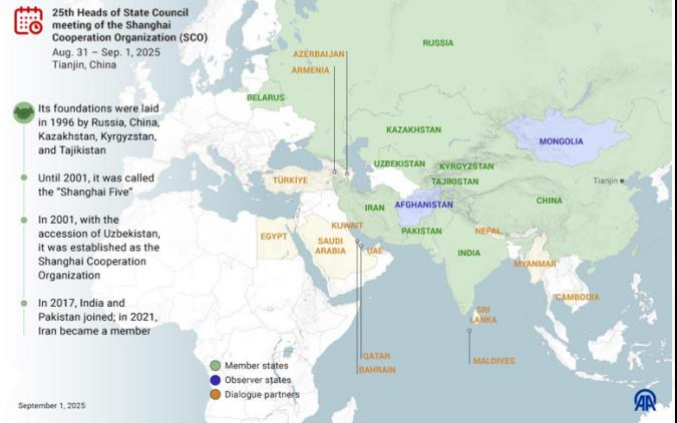
Objectives

- The goals of the SCO are:
 - to **strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good-neighborliness** between the Member States;
 - to encourage the **effective cooperation** between the Member States in such spheres as politics, trade, economy, science and technology, culture, education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, etc;
 - to jointly ensure and maintain **peace, security and stability** in the region; and
 - to promote a **new democratic, fair and rational international political and economic international order**.
- **Internally**, the SCO adheres to the "**Shanghai spirit**", namely, mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations and pursuit of common development; and **externally**, it upholds **non-alignment**,

non-targeting at other countries or regions and the **principle of openness**.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Member states represent 40% of the world's population and 30% of global GDP.
The combined land area of these countries covers about 65% of the Eurasian landmass



Structure of SCO

- SCO's **supreme decision-making body** is the **Council of Heads of State (CHS)** which meets annually in the country chairing the SCO.
- The **Council of Heads of Government (CHG)** is the **2nd most important SCO mechanism** which meets annually to decide upon major issues of trade-economic cooperation as well as the SCO annual budget.
- The SCO has **two Permanent Bodies**:
 - (i) **SCO Secretariat** in **Beijing**; and
 - (ii) **Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** in **Tashkent**.
- The SCO was granted **observer status in the United Nations General Assembly** in 2004.
- **Russian and Chinese** are the two official languages of the SCO.

Why in News?

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** participated in the **25th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State** of SCO, held in **Tianjin, China**.



5) Bureau of Energy Efficiency

About

- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Power** established through the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001**.
- Set up in **2002**, the mission of BEE is to **assist in developing policies and strategies with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles** with the primary objective of **reducing energy intensity of the Indian economy**.



- The key initiatives of BEE include **energy efficiency standards and labelling of equipment and appliances, energy conservation codes** for buildings, **energy conservation norms and goals** for energy-intensive industries, **awareness-raising and capacity-building**.

Why in News?

- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency has published its **State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2024**.

About the Index

- The Index assessed the **energy efficiency performance of 36 states and Union Territories (UTs)** for FY24 across **seven demand sectors** – buildings, industry, municipal services, transport, agriculture, electricity distribution companies (discoms) and cross-sector initiatives.
- The Index **classifies states and UTs into four performance categories: Front Runners (>60%), Achievers (50-60%), Contenders (30-50%), and Aspirants (<30%)**.

Highlights of the Index

- **Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh** have emerged as the **top-performing states** in

the latest Index, with overall scores of 80.5% and 79.3%, respectively.

- They were followed by **Karnataka, Telangana and Tamil Nadu**.
- Compared with seven states in the preceding financial year, five states – **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana** – featured in the '**front runner**' category this year.

6) Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)

About

- Constituted in **2018**, PM-STIAC serves as an **overarching council** to assess the status of various science and technology-related matters, comprehend challenges, formulate interventions, develop a futuristic roadmap, and **advise the Prime Minister accordingly**.
- The council also **oversees the implementation of these interventions** by concerned S&T departments, agencies, and other government ministries.
- The council is chaired by the **Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India**.

Office of PSA:

- The Government of India established the **Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)** in 1999.
- The PSA's office aims to provide **pragmatic and objective advice to the Prime Minister and the cabinet in matters of Science and Technology**.
- The Office of PSA was placed under the **Cabinet Secretariat** in 2018.

Why in News?

- The 28th meeting of PM-STIAC was held in New Delhi.

7) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

7.1. Unique Identification Authority of India

About

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is a **statutory authority**



established under the provisions of **Aadhaar Act 2016** under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.

- UIDAI was created in 2009 to issue **Unique Identification numbers ("Aadhaar")** to all residents of India.
- Under the Aadhaar Act 2016, UIDAI is responsible for **Aadhaar enrolment and authentication**, including operation and management of all stages of Aadhaar life cycle.
- UIDAI has its Head Office in **New Delhi**.
- The Authority consists of a **Chairperson, two part-time Members and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**, who is also the Member-Secretary of the Authority.

Aadhaar:

- Aadhaar is a **12-digit random number issued by UIDAI** to the residents of India.
- **Any individual, irrespective of age and gender**, who is a **resident of India**, may **voluntarily** enrol to obtain Aadhaar number.
- A person willing to enrol has to provide **minimal demographic** (such as Name, Date of Birth, Gender, Address, Mobile Number) and **biometric information** (such as Fingerprints, Iris Scans, Facial Photograph) during the enrolment process which is **free of cost**.
 - **Eligibility** for enrolment: **Resided in India for 182 days or more** in 12 months immediately preceding enrolment application.
 - **Resident foreign nationals** who resided in India for 182 days or more can also enrol for Aadhaar.
 - A **Non-Resident Indian** with a valid Indian Passport can also apply for Aadhaar. In case of NRIs the **residential condition of 182 days is not mandatory**.
- An individual needs to enrol for Aadhaar only once and after deduplication **only one Aadhaar shall be generated**.

- Aadhaar number is **devoid of any intelligence** and **does not profile people based on caste, religion, income, health and geography**.
- The Aadhaar number is a **proof of identity**, however, it **does not confer any right of citizenship or domicile** in respect of an Aadhaar number holder.
- Aadhaar enables the Government of India to directly reach residents of the country in **delivery of various subsidies, benefits and services**.

Baal Aadhaar:

- For **children under the age of five**, UIDAI has introduced the concept of the '**Baal Aadhaar**'.
- Also known as the **Blue Aadhaar** (because of its blue colour), it similarly contains a **12-digit unique identification number linked to one of the parents' Aadhaar cards**.
- Baal Aadhaar **does not record any biometric information**. On **attaining the age of 5**, the child is required to furnish his or her **biometrics** and the child is issued a **normal Aadhaar without any change in the Aadhaar number**.

7.2. World Food Programme

About

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is the **world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security**.
- WFP was established in **1961** by the **United Nations General Assembly** and the **Food and Agriculture Organisation** of the United Nations.

Did you know?

- WFP was created at the behest of the **administration of US President Dwight D Eisenhower** to provide food aid through the UN system, which was still in its infancy.





- WFP delivers **food assistance** to vulnerable communities, particularly those affected by war.
- WFP was awarded the **2020 Nobel Peace Prize** for its efforts to combat world hunger.

7.3. International Organization for Migration

About

- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is a part of the **United Nations System** and is the **leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration**.
- Established in **1951**, IOM is dedicated to **promoting humane and orderly migration** for the benefit of all.



- IOM also serves as **coordinator of the United Nations network on migration**, established by the Secretary-General in 2018.
- The organization's **three main objectives** for 2024-2028 are:
 - to save lives and protect people on the move,
 - drive solutions to displacement and
 - facilitate pathways for regular migration.

- With 175 member states (including **India**), IOM is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

7.4. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

About

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), also known as the **UN Refugee Agency**, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees.
- UNHCR was established by the **United Nations General Assembly** in **1950** in the **aftermath of the Second World War**.
- UNHCR's **headquarters** is located in **Geneva, Switzerland**.



1951 Refugee Convention

- The **1951 Refugee Convention** and its **1967 Protocol** are the key legal documents that form the basis of UNHCR's work.
- With 149 State parties to either or both, they **define the term 'refugee'** (as someone fearing persecution and unable to return home) and **outline refugees' rights and States' legal obligations** to protect them.
- The core principle is **non-refoulement**, which asserts that refugees should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. This is considered **customary international law**.
- India is **not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol**.

Did you know?

- UNHCR was established in 1950 by the UN General Assembly with a **three-year**



mandate to complete its work and then **disband**.

- The following year, the **Refugee Convention** was adopted. So instead of ending its work after three years, UNHCR has been working ever since to help refugees.

7.5. Bar Council of India

About

- The Bar Council of India (BCI) is a **statutory body** created by Parliament under the **Advocates Act, 1961** to **regulate and represent the Indian Bar**.
 - *The term 'Bar' refers to the legal profession as an institution.*
- BCI performs the **regulatory function** by prescribing **standards of professional conduct and etiquettes** for advocates and by exercising **disciplinary jurisdiction over the Bar**.
- It exercises **general supervision and control over State Bar Councils** constituted under Advocates Act, 1961.
- BCI sets **standards for legal education and grants recognition to Universities** whose degree in law will serve as qualification for enrolment as an advocate.

- BCI also administers the **All India Bar Examination (AIBE)**, which serves as a selection process for individuals seeking to practice law in the country's courts.
- In addition, BCI performs certain **representative functions** by protecting the rights, privileges and interests of advocates and through the **creation of funds** for providing financial assistance to organise welfare schemes for them.

Constitution

- BCI consists of **18 Members**.
 - The **Attorney General of India** and the **Solicitor General of India** are **Ex-officio Members** and the other **16 Members represent the 16 State Bar Councils** in the country.
- The **Members** are elected for a period of **five years**.
- **Chairman and Vice-Chairman** are elected for a period of **two years** from among the Members of BCI.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1) NISAR

What is NISAR?

- NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) is an **Earth-observation satellite** jointly developed by U.S. space agency **NASA** and Indian space agency **ISRO** under a partnership agreement signed in 2014.
- It will **map the entire globe in 12 days** and provide **spatially and temporally consistent data** for understanding changes in Earth's ecosystems.

About the Mission

- It is the **first satellite to observe the earth with a dual-frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** — NASA's **L-band** and ISRO's **S-band**.
 - **L-band SAR:** Penetrates vegetation, soil, and ice to monitor ground deformation, forest biomass, and subsurface features.
 - **S-band SAR:** Captures high-resolution surface details such as crops, water bodies, and urban infrastructure.

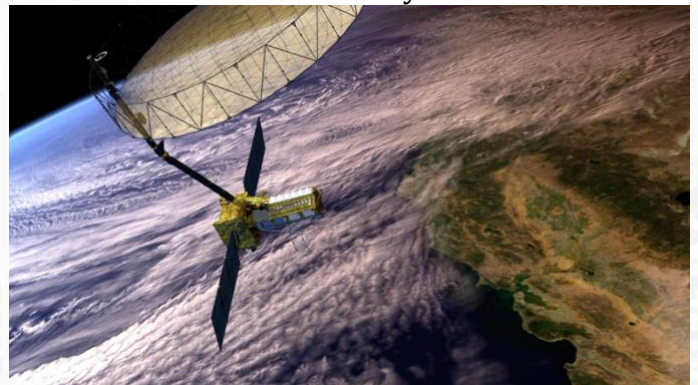
Synthetic Aperture Radar:

- SAR is an **advanced imaging technology** first developed for military use in the 1950s.
- **Unlike optical imaging** (which is a passive process using reflected sunlight to capture detailed spectral information), SAR actively **sends radar signals to Earth's surface and captures their reflections**.
- SAR can **see through clouds, smoke, and even dense vegetation**, making it **ideal for 24/7 monitoring in all weather conditions**.
- Another important component of the satellite is its large **39-foot stationary antenna reflector** which will be used to focus the radar signals emitted and received by the upward-facing feed on the instrument structure.

- While **NASA** has provided the **L-band radar, GPS, a high-capacity solid-state recorder** to store data, and a **payload data subsystem**, **ISRO** has provided the **S-band radar, the GSLV launch system and spacecraft**.

Objective

- NISAR aims to address critical global and regional challenges by monitoring:
- **Ecosystem Changes:**
 - Measure woody biomass (e.g., forest density and carbon storage).
 - Track crop extent and health for agricultural management.
 - Monitor wetland dynamics and coastal ecosystems.
- **Cryosphere and Climate:**
 - Map Greenland and Antarctica's ice sheets to study melting and sea-level rise.
 - Track glacier dynamics and sea-ice changes.
- **Natural Hazards:**
 - Detects ground deformation related to earthquakes, volcanoes, and landslides.
 - Monitor subsidence/uplift from groundwater changes, aquifer depletion, and hydrocarbon extraction.
- **Ocean and Coastal Processes:**
 - Study ocean currents, coastal erosion, and marine ecosystems.



Why in News?

- The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite was successfully



launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

- Launched aboard **GSLV-F16 rocket**, the earth observation satellite was injected into a 747-kilometre **sun-synchronous orbit**.
- Over its **five-year mission life**, NISAR will offer **invaluable data for global climate science, seismic and volcanic monitoring, forest mapping, and resource management**.

Sun-Synchronous Orbit (SSO):

- SSO is a particular kind of polar orbit in which **satellites are in sync with the Sun**. Matching Earth's rotation around the Sun, they **always appear in the same position relative to our star**.
- This means they **pass over the same spot on Earth at the same local time every day** – for example passing over the city of Paris daily at noon.
- This consistency allows for the **accurate monitoring of changes** over days, weeks, months or even years, as images are more comparable in terms of light and shadows.
- Typical SSOs around Earth are at an altitude of approximately **600–800 kilometers**.

2) Chikungunya

About

- Chikungunya is a **mosquito-borne viral disease** caused by the **chikungunya virus (CHIKV)**, an RNA virus in the alphavirus genus of the family **Togaviridae**.
- **Transmission:** Chikungunya virus is **transmitted by mosquitoes**, most commonly **Aedes aegypti** and **Aedes albopictus**, which can also **transmit dengue and Zika viruses**. These mosquitoes **bite primarily during daylight hours**.
- **Symptoms:** Chikungunya virus infection typically begins with a **sudden onset of fever accompanied by severe joint pain**. Other symptoms include joint swelling, muscle pain, headache, fatigue, nausea, and rash.

- **Treatment and vaccines:** There is **no specific antiviral drug treatment** for CHIKV infections. Treatment primarily **focuses on managing symptoms**.

- There are **currently two chikungunya vaccines** that have received regulatory approvals and/or have been recommended for use in populations at risk in several countries, but the **vaccines are not yet widely available nor in widespread use**.

- **Prevention:** **Reducing mosquito breeding sites** by cleaning water containers is essential, and **insecticides** may be used in outbreaks to control mosquito populations.

Why in News?

- A significant rise in Chikungunya cases has been observed across multiple states in India, raising public health concerns.

3) Diabetes

What is diabetes?

- Diabetes is a **chronic hormonal disorder** that occurs either when the **pancreas does not produce enough insulin** or when the **body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces** leading to **high blood sugar levels (hyperglycaemia)**.
- **Insulin**, a hormone made by the pancreas, helps **move glucose from the blood into cells** to produce energy.
 - Without it, **glucose builds up** in the bloodstream and can **damage organs** over time.

Types of Diabetes

- There are three main types of diabetes – **Type 1, Type 2 and Gestational**.

| Type | When does it occur? | Cause | Treatment |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Type 1 Diabetes | Most common in children & adolescents | Body produces little or no insulin | Insulin injections |
| Type 2 Diabetes | More common in adults. | Body doesn't | Healthy lifestyle, oral drugs, |



| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Accounts for ~90% of cases; often linked to obesity & inactivity | use insulin effectively | and/or insulin |
| Gestational Diabetes (GDM) | Occurs during pregnancy. Usually disappears after birth, but increases future risk of type 2 diabetes | High blood glucose due to hormonal changes | Diet, exercise, sometimes insulin |

- **Other types of diabetes**
 - Less common types of diabetes include **monogenic diabetes** and **cystic fibrosis-related diabetes**.

Why in News?

- A recent study has found that **one in five Indians aged 45 and above has diabetes**, with **40% of them unaware of their condition**, highlighting serious gaps in awareness, diagnosis, and treatment.
- The study also highlighted that **urban diabetes prevalence (30%) is twice that of rural areas (15%)** and **Southern states** like Kerala and Tamil Nadu show the **highest prevalence** compared to Northern states.

4) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

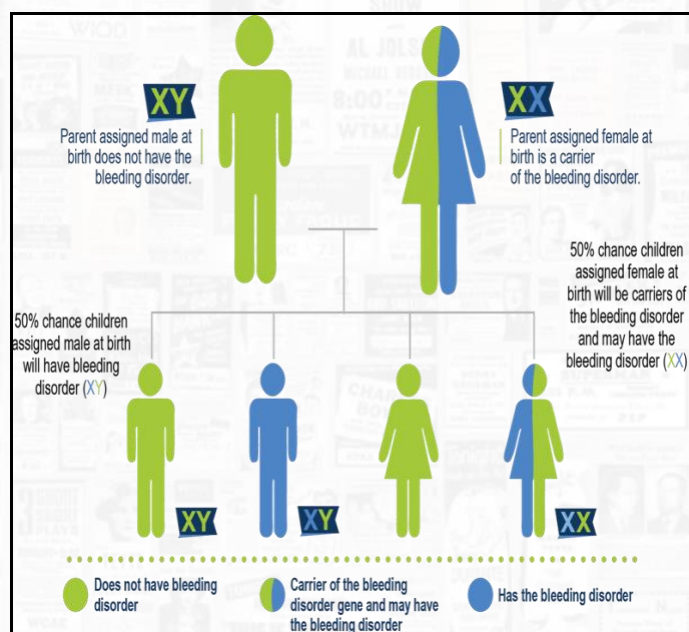
4.1. Hemophilia

About

- Hemophilia is an **inherited bleeding disorder** where **individuals lack enough of a specific clotting factor** in their blood, which is essential for blood to clot properly **resulting in excessive bleeding**.
- The **severity of hemophilia** depends on the **amount of clotting factor** present in the blood.

- There are **12 clotting factors** involved in the blood coagulation process, each playing a vital role in the clotting cascade that leads to the formation of a stable blood clot.

| Type | Cause | Related Information |
|--------------|---------------------------|--|
| Hemophilia A | Deficiency of factor VIII | Can be severe and constitutes 80% of hemophilia cases . |
| Hemophilia B | Deficiency of factor IX | Also called Christmas Disease . |
| Hemophilia C | Deficiency of factor XI | Rare occurrence. |



Though globally rare, **India has the second-largest population** of hemophilia patients.

Causes of Hemophilia

- Hemophilia is **caused by genetic mutations** that result in a deficiency of clotting factors.
- **Hemophilia A and Hemophilia B are passed through the X chromosome.**
- **Males are more likely to be affected** because they have only **one X chromosome**, while **females may be carriers** with a gene on one of their X chromosomes.



Symptoms

- Common symptoms of Hemophilia include:
 - **Excessive or prolonged bleeding**
 - **Easy bruising**
 - **Bleeding into joints and muscles**
- In severe cases: **intracranial bleeding** (bleeding in the brain), which can be life-threatening.

Treatment

- Hemophilia treatment involves **clotting factor replacement** to stop or prevent

bleeding, **physical therapy and surgery** for joint issues, **blood transfusions** for blood loss.

- **Gene therapy** is also gaining prominence, in which a functional gene is introduced into the patient's body, enabling it to produce sufficient clotting factor naturally and reduce or eliminate bleeding episodes over the long term.



REPORTS & INDICES

1) 2024-25 UDISE+ Report

What's in the news?

- The **Ministry of Education (MoE)** has released the **Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2024-25 report**, providing a **detailed overview of school education** across India.

Highlights of the Report

- School enrolment has dropped** for the **third consecutive year**, with the latest data showing a **dip of 11 lakh** in enrolment in 2024-25 (total enrolment: 24.69 crore) as compared to 2023-24 (24.80 crore).
- The MoE officials attributed the decline in the enrolment numbers largely to **demographic shifts** with falling birth rates in primary school-age population.
 - India's total fertility rate (TFR)** dropped to **1.91 per woman** by 2021, **below the replacement level of 2.1**.
- While the total enrolment has gone down, **Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)** – which is the enrolment at a level of education compared to the population of the age-group appropriate for that level – **has improved**.
 - At **middle level**, GER rose from 89.5% in 2023-24 to **90.3%** in 2024-25, while at **secondary level** it increased from 66.5% in 2023-24 to **68.5%** in 2024-25.
- Also, **dropout rates have reduced**.
 - In **preparatory stages**, dropout rates have reduced from 3.7% to **2.3%** between 2023-24 and 2024-25. During the same years in **middle school**, dropouts reduced from 5.2% to **3.5%** and in **secondary school** from 10.9% to **8.2%**.
- For the **first time since UDISE+ began in the 2018-19 academic year**, the **total number of teachers** in the country has **crossed the one-crore mark**.
- The **Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR)** at the **Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and**

Secondary levels are now reported as **10, 13, 17, and 21** respectively, all significantly improved in comparison to the **National Education Policy's (2020) recommended ratio of 1:30**.

- There is also a **significant progress in school infrastructure**, particularly in the area of **digital facilities**.
 - One of the most notable improvements is the increase in the **number of schools with computer access**, rising from 57.2% in 2023-24 to **64.7%** this year.

2) India Electric Mobility Index

What's in the news?

- NITI Aayog has published the **India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI)**, a first-of-its-kind tool developed to comprehensively **track and benchmark the progress of States and Union Territories (UTs)** in achieving their **Electric Mobility goals**.

About the Index

- IEMI **tracks, evaluates and scores** all Indian States and UTs **out of 100** across **16 indicators** under **three core themes**:
 - Transport Electrification Progress:** To capture demand-side adoption,
 - Charging Infrastructure Readiness:** To track allied charging infrastructure development and
 - EV Research and Innovation Status:** Covers supply-side ecosystem R&D efforts.



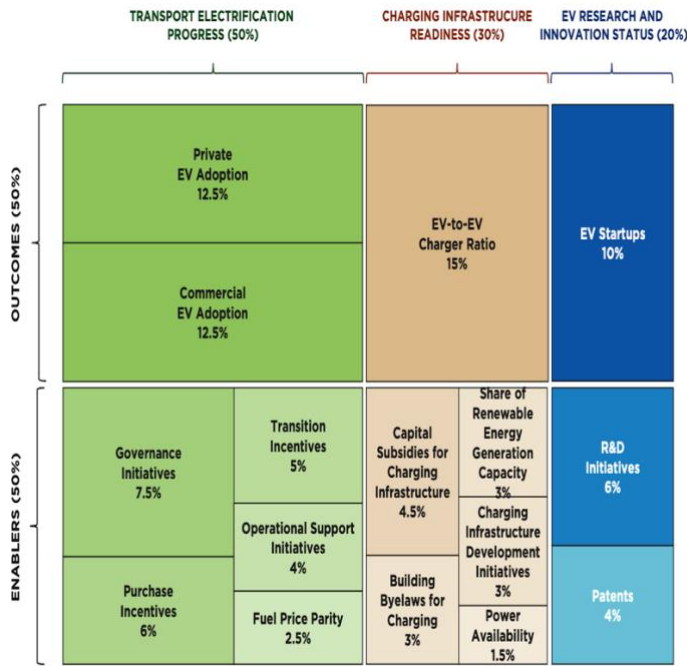


Figure 8: IEMI Theme and Indicator Weightages

Highlights of the Index

- Delhi, Maharashtra and Chandigarh have emerged as **overall frontrunners** in the first edition of the index.
 - Chandigarh, Delhi and Maharashtra are the frontrunners in **transport electrification** while Haryana, Karnataka, Ladakh and Himachal

Pradesh lead in charging infrastructure readiness and Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana and Telangana stand out as frontrunners in terms of EV research and innovation.

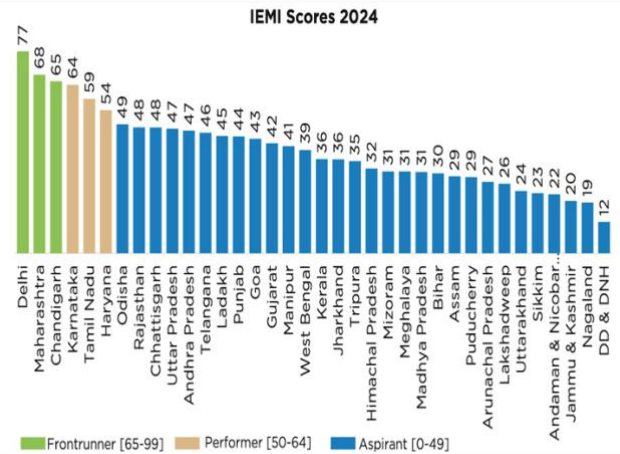


Figure 9: IEMI Score for 2024

- India seeks to attain a **30 percent share of electric vehicles in the total vehicles sold by 2030.**
 - Once accounting for just 0.5% of total vehicle sales in 2018, **EVs rose to 7.7% of new vehicle sales in 2024.**



DEFENCE & SECURITY

1) Navy takes delivery of Project 17A frigate Himgiri

What's in the news?

- The Indian Navy has received the **advanced guided-missile frigate Himgiri** built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE)** in **Kolkata**.
 - Established in **1884**, GRSE is a warship building company in India. It operates under the **administrative control of the Ministry of Defence**, primarily catering to the shipbuilding requirements of the **Indian Navy** and the **Indian Coast Guard**.

A frigate is a fairly small ship that can move at fast speeds. A modern frigate acts as a **versatile, multi-mission warship** with roles including **anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare** to protect other vessels like merchant ships and larger fleet ships.



- The warship was built under the Indian Navy's **Project 17A**.

Project 17A:

- Project 17A, also known as the **Nilgiri-class frigate program**, is an **Indian Navy** initiative to build **seven advanced stealth guided-missile frigates** with **high indigenous content**.
- Himgiri is equipped with **BrahMos anti-ship and land-attack cruise missiles**,

along with **Barak 8 anti-aircraft missiles**, representing a major leap in naval strike and defensive capabilities.

- The frigate is capable of **anti-air, anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare operations**.
- With an **indigenous content of 75%**, the project has involved over 200 MSMEs at GRSE.

2) Successful Test-Firing of Agni 5

What's in the news?

- India has successfully test-fired its **Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile Agni-5** from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, Odisha.



- The launch was carried out under the aegis of the **Strategic Forces Command (SFC)**.
 - The *tri-service Strategic Forces Command* was created in **2003** to *manage the strategic nuclear assets of India*.

About Agni-5

- Agni-5 is India's **indigenously developed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)** with a **range of 5,000 km**.



Ballistic Missiles vs Cruise Missiles:

- Ballistic missiles are **rocket-propelled weapons that follow a predetermined arched trajectory**.
 - These missiles can **travel vast distances** and are **capable of carrying both nuclear and conventional warheads**.
 - They often **exit the Earth's atmosphere** before re-entering to strike their targets.
- In contrast, **cruise missiles are guided missiles that remain within the Earth's atmosphere throughout their flight**.
 - **Powered by jet engines**, they maintain a **constant speed** and are designed for **precision strikes**.
 - Cruise missiles can be launched from **various platforms**, including aircraft, ships, and ground-based launchers.
 - They typically **fly at lower altitudes**, making them **harder to detect** by radar systems.
- Designed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, the

missile can bring **almost the entire continent of Asia**, including the **northernmost parts of China**, and **some regions of Europe within striking range**.

- The missile uses a **three-stage, solid-fuel propulsion system** and is launched from a **canisterised platform**, which allows for rapid deployment, easier storage, and enhanced mobility.
- The **nuclear-capable Agni-5** is equipped with **Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology**, which would allow a single missile to deliver multiple warheads at different targets.
- The **Agni series** ranges from **Agni-I to Agni-V**, with the latter the most advanced and first tested in 2012. Other missiles in the series include Agni-I (700 km range), Agni-II (2,000 km), and Agni-III and IV (2,500–3,500 km).



PLACES IN NEWS

1) Gulf of Aden

About

- Gulf of Aden is a deepwater basin that forms a **natural sea link between the Red Sea** (via the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait**) and the **Arabian Sea**.
- The Gulf is situated **between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa**.
- It is bordered by **Yemen** to the north, and **Somalia and Djibouti** to the south.
- The gulf is a **major shipping route** and forms a **critical part of the Suez Canal trade route** that links Europe and Asia.
- Strategically, it hosts several **naval bases** and has often been identified as a **piracy hot spot**, particularly off the Somali coast.



Why in News?

- A boat with 154 Ethiopian migrants sank near Yemen's Abyan province in the Gulf of Aden, a common route used by migrants from East Africa.
 - **Yemen** remains a **major migration corridor** from East Africa, especially Ethiopia and Somalia, toward Gulf Arab countries.

2) Mount Etna

About

- Mount Etna is an **active volcano** on the **east coast of Sicily, Italy**.
- It is a type of a **stratovolcano**.

- Stratovolcano is a **conical style volcano** formed from viscous lava that does not flow easily and instead deposits around the vent, adding to the slope structure. **Around 60%** of the earth's individual volcanoes are stratovolcanoes.
- Mount Etna is also a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Did you know?

- Mount Etna roughly stands at an impressive 3,300 metres, which is approximately four times the height of Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building.



Why in News?

- Mount Etna has erupted recently.

3) Indonesia

About

- Indonesia, located in **Southeast Asia**, is the **world's largest archipelago** with more than 17,000 islands.
- Capital: **Jakarta**.
- Major Islands: **Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan (Borneo), Sulawesi, Papua, Bali**.



- **Bordering Countries:**
 - **Land borders with:**
 - Malaysia
 - Papua New Guinea
 - Timor-Leste
 - **Maritime boundaries with:**
 - Singapore, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, **India**, Australia, and Palau.

- It has more than **120 active volcanoes** and sits along the **Pacific “Ring of Fire”**, a horseshoe-shaped zone marked by intense seismic and volcanic activity.
- **Notable active volcanoes:** Mount Merapi, Mount Ruang, Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki.

Why in News?

- Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki in Indonesia experienced a series of eruptions recently.

Did you know?

- Barren Island is the only active volcano in India. It is located in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



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MISCELLANEOUS

1) Ramon Magsaysay Award

What is the Magsaysay Award?

- Launched in **1958**, the Ramon Magsaysay Award, widely considered to be **Asia's equivalent to the Nobel Prize**, recognises **outstanding leadership and communitarian contributions in Asia**.
- The award was set up by trustees of the **Rockefeller Brothers Fund**, created by the wealthy **Rockefeller family in the United States**, and the **Philippine government**.
- The award is given out every year on **August 31**, on **former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay's birth anniversary**.
- The **RMAF board of trustees** select the winners following a confidential nominations process and their investigation.



- The winners are presented with a **certificate** and a **medallion** with an embossed image of Ramon Magsaysay facing right in profile. Both are presented in a formal ceremony in **Manila, Philippines**.

Why in News?

- An **Indian non-profit organisation**, '**Foundation to Educate Girls Globally**', dedicated to mobilise community and government resources for girls' education

in rural and educationally disadvantaged areas of India, has been named a **2025 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee**.

- The Foundation, widely known as **Educate Girls**, is the **first Indian organisation to receive the prestigious award**.
- The Foundation, started in Rajasthan, was founded in 2007 by **Safeena Husain**.

2) Equator Initiative Award 2025

What's in the news?

- The **Bibi Fatima Women's Self-Help Group (SHG)** from Karnataka, has been honoured with the '**Equator Initiative Award 2025**' by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, which is also referred to as the **Nobel Prize for Biodiversity Conservation**.
 - Supporting more than 5,000 farmers, the Bibi Fatima SHG promotes millet cultivation through mixed cropping, conserves traditional seeds and operates solar-powered processing machines.
- Launched in **2002**, the Equator Prize is **awarded every two years**.
- The award recognizes **nature-based solutions** led by **indigenous people and local communities** that promote sustainable development and ecological resilience.
 - **Nature-Based Solutions** are actions that **use natural ecosystems** (forests, rivers, wetlands, mangroves, grasslands, etc.) to **address societal problems** like climate change, water scarcity, and disaster risks, while also **improving biodiversity and human well-being**.
- Each winner receives a **cash prize of USD 10,000** to scale up their projects.



United Nations Development Programme:

- UNDP was established in **1966** by the **General Assembly of the United Nations**.
- UNDP's work is concentrated in **three focus areas**:
 - **sustainable development,**
 - **democratic governance and peace building,** and
 - **climate and disaster resilience.**
- In order to achieve its mandate, **UNDP relies entirely on voluntary contributions** from UN Member States, multilateral organizations, private sector and other sources.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OTHER ARTICLES

1) Stagflation

About

- Stagflation is an economic condition characterized by **slowing economic growth, high unemployment, and rising prices (inflation) simultaneously**.
- This makes it hard for policymakers to find solutions, as fixing one problem can make another worse.

2) Perito Moreno Glacier

About

- One of the few stable glaciers in a warming world, **Perito Moreno**, in **Argentina**, is now undergoing a **possibly irreversible retreat**.
 - Over the past seven years, it has lost 1.92 sq km of ice cover and its thickness is decreasing by up to 8 metres a year.
- Also called the '**White Giant**', the glacier is located within **Los Glaciares National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

3) Inverted Duty Structure

About

- An inverted duty structure refers to a situation where the **tax rate on inputs** (raw materials or intermediate goods) is **higher than the tax rate on the final product**.
 - For example, in the pharmaceutical sector, certain active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) are taxed at 18%, whereas the finished drugs are taxed at a lower rate.
- An inverted duty structure **negatively impacts the domestic industry** by increasing production costs for manufacturers with higher import duties on inputs than on finished goods, leading to **reduced competitiveness** in both domestic and global markets.

4) Largest Milk Producer

News:

- India has ranked 1st in milk production since 1998**, now contributing **25 percent of global milk production**.
- Per capita availability of milk** in the country is **471 gm/person/day** against the per capita availability of 322 gram/person/ day in the world.
- Uttar Pradesh** is the largest milk producer in the country, followed by **Rajasthan**.

5) New Lichen Species

News:

- A team of Indian scientists has uncovered a **previously unknown species of lichen**, *Allographa effusosoredica*, from the **Western Ghats**.

Lichens:

- Lichens are not just one organism but **two (sometimes more) living in intimate symbiosis**: a **fungus** that offers structure and protection, and a **photobiont** (usually a green **alga** or cyanobacterium) that captures sunlight and makes food.
- Lichens play **critical roles in ecosystems**, contributing to **soil formation, providing food** for insects, and serving as a **bioindicator** of environmental health due to its sensitivity to air quality and climate changes.
- Allographa effusosoredica* becomes the 53rd species from the genus reported from India and the 22nd from the Western Ghats alone.

6) Exercise SLINEX

News:

- The 12th Edition of **annual Indian Navy (IN) - Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) bilateral maritime exercise SLINEX-2025** was recently held at Colombo.



7) Biofortification

About

- Biofortification is the process of **increasing the nutrient content of food crops** through methods like **conventional breeding or improved agronomic practices or biotechnology**, without compromising farmer- or consumer-preferred traits.
- It is a sustainable, nutrition-sensitive agricultural intervention designed to **combat vitamin and mineral deficiencies**.
- Examples include **Iron rich pearl millet, Zinc-biofortified wheat, etc.**

Food Fortification:

- Food fortification is the practice of deliberately **increasing the content of one or more essential micronutrients (such as vitamins and minerals) in a food product** during its **processing** to improve its nutritional quality.
- Examples include **Iodized salt, Fortified milk (with vitamin D and A)** etc.
- While **food fortification** refers to the process of **increasing the nutritional content** of food products **during processing**, **biofortification** refers to the process of **increasing the nutritional value** of crops **during plant growth** itself.

8) National Space Day

News:

- India celebrated its **second National Space Day** on **23rd August**.
 - **Theme: "Aryabhata to Gaganyaan: Ancient Wisdom to Infinite Possibilities."**
- National Space Day is observed to **commemorate the historic soft landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon's south pole**.

Chandrayaan-3 Mission:

- Chandrayaan-3 is an **ISRO mission to the Moon**, which successfully achieved a **soft landing near the lunar south pole**

on August 23, 2023, marking **India** as the **fourth nation to land on the Moon** and the **first to land near its south pole**.

- The mission involved a **Vikram lander**, a **Pragyan rover**, and a **propulsion module**, demonstrating end-to-end landing and roving capabilities.
- The mission's objectives included **scientific experiments on the lunar surface**, such as studying seismicity, thermal properties, and elemental composition.

Major Milestones of ISRO

- **Aryabhata (1975):** India's first satellite.
- **PSLV and GSLV Rockets:** Reliable vehicles that carried satellites and interplanetary missions.
- **Mangalyaan (2013):** Made India the first Asian nation to reach Mars orbit.
- **Chandrayaan Missions:** From the discovery of water molecules on the Moon to the south pole landing.
- **NAVIC System:** India's own navigation satellite system.
- **Aditya L1 Mission (2023):** First space based Indian mission to study the Sun.

9) Largest Uranium Producer

News:

- Uranium is primarily used as **fuel for nuclear power plants** and in the **production of nuclear weapons** due to its **fissile properties**. It also has applications in **military armor**, as a material for **radiation shielding**, for producing **medical isotopes** etc.,
- **Kazakhstan** is the **world's largest producer of uranium**, contributing over 40% of global output followed by **Canada** and **Namibia**.
- While **Kazakhstan leads in production**, **Australia** holds the **world's largest uranium reserves**, followed by **Kazakhstan** and **Canada**.



10) Orbiting Carbon Observatory Missions

About

- The Orbiting Carbon Observatory missions are a series of **dedicated Earth remote sensing satellites of NASA** designed to **precisely measure atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) from space**.
- It aims to provide **critical data to understand and address climate change**.

11) Nauru sells citizenship to tackle climate crisis

News:

- Nauru is a tiny **island country** located in **Micronesia**, northeast of Australia.
- It is offering **citizenship** to foreign nationals under its Economic and Climate Resilience Citizenship Programme to **raise funds to combat climate change**.

12) Flash Floods

About

- Flash flood refers to flood caused by **heavy or excessive rainfall in a short period of time, generally less than 6 hours**.
- In India, flash floods are triggered not only by **intense rainfall and cloudbursts** but also by **dam breaches and Glacial Lake**

Outburst Floods (GLOFs) in the Himalayas.

- They are more common in **steep river valleys** and **urban areas** where hard surfaces prevent water absorption.
- Adaptation strategies include **region-specific early warning systems, climate-resilient infrastructure, identification of new hotspots, and improved land-use and flood planning**.

13) Carrying Capacity

About

- The carrying capacity of a region is the **maximum population size or level of resource use that the environment can sustain indefinitely** without degrading its resources and ecological balance.
- It is determined by **available resources, environmental conditions** such as climate and pollution and the **ability of the region's ecosystems to regenerate**.
- Carrying capacity is essential for **effective resource management, environmental preservation, and planning** to prevent overexploitation of resources and land degradation.



PRACTICE WITH PYQS

1. Among the following who are eligible to benefit from the “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act”? (2011)

- A. Adult members of only the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households
- B. Adult members of below poverty line (BPL) households
- C. Adult members of households of all backward communities
- D. Adult members of any household

2. Regarding ‘DigiLocker’, sometimes seen in the news, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2016)

- 1. It is a digital locker system offered by the Government under Digital India Programme.
- 2. It allows you to access your e-documents irrespective of your physical location.

Select the correct answer using the code given below

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

3. Consider the following statements about the Rashtriya Gokul Mission. (2025)

- 1. It is important for the upliftment of rural poor as majority of low producing indigenous animals are with small and marginal farmers and landless labourers.
- 2. It was initiated to promote indigenous cattle and buffalo rearing and conservation in a scientific and holistic manner.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

4. Consider the following statements. (2017)

- 1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
- 2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
- 3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 3 only

5. What is the purpose of setting up of Small Finance Banks (SFBs) in India? (2017)

- 1. To supply credit to small business units
- 2. To supply credit to small and marginal farmers
- 3. To encourage young entrepreneurs to set up business particularly in rural areas.



Select the correct answer using the code given below

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

6. According to India's National Policy on Biofuels, which of the following can be used as raw materials for the production of biofuels? (2020)

- 1. Cassava
- 2. Damaged wheat grains
- 3. Groundnut seeds
- 4. Horse gram
- 5. Rotten potatoes
- 6. Sugar beet

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1, 2, 5 and 6 only
- B. 1, 3, 4 and 6 only
- C. 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
- D. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

7. With reference to 'fly ash' produced by the power plants using coal as fuel, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2015)

- 1. Fly ash can be used in the production of bricks for building construction.
- 2. Fly ash can be used as a replacement for some of the Portland cement contents of concrete.
- 3. Fly ash is made up of silicon dioxide and calcium oxide only, and does not contain any toxic elements.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 3 only

8. Consider the following pairs: (2023)

| Regions often mentioned in news | - | Reason for being in news |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. North Kivu and Ituri | - | War between Armenia and Azerbaijan |
| 2. Nagorno-Karabakh | - | Insurgency in Mozambique |
| 3. Kherson and Zaporizhzhia | - | Dispute between Israel and Lebanon |

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None



9. India is a member of which of the following? (2015)

1. Asia-Pacific economic corporation
2. Association of South-East Asian Nations
3. East Asia Summit

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 3 only
- C. 1, 2 and 3
- D. India is a member of none of them

10. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. Aadhaar card can be used as a proof of citizenship or domicile.
2. Once issued, Aadhaar number cannot be deactivated or omitted by the Issuing Authority.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

11. The identity platform 'Aadhaar' provides open "Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)". What does it imply? (2018)

1. It can be integrated into any electronic device.
2. Online authentication using iris is possible.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

12. With reference to India, consider the following statements: (2022)

1. Government law officers and legal firms are recognised as advocates, but corporate lawyers and patent attorneys are excluded from recognition as advocates.
2. Bar Councils have the power to lay down the rules relating to legal education and recognition of law colleges.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

13. Which of the following diseases can be transmitted from one person to another through tattooing? (2013)

1. Chikungunya
2. Hepatitis B
3. HIV-AIDS



Select the correct answer using the codes given below

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

14. Consider the following statements: (2023)

1. Ballistic missiles are jet-propelled at subsonic speeds throughout their flights, while cruise missiles are rocket powered only in the initial phase of flight.
2. Agni-V is a medium-range supersonic cruise missile, while BrahMos is a solid-fuelled intercontinental ballistic missile.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

15. Match List-I (Disease) with List-II (Types of disease) and select the correct answer using the codes given below: (2000)

| List-I | List-II |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| A. Haemophilia | 1. Deficiency disease |
| B. Diabetes | 2. Genetic disease |
| C. Rickets | 3. Hormonal disorder |
| D. Ringworm | 4. Fungal infection |

Codes:

- A. A - 2; B - 3; C - 4; D - 1
- B. A - 2; B - 3; C - 1; D - 4
- C. A - 3; B - 2; C - 1; D - 4
- D. A - 3; B - 2; C - 4; D - 1

16. Match List-I with List-II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists: (1999)

| List-I (Volcanic Mountain) | List-II (Country) |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| A. Mt. Rainier | 1. Italy |
| B. Etna | 2. Mexico |
| C. Paricutin | 3. Philippines |
| D. Taal | 4. U.S.A. |

Codes:

- A. A-4; B-2; C-1; D-3
- B. A-4; B-1; C-2; D-3
- C. A-2; B-1; C-4; D-3
- D. A-4; B-3; C-2; D-1

17. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The Barren Island volcano is an active volcano located in the Indian territory.
2. Barren Island lies about 140 km east of Great Nicobar.



3. The last time the Barren Island volcano erupted was in 1991 and it has remained inactive since then.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 3 only
- D. 1 and 3

18. Which among the following has the world's largest reserves of Uranium? (2009)

- A. Australia
- B. Canada
- C. Russian Federation
- D. USA

19. Lichens, which are capable of initiating ecological succession even on a bare rock, are actually a symbiotic association of (2014)

- A. algae and bacteria
- B. algae and fungi
- C. bacteria and fungi
- D. fungi and mosses

ANSWERS:

- 1. D
- 2. C
- 3. C
- 4. D
- 5. A
- 6. A
- 7. A
- 8. D
- 9. B
- 10. D
- 11. C
- 12. B
- 13. B
- 14. D
- 15. B
- 16. B
- 17. A
- 18. A
- 19. B

