

For UPSC CSE



MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE



March 2026 (PRELIMS)

YOUR SIMPLIFIED GUIDE TO CURRENT AFFAIRS



A Note to Our Readers

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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.

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Dear Aspirants,

In the August 2025 edition of the SCA Prelims Magazine, under the topic Small Finance Banks, it is mentioned that SFBs are required to lend at least 75% of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) to sectors classified as Priority Sector Lending (PSL) by the RBI.

This is incorrect. In 2025, the RBI revised the PSL target for SFBs from 75% to 60%. Please make a note of this correction.

SCHEMES

1) Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna

What's in the news?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA) to **develop 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across the country.**
- The scheme is aimed at **boosting manufacturing, attracting investments and generating large-scale employment.**

Key Features

- BHAVYA will focus on **developing modern, ready-to-use industrial ecosystems.**
- The initiative will be **implemented in partnership with states and private players**, with parks ranging in size from **100 to 1,000 acres.**
 - The minimum contiguous land parcel size has been kept at **25 acres for north-eastern and hilly States.**
- A key feature of the scheme is its **emphasis on streamlined approvals and single-window clearances**, enabling industries to move quickly from planning to production.
- **Project selection** will be carried out through a **challenge-based mechanism**, ensuring that only high-quality, investment-ready proposals are approved.
- The **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)**, under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, will

play a key role in implementing the initiative.

Financial Assistance

- **Financial assistance of up to ₹1 crore per acre** will be provided for **core infrastructure** such as roads, utilities, drainage and ICT systems; value-added facilities including factory sheds, testing labs and warehousing; and social infrastructure like worker housing and support amenities.
 - **Additional support of up to 25% of project cost** will be extended for **external connectivity infrastructure.**

2) RELIEF Scheme

What's in the news?

- The Union Government has **launched the RELIEF (Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation) scheme** to support Indian exporters facing disruptions due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia.
- The scheme has been introduced under the **Export Promotion Mission (Refer SCA Prelims Magazine November 2025 Edition).**
- It offers **insurance support**, facilitates **coverage for new shipments** and provides **reimbursement assistance** to eligible MSME exporters dealing with elevated freight and insurance costs.
- RELIEF has been structured to provide **support across the export cycle** by covering the **shipments already left during the disruption period** as well as



prospective exports planned to the affected region.

- Under the approved framework, **Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC)**, wholly owned by **Government of India (Ministry of Commerce & Industry)**, has been designated as the **nodal and implementing agency** responsible for verification, claim processing, disbursement and monitoring.

3) SFURTI

About

- The “**Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)**” is an initiative of the **Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises** to **strengthen traditional industries** (such as khadi, coir, handicraft, handlooms, pottery, etc.) by making them competitive, market-driven, and sustainable.
- Launched in **2005**, the scheme focuses on **organizing artisans and rural entrepreneurs into clusters** to enhance productivity, income, and employment opportunities.
- The scheme, which was **revamped in 2014-15**, **supports infrastructure development, technology upgradation, skill training, product design, and improved market access.**
 - The scheme also promotes innovation, branding, e-commerce, and sustainable practices to improve the overall value chain of traditional industries.
- **Financial assistance** is provided based on the type of cluster.

Why in News?

- A total of 513 clusters across various traditional sectors have been approved under SFURTI since 2015-16.

4) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

4.1. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

About

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is a flagship scheme of the **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship** to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up **industry-relevant skill training.**
- Launched in **2015**, PMKVY is implemented by **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).**

National Skill Development Corporation:

- NSDC is a **not-for-profit public limited company** incorporated in 2008.
- It was set up by the **Ministry of Finance** as a **Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.**
 - The **Government of India** through the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship holds **49% of the share capital** of NSDC, while the **private sector has the balance 51%** of the share capital.
- NSDC acts as a catalyst in skill development by providing funding to enterprises, companies and organizations that provide skill training.
- Skill training is based on the **National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF)** and industry led standards.

National Skills Qualifications Framework:

- NSQF is a **competency-based framework** that organizes all qualifications according to a series of **levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude.** NSQF in India was notified in **2013.**
- Under NSQF, the learner can acquire the **certification for competency** needed at any level through **formal, non-formal or informal learning.**



- At present, the current version of the PMKVY i.e. **PMKVY 4.0** is under implementation.

Key Components of PMKVY

1. **Short Term Training:** To impart short term training to candidates of Indian nationality who are either school/college dropouts or unemployed.
2. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** To assess and certify individuals with prior learning experience or skills.
3. **Special Projects:** To facilitate training in special areas and/or premises of Government bodies, Corporates or Industry bodies.

4.2. Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

About

- The Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) was launched in **2018** by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** to **develop and strengthen the Panchayati Raj System** across India.
- The scheme was **revamped in FY 2022-23**, with the main objective of supporting the **capacity building of Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs)** by **imparting training to Elected Representatives (ERs) and other stakeholders** to develop their governance capabilities.
 - Additionally, the scheme promotes **e-governance and other technology driven solutions** and also supports **exposure visits, development of training modules and materials**, etc.
- The Revamped RGSA **extends to all States and Union Territories (UTs) of the country including institutions of rural local government in non-Part IX areas, where Panchayats do not exist.**

- **Part IX Areas** are regions where the **standard three-tier Panchayati Raj system is mandatory.**
- **Non-Part IX areas** are **specific regions exempted** from the provisions of Part IX under **Article 243M**. These typically

include Tribal Areas (Sixth Schedule) and states like Nagaland and hill areas of Manipur.

- The scheme comprises **both Central and State Components**, with the **Central Component being fully funded by the Government of India.**
 - The **funding pattern for the State Component** follows a ratio of **60:40** between the Centre and States, except for **North Eastern and Hilly States and the UT of Jammu & Kashmir**, where the ratio is **90:10**.
 - For **other UTs**, the **Central share is 100%.**

4.3. Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

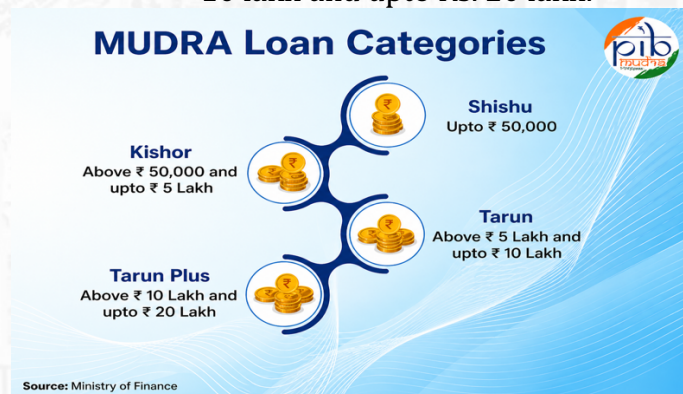
About

- The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) was launched in **2015** to **bridge the gap in financial accessibility**, offering **collateral-free loans up to ₹20 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.**
- PMMY aims to **“fund the unfunded”** by **bringing the small entrepreneurs into the formal financial system** and extending affordable credit to them.
- The **Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA)**, serves as the **supporting institution** that provides **refinance support** to a network of lending institutions, enabling the flow of institutional credit.
- **Loans under PMMY are extended through Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)**, including Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs), Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), Small Finance Banks (SFBs), Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), and Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs).
- **Borrowers include non-corporate, non-farm micro and small enterprises** across **manufacturing, trading, services, and allied agricultural activities.**



MUDRA Loan Categories:

- Mudra loans are offered in **four categories** namely, ‘**Shishu**’, ‘**Kishore**’, ‘**Tarun**’ and ‘**Tarun Plus**’ which signifies the stage of growth or development and funding needs of the borrowers:-
 - **Shishu** : covering loans upto Rs. 50,000
 - **Kishore** : covering loans above Rs. 50,000 and upto Rs. 5 lakh
 - **Tarun** : covering loans above Rs. 5 lakh and upto Rs. 10 lakh
 - **Tarun Plus** (started in 2024 for those entrepreneurs who have availed and successfully repaid previous loans under the ‘Tarun’ category) : covering loans above Rs. 10 lakh and upto Rs. 20 lakh.



- With an objective to promote entrepreneurship among the new generation aspiring youth, it is ensured that **more focus is given to Shishu Category loans and then Kishore and Tarun and Tarun Plus categories.**

Why in News?

- The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana is marking 11 years of success in strengthening India's grassroots entrepreneurs.

4.4. Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan

About

- The Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA) was launched by the Government of India in **2024** for **improving the socio-economic condition of tribal communities.**

- Also known as the **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan**, PM JUGA aims to benefit **more than 5 crore tribal people**—about half of India's tribal population—through **comprehensive development initiatives.**

Objectives

- The scheme's core objective is to **ensure saturation coverage and implementation of central schemes for improving the socio-economic conditions of tribal communities.**
- PMJUGA covers **all tribal majority villages** (with a population of 500 or more, and at least 50% tribal residents as well as villages in Aspirational Districts with a tribal population of 50 or more).

Implementation

- The scheme comprises **25 interventions** implemented by **17-line Ministries.** These ministries are implementing flagship schemes to **bridge critical gaps in social infrastructure, healthcare, education and livelihoods** in tribal-majority villages.
- The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** serves as the **nodal agency**, coordinating with Central Ministries for planning, implementation, and monitoring.

Funding

- The funding for various interventions will come from the existing **Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST) grants** allocated to Central Ministries and Departments under Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

4.5. Seva Bhoj Yojana

About

- Seva Bhoj Yojana was launched by the **Ministry of Culture** in **2018** to **support charitable and religious institutions distributing free food to the public.**
- Under the scheme, the **Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST)** and the central government's share of **Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST)** paid on the purchase of specific



raw food items by eligible institutions are **reimbursed by the central government.**

- To qualify for reimbursement, institutions must have been actively distributing free food to at least 5,000 people per month for the past three years.
- It is implemented as a **Central Sector Scheme.**

4.6. Khelo India Scheme

About

- The Khelo India programme has been introduced to **revive the sports culture in India at the grass-root level** by building a strong framework for all sports played in our country.
- It was launched **2018** and implemented by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.**



- Under the scheme, talented players identified in priority sports disciplines at various levels (by the High-Powered Committee) will be provided **annual financial assistance of Rs 6.28 lakh** [including Rs 1.20 lakh as Out of Pocket Allowance (OPA)] towards training expenses, coaching, competitions exposure, education, equipment support, scientific support etc.



INITIATIVES

1) Centre Suspends Rice Fortification Scheme

What is 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.
- In 2016, the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** operationalized the **Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016** for fortifying staples namely:
 - **Wheat Flour** and **Rice** with **Iron, Vitamin B12** and **Folic Acid**,
 - **Milk** and **Edible Oil** with **Vitamins A** and **D** and
 - **Double Fortified Salt** with **Iodine** and **Iron**.

FSSAI:

- FSSAI is an **autonomous body** established under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, with the primary purpose of **regulating and ensuring the safety and quality of food products** across the country.
- The FSSAI is responsible for **setting standards** for food products, **ensuring compliance** with these standards, and **promoting public health** by regulating food safety practices.

- The **'+F' logo** has been notified to identify fortified foods.

Significance

- **Deficiency of micronutrients**, also known as **"hidden hunger"**, is a serious health risk in India.
- According to the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)**:
 - **67 percent of children** (6-59 months) are **anaemic**
 - **57 percent women** in the reproductive age group are **anaemic**

- **every third child** still suffers from **chronic undernourishment**, and **every fifth child** is **acutely malnourished**.

- Food fortification is one strategy to address these issues, as it **provides essential nutrients without requiring changes to people's dietary habits**.
- This approach is **socio-culturally acceptable** since it **does not affect the taste, texture, or appearance of the food**.

Did you know?

- Food Fortification has a **high benefit-to-cost ratio**. The **Copenhagen Consensus** (a conference of prominent economists) estimates that **every 1 Rupee spent on fortification results in 9 Rupees in benefits to the economy**.

Why in News?

- The Union Government has decided to **temporarily discontinue the process of rice fortification**, citing a study by IIT Kharagpur to assess the shelf life of fortified rice.
 - The study found that moisture content, storage conditions, temperature, relative humidity and packaging material critically influence the stability of fortified rice.
- The central government had rolled out rice fortification to **address micronutrient deficiencies** such as anaemia and malnutrition among vulnerable populations.
 - Fortified rice is produced by blending fortified rice kernels with regular rice.

2) Jal Jeevan Mission gets extension up to 2028

About

- The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) was launched in **2019** to **enable all rural households to have functional household tap**



connection (FHTC) by 2024 (Har Ghar Nal Se Jal).

- The goal of JJM is to provide FHTC to every household with service level at the rate of **55 litres per capita per day (lpcd)**.
- This Mission is under the **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti**.



- The Mission also aims to provide **functional tap connections to Schools, Anganwadi centres, Gram Panchayat buildings, Health centres, wellness centres and community buildings**.
- The Mission gives **emphasis to source sustainability measures** such as recharge and reuse through greywater management, water conservation and rainwater harvesting.
- Every water supply asset created under Jal Jeevan Mission is **geo-tagged**.
- It is implemented through a **community-based approach** and seeks to build a **Jan Andolan (people's movement)** for water, making it a shared national priority.

Fund Sharing:

- The fund sharing pattern is **90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States; 50:50 for other States and 100% for Union Territories**.

Progress:

- From the baseline of 3.23 crore (17%) rural households with tap water connections in 2019, so far, more than 12.56 crore additional rural households have been provided with tap water connections under JJM.

Significance:

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** estimates that achieving the Mission's goals will **save women 5.5 crore hours daily previously spent** collecting water

and **prevent nearly 400,000 deaths** from diarrheal diseases.

- **Nobel laureate Prof. Michael Kremer** suggests safe water coverage could **reduce under-five child mortality by almost 30%**.

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the **extension of Jal Jeevan Mission to 2028** and transform the programme from a **primarily infrastructure-driven initiative to a citizen-centric utility model** ensuring sustainable piped potable water supply in rural areas.
- JJM 2.0 would facilitate the **certification of all Gram Panchayats as 'Har Ghar Jal'**, by provisioning tap water connection to all the rural households across the country by 2028.
- As part of structural reforms, the government will introduce a **national digital framework** called "**Sujalam Bharat**", which will **assign each village a unique Sujal Gaon or Service Area ID**.
 - The system will **digitally map the entire drinking water supply chain**—from source to household tap—to improve monitoring, transparency and accountability.
- To **encourage community ownership** of water systems, the mission will introduce "**Jal Utsav**", an annual community-led event focused on reviewing and maintaining local water supply infrastructure while promoting collective responsibility for water sustainability.

3) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

3.1. National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021

About

- The Government of India launched the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD) in 2021 for the treatment of rare disease patients.



What is a rare disease?

- A rare disease is a health condition of **low prevalence that affects a small number of people** compared with other prevalent diseases in the general population.
- Rare diseases include **genetic diseases, rare cancers, infectious tropical diseases and degenerative diseases.**
- **80% of rare diseases are genetic in origin** and hence **disproportionately impact children.**

Definition:

- Rare disease is defined by the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** as an often debilitating, lifelong disease or disorder with a **prevalence of 1 or less per 1,000 population.**
- However, there is **no universal definition** as different countries define rare diseases differently, with India recording about 450 rare diseases that affect at least 70 million people.

Challenges Associated:

- There are 7,000-8,000 classified rare diseases, but **less than 5% have therapies available to treat them.** About 95% rare diseases have no approved treatment and less than 1 in 10 patients receive disease-specific treatment.
- Rare diseases are also **difficult to research upon** as the patients pool is very small and it often results in inadequate clinical experience.
- **The cost of treatment of rare diseases is prohibitively expensive.**

Salient Features of NPRD, 2021

Classification:

- In the policy, rare diseases have **not been defined but classified into three groups.**
 - **Group 1** has disorders amenable to **one-time curative treatment.**
 - **Group 2** has diseases **requiring long-term or lifelong treatment with relatively lower cost of treatment** and benefit has been documented in literature.
 - **Group 3** has diseases for which definitive treatment is available, but

challenges are to make optimal patient selection for benefit, and very high cost and lifelong therapy.

Lowering the Cost of Treatment:

- The Rare Diseases Policy aims to lower the high cost of treatment for rare diseases with **increased focus on indigenous research.**

National Hospital Based Registry:

- The policy also envisages creation of a **national hospital based registry of rare diseases** so that adequate data is available for definition of rare diseases and for research and development related to rare diseases.

Screening, Prevention & Treatment:

- The Policy also focuses on **early screening and prevention through primary and secondary health care infrastructure.**
- Screening will also be supported by **Nidan Kendras** set up by the Department of Biotechnology.
 - *Nidan Kendras provide counselling, prenatal testing and diagnosis, management, and multidisciplinary care in Government Hospitals wherein the influx of patients is more.*

- The policy also aims to **strengthen tertiary health care facilities** for prevention and treatment of rare diseases through **designating 12 health facilities as Centre of Excellence (CoEs).**

Crowd Funding Mechanism:

- Besides, the Policy also envisages a **crowd funding mechanism** in which corporates and individuals will be encouraged to extend financial support for treatment of rare diseases.

Financial Assistance:

- **Financial support up to Rs 50 lakh** shall be provided to the patients suffering from **any category of rare diseases.**
- The financial support will be provided to the patients for the treatment in any of the **Centre of Excellence** mentioned in NPRD-2021.

3.2. Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission

About

- The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), launched in **2021**, is an initiative of the Government of India aimed at



building an **open interoperable digital health ecosystem** for the country.

- With ABDM, citizens can **securely store and access their medical records** (e.g., prescriptions, diagnostic reports, discharge summaries) and **share them with healthcare providers** after their **consent**, ensuring continuity of care.
- Citizens will also have access to **accurate and verified information** about **health facilities and service providers**. Through these initiatives, ABDM aims to make healthcare more accessible.



Components of ABDM

- The core components of ABDM's technological architecture include **four registries** for providing a trustable identity across healthcare stakeholders in the ecosystem:
 - **Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA):** A 14 digit unique identifier for individuals to store and share medical records.
 - **Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR):** A comprehensive database of registered healthcare professionals.
 - **Health Facility Registry (HFR):** A digital repository of healthcare facilities across India.
 - **Drug Registry:** A registry of all the drugs across various systems of medicines that are sold in the Indian market.
- Participation in ABDM is **voluntary** including for citizens. Participation of a healthcare facility or an institution is also **voluntary** and shall be taken by the respective management (government or private management).

Implementing Agency

- The **National Health Authority (NHA)** has been given the mandate by the government to design, build, roll-out and implement the ABDM in the country.
 - NHA is an attached office of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** with full functional autonomy.

3.3. Universal Immunisation Programme

About

- The Universal Immunisation Programme, launched in **1985** and implemented by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, aims to provide **free vaccines to children and pregnant women** against various diseases.
 - The programme reaches about 2.9 crore pregnant women and 2.54 crore newborns every year.
- Under UIP, immunization is providing free of cost against **12 vaccine preventable diseases**:
 - **Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Rubella, severe form of Childhood Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, Meningitis & Pneumonia caused by Hemophilus Influenza type B, Rotavirus Diarrhoea, Pneumococcal Pneumonia and Japanese Encephalitis.**
 - The **Japanese Encephalitis vaccine** is provided to people **only in endemic districts**, and the **rest are provided nationally**.
- Under UIP, a **child is considered fully immunized** after receiving **all vaccinations** as per the national schedule **within the first year of life**.
- Notable milestones of UIP include India's **elimination of polio** in 2014 and **maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination** in 2015.

Mission Indradhanush:

- To **reach children and pregnant women who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated**, the government launched the **Mission Indradhanush** programme in **2015**, following it with **Intensified**



Mission Indradhanush Missions (with a greater focus on **urban areas**).

- These missions aim to achieve **over 90% full immunisation coverage** under the UIP by strengthening routine immunisation services and targeting hard-to-reach populations.

U-Win Portal:

- U-Win is a digital platform and app to help people **find vaccination centres** near their residence, **manage vaccination appointments** at health facilities and **maintain vaccination records**.



POLITY

1) Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026

What's in the news?

- The Parliament has passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 which seeks to amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

Key Provisions of the Bill

- **Definition of a Transgender Person:** The 2019 Act defines a transgender person as a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned at birth, and specifies certain persons who are included.
 - The Bill now **explicitly includes socio-cultural identities** such as kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta, and eunuch, as well as **persons with variations at birth in characteristics** such as primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones **from the normative standard of male or female body.**
 - It also brings within its ambit **individuals who may have been forced or induced to assume a transgender identity through physical or medical interventions.**
 - The Bill **excludes persons with different sexual orientations and self-perceived sexual identities** from this definition.
- **Recognition of Transgender Identity:** Under the Act, a transgender person may apply to the **District Magistrate for issuing a certificate of identity as a transgender person.**
 - The Bill adds that the **District Magistrate** will issue the certificate **after examining the recommendation of a designated medical board.**
 - The board will be headed by a **Chief Medical Officer or a Deputy Chief Medical Officer.**

- The Bill adds that **transgender persons will be entitled to change the first name in the birth certificate and other official documents** based on the certificate of identity.
- **Change in Gender:** The Act provides that a **revised certificate of identity may be obtained** where a transgender person undergoes surgery to change gender.
 - The Bill instead **mandates the person to obtain a revised certificate.**
- **Mandatory Reporting by Hospitals:** **Medical institutions** where gender-change surgeries are performed **must now furnish details of those surgeries to the district magistrate and the medical board.**
- **Offences and Penalties:** Under the Act, **offences against transgender persons** include: (i) compelling or enticing into forced or bonded labour, (ii) denying the right of passage or obstructing use of public place, (iii) forcing or causing to leave household, village, or other places of residence, and (iv) harm or injury.
 - These are **punishable with imprisonment between six months and two years, and a fine.**
 - The **Bill adds certain offences.** Kidnapping and causing grievous hurt or severe injury in order to force a person to assume a transgender identity will carry: (i) imprisonment between 10 years and life and a minimum fine of two lakh rupees if the victim is an adult, and (ii) imprisonment for life and a fine of at least five lakh rupees if the victim is a child.

Criticisms

- The bill has been facing opposition from various quarters including the people from the transgender community.
 - It **excludes persons who identify as transgender based on self-**



perception, as it omits a key provision of the 2019 Act that recognised self-identification.

- The transgender community has pointed out that the Bill goes against the **Supreme Court's landmark 2014 NALSA vs Union of India judgment**.
 - In that verdict, the top court **recognised transgender persons as a "third gender"** and ruled that **gender identity is a matter of personal autonomy and self-perception, not biological or medical criteria**.
 - The SC had noted that **self-determination of gender is an integral part of personal autonomy and self-expression and falls within the realm of personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India**.

2) Model Code of Conduct

About

- The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a **set of rules** issued by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** to guide political parties and candidates during elections.
- Its purpose is to **ensure the conduct of free and fair elections**, in line with the mandate of ECI under **Article 324** of the Indian Constitution.

Timeline

- The MCC was first introduced in the **assembly election in Kerala in 1960**.
- In **1962**, the Election Commission introduced the Model Code of Conduct for **general elections**.
 - The guidelines of the Model Code of Conduct were **made stricter** by the Election Commission in **1991** after repeated flouting of norms by political parties.

Legal Provisions

- The MCC is **not enforceable by law; it serves only as a guiding principle**. However, certain provisions of the MCC may be enforced through **invoking corresponding provisions in other**

statutes such as the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and Representation of the People Act, 1951.

- While it **does not enjoy any statutory backing**, the **Supreme Court has upheld its sanctity** on several occasions.

When does the MCC come into force?

- The MCC **comes into force immediately when the election schedule is announced** by the Election Commission and **remains in operation till the election process is complete, i.e. results are announced**.
- It is **enforced throughout India** in case of **General elections**, and the **State up for polls** in case of **Legislative Assembly elections**.
- **All organisations, committees, corporations, commissions** (for e.g. Transport authorities, Jal boards) **funded wholly or partially by the Centre or State are bound by the MCC**.
- While **listed political parties and candidates** are bound to follow the MCC, **even non-political organisations** which hold campaigns favouring a political party or candidate are bound to follow specific guidelines mentioned by the EC.

What happens once MCC is enforced?

- No appeals to religion, caste, or communal sentiments.
- Criticism must focus on policies, performance, and programmes, not private lives.
- Official mass media cannot be used for biased coverage favouring the ruling party.
- Illegal activities like bribing, intimidation, impersonation, or campaigning near polling stations are prohibited.
- Demonstrations outside private homes or use of someone else's property for campaigning are banned.
- Parties must inform authorities about meetings and processions; permissions for loudspeakers or gatherings must be obtained.
- Police instructions must be followed to maintain peace and manage traffic.
- Carrying harmful objects or burning effigies is prohibited.



- Governments cannot use official machinery, funds, or positions for campaigning.
- No announcements of financial grants, new projects, infrastructure promises, or ad-hoc appointments that could influence voters.
- Government facilities, including transport, rest houses, and public spaces, must be equally available to all parties.
- Election manifestos must follow constitutional principles, be realistic, and cannot be released during the prohibited period before polling.
- The Election Commission has also issued directions to political parties for responsible and ethical use of social media in election campaigning.

Why in News?

- The Election Commission of India has enforced the Model Code of Conduct soon after announcing the schedule for Assembly elections in five states and one Union Territory, Kerala, West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

3) Removal of Speaker

Procedure for Removal of Speaker

- The post of Speaker is the **constitutional and ceremonial head of the Lok Sabha**.
- **Rules 200-203 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha and Article 94-96** deal with the procedure to initiate the **removal of the Speaker**.
- A **resolution for removal** of Lok Sabha Speaker can only be moved after giving **at least 14 days notice**.
- The notice must be **signed by at least one member** and **given in writing to the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha**.
- In order for the motion to be admitted for discussion, **at least 50 members must rise in support** of it in the House.
- For the removal to be successful, the **resolution must be passed by an "effective majority."**
 - Effective majority means the majority of all the then members of the House (total strength minus vacancies).

- As per **Article 96**, the **Speaker cannot preside over the House** while a resolution for their removal is under consideration.
 - In such a scenario, the **Deputy Speaker** typically presides over the business of the Lok Sabha.
- The Speaker has the **right to speak and take part in the proceedings. They can vote in the first instance** (as an ordinary member).
- Though there are past instances of resolutions seeking the removal of Speaker (in 1954, against G. V. Mavalankar; in 1966, against Hukam Singh; and in 1987, against Balram Jakhar), **no Lok Sabha Speaker has so far been removed using this process**.

Why in News?

- The Lok Sabha took up a discussion on the resolution seeking the removal of Speaker Om Birla.

4) Essential Commodities Act, 1955

About

- The Essential Commodities Act (ECA) was enacted in 1955 to **control and regulate trade and prices of commodities declared essential** under the Act.
 - Though there is **no specific definition for 'essential commodities'**, the Act states that an essential commodity means a commodity specified in the **"Schedule"** of the Act.
- The Act **empowers the central government to notify certain commodities** as essential commodities and to **regulate or prohibit the production, supply, distribution, and trade** of such essential commodities to control rising prices, prevent hoarding and maintain food security.
 - Most of the powers under the Act have been **delegated by the Central Government to the State Governments**.
- The measures that can be taken under the provisions of the Act include **licensing, distribution and imposing stock limits**. Governments also have the power to **fix price limits**, and selling the particular



commodities above the limit will attract penalties.

- Some of the major commodities that are covered under the act:
 - Petroleum and its products
 - Food products, including edible oilseeds and oils
 - Drugs
 - Fertilisers
 - Raw jute and jute textiles
 - Seeds of cattle fodder.

Why in News?

- Amid the ongoing Iran war that caused the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, leading to

disruption in global oil and gas supply, the Government has invoked the Essential Commodities Act 1955 to regulate the production, maintain supply, equitable distribution and availability of natural gas for priority sectors.



ECONOMY

1) WTO's 14th Ministerial Conference

About

- The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** is the **only global international organization** dealing with the **rules of trade between nations**.
- The **Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization**, commonly known as the **"Marrakesh Agreement"**, was signed in Marrakesh, Morocco, in **1994**, at the conclusion of the **Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations**.
 - WTO is the **successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**, which was established in 1948.
 - While **GATT was limited primarily to trade in goods**, **WTO expanded its mandate** to include **trade in services (GATS)** and **intellectual property rights (TRIPS)**.
- The goal of WTO is to ensure that **trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible**.
 - At present, the WTO has over 160 members (including **India**).
- **All decisions are taken through consensus and any member can exercise a veto**.
- WTO is **not a United Nations specialized agency** and it is **not part of the United Nations system**, but has cooperative arrangements and practices with the United Nations.
- The WTO is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

WTO Structure

Ministerial Conference:

- The **topmost decision-making body** of the WTO is the Ministerial Conference, which usually meets **every two years**.
- It brings together all members of the WTO, all of which are countries or customs unions.

General Council:

- The General Council comprises the **representatives of all member countries**

and acts as the representative of the Ministerial Conference when it comes to daily operations.

- Its job is to **carry out the implementation and monitoring function of the WTO**.

Dispute Settlement Body:

- The Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) is a **part of the General Council** and is responsible for **settling trade disputes between member states**.
 - According to the procedure established by the WTO, the **first step** to resolve a trade dispute is engaging in the **consultation process**.
 - If two trading partners having a dispute could not resolve at that level, one of them can ask for a settlement of **DSB** for hearing. The General Council of the WTO convenes as the DSB.
- The DSB's ruling can be challenged at the **Appellate Body, the highest court for global trade disputes**.

Appellate Body:

- The Appellate Body is a standing committee of **seven members** that presides over appeals against judgments passed in trade-related disputes brought by WTO members.
- Members of the Appellate Body have **four-year terms**. In the selection process, WTO members follow the **consensus principle**, which means that the nomination of the Appellate Body members can only proceed smoothly with the agreement of all the members of WTO.
- The Appellate Body **must have at least three sitting members** to hear an appeal.
 - The Appellate Body has been **dysfunctional** since 2019, because the United States has blocked the appointment of appellate body members.

Why in News?

- The **14th Ministerial Conference (MC14)** of the WTO was recently held in **Yaoundé, Cameroon**. The Indian delegation was led



by Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal.

- The conference concluded **without a final package of agreements or an overall ministerial declaration.**

Highlights of MC14

Lapse of the E-Commerce Moratorium:

- For the first time since instituted in 1998, the **moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions** (such as downloads, streaming, and cloud services) **lapsed** after members failed to reach a consensus for its extension, opening the door for countries to impose tariffs on digital transmissions.
- **India**, alongside Indonesia and South Africa, **strongly opposed** making the moratorium permanent.
 - Experts estimate **India loses approximately \$1 billion in tax revenue annually** by foregoing duties on digital transmissions.

Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement:

- The China-backed IFD Agreement aims to **improve the investment climate and promote international cooperation** to facilitate the flow of foreign direct investment among WTO members.
- India led the opposition against incorporating the IFD (backed by over 120 members) through a plurilateral route.
 - India argued that **plurilateral deals** (agreements between some, but not all, members) **undermine the WTO's foundational principle of multilateralism and consensus.**
- The agreement was **not adopted** into the WTO framework during the conference.

Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA):

- The MPIA was established as an **alternative system for resolving WTO disputes** that are appealed by a member in the absence of a functioning Appellate Body.
- There was incremental progress as 61 WTO members are now party to the MPIA.
 - **India is not a party** to the MPIA.

2) DICGC

About

- Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) is a **wholly owned subsidiary of the RBI**, created by an **Act of Parliament in 1961.**
- The objective of the DICGC is to **protect small depositors** from the **risk of losing their savings** in case of a bank failure.
- The **premium** for deposit insurance is **borne entirely by the insured bank.**
- The Head Office of DICGC is at **Mumbai.**



Banks covered by Deposit Insurance Scheme:

- **All commercial banks** including **branches of foreign banks** functioning in India, **Local Area Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Co-operative Banks** that are licensed by the RBI (Primary cooperative societies are not insured by the DICGC).

What's covered?

- The DICGC **insures all deposits** such as savings, fixed, current, recurring (**including accrued interest**) **except the following types of deposits:**
 - Deposits of foreign Governments;
 - Deposits of Central/State Governments;
 - Inter-bank deposits;
 - Any amount due on account of and deposit received outside India;
 - Any amount, which has been specifically exempted by the corporation with the previous approval of RBI.
- Each depositor in a bank is insured up to a **maximum of Rs 5 lakh for both principal and interest amount** held by them as on the date of liquidation or failure of a bank.



What's not covered?

- Deposits mobilized by Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)
- Deposits mobilized by Land Development Banks
- Mutual funds
- Stocks and bonds
- Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)
- Cryptocurrencies.

Why in News?

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved a **risk-based deposit insurance framework for banks**.
 - Since 1962, DICGC has operated a **flat-rate premium system**, under which banks pay 12 paise per ₹100 of assessable deposits.
 - The proposed framework, introduced as an alternative, is expected to allow financially stronger banks to significantly reduce their premium burden.

3) Govt asks RBI to target retail inflation at 4% till Mar 2031

Flexible Inflation Targeting in India

- **Inflation targeting** is a **monetary policy strategy** used by Central Banks for **maintaining price level at a certain level or within a range**.
- In **2016**, the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934** was amended to provide a **statutory basis for the implementation of the Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT)**.
- The amended RBI Act provides for the **inflation target to be set by the Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank, once in every five years**.
- Under the FIT framework, **4% was set as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation target, with the upper tolerance limit of 6% and the lower tolerance limit of 2% in 2016**.
 - Subsequently, in **2021**, the government maintained the **same target**.
- When the **Reserve Bank of India fails** to meet the inflation target, it will send a **report to the central government** stating

reasons and remedial actions that will be taken.

- A **breach of the "tolerance level" for three consecutive quarters** will constitute a **failure of monetary policy**.

Why in News?

- The Government of India has asked the Reserve Bank to target **retail inflation at 4% with a margin of 2%** on either side for **another five years ending March 2031**.

4) Wholesale Price Index

About

- Wholesale Price Index (WPI) measures and tracks the changes in the **price of goods in the stages before the retail level**. It provides estimates of inflation at the wholesale transaction level for the economy as a whole.
- **WPI basket does not cover services**.
- It is released on a **monthly basis** by the **Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The base year is **2011-2012**.
- The index basket consists of commodities under 3 main categories in decreasing order of weightage: **Manufactured products (64.2%), Primary Articles (22.6%) and Fuel and Power (13.2%)**.
 - **WPI Food Index (Weight 24.38%)**: The Food Index consists of 'Food Articles' from Primary Articles group and 'Food Product' from Manufactured Products group.

Why in News?

- India's wholesale price inflation rose to 2.13 per cent in February 2026 on a year-on-year basis.
- The WPI Food Index, which includes food articles and manufactured food products, rose 1.85 per cent year-on-year in February, up from 1.41 per cent in January.



5) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

5.1. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016

About

- The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016** was brought in to **address the financial stress of honest debtors** and get them **back into the business** or **provide an honourable exit**.
- It provides a **time-bound process** for **resolving the insolvency of corporate debtors** called the **corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP)**.
 - *Insolvency is a situation where individuals or companies are unable to repay their outstanding debt.*
- Earlier, the **minimum amount of default** after which the creditor or debtor could apply for insolvency was ₹1 lakh, but considering the stress on companies amid the **covid pandemic**, the government increased the minimum amount to **₹1 crore**.

Process:

- Under CIRP, a **Committee of Creditors (CoC)** is constituted to decide on the insolvency resolution. The committee may consider a **resolution plan** which typically provides for the payoff of debt by merger, acquisition, or restructuring of the company.
 - If a resolution plan is **not approved** by the committee of creditors within the specified time, the company is **liquidated** (the assets of the borrower will be sold to repay creditors).
- During CIRP, the affairs of the company are managed by the **Resolution Professional (RP)**, who is appointed to conduct CIRP.
- The **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** adjudicates insolvency resolution for **companies and Limited Liability Partnerships**. The **Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT)** adjudicates insolvency resolution for **individuals and partnership firms**.
- The code was **amended in 2019** which mandated a **deadline for the completion of the resolution process within 330 days, including all litigation and judicial processes**.

Did you know?

- According to the **Economic Survey 2025-26, insolvency proceedings now average 713 to 853 days**, far exceeding the 330-day statutory limit.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Act, 2021:

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Act, 2021 was brought in to provide a **simpler, faster, and less costly resolution for MSMEs** (known as **pre-packaged insolvency resolution process (PIRP)**).
- Unlike CIRP, **PIRP may be initiated only by debtors**. Application for initiating PIRP may be filed in the event of a **default of at least one lakh rupees**.
- During PIRP, the **management of the company will remain with the debtor**.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India:

- The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)**, a **statutory body** established under the Code, acts as a key pillar in **implementation of the Code**.
- It is a **unique regulator: regulates a profession as well as processes**.
 - It has **regulatory oversight** over the Insolvency Professionals, Insolvency Professional Agencies, Insolvency Professional Entities and Information Utilities.
 - It **writes and enforces rules for processes**, namely, corporate insolvency resolution, corporate liquidation, individual insolvency resolution and individual bankruptcy under the Code.

5.2. AT1 Bonds

About

- **Additional-Tier 1 (AT1) bonds** are **perpetual debt instruments** issued by banks to raise money and build up their core equity capital.
 - A perpetual instrument is one with **no maturity date**, implying that the issuer **does not pay the principal amount back to investors** but makes **periodic interest payments** throughout the life of the bond.

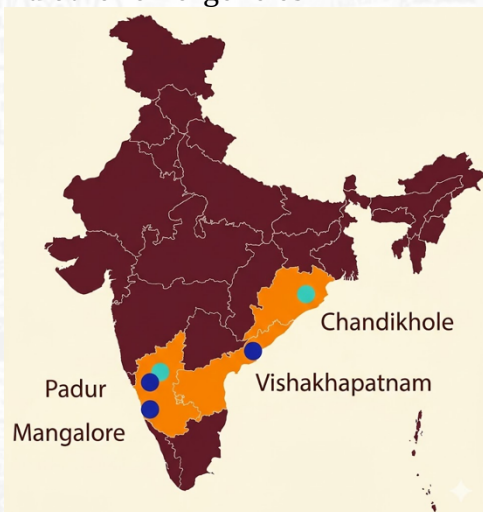


- In practice, however, AT-1 bonds typically come with a **'call option'**, which means that the bank issuing these instruments can **redeem them or repay investors after a specified period.**
- For AT-1 bonds, banks typically shell out a **higher rate of interest.**
- However, there are **certain features of the instrument that make them riskier** than several other bonds.
 - If a bank faces **financial stress, it can hold off interest payments or pay a lower amount.**
 - Most alarming for investors is the clause which **permits banks to write off AT-1 bonds in case of severe financial stress.**

5.3. Strategic Crude Oil Reserves

About

- Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs) are **dedicated storage facilities** developed to **hold crude oil for emergency use.**
- They act as a **protective buffer**, shielding the energy supply chain from short-term disruptions caused by external factors such as transportation delays, natural events, or fluctuations in global markets.
- **India, the world's third-largest consumer of crude, depends on imports for more than 85% of its requirement.** SPR could help ensure **energy security and availability** during global supply shocks and other emergencies.



Status in India

- **India's SPR network is managed by the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL), a Special Purpose**

Vehicle operating under the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.**

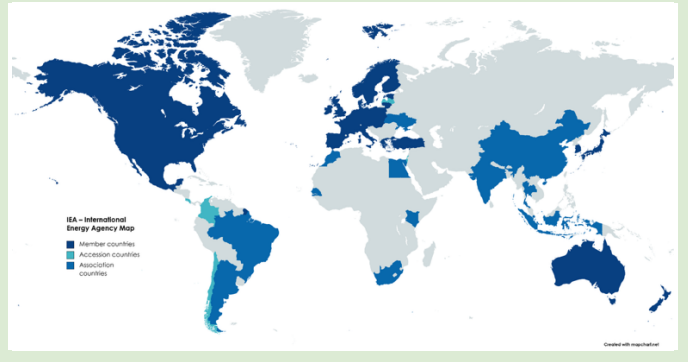
- Currently, India maintains SPR facilities at **underground rock caverns at three places - Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), Mangalore (Karnataka) and Padur (Karnataka) - with a combined capacity to store 5.33 MMT (million metric tons) of crude oil, enough to provide 9.5 days of consumption.**
 - With this, the **total national capacity** for storage of crude oil and petroleum products is about **74 days**, which includes 64.5 days of storage capacity maintained by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).
- The **second phase of development is underway**, which includes new storage locations such as **Chandikhol (Odisha)** and the **expansion of the Padur facility, on a Public Private Partnership mode.**

International Guidelines

- The **International Energy Agency (IEA)** mandates that its member countries maintain SPRs equivalent to **at least 90 days** of their net oil imports to ensure energy security during supply disruptions.

International Energy Agency:

- IEA is an **intergovernmental organization** established in **1974** within the framework of the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, in response to the 1973 oil crisis.
- IEA is dedicated to **maintaining a steady supply of oil throughout the world.**
- The IEA is made up of **32 member countries.**



- Before becoming a member country of the IEA, a candidate country must meet **several criteria**. These are:
 - It must have **crude oil or product reserves equivalent to 90 days** of the previous year's net imports.
 - It must have in place a **demand restraint program** to reduce national oil consumption by up to 10 per cent.

- Legislation and measures to ensure that all oil companies under its jurisdiction **report information upon request**.
- Currently, **India** is an **Associate Member** of the agency and is yet to get a full membership.
- IEA is headquartered in **Paris, France**.



AGRICULTURE

1) National Mission on Edible Oils

Background

- **Edible oils** form an **essential component of India's food and nutritional security**, and **oilseeds** (seeds grown primarily for the production of edible oils) play a **vital role in the livelihoods of millions of farmers** by serving as an **important cash crop** that sustains rural incomes and employment.
 - They are a **major source of dietary fats, energy, and fat-soluble vitamins**, helping to combat hidden hunger and improve calorie intake.
- However, the **country's growing demand for edible oils has outpaced domestic production**.
 - **India** is able to meet **only 44 percent of its domestic demand for edible oils through internal production**.
- The Government of India launched the **National Mission on Edible Oils (NMEO)** to **strengthen the country's oilseed ecosystem** and achieve the goal of **Atmanirbharta (self-sufficiency) in edible oil production** through a comprehensive, **two-pronged approach**:
 1. NMEO – Oil Palm
 2. NMEO – Oilseeds.

National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm

- The Government of India launched the National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) in **2021** as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, with the aim to **enhance the edible oilseeds production and oils availability** in the country by **area expansion and increasing Crude Palm Oil (CPO) production**.

Oil Palm:

- Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis*), **originated from West Africa**, is comparatively a new crop in India and has **highest vegetable oil yielding capability per ha**.
- It produces two distinct oils, i.e. **palm oil** and **palm kernel oil**, which are used for culinary as well as industrial purposes.

- The oil palm grows best in areas with a **mean maximum temperature of 30-32°C** and on an **average of at least five hours of sunlight**. Oil palm is a **humid crop** and requires a **well distributed rainfall of 200 cm per annum**.
- The adult palms can withstand occasional water logging, but **frequent water logged, extremely sandy and hard lateritic soils should be avoided**.
- Best suited soils are **moist, well-drained, deep loamy alluvial soils, rich in organic matter with good water permeability**.

Major oil palm growing states:

- **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana** are major Oil palm growing States and account **98% of total production**.
 - Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa, and Mizoram also have sizable areas under Oil palm cultivation.
- Recently, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur and Nagaland have also initiated oil palm plantation programs on a large scale.

- The mission aims to **increase capital investment, reduce the import dependence** and also **increase the income of the farmers**.
- **Special emphasis** is being placed on leveraging the **agro-climatic potential of the North-eastern region and other oil palm-growing states**.

Targets of the Mission:

- The mission aims to **bring 6.5 lakh hectares under oil palm plantations by 2025-26**.
- The **production of Crude Palm Oil** is targeted to reach **11.20 lakh tonnes by 2025-26** and up to **28 lakh tonnes by 2029-30**.

Implementation:

- The **Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW)**, Ministry of



Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, serves as the nodal central authority for the mission.

Funding Pattern:

- The funding pattern is **60:40** between the Central and the State Government in case of **general category States** and **90:10** in case of **North-Eastern states**.

National Mission on Edible Oils - Oilseeds

- The National Mission on Edible Oils - Oilseeds (NMEO-OS) was approved in **2024** to achieve **Atmanirbharta in edible oil production**.

Oilseeds:

- Oilseeds are **seeds grown primarily for the production of edible oils**.
- **India** is the **fourth largest oilseeds producer** in the world. It has 20.8% of the total area under cultivation globally, accounting for 10% of global production.
- **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra** together contribute over **77.68% of India's total oilseed output**.

- NMEO-Oilseeds focuses on **increasing production of key primary oilseed crops** such as Rapeseed-Mustard, Groundnut, Soybean, Sunflower, Sesamum, Safflower, Niger, Linseed and Castor, as well as **increasing collection and extraction efficiency from secondary sources** like cottonseed, coconut, rice bran.

Targets of the Mission:

- The mission targets **increasing area coverage** from 29 million ha (2022-23) to **33 million ha**, **primary oilseed production** from 39 million tonnes (2022-23) to **69.7 million tonnes**, and yield from 1,353 kg/ha (2022-23) to **2,112 kg/ha by 2030-31**.
- Together with **NMEO-OP**, this mission targets **domestic edible oil production at 25.45 million tonnes by 2030-31**, meeting around **72% of our projected domestic requirement**.
- The Mission also seeks to **expand oilseed cultivation by an additional 40 lakh hectares by targeting rice and potato fallow lands, promoting intercropping, and promoting crop diversification**.

Implementation:

- The Mission is implemented through a **multi-level governance structure, led by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.

Funding Pattern:

- The NMEO-OS is implemented with the funding pattern of **60:40** between the Central and the State Government in case of **general category States** and **90:10** in case of **North-Eastern states**.



ENVIRONMENT

1) India's new Nationally Determined Contribution

What's in the news?

- In a significant step towards strengthening India's action, the Union Cabinet has approved **India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the period 2031 to 2035** under the **Paris Agreement**.

Paris Agreement:

- The Paris Agreement is a **universal and legally binding agreement** adopted in **2015** under the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.
- It aims to **limit global temperature increase to "well below 2°C" above pre-industrial levels**, while **pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C**.
 - It allows governments to set **emissions-reduction pledges** known as **Nationally Determined Contributions** which are **reviewed every five years**.

What are NDC?

- Under the **Paris Agreement**, every **signatory country must periodically submit NDCs**, which are **voluntary pledges** spelling out how they will transition away from fossil fuels.
 - India's previous NDC**, conveyed in **2022**, committed it to **50% non-fossil installed capacity by 2030**, a **45% reduction in emissions intensity**, and a **carbon sink of at least 2.5 billion-3 billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent**.

Revised Targets

- India said it would ensure that **at least 60% of its electricity installed capacity in 2035** was based on **non-fossil fuel sources**, up from the 50% target it had set for 2030.
- It has promised to attain **at least a 47% reduction in emissions intensity, or emissions per unit of GDP, on 2005 levels**, which is two percentage points

more than its current target of 45% for 2030.

- And, it has promised to **create a carbon sink that is at least 3.5 to 4 billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent** larger than what existed in 2005.
- The updated NDC marks an important step towards achieving **India's long-term goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2070**.

India's Current Status

- Non-fossil installed capacity:** Already **52%** as of early 2026 – exceeding the old 2030 target of 50% well ahead of schedule.
 - But **only about 25% of actual electricity generated comes from non-fossil sources** (because solar and wind run intermittently).
- Emissions Intensity:** Achieved a **36% reduction** from 2005 to 2020.
- Carbon Sink:** Created 1.97 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent sink from 2005–2019.

2) National Chambal Sanctuary

About

- The National Chambal Sanctuary is situated in a large arc of the **Chambal River**, covering nearly 1800 km across **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh**.
 - It is the **first and only tri-state riverine protected area** in India.
- The sanctuary was notified in 1979, mainly to provide protection to the fast dwindling population of the **critically endangered Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*)**.
 - Chambal River** that runs through the sanctuary is **home to the Gharial**, providing protection in the wild.
- Besides Gharials, the sanctuary hosts a rich biodiversity of **Marsh Crocodile Muggers**, several species of **freshwater turtles**, including the **endangered Red Crowned Roof Turtle, Smooth coated Otters, Gangetic River Dolphins, Indian Skimmer, Black-bellied Tern, Sarus Crane and Black-necked Storks**.



Why in News?

- The Supreme Court has taken suo motu cognisance of media reports regarding the damage caused by widespread illegal sand mining in the National Chambal Sanctuary.

3) Convention on Biological Diversity

About

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was adopted by the **United Nations** at the **Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in Brazil in 1992**.
 - The convention came into force in **1993**.
- At the present, there are more than 190 Parties to this Convention.
 - **India** is a party to CBD and enacted the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** to meet the obligations under the Convention.
- The CBD's governing body is the **Conference of the Parties (COP)**.
 - This ultimate authority of all Parties that have ratified the treaty meets **every two years** to review progress, set priorities and commit to work plans.
- The **CBD Secretariat** is based in **Montreal, Canada**.



Convention on Biological Diversity

Objectives

- The CBD has 3 main objectives:
 - The **conservation of biological diversity**
 - The **sustainable use of the components of biological diversity**
 - The **fair and equitable sharing of the benefits** arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Key Protocols and Agreements under CBD

1. Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2003):

- The Cartagena Protocol focuses on **ensuring the safe handling, transport, and use of living-modified organisms**

(LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology.

- **Objective:** To protect biodiversity from potential risks posed by LMOs, while also considering human health.

2. Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (2014):

- The Nagoya Protocol deals with **access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits** arising from their utilisation.
- **Objective:** To create a legal framework ensuring that benefits (e.g., monetary or technological) derived from genetic resources are shared fairly with the countries and communities providing those resources.

3. Aichi Biodiversity Targets (2010-2020):

- Adopted as **part of the CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020**, the Aichi Targets included **20 global goals to address biodiversity loss**.
- **Objective:** To halt biodiversity decline through conservation, sustainable use, and awareness.
- **Outcome:** While progress was made, most Aichi Targets were not fully achieved, leading to the adoption of the **Kunming-Montreal Framework**.

4. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022):

- Adopted during **COP15**, the Kunming-Montreal Framework sets ambitious global targets to **halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030**.
- **Objective:** To create a global action plan to protect biodiversity and ensure ecosystems are resilient and healthy by 2030.
- **Key Elements:**
 - **30×30 Target:** Protect at least 30 percent of the world's land and oceans by 2030.
 - **Reduce pollution**, including nutrient and plastic waste, **to non-harmful levels**.
 - **Eliminate harmful subsidies** worth \$500 billion annually and **increase financial flows** to support biodiversity efforts.



- **Ensure Indigenous Peoples and local communities play a central role** in biodiversity conservation.

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has submitted **India's Seventh National Report (NR-7) to the Convention on Biological Diversity**, reaffirming its commitment to the three objectives of the Convention.
- Submission of national reports is a **mandatory obligation on Parties to the CBD under Article 26** of the Convention.

Highlights of the Report

- India has substantially strengthened biodiversity-inclusive land and seascape planning. **Recorded Forest Area** stands at 7,75,377 km² (**23.59% of geographical area**). The **number of notified Ramsar wetlands of international importance** have expanded from 26 in 2014 to **98** as of March 2026.
- India's conservation network now encompasses **58 Tiger Reserves, 33 Elephant Reserves, 18 Biosphere Reserves, 106 National Parks and 574 Wildlife Sanctuaries**.
- India supports 3,682 tigers (**over 70% of the global tiger population**), 4,014 greater one-horned rhinoceroses, 22,446 wild elephants, 891 Asiatic lions, and about 718 snow leopards.

4) Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species

About

- The **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)** is a **legally binding global treaty** under the aegis of the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- The CMS provides a global platform for the **conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats**.
- The pact was signed in **1979 in Bonn, Germany** and is also known as the **Bonn Convention**.

- **Migratory animals** are essential components of the ecosystems that support all life on Earth.
- By acting as **pollinators** and **seed distributors** they contribute to ecosystem structure and function.
- They provide food for other animals and **regulate the number of species in ecosystems**.

- 133 nations (including **India**) are parties to the Convention, engaging in international cooperation and coordinated action to conserve migratory species.



- The **Conference of the Parties (CoP)** is the **principal decision-making body** of the Convention, which **meets once every three years**.

CMS Appendices

- The CMS has **two appendices**.
 - **Appendix I** listing is for migratory species that are considered **endangered**. If listed on Appendix-I, it would **facilitate transboundary conservation efforts** of these species.
 - Species in India, such as the **Great Indian Bustard, the Asian Elephant, the Bengal Florican, the Siberian Crane, the Hawksbill Sea Turtle, the Olive Ridley turtle and the Leatherback Sea Turtle** are included in Appendix I of CMS.
 - **Appendix II** listing is for migratory species that have an **unfavourable conservation status** and which **require international agreements** for their conservation and management.
 - **A migratory species can be listed in both the**



appendices at the same time, if the circumstances warrant.

Why in News?

- The **15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15)** to the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals was held in **Campo Grande, Brazil**.
- The theme for this year is **“Connecting Nature to sustain life.”**

Highlights of the Conference

- The conference **included or reclassified 40 species** of migratory birds, aquatic and terrestrial animals in the **Appendices I and II** of the Convention.
- The **State of the World’s Migratory Species: Interim Report (2026)** released during the conference highlighted that **49 per cent of migratory population species** protected under the Convention were facing a **decline** while another **24 per cent face extinction**.

5) Commission for Air Quality Management

About

- The **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the National Capital Region and adjoining areas** is a **statutory body** established under the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas, Act, 2021.
- The Commission has been established for **better coordination, research, identification and resolution of problems** surrounding matters related to air quality in the **National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas**.
 - **Adjoining areas** have been defined as **areas in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh**, adjoining the National Capital Territory of Delhi and NCR, where **any source of pollution may cause adverse impact on air quality in the NCR**.
- CAQM **consolidates all monitoring bodies, and brings them on one platform** so that air quality management can be carried out in a more comprehensive, efficient, and time-bound manner.

- The CAQM **replaced** the 22-year-old Supreme Court-appointed **Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA)**.

Mandate

- The Commission has the power to **take measures, issue directions and entertain complaints** for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of air in NCR.
- The powers of the commission **supersedes that of any other body in matters of air pollution**.
 - In cases where **conflict** may arise between orders or directions issued by the other state governments, state pollution control boards or even the Central Pollution Control Board, the **orders of the commission will prevail**.
- It also **coordinates action** taken by states on air pollution and **lays down parameters** for air quality and emission or discharge of environmental pollutants.
- It also has **powers to restrict industries** in any area, **carry out random inspections** of any premises including factories and can **close down an industry or cut its power and water supply** in case of non-compliance.
- **No civil court shall have jurisdiction** to entertain any suit, proceeding or dispute pertaining to or arising out of the actions taken or directions issued by the commission and that **orders of the commission can only be contested before the National Green Tribunal**.



National Green Tribunal:

- NGT is a **statutory body** established in **2010** under the **National Green Tribunal Act 2010**.
- It is a **specialized body** equipped with the necessary expertise to **handle environmental disputes** involving multi-disciplinary issues.
- It provides **speedy environmental justice** and helps reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts.
 - The Tribunal is mandated to make and endeavour for disposal of applications or appeals finally **within 6 months of filing of the same**.
- NGT is vested with the **powers of a civil court** for discharging its functions but it can make its own rules.
- The Tribunal **shall not be bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**, but shall be **guided by principles of natural justice**.

Composition:

- The Tribunal has a presence in **five zones**: North, Central, East, South and West. The **Principal Bench** is situated in the **North Zone**, headquartered in **Delhi**.
 - The Central zone bench is situated in Bhopal, East zone in Kolkata, South zone in Chennai and West zone in Pune.
- The Tribunal is headed by the **Chairperson** who sits in the Principal Bench and has **at least ten but not more than twenty judicial members** and **at least ten but not more than twenty expert members**.
- The Chairperson of NGT is appointed by the **Central Government** in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.

Jurisdiction:

- The NGT deals with civil cases under the seven laws related to the environment, these include
 - The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
 - The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977

- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980
- The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
- The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 and
- The Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- The Tribunal has jurisdiction **over all civil cases involving a substantial question relating to the environment**.
- Additionally, any person aggrieved by an order/direction of any of the **Appellate Authorities** under the legislations mentioned above can also challenge them before the National Green Tribunal.
- The **Tribunal's orders are binding** and it has **power to grant relief** in the form of compensation and damages to affected persons.
- The Tribunal has **powers to review its own decisions**. If this fails, the decision can be **challenged before the Supreme Court within ninety days**.

Composition

- CAQM is headed by a **full-time chairperson** with experience of not less than 15 years in the field of environmental protection and pollution control or having administrative experience of not less than 25 years.
- The commission also has **three members**, being stakeholders from sectors such as agriculture, industry, transport or construction apart from representatives of several ministries.
 - The Chairperson and members of the Commission will have a tenure of **three years or till the age of seventy years**, whichever is earlier, and shall be **eligible for re-appointment**.

Why in News?

- CAQM reviewed the status of enforcement actions across key sectors for abatement of air pollution in Delhi-NCR.



6) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

6.1. National Green Hydrogen Mission

About

- Launched in **2023**, the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) aims to **make India the Global Hub for production, usage and export of Green Hydrogen and its derivatives.**
- The Mission aims to **build capabilities to produce at least 5 Million Metric Tonne (MMT) of Green Hydrogen per annum by 2030.**
- The **Ministry of New & Renewable Energy** is responsible for overall coordination and implementation of the Mission.

Hydrogen:

- Hydrogen (H₂) is a **colourless, odourless, tasteless, non-toxic and highly combustible gaseous substance.**
- It is the **lightest and most abundant element** in the universe. It is **rarely found in nature in its elemental form** and must always be **extracted from other hydrogen-containing compounds.**
- Hydrogen is a **clean fuel** and an **efficient energy carrier.** It is emerging as an important source of energy since it has **zero carbon content** in contrast to hydrocarbons which have net carbon content between 75 and 85 per cent.
- When burnt, Hydrogen produces **water as a by-product** and is, therefore, **environmentally benign.**

Types of H₂:

- Depending on the **nature of the method of its extraction**, hydrogen is categorised into **three major categories**, namely, **Grey, Blue and Green.**
 - **Grey Hydrogen:** It is produced via **coal or lignite gasification** (often termed **black or brown hydrogen** due to higher CO₂ emissions), or via a process called **Steam Methane Reformation (SMR)** of natural gas or methane.

These tend to be mostly **carbon-intensive processes.**

- **Blue Hydrogen:** It is produced via **natural gas or coal gasification** combined with **carbon capture storage (CCS) or carbon capture use (CCU) technologies** to **reduce carbon emissions.**
- **Green Hydrogen:** It is produced using **electrolysis of water with electricity generated by renewable energy.** The **carbon intensity ultimately depends on the carbon neutrality of the source of electricity** (i.e., the more renewable energy there is in the electricity fuel mix, the “greener” the hydrogen produced).
 - According to **standards notified by the Government of India**, Hydrogen made this way is considered “green” if the **total emissions from the process are very low, not more than 2 kg of CO₂ equivalent for every 1 kg of Hydrogen produced.**

	GREY HYDROGEN	BLUE HYDROGEN	GREEN HYDROGEN
Process	Reforming or gasification	Reforming or gasification with carbon capture	Electrolysis
Energy source	Fossil fuels	Fossil fuels	Renewable electricity
Estimated emissions from the production process ^a	Reforming: 9 - 11 ^b Gasification: 18 - 20	0.4-4.5 ^c	0

Mission Components

- The Mission strategy comprises interventions for:
 - **demand creation** by making Green Hydrogen produced in India competitive for exports and through domestic consumption.
 - **addressing supply side constraints** through an incentive framework, and



- **building an enabling ecosystem** to support scaling and development.

Mission Sub-Components

- **SIGHT Programme:** Under the **Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition Programme (SIGHT)**, two **distinct financial incentive mechanisms** – targeting **domestic manufacturing of electrolysers** and **production of Green Hydrogen** – will be provided under the Mission.
- **R&D Projects:** Public-Private Partnership framework for R&D (**Strategic Hydrogen Innovation Partnership – SHIP**) will be facilitated under the Mission.

- **Skill Development:** A coordinated skill development programme will also be undertaken under the Mission.

Expected Benefits

- The targets by **2030** are likely to bring in **over Rs. 8 lakh crore investments** and create **over 6 lakh jobs**.
- Nearly **50 MMT per annum of CO2 emissions** are expected to be averted by 2030.
- This will contribute to India's aim to become **Aatmanirbhar (self-reliant) through clean energy** and **achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070**.



SPECIES IN NEWS

1) Great Indian Bustard

About

- Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) is **one of the heaviest flying birds endemic to the Indian subcontinent.**
- Bustards **generally favour flat open landscapes** with minimal visual obstruction and disturbance, therefore **adapt well in grasslands.**
- Historically, the great Indian bustard was distributed throughout Western India, spanning 11 states, as well as parts of Pakistan.
 - Today, its population is **confined mostly to Rajasthan and Gujarat.** Small populations occur in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Loss of their habitat** to rising farmlands, **depredation of eggs** by other predators such as dogs, and **death due to overhead power lines** have caused their numbers to decline.

Conservation Status:

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



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1) Outer Space Treaty

About

- The **Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies** (also known as the **Outer Space Treaty**), which entered into force in **1967**, laid the foundation of international space law.
- The Treaty establishes that **space is the province of all humankind, prohibits national appropriation, and places responsibility on states** for national activities in space, whether conducted by government or private entities.
- The treaty also **prohibits weapons of mass destruction** in space and **limits celestial body use to peaceful purposes**.

Outer space is the region beyond Earth's atmosphere. For example, the Sun, planets, stars, and galaxies - all these things are in outer space.

- **India signed** the Outer Space Treaty in 1967 and **ratified** it in 1982.
 - **India** is also a **party to other major international treaties related to Outer Space**; having **ratified the Rescue Agreement, 1968, Liability Convention, 1972 and Registration Convention, 1976**; and being **signatory to the Moon Agreement, 1984**.

Why in News?

- Malaysia has ratified the Outer Space Treaty, becoming the 118th State party.

2) Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

About

- The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) aims to **prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy**, and to

further the goal of disarmament. It entered into force in **1970**.

- Its **states-parties** are classified into **two categories: nuclear-weapon states (NWS)**—nuclear weapon states that had manufactured and detonated a nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967 (**United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom**)—and **non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS)**.
 - Under the treaty, the **five NWS** commit to pursue **general and complete disarmament**, while the **NNWS** agree to **forgo developing or acquiring nuclear weapons**.
- The Treaty represents the **only binding commitment** in a multilateral treaty to the **goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States**.
- The NPT has 191 members; **India, Israel, Pakistan, and South Sudan** have not joined, and **North Korea** announced its withdrawal from the treaty in 2003.

Why in News?

- Iran's Parliament is reviewing a possible exit from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

3) Raisina Dialogue

About

- The Raisina Dialogue is an **annual conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics**, which aims to address the most challenging issues faced by the world.
- The conference has been held **annually in New Delhi** since 2016 and is attended by people from political, business, media, and civil society backgrounds.
- Delhi-based think tank **Observer Research Foundation**, in partnership with the **Ministry of External Affairs**, hosts the conference.

Why in News?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 11th edition of the



Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, with the President of Finland, Dr. Alexander Stubb, as the Chief Guest.

- The **theme** this year is **“Saṁskāra – Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement”**.



4) Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

About

- The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is a **free trade agreement (FTA)** between **12 countries around the Pacific Rim: Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, United Kingdom and Japan.**
 - The CPTPP is the successor to the **Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact** negotiated by the former U.S. President Barack Obama, before his successor Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the agreement in 2017.

COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP



- The CPTPP came into force in **2018**.
- CPTPP aims to **reduce or eliminate tariffs** on the vast majority of goods

traded between member countries, fostering greater market access and economic integration.

Why in News?

- **Uruguay** has been accepted to join the CPTPP, becoming the 13th member of the treaty.

5) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

5.1. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

About

- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a **regional economic forum** established in **1989** to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific.
- It is the **only international intergovernmental grouping** in the world committed to **reducing barriers to trade and investment without requiring its members to enter into legally binding obligations.**
- APEC operates on the basis of **voluntary cooperation and consensus.**
- The APEC Secretariat is based in **Singapore.**

Membership of APEC:

- There are **21 member economies** at present. It includes Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Philippines; The Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States of America; Viet Nam.
 - The word **'economies'** is used to describe APEC members because the APEC cooperative process is predominantly concerned with trade and economic issues.
- **India is not a member of APEC.**



APEC Member Economies (21)



- It aims at **reducing reliance on traditional sea routes**, especially the Suez Canal.
 - It offers a **faster option** that can **cut transit times by 40 percent** and **lower freight costs by 30 percent**.

5.2. International North-South Transport Corridor

About

- The International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is a **multi-modal transportation network** that integrates **ship, rail, and road routes** for moving freight between **India, Russia, Iran, Europe, and Central Asia**.
- Established in **2000**, through an agreement between **India, Russia, and Iran**, this **7,200-kilometer network** has developed into a transportation system that connects the **Indian Ocean to Northern Europe via the Caspian Sea**.
- At present, there are **13 Members** of INSTC, namely - **India, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Oman and Syria**. **Bulgaria** has joined as an **Observer State**.

Significance

- The corridor's primary objective is to **enhance regional connectivity, promoting trade and economic cooperation** among participating nations and regions.

5.3. Group of Seven (G7)

About

- The Group of Seven (G7) is an **informal partnership** of the **seven leading industrialised nations: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States**, along with the **European Union (EU)**.

G7 COUNTRIES



- The Group was established as a platform for **economic and financial cooperation** in response to the **1973 energy crisis**.
 - **Russia** belonged to the forum from 1998 through 2014, when the bloc was known as the **G8**, but was **suspended** following its annexation of Crimea.



- The G7 operates by **consensus** and **does not have a treaty or permanent secretariat**.
- The **Presidency rotates** between members on an **annual basis**. The Presidency plays a key role in setting the agenda and identifying key priorities.
- The EU is a **“non-enumerated” member** and **does not assume the rotating G7 presidency**.



ORGANISATIONS

1) National Housing Bank

About

- National Housing Bank (NHB) is a **statutory organization** set up in **1988** based on the recommendations of the **Dr. C. Rangarajan Committee**.
- NHB is an **apex financial institution for housing**.
- NHB **regulates the housing finance system** of the country, oversees **supervision and grievance redressal regarding Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)**, extends refinance to different **primary lenders** and **lends directly in respect of projects undertaken by public housing agencies** for housing construction and development of housing related infrastructure.
 - NHB **does not grant any loan directly to individuals**.
 - It is to be noted that **NHB supervises HFCs while regulation of HFCs is with RBI**.
- In 2019, the **RBI divested its entire stake held in NHB to the government**, which now **holds 100% stake in the organisation**.
- The Head Office of NHB is at **New Delhi**.

Why in News?

- The National Housing Bank has launched the **Gruh Sugam Portal** to enable Defence/Government personnel to avail home loans with ease from the location of their posting.

2) District Mineral Foundations

About

- District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) are **statutory bodies** established under the **Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Amendment Act, (MMDRA) 2015**.
- The Act mandates setting up of DMFs in **all districts in the country affected by mining related operations**.

- Each DMF is established by the **State Governments** by notification as a **trust or non-profit body to work for the interest and benefit of persons, and areas affected by mining related operations**.
- It is funded through the **contributions from miners**.
- DMFs are the **implementing agencies** for the **Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)**.

Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana:

- PMKKKY was launched by the **Ministry of Mines** in 2015 to provide for the **welfare of areas and people affected by mining related operations**.
- The objective of PMKKKY scheme will be
 - to implement various **developmental and welfare projects/programs in mining affected areas**;
 - to **minimize/mitigate the adverse impacts**, during and after mining, on the environment, health and socio-economics of people in mining districts; and
 - to ensure **long-term sustainable livelihoods** for the affected people in mining areas.
- PMKKKY is implemented by the **District Mineral Foundations** of the respective districts using the funds accruing to the DMF.
- **At least 70% of PMKKKY funds are utilized for high priority areas** like drinking water supply, environment preservation and pollution control measures, health care, education, welfare of women and children, welfare of aged and differently abled, skill development and livelihood generation, sanitation, housing, agriculture, and animal husbandry.



Why in News?

- The National District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Summit 2026 was recently held in New Delhi.

3) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

3.1. Forest Survey of India

About

- Forest Survey of India (FSI) is a premier national organization under the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change** based in **Dehradun, Uttarakhand**.
- Established in **1981**, FSI succeeded the "**Preinvestment Survey of Forest Resources**" (PISFR), a project initiated in 1965 by the Government of India with the sponsorship of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- FSI is responsible for **assessment and monitoring of the forest resources** of the country regularly.
- In addition, it is also engaged in **providing the services of training, research and extension**.
- FSI also publishes a **biennial State of Forest Report** assessing forest cover and tracking changes.
- FSI also operates the **Van Agni Geo-portal** designed for tracking and monitoring **forest fires**.

3.2. National Shipping Board

About

- The National Shipping Board (NSB) is a **statutory advisory body** under the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**.
- The Board was constituted under the **Merchant Shipping Act, 1958**.
- Its main role is to **advise the central government on matters related to the shipping and maritime sector**.
- It consists of **representatives from the government, ship owners, seafarers, port authorities, and maritime training institutions**.

3.3. Central Board of Film Certification

About

- Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
- CBFC **regulates the public exhibition of films** under the provisions of the **Cinematograph Act 1952**.
- Films can be **publicly exhibited in India only after they have been certified** by CBFC.
- The Board consists of **non-official members** and a **Chairman** (all of whom are appointed by **Central Government**) and functions with headquarters at **Mumbai**.

Certification Process & Categories:

- The Certification process is in accordance with **The Cinematograph Act, 1952, The Cinematograph (certification) Rules, 1983**, and the guidelines issued by the Central government:
 - U – Unrestricted Public Exhibition.
 - U/A – Unrestricted Public Exhibition but with a word of caution that discretion is required for children below 12 years.
 - Age based sub-categories under the UA category were introduced vide the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules 2024.
 - A – Restricted to adults.
 - S - Restricted to any special class of persons.

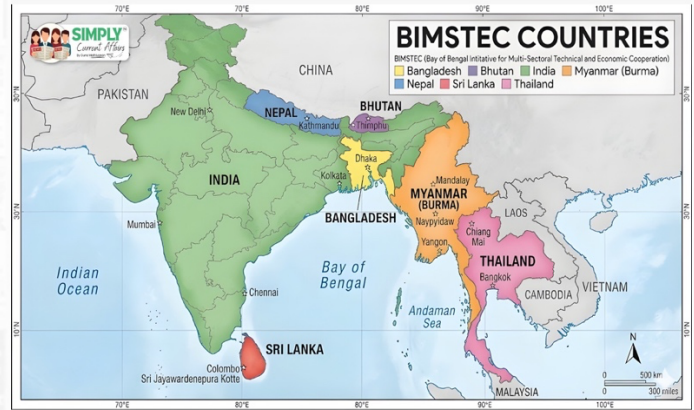
3.4. BIMSTEC

About

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a **multilateral regional organisation** established with the aim of **accelerating shared growth and cooperation between littoral and adjacent countries in the Bay of Bengal region**.
- It was founded in **1997** with the adoption of the **Bangkok Declaration**.










- Initially known as **BIST-EC (Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation)**, the organisation is now known as **BIMSTEC** and comprises **seven Member States** with the admission of **Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal**.
 - The regional group constitutes a **bridge between South and South East Asia** and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries.
- The **BIMSTEC Charter** was signed and adopted during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit held in Sri Lanka in **2022**.
- BIMSTEC's headquarters is situated in **Dhaka, Bangladesh**.



Sectors of Cooperation:

- BIMSTEC is a **sector-driven grouping**. The following sectors and sub-sectors led by the respective Member States:

 Bangladesh Trade, Investment and Development Sub-sectors: Blue Economy	 Bhutan Environment & Climate Change Sub-sectors: Mountain Economy	 India Security Sub-sectors: Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime, Disaster Management, Energy	 Myanmar Agriculture and Food Security Sub-sectors: Agriculture, Fisheries & Livestock
 Nepal People-to-People Contact Sub-sectors: Culture, Tourism, Poverty Alleviation, People-to-People Contact (forums of think tanks, media etc.)	 Sri Lanka Science, Technology & Innovation Sub-sectors: Technology, Health, Human Resource Development	 Thailand Connectivity	

3.5. Financial Services Institutions Bureau

About

- The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) was constituted in **2022**, as an **autonomous body of Government of India**.
- FSIB's mandate is **recommending persons for appointment as whole-time directors and non-executive chairpersons** on the **Board of Public Sector Banks (PSBs), Public Sector Financial Institutions (FIs) and Public Sector Insurance Companies (PSIs)** and recommend measures to improve

Corporate Governance in these Institutions.

- It **replaced the Banks Board Bureau (BBB)**.
- FSIB is headed by a **chairman, a central government nominee**.
- Other functions of the Bureau are :-
 - To advise the Government on matters relating to **appointments, transfer or extension of term of office and termination of services** of the said directors;
 - To advise the Government on the **desired management structure**



at the Board level for PSBs, FIs and PSIs;

- To **build a databank** containing data related to the **performance** of PSBs, FIs and PSIs;
- To advise the Government on **formulation and enforcement of a code of conduct and ethics** for whole-time directors in PSBs, FIs and PSIs;
- To advise the Government on evolving **suitable training and development programmes** for management personnel in PSBs, FIs and PSIs;

3.6. Permanent Court of Arbitration

About

- The Permanent Court of Arbitration was established by the **Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes**, concluded at **The Hague, Netherlands** in **1899** during the first Hague Peace Conference.
 - The 1899 Convention was revised at the second Hague Peace Conference in 1907.

Did you know?

- The PCA is the **oldest universal intergovernmental institution** dedicated to the **resolution of international disputes**.



- The PCA is **not a court in the traditional sense** but provides services of an **arbitral tribunal to resolve disputes** that arise out of **international agreements** between **member states, international organizations or private parties**.
 - The cases span a range of legal issues involving territorial and

maritime boundaries, sovereignty, human rights, international investment, and international and regional trade.

- The PCA has **no sitting judges: the parties themselves select the arbitrators**.
- The PCA has an **observer status** with the **United Nations**.
- It is headquartered in **The Hague**.

Members:

- The PCA has more than 125 Contracting Parties which have acceded to one or both of the PCA's founding conventions (1899 and 1907 Conventions).
- **India is a party** to the PCA according to the convention of 1899.

3.7. OPEC

About

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a **permanent, intergovernmental body** comprising **12 oil-exporting developing nations**.
- Established during the **Baghdad Conference in 1960**, its primary mandate is to **coordinate petroleum policies and provide technical/economic assistance to its members**.
- **Founding Members:** Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.
 - **Other Current Members:** UAE, Libya, Algeria, Nigeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon.
- It **operates as a cartel**, influencing global oil prices by regulating production levels (increasing production to lower prices and cutting production to raise them).
- **Headquarters:** Located in **Vienna, Austria** (notably, **Austria is not a member**).

"OPEC Plus" Alliance

- The **2014 oil crisis**, triggered by a massive oversupply that sent prices crashing below \$30 per barrel, led to a strategic shift in global energy politics.
- To regain control over market stability, **OPEC began collaborating with several non-OPEC producers**.



- **Partners:** Includes **Russia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Sudan, and South Sudan.**
- This broader alliance, known as **OPEC Plus**, coordinates production cuts to prevent price collapses and manage the global supply-demand balance.
- Together, the OPEC Plus nations account for approximately **40% of the world's crude oil production**, giving them significant leverage over the global economy.

3.8. NATO

About

- The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** is a **political and military alliance of 32 countries from North America and Europe.**
- The foundations of NATO were officially laid down in **1949** with the signing of the **North Atlantic Treaty**, more popularly known as the **Washington Treaty.**
- Established during the **Cold War** to counter Soviet aggression, NATO's primary objective is to **protect the freedom and security of its members** through both political and military means.
 - **Article 5** of the Washington Treaty — that an attack against one Ally is an attack against all — is at the core of the Alliance, a **promise of collective defence.**
 - Article 5 has been **invoked only once** in NATO history. It happened after the **September 11 attacks** on the United States in 2001, which led the alliance into Afghanistan.
- NATO is funded by Allies both **directly and indirectly.**
 - Direct contributions are made to NATO budgets and programmes on an agreed cost-share formula, based on Gross National Income. Indirect funding is where allies commit

capabilities or troops to a military operation.

- **All decisions** at NATO are taken by **consensus.**
- NATO's Headquarters are located in **Brussels, Belgium.**

Members:

- At present, NATO has **32 members.**
 - In 1949, there were **12 founding members** of the Alliance: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.
 - The other member countries are: Greece and Turkey (1952), Germany (1955), Spain (1982), the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland (1999), **Bulgaria**, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (2004), Albania and **Croatia** (2009), Montenegro (2017) **North Macedonia** (2020), Finland (2023) and **Sweden** (2024).



- NATO membership is **open to** “any other **European state** in a position to further the principles of the **Washington Treaty** and to contribute to the **security of the North Atlantic area.**”



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1) Superconductors

About

- A superconductor is any material that **conducts electricity without offering any resistance to the flow of the electric current.**
- Superconductors find applications in improving **electrical grids**, building **advanced medical imaging systems**, enabling **fusion energy technologies**, and developing **faster electronics**.
- However, this property only appears when the **material is below a certain critical temperature** known as **transition temperature (T_c)** and, in many cases, under **specific pressure**.

Temperature:

- Most materials become superconducting only when **cooled to extremely low temperatures** (near absolute zero, -273° Celsius).
- The **higher the T_c, the more useful the superconductor**, because cooling becomes cheaper and easier.
- The ultimate goal is **room-temperature superconductivity** (around 20–25°C), which would require no active cooling at all.

Pressure:

- Applying **high pressure squeezes atoms closer together**, which can **change the material's electronic structure and raise the critical temperature.**
- In many materials (including copper oxides and hydrogen-rich compounds), **intense pressure can push T_c up dramatically** – sometimes to near or above 0°C.
- These high-pressure states **usually vanish the moment pressure is released**, making them useless for everyday applications.

Why in News?

- Scientists have broken a 33-year-old record by making a superconducting material with a **transition temperature (T_c) of about -122°C**—the highest ever

recorded for all the reported superconductors at ambient pressure since the discovery of superconductivity in 1911.

- Since 1993, the best a material could do at normal pressure was **superconduct at -140°C**. The same material (a copper oxide called **Hg1223**) now superconducts at -122°C at normal pressure.
- Scientists achieved this using a new technique called "**pressure quenching**", a three-stage process designed to freeze a high-pressure superconducting state in place by removing pressure fast enough and at a low enough temperature.

Significance

- Raising the transition temperature has been a major goal in superconductivity research for decades.
- The **closer scientists can push the T_c toward room temperature, the more practical and affordable superconducting technologies could become.**

2) Pneumonia

About

- Pneumonia is an **infection in one or both lungs** that can be caused by **bacteria, viruses or fungi**.
 - *Streptococcus pneumoniae* is the **most common cause of bacterial pneumonia** in children.
 - *Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)* is the **second most common cause** of bacterial pneumonia.
 - **Respiratory syncytial virus** is the **most common viral cause** of pneumonia.
- The infection causes **inflammation or swelling in the air sacs (alveoli)** of the lungs, leading to the accumulation of fluid or pus. This can produce **fever, cough and difficulty in breathing.**



- Pneumonia can range from **mild to severe** and can even be **life-threatening** in some cases.
- The disease can be **treated with antibiotics and prevented through immunisation.**
- **Children whose immune systems are weakened** by other infections like HIV or by malnutrition, as well as those living in areas with **high levels of air pollution and unsafe water**, are at a far **greater risk.**

Did you know?

- Pneumonia is the single largest infectious cause of death in children worldwide.

SAANS Campaign

- The **SAANS (Social Awareness and Action to Neutralize Pneumonia Successfully)** campaign is an initiative of the Ministry for Health and Family Welfare to **reduce morbidity and mortality of childhood pneumonia.**
- The campaign was launched in 2019. It aims to raise awareness about pneumonia and emphasizes **early identification of pneumonia symptoms**, including **rapid breathing, chest indrawing and fever.**

Why in News?

- **Kerala** recently became the first Indian state to **publicly fund pneumonia vaccines for adults from poor socio-economic backgrounds**, in a bid to reduce deaths from life-threatening respiratory infections.
- While **vaccination against the disease is provided to children** through the government's **Universal Immunisation Programme**, there is currently **no such provision for older adults.**
 - Currently, the vaccine most pulmonologists prescribe is **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine 20 (PCV20)**, commonly known as **Prevnar 20**, which protects against 20 pneumococcal serotypes. The vaccine is estimated to be **45–75 per cent**

effective in reducing the risk of pneumonia.

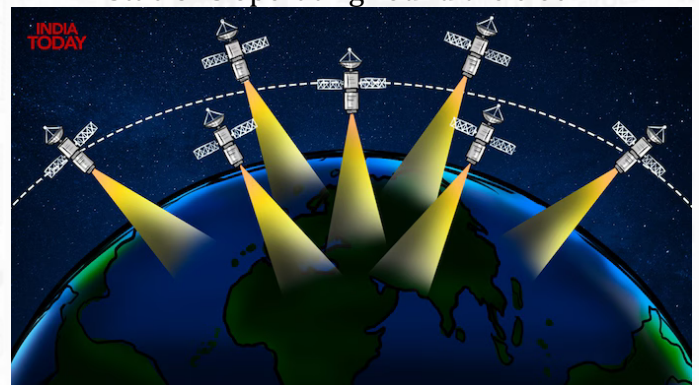
Did you know?

- '**Pneumosil**' is **India's first fully indigenously developed pneumococcal vaccine.** It was developed by the **Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd** in Pune.

3) NavIC

About

- Developed by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, the **Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC)**—earlier known as the **Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)**—is **India's regional satellite navigation system** aimed at providing independent positioning, navigation and timing capabilities.
- The system was originally designed with a **constellation of seven satellites—three in geostationary orbit and four in inclined geosynchronous orbit**—supported by a **network of ground stations** operating round the clock.



Range & Services of NavIC

- While equivalent American (**GPS**), Russian (**GLONASS**), Chinese (**BeiDou**) and European systems (**Galileo**) provide **global positioning services**, NavIC is designed to provide accurate position information service to users in India as well as the region **extending up to 1500 km from its boundary**, which is its **Primary Service Area.**
- Beyond that lies an **Extended Service Area**, that can extend up to the edges of the



area enclosed by the rectangle imagined by latitudes 30 degrees South and 50 degrees North, and longitudes 30 degrees East and 130 degrees East.

- NavIC is viewed more as a **fall back system in case of future global conflicts** in which India is denied access to foreign constellations.
- The system supports a **range of applications** including **civilian navigation, maritime operations and disaster management**.
- NavIC also has a strategic dimension, with its **encrypted Restricted Service** catering to **authorised users**, including defence forces, enabling secure navigation and timing support independent of foreign systems.
- According to ISRO, the system provides **position accuracy better than 20 metres and timing accuracy better than 50 nanoseconds**.

Why in News?

- ISRO recently said that the **last atomic clock on board the IRNSS-1F** has stopped functioning, leaving **only three satellites of the constellation capable of providing position, navigation, and timing services**.
- **At least four satellites with operational atomic clocks are required** for the navigation satellite system to function properly.

What are Atomic clocks?

- Atomic clocks are **extremely precise timekeeping devices** that **measure time using the natural vibration frequency of atoms** such as **cesium or calcium**.
- Unlike older quartz clocks, which slowly lose accuracy, atomic clocks **rely on atomic properties that are constant everywhere in the universe**.

What is the issue?

- The **first-generation NavIC satellites**, known as the **IRNSS series**, consisted of 7

active satellites (1A-1G) launched between 2013 and 2018.

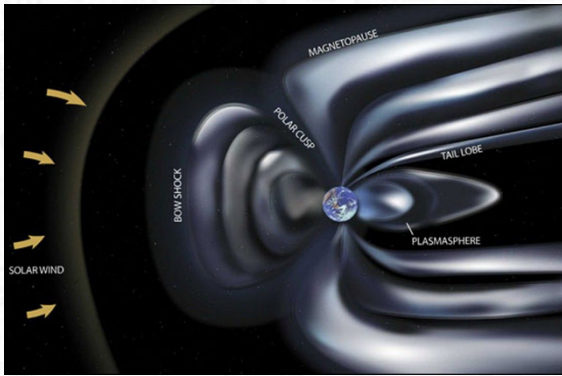
- Designed for a **10-year lifespan**, many experienced **early failures** of their **onboard atomic clocks**, with some now considered defunct.
- In 2017, ISRO attempted to **replace the IRNSS-1A with IRNSS-1H**, but the **mission failed** to insert the satellite into the desired orbit. Subsequently, ISRO began launching the **second generation of satellites** for NavIC, known as the **NVS series**.
- While it **successfully placed NVS-01** in the desired orbit in 2023, the **2025 launch of NVS-02 failed**.
 - This has **delayed the launch** of NVS-03, NVS-04, and NVS-05, **leaving the NavIC system with only IRNSS 1-B, IRNSS 1-L, and NVS-01**, which are currently capable of providing navigation services.

4) Magnetic Field Reversals

Background

- Earth is surrounded by an **immense magnetic field**, called the **magnetosphere**.
- Generated by the movement of molten iron in its outer core, our magnetosphere **shields us from erosion of our atmosphere by the solar wind, particle radiation from coronal mass ejections** (eruptions of large clouds of energetic, magnetized plasma from the Sun's corona into space), and from **cosmic rays** from deep space. It also enables **navigation for animals and humans**, and creates **auroras**.
 - Without this shield, Earth would lose its atmosphere and become **uninhabitable**.





- Since the forces that generate our magnetic field are constantly changing, the **field itself is also in continual flux**, its strength waxing and waning over time.
- This causes the **location of Earth's magnetic north and south poles to gradually shift**, and to **even completely flip locations every 300,000 years or so**.

Why in News?

- For decades, geologists believed that magnetic field reversals (north and south poles swapping) happened relatively quickly, over about 10,000 years.
- However, a new study found evidence that **some reversals last much longer**.
 - A team of scientists have found one reversal lasted 18,000 years and another lasted a staggering 70,000 years.

Implications

- During a **reversal**, the **magnetic field loses much of its strength**.
- A 70,000-year weak field would **expose the atmosphere and surface life to significantly more solar radiation** for a prolonged period.
- The study suggests these long intervals could have influenced ancient environments and the evolution of life on Earth.

5) exRNA

About

- exRNA (Extracellular RNA) is **RNA that exists outside cells**, in body fluids such as blood, saliva, urine, and cerebrospinal fluid.

- Earlier, scientists believed RNA only functioned inside cells, and that any RNA outside would be quickly destroyed by enzymes.
- However, researchers now know that **cells intentionally export RNA for communication purposes**.
- To survive outside the cell, exRNA travels in its **own molecular containers** that prevent enzymes from breaking it down before it reaches its destination.

Significance

- This process helps **coordinate responses** in the **immune system, tissue repair, and development**.
- However, **cancer cells can also release exRNA to promote tumour growth**.
- The discovery of exRNA changed modern medicine. For instance, **just by testing a patient's blood or other body fluids**, doctors can **identify specific RNA patterns linked to cancer or heart disease**.

Why in News?

- In a study published recently, scientists reported that **exRNA from bacteria can persist in disinfected drinking water**.
- By analyzing this surviving exRNA, researchers can determine what survival strategies bacteria were attempting just before they were damaged or killed by disinfectants.
- This insight can help in designing more effective disinfectants that counter those bacterial survival tactics.

6) Nucleic Acid Test

Background

- Blood transfusions carry a risk of transmitting infections from donor to recipient.
- To reduce this risk, **blood donations are screened for transfusion-transmitted infections**. Two main techniques are used: **Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA)** and **Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT)**.



ELISA:

- ELISA is a **widely used, cost-effective laboratory technique** that helps diagnose infections by **detecting and measuring antibodies or antigens** in the blood.
 - *Antigens are foreign substances (bacteria, viruses, toxins) that trigger an immune response, while antibodies are Y-shaped proteins (immunoglobulins) produced by B cells to bind to and neutralize these specific antigens.*

NAT:

- NAT is a **molecular technique** that provides an **additional layer of blood safety**.
- Unlike traditional methods that wait for the body to produce antibodies, **NAT directly detects the genetic material of a virus** – its DNA or RNA – in a blood sample.
- The most important advantage of NAT is **reduction in the "window period"** – the time between when a person becomes infected and when the test can reliably detect the infection.
- **ELISA typically detects** antibodies (or sometimes antigens) **only after the immune system has had time to respond**.
 - For HIV, this can take 18–45 days; for Hepatitis C, it may take up to 66 days.
- **NAT detects the virus directly within days of infection** – about 5 days for HIV and 3–5 days for Hepatitis C.
- While **NAT offers superior safety**, its widespread adoption is constrained by its **high operational costs**, which are significantly greater than those of ELISA.

Note:

- Currently, **NAT is not mandatory** for all blood banks in India.
- The national guidelines mandate **screening for HIV, Hepatitis B and C, syphilis, and malaria**, but they **do not specifically mandate techniques** like NAT.

Why in News?

- The Supreme Court has refused to direct the government to compulsorily conduct Nucleic Acid Tests (NAT) to identify diseases ahead of blood transfusions, saying that it does not have specialised knowledge about either medical science or the costs involved.

7) NAP-AMR 2.0

About

- Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) occurs when **bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines** that are used to treat infections.
- As a result, these medicines become **ineffective** and **infections become difficult or impossible to treat, increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness, disability and death**.
- When the microorganisms become resistant to most antimicrobials they are often referred to as **"superbugs"**.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has declared that **AMR is one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity**.

Causes of AMR

- AMR occurs **naturally** over time, usually through **genetic changes** in pathogens.
- Its emergence and spread is **accelerated by human activity**, mainly the **misuse and overuse of antimicrobials** to treat, prevent or control infections in humans, animals and plants.
- **Lack of proper sanitation, hygiene, and clean water** in healthcare settings and communities facilitates the spread of resistant microorganisms.

Global Initiatives to combat AMR

One Health Approach:

- The WHO leads global efforts to combat AMR using the One Health approach.
 - It recognizes that the **health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants and the wider environment are closely linked and inter-dependent**.



Global Action Plan (GAP) on Antimicrobial Resistance:

- Framework adopted by WHO member states in 2015 which commits countries to develop multisectoral National Action Plans (NAPs).

World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW):

- A global campaign to raise awareness, understanding and best practices with the public, and policymakers.
- WAAW is celebrated from 18 to 24 November every year.

Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (GLASS):

- Launched in 2015 by the WHO to foster standardized AMR surveillance globally at national level.

AWaRe Tool:

- An online tool launched by the WHO in 2019 aimed at guiding policy-makers and health workers to use antibiotics safely and more effectively.
- It classifies antibiotics into three groups:
 - **Access** — antibiotics used to treat the most common and serious infections
 - **Watch** — antibiotics available at all times in the healthcare system
 - **Reserve** — antibiotics to be used sparingly or preserved and used only as a last resort.

National Initiatives

- The **National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (NAP-AMR)** focusing on 'One Health' approach was launched in 2017 with the aim of promoting AMR containment.
- The **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has launched the **Red Line awareness campaign on AMR**, urging people not to use medicines marked with a red vertical line, including antibiotics, without a doctor's prescription.

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched the second version of the **National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (NAP-AMR 2.0) for the period 2025–29.**

- The second version addresses gaps identified in the first NAP-AMR and strengthens efforts to create public awareness and private sector participation, among other areas.

8) Researchers at CERN transport antiprotons

- #### CERN
- The **European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN)** is the **world's largest nuclear and particle physics laboratory.**
 - Founded in **1954**, the CERN laboratory is situated in the **Franco-Swiss border near Geneva.**
 - The centre is best known for its **Large Hadron Collider**, a network of magnets that accelerates particles through a 27-km underground tunnel and slams them together at velocities approaching the speed of light. Scientists then study the results of those collisions.
 - CERN is run by **25 Member States.**
 - In 2016, India became an **associate member** of CERN.

Why in News?

- Researchers at the CERN particle-physics lab have successfully transported **antiprotons** in a truck across the lab's main site.



- The feat, the first of its kind, is considered a huge leap towards being able to transport antimatter between labs across Europe.

- Antiprotons are the **antimatter counterpart of protons.**
 - *Antimatter is the twin of almost all the subatomic particles that make up our universe.*
- These subatomic particles are of the **same mass as a proton** but having a **negative electric charge** and



oppositely directed magnetic moment.

- Even though they are **stable**, they are **typically short-lived as collision with any proton causes both particles to annihilate in a burst of energy.**
- **Antimatter does not occur naturally**, except for single particles produced in **nuclear or cosmic ray interactions.** Therefore, the only way to obtain it is to **produce it.**
 - At CERN, there is a dedicated facility for this purpose known as the **Antimatter Factory.**

Why do scientists study Antimatter?

- Antimatter is **almost identical to ordinary matter** except that the **electric charge and magnetic moment are reversed.**
- But if equal amounts of matter and antimatter were created in the **Big Bang**, as is widely believed, they **would have annihilated each other, leaving an empty universe.**
- Physicists therefore suspect there are hidden differences that may explain why matter survived and antimatter all but disappeared.

9) Centre intensifies regulatory surveillance over GLP-1 weight loss drugs

Background

- **Diabetes** is a chronic **hormonal disorder** that occurs **when the pancreas does not produce adequate insulin, or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces**, leading to **high blood sugar (hyperglycaemia).**
- If left untreated, it can lead to **complications like blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, stroke and lower limb amputation.**
- **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.

- People with a **family history of diabetes** and **excess sugar** in the diet are at high risk of developing diabetes. Being **obese** (caused by excess body fat) also **increases the risk of diabetes.**

GLP-1 Drugs

- **GLP-1 drugs (glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists)** are **medications developed to treat both diabetes and obesity by correcting hormonal imbalance** - stimulating insulin release and suppressing excess glucagon - to **bring blood sugar back under control.**
- The drugs **regulate blood sugar and appetite** and are also **used to treat obesity.**
 - Essentially, they **slow down the gastric emptying, increasing the feeling of fullness.** This decreases patients' appetites and thereby leads to their weight loss.

Why in News?

- The **Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)** has intensified regulatory surveillance against unauthorised sale and promotion of **GLP-1 based Weight Loss Drugs.**

CDSCO & DCGI:

- The **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)** under the **Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** is the **National Regulatory Authority (NRA)** of India for regulation of pharmaceutical, medical devices and clinical trials.
- It is headed by the **Drugs Controller General (India).**
- Under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**, CDSCO is **responsible for approval of Drugs, conduct of clinical trials, laying down the standards for Drugs, control over the quality of imported Drugs** in the country and



coordination of the activities of State Drug Control Organizations.

- Further **CDSCO** along with state regulators, is **jointly responsible** for **grant of licenses of certain specialized categories of critical Drugs** such as blood and blood products, I. V. Fluids, Vaccine and Sera.
- The CDSCO is headquartered in **New Delhi**.

- The move comes amid growing concerns over the increasing availability of multiple generic variants of these drugs in the Indian market, through retail pharmacies, online platforms, wholesalers, and wellness clinics.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said that these drugs, **when used without proper medical supervision, may lead to serious adverse effects and related health risks.**

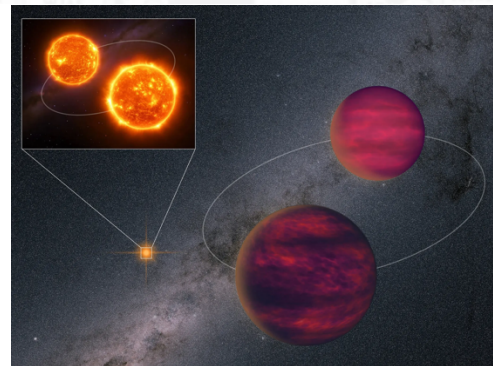
10) Brown Dwarf

About

- Brown Dwarf is an **astronomical object** that is **intermediate between a planet and a star**.
- It **forms like a star but lacks the sufficient mass to ignite and sustain core hydrogen fusion**—the process that powers true stars. That is why they are often known as **“failed stars”**.
 - Brown dwarfs are not actually brown but appear from **deep red to magenta depending on their temperature**.
- Brown dwarfs can be **up to 70 times more massive than gas giants like Jupiter**.
- They have **atmospheres similar to gas giant planets** such as Jupiter and Saturn.
- Brown dwarfs can be **difficult to detect** as they are **cold and faint**. As a result, **astronomers typically search for brown dwarfs orbiting companion stars**, which often burn brighter.

Why in News?

- A team of scientists has discovered an extremely rare **quadruple star system** in the **Milky Way** consists of a **pair of brown dwarfs orbiting a pair of young red dwarf stars**, a configuration never seen before.
 - *A quadruple star system consists of four stars that are gravitationally bound to each other.*
 - *Red dwarfs are the smallest, coolest, and most numerous type of star in the Milky Way, making up about three-quarters of all stars. It is a true star unlike brown dwarf.*



11) White Phosphorus

About

- White phosphorus is a **colorless, white, or yellow waxy solid** with a **garlic-like odor**.
- It **does not occur naturally**, but is **manufactured from phosphate rocks**.
- White phosphorus **reacts rapidly with oxygen**, easily catching fire at temperatures 10 to 15 degrees above room temperature.
- Upon exposure, white phosphorus can cause **severe burns**, often down to the bone. White phosphorus burns on even 10 per cent of the body can be fatal.

Applications

- White phosphorus is used by the **military** in **various types of ammunition**, and to **produce smoke** for concealing troop movements and identifying targets.
- It is also used by **industry to produce phosphoric acid and other chemicals**



for use in **fertilizers, food additives, and cleaning compounds.**

- Small amounts of white phosphorus were used in the past in **pesticides and fireworks.**

Legal Status

- The use of white phosphorus is governed by the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCCW)**, an international treaty that prohibits the use of air-delivered incendiary weapons against concentrations of civilians.
 - However, since white phosphorus is primarily designed for smoke-screening and not as a weapon to burn people, many militaries argue it falls outside the definition of an "incendiary weapon".

Why in News?

- Israel has been accused of firing white phosphorus munitions over homes in the southern Lebanon region.

12) Helium Shortage

About

- Helium (He) is the **second element** in the periodic table, with an **atomic number of 2.**
- It is a **colorless, odorless, non-flammable, non-toxic, inert gas** (does not react with other substances or combust).
- Its **boiling and melting points** are the **lowest among all the elements.**
- Helium is the **second lightest element** and the **second most abundant in the universe** (after hydrogen).

Did you know?

- Helium makes up about 24% of the mass of the universe.

Production:

- Helium is **found in small amounts in the Earth's atmosphere** and is also produced by the **radioactive decay of uranium and thorium.**
- The **United States** is the world's largest producer of helium, followed by **Qatar** and **Russia.**

Applications:

- Helium is used in a variety of applications, including:
 - **Balloons and airships:** Helium is used to fill balloons and airships because it is lighter than air and non-flammable.
 - **Party balloons:** Helium is used to fill party balloons because it makes them float.
 - **Scuba diving:** Helium is used in scuba diving tanks to reduce the risk of decompression sickness.
 - **Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI):** Helium is used to cool the superconducting magnets in MRI machines.
 - **Welding and cutting:** Helium is used as a shielding gas in welding and cutting operations.
 - **High-tech applications:** Helium is used in a variety of high-tech applications, such as lasers, particle accelerators, and semiconductor manufacturing.

Why in News?

- The disruption in global helium supply due to the war in the Middle East has raised concerns in India's healthcare sector, particularly over the rising cost of MRI scans and the installation of MRI machines.

13) Difference between LPG and LNG

What's in the news?

- The effective halt in vessel movements through the **Strait of Hormuz** due to the West Asia war has hit India's energy supplies, particularly those of **liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG).**
- **LPG**, particularly, has been a cause of concern, given that **India depends on imports to meet around 60% of the fuel's needs, and 90% of those imports came through the critical maritime chokepoint of the Strait.**
 - **India depends on LNG imports to meet half of its natural gas**



requirement, and 55-60% of it comes from West Asia through the Strait of Hormuz.

- While both LPG and LNG are hydrocarbon gases turned into the liquid state, they differ in their chemistry, production processes, transportation, and delivery.

LPG:

- LPG is a gaseous fuel mix primarily comprising propane and butane that is a byproduct of crude oil refining and natural gas processing.
 - It may also contain some propylene, butylene, and isobutylene or isobutene.
- Under relatively low temperatures or moderate pressure, the gas mix becomes a liquid.
- It is mostly used for cooking and heating, with some industrial applications as well; it is also used as an automobile fuel in some parts of the world.
 - LPG's volume is around 1/260th of its gaseous volume.

LNG:

- LNG, on the other hand, is primarily natural gas — mainly methane — cooled to below -160 degrees Celsius and cryogenically turned into a liquid.
- LNG itself doesn't have too many direct uses, except for an upcoming fuel to power heavy vehicles, ships, and trains.
- The key purpose of liquefaction of natural gas into LNG is to transport it over long distances across seas, where supplying natural gas through pipelines is not feasible.
- Unlike LPG, LNG must be stored in cryogenic tanks and requires trained handling to prevent vapourisation or boil-off.
 - In its liquid state, LNG occupies roughly 1/600th the volume of natural gas in gaseous form, making it viable for transport and storage over long distances.

- Essentially, LNG is natural gas that is liquefied for easier storage and transportation, and is mostly converted back to natural gas before being used.
 - Natural gas itself has a number of applications — cooking fuel, transportation fuel, and industrial fuel or feedstock in sectors like refineries, fertilisers, power plants, and petrochemicals.
 - It is supplied via pipelines as piped natural gas (PNG) to households and industries, and as compressed natural gas (CNG) for vehicles.
- LPG, in contrast, is bottled in cylinders, transported mainly by road, and is more portable since it does not depend on pipeline infrastructure. It is also easier to store, requiring only pressurised cylinders.

Safety:

- PNG is considered safer than LPG. This is because natural gas is lighter than air, which allows it to disperse quickly in case of a leak.
 - LPG is heavier than air, and therefore tends to sink and accumulate in the air in case of leakage, which makes it a lot more prone to fires and explosions in such instances.

14) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

14.1. CAR-T Cell Therapy

Cancer Treatments

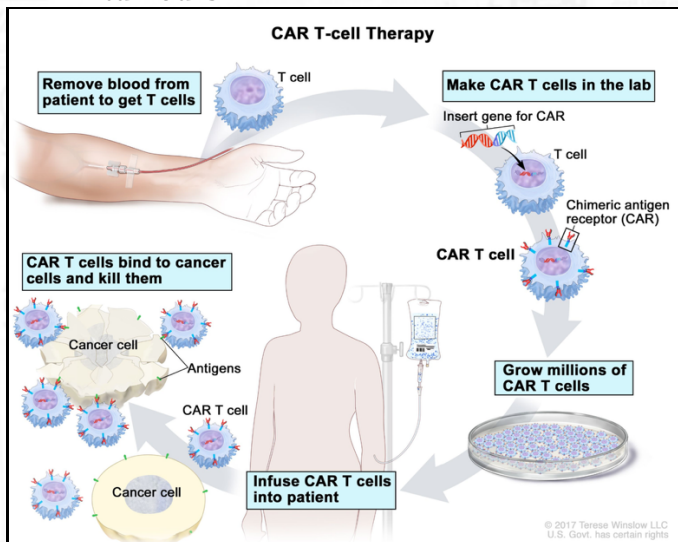
- The three major forms of treatment for any cancer are surgery (removing the cancer), radiotherapy (delivering ionising radiation to the tumour), and systemic therapy (administering medicines that act on the tumour).
- Surgery and radiotherapy have been refined significantly over time – whereas advances in systemic therapy have been unparalleled.



- **Systemic therapy's earliest form** was **chemotherapy**. When administered, chemotherapy preferentially acts on cancer cells as they have rapid unregulated growth and poor healing mechanisms. Chemotherapeutic drugs have **modest response rates** and **significant side-effects** as they affect numerous cell types in the body.
- The next stage in its evolution was **targeted agents**, a.k.a. **immunotherapy**: the drugs bind to specific targets on the cancer or in the immune cells that help the tumour grow or spread. This method often has **fewer side-effects** as the impact on non-tumour cells is limited. However, it is **effective only against tumours that express these targets**.

What is CAR-T Cell Therapy?

- **Chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapies** represent a quantum leap in the sophistication of cancer treatment.
- Unlike chemotherapy or immunotherapy, which require mass-produced injectable or oral medication, **CAR-T cell therapies use a patient's own cells**.
- These cells are **modified in the laboratory to activate T-cells**, a component of the immune system, so that they can attack tumours.



- The modified cells are then **infused back into the patient's bloodstream** after being conditioned to multiply more effectively.

- Because these cells are even more specific than targeted agents and directly activate the patient's immune system against cancer, they are often called **"living drugs."**

Barriers to Widespread Use

- The **complexity of preparing CAR-T cells** has been a major barrier to their use.
- The **technical and human resources** required to administer this therapy are also considerable.
- The **prohibitive cost** of CAR-T cell therapy has placed it beyond the reach of many.

NexCAR19

- In 2024, India launched its **first indigenously developed CAR-T cell therapy, "NexCAR19."**
 - Considered the **world's most affordable CAR-T therapy**, NexCAR19 has been developed by **IIT Bombay** in collaboration with the **Tata Memorial Centre** and industry partner **ImmunoACT**.

14.2. ASTROSAT

About

- ASTROSAT is **India's first dedicated multi-wavelength space observatory**.
- ASTROSAT is designed to observe the universe in the **visible, ultraviolet, low and high energy X-ray regions of the electromagnetic spectrum simultaneously** with the help of its five payloads.
- **AstroSat with a lift-off mass of 1515 kg was launched in 2015 into a 650 km orbit by PSLV-C30 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.**
- Upon its successful deployment, India became the **fourth nation to host a dedicated space observatory, following the USA (Hubble), Russia (Spektr-R), and Japan (Suzaku).**
- Though **originally designed for a five-year mission**, it **continues to function and deliver valuable data even after ten years.**



- The **scientific objectives of ASTROSAT mission** are:
 - To understand high energy processes in **binary star systems** containing neutron stars and black holes;
 - *A binary star is a system of two gravitationally bound stars that orbit a common centre of mass called a barycentre.*
 - Estimate **magnetic fields of neutron stars**;
 - **Study star birth regions and high energy processes** in star systems lying beyond our galaxy;
 - Detect new briefly **bright X-ray sources** in the sky;
 - Perform a limited **deep field survey of the Universe in the Ultraviolet region.**

14.3. National Quantum Mission

About

- The Government of India approved the National Quantum Mission (NQM) in 2023 with the objective to **seed, nurture and scale up scientific and industrial R&D and create a vibrant & innovative ecosystem in Quantum Technology.**



What is Quantum Computing?

- Quantum computers use special units called **qubits** to **store and process information.**
- Unlike **regular computers**, where **classical bits can only be 0 or 1, qubits can be both 0 and 1 at the same time** (a state known as **quantum superposition**).

Potential of Quantum Technology:

- This ability to be in multiple states at once makes quantum computers different and **potentially much more powerful** than traditional ones. It can **solve problems much faster with more authenticity.**
- Quantum technology offers **unique security** when it comes to encryption, making quantum communication **hack-proof.**
- Quantum communication is **one of the safest ways of connecting two places** with high levels of code and **quantum cryptography cannot be decrypted or broken** by an external entity.
- Meanwhile, **quantum sensing** uses the principles of quantum mechanics to develop **new types of sensors with unprecedented sensitivity and accuracy.**
 - These sensors can measure physical quantities, such as temperature, magnetic fields, and gravitational waves, with higher precision than classical sensors.
- This technology has vast utilisation in **astronomy and astrophysics** and in solving the riddles of the universe.

Challenges associated with Quantum Computing:

- Superpositions can **collapse quickly.**
- The software programming is different, and **requires excellent error control and management.**
- Researchers have found it **hard to maintain physically stable configurations.** They are huge installations which must be housed in **super-cold, seismically stable places** since even passing trucks can cause errors through imperceptible tremors.
- **Special materials and rare helium isotopes** are used to manage cooling and shielding, quite apart from specialized semiconductors.



Objectives

- The mission, spearheaded by the **Department of Science and Technology**, targets developing **intermediate scale quantum computers with 50-1000 physical qubits in 8 years** in various platforms like superconducting and photonic technology.
- Establish **satellite-enabled quantum-secured communication** between **two ground stations over 2000 km within India** and extend this technology for **long-distance secure quantum communication with other countries**.
- The mission will help develop **magnetometers with high sensitivity** in atomic systems and Atomic Clocks for precision timing, communications and navigation.
 - *A magnetometer is a specialized device designed to measure the strength and direction of magnetic fields. Magnetometers are useful devices with applications in areas ranging from fundamental physics to medical imaging and navigation.*
- It will also support **design and synthesis of quantum materials** such as superconductors, novel semiconductor structures and topological materials for fabrication of quantum devices.
- **Single photon sources/detectors, entangled photon sources** will also be developed for quantum communications, sensing and metrological applications.
- **Four Thematic Hubs (T-Hubs)** will be set up in top academic and National R&D institutes on the domains - **Quantum Computing, Quantum Communication, Quantum Sensing & Metrology and Quantum Materials & Devices**.
 - Each T-Hub will follow the **Hub-Spoke-Spike model**, fostering a **cluster-based network** where research projects (Spokes) and individual research groups (Spikes) operate alongside central hubs.



REPORTS & INDICES

1) Fiscal Health Index 2026

What's in the news?

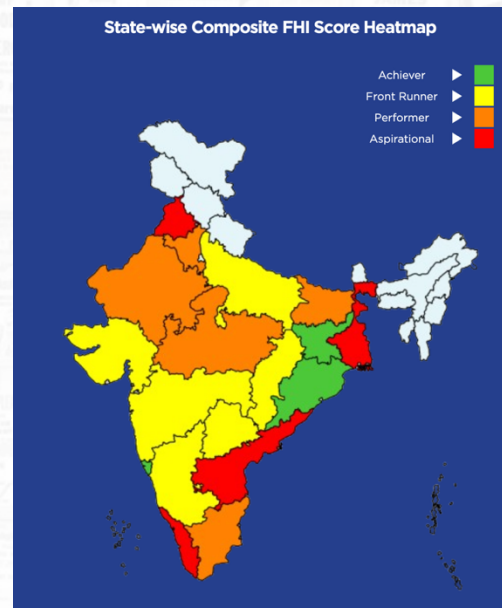
- NITI Aayog has released the second annual edition of the “Fiscal Health Index 2026”.

About the Index

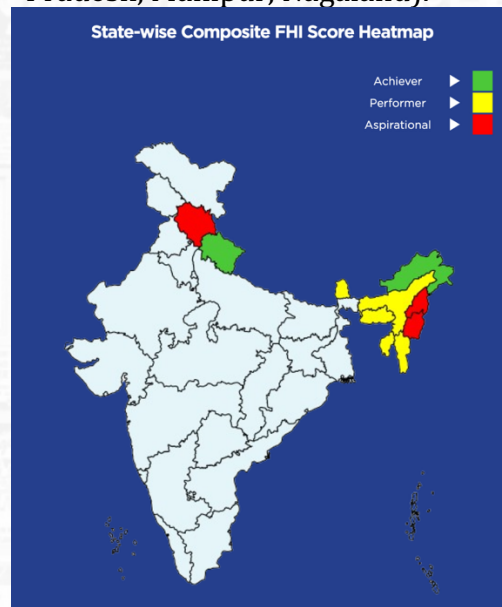
- The Fiscal Health Index provides a **comprehensive and comparable assessment of the fiscal performance of Indian states**.
- The Index has been designed as a **data-driven framework to evaluate fiscal soundness, guide reforms, and promote evidence-based fiscal policymaking** across states.
- The Index is built on **five key pillars of fiscal health** using data from the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)**:
 - **Quality of Expenditure,**
 - **Revenue Mobilisation,**
 - **Fiscal Prudence,**
 - **Debt Index,** and
 - **Debt Sustainability.**
- While the **first edition** assessed the **fiscal performance of 18 major states**, the **second edition** includes the **10 North-Eastern and Himalayan states**, making the Index more inclusive and representative.

Highlights of the Index

- Among the 18 major States, **Odisha** secured the top position in the index, followed by **Goa** and **Jharkhand**. These states are recognized as top '**Achievers**'.
 - Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka are categorized as '**Front-Runners**'.
 - '**Performers**' include Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan.
 - '**Aspirational**' category includes West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Punjab.



- The **North Eastern/Himalayan States** have been **ranked separately** from the major states and classified into **three groups** i.e., **Achievers** (Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand), **Performers** (Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura) and **Aspirational** (Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland).



- The report underlines the **need to strengthen revenue mobilisation, rationalise committed expenditure** to enhance fiscal flexibility, **improve the composition and effectiveness of capital expenditure**, and **advance fiscal**



transparency and public financial management systems to ensure sustainable fiscal outcomes.

2) World Happiness Report 2026

What's in the news?

- The Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford has published its **World Happiness Report 2026**.
- The rankings are based on responses from around 100,000 people across **140 countries and territories**, where participants rate their own lives on a scale from **0 (worst) to 10 (best)**, linked with **six variables** — GDP per capita, social support, life expectancy, freedom, generosity and corruption perception.
- The study was done in partnership with the analytics firm **Gallup** and the **U.N. Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**.

Sustainable Development Solutions Network:

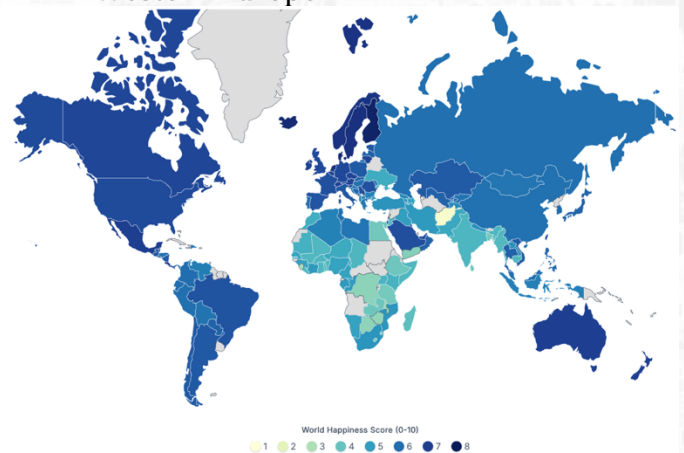
- SDSN was launched in **2012** by **UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon** to mobilize global scientific and technological expertise to **promote practical problem solving for sustainable development and implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- SDSN is committed to supporting the implementation of the SDGs at national and international levels.

Highlights of the Report

- **Finland** remains the happiest country in the world in 2026, holding the top spot for the **ninth consecutive year**.
- The Nordic countries, **Iceland** (2nd), **Denmark** (3rd), **Sweden** (5th), and **Norway** (6th), also rank among the top 10 happiest countries in 2026.
- The 2026 rankings showed a **notable absence of English-speaking countries**, with **none appearing in the top 10** for the second consecutive year.
- **Afghanistan**, at the bottom of the list at 147th, has once again been ranked the

world's unhappiest country, along with **Malawi** (145th) and **Sierra Leone** (146th), all affected by conflict.

- **India** improved its ranking from 126th in 2024 to 118th in 2025, rising two positions this year and currently standing at **116th** with a **life evaluation score of 4.536**.
- The report has linked **heavy social media use to a significant decline in well-being among young people**, with the impact especially severe for teenage girls in English-speaking countries and Western Europe.



3) Periodic Labour Force Survey Annual Report

About PLFS

- The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), conducted by **National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**, is the **primary source of data on activity participation and employment unemployment conditions** of the population.
- Launched in **2017**, the PLFS survey methodology was **revamped in 2025** to provide **monthly estimates of key employment indicators at the all-India level**, as well as **quarterly results for both rural and urban areas**.
 - Until then, PLFS provided quarterly urban figures and annual rural-urban estimates.
- The **annual PLFS results are now aligned to the calendar year** (January-



December), replacing the previous July-June reporting cycle.

Objectives

- The revamped PLFS design is envisaged to address the following objectives:
 - to estimate the **key employment and unemployment indicators** on a **monthly basis for rural and urban areas** in the **Current Weekly Status (CWS)** at all-India level;
 - to extend the coverage of the Quarterly results of PLFS to rural areas and thereby producing **quarterly estimates covering both rural and urban areas** of India in CWS;
 - to estimate **important employment and unemployment indicators** in **both usual status (ps+ss) and CWS** for rural and urban areas **annually**.

Definitions:

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** LFPR is defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR):** WPR is defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population.
- **Unemployment Rate (UR):** UR is defined as the percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.
- **Activity Status-Usual Status:** The activity status of a person is determined on the basis of the activities pursued by the person during the specified reference period. When the **activity status is determined** on the basis of the reference period of the **last 365 days preceding the date of survey**, it is known as the usual activity status of the person.
- **Principal activity status (ps):** The **activity status** on which a person spent

relatively long time during 365 days preceding the date of survey, was considered the usual principal activity status of the person.

- **Subsidiary economic activity status (ss):** The activity status in which a person **in addition to his/her usual principal status, performs some economic activity for 30 days or more** for the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey, was considered the subsidiary economic activity status of the person.
- **Activity Status - Current Weekly Status (CWS):** The activity status determined on the basis of a reference period of **last 7 days preceding the date of survey** is known as the current weekly status (CWS) of the person.

Why in News?

- The National Statistical Office (NSO) has published the Periodic Labour Force Survey annual report for 2025.

Highlights of the Report

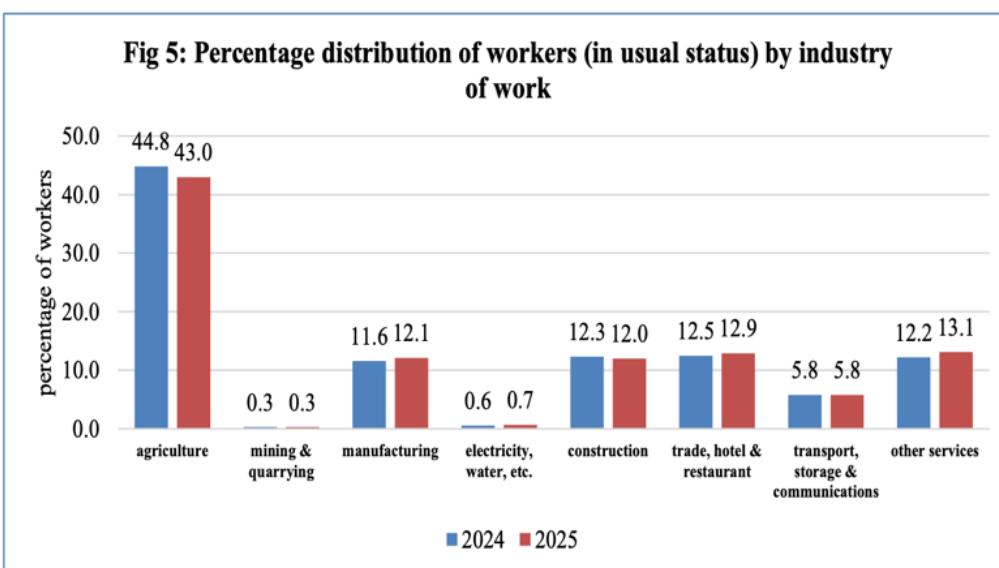
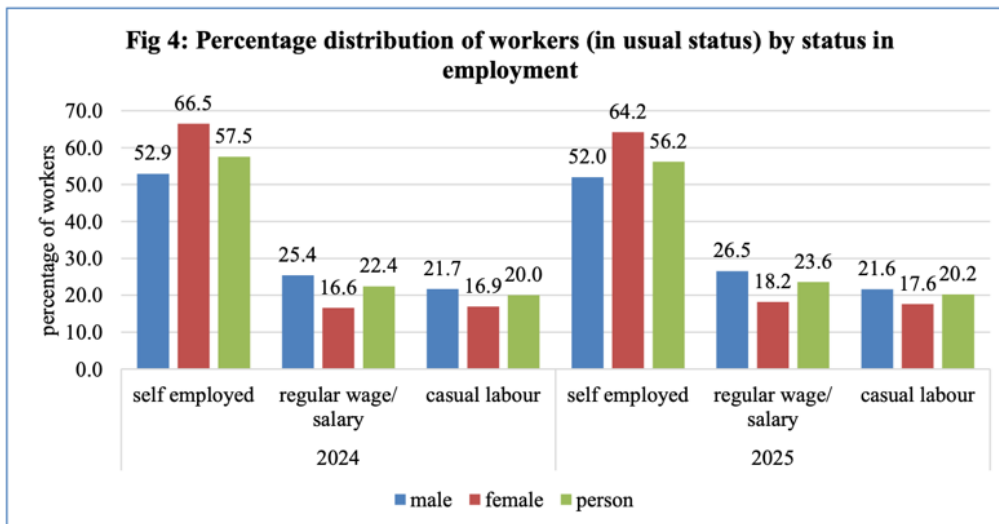
- The **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** in usual status (ps+ss) for persons of age 15 years and above was observed as **59.3%** during 2025.
 - The same for **male and female** stood at **79.1% and 40.0%** respectively.
 - Among **male, 69.8%** reported wanting to **continue studies as the main reason for not being in the labour force**, whereas among **female, 44.4%** cited **child care/personal commitments in home-making** as the main reason.
- The **Worker Population Ratio (WPR)** in usual status (ps+ss) for persons of age 15 years and above estimated as **57.4%** during 2025, remaining almost at the same level as in 2024.
 - In 2025, the **WPR for male and female** was **76.6% and 38.8%** respectively.



- The **Unemployment Rate (UR)** in usual status (ps+ss) for persons aged 15 years and above was **3.1%** for both male and female in 2025.
- **Youth** (age 15-29 years) **unemployment rate** in usual status (ps+ss) declined to **9.9%** in 2025 from 10.3% in 2024.
 - The **unemployment rate among rural youth** decreased to **8.3%** in 2025 from 8.7% in 2024, whereas among **urban youth** it fell to **13.6%** from 14.3% over the same period.
- The **proportion of workers in regular wage/ salaried employment** in usual

status (ps+ss) **increased to 23.6%** in 2025 compared to 22.4% in 2024.

- The **share of self-employed persons** has shown a **gradual decline** from 2023 to 2025, decreasing from 58.2% in 2023 to 57.5% in 2024 and further to **56.2%** in 2025.
- Over the period, the **manufacturing sector** has broadly witnessed an **increase in the proportion of workers engaged**, while the **agriculture sector has experienced a decline** in the **share of worker engagement**.
- Among persons aged 15-59 years, **4.2%** reported having **received/receiving formal vocational/ technical training**.



ART & CULTURE

1) Sahitya Akademi Award

About

- The Sahitya Akademi Award is a **literary honour** in India, conferred by the **Sahitya Akademi**, an **autonomous organization under the Ministry of Culture** dedicated to the promotion of Indian literature.
- The award's goals are to **identify emerging trends** in writing as well as to **recognise and promote excellence in Indian literature**.
- The award, instituted in **1954**, consists of a **plaque** and a **Rs. 1,00,000 cash reward**.



Did you know?

- The plaque awarded by the Sahitya Akademi was designed by the Indian film-maker Satyajit Ray.

Languages Recognised:

- In addition to the **22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution**, the Sahitya Akademi has designated **English and Rajasthani** as the languages chosen.

Conditions of Bestowing the Award:

- The author must be of **Indian origin**.
- The book/work must be an **excellent contribution to the language and literature**.
- When two or more works have similar worth, **specific factors** such as overall literary contribution and author status

must be considered before awarding a prize.

Why in News?

- The Sahitya Akademi has announced the winners of the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025, recognising outstanding literary works in 24 Indian languages.

2) Jnanpith Award

About

- The Jnanpith Award, considered the **highest literary award in India**, is awarded **annually** to authors for their **outstanding contribution towards literature**.
- Instituted in **1961**, the award is **bestowed only on Indian writers** writing in **Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India and English**, with **no posthumous conferral**.

Did you know?

- The **first recipient** of the award was **Malayalam writer G Sankara Kurup** in 1965 for his novel 'Odakkuzhal' (The Bamboo Flute).
- The award carries a **cash award**, a **citation**, and a **bronze replica of Vagdevi** (Hindu goddess Saraswati).
- The Award is **presented annually** by the **Bharatiya Jnanpith**, a literary and research organization, based in New Delhi.



Why in News?

- Tamil lyricist and author R. Vairamuthu has been selected for the Jnanpith Award, the nation's highest literary honour



DEFENCE & SECURITY

1) Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region

About

- The Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), **hosted by the Indian Navy**, was established by the Government of India at **Gurugram, Haryana** in 2018 to **further maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean Region**.
- The Centre aims at strengthening maritime security in the region by building a **common coherent maritime situation picture** and acting as a **maritime security information sharing hub**.



- Since its inception, the Centre has established working level linkages with more than 50 nations and multinational/maritime security centres.



PLACES IN NEWS

1) Somaliland

About

- Somaliland is a **self-governing region within Somalia**, located in the broader **Horn of Africa**.
- It shares a coastline along the **Gulf of Aden** to the north, borders **Ethiopia** to the south and west, and **Djibouti** to the northwest.
- The capital city is **Hargeisa**.
- Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991. Though **not internationally recognised**, Somaliland has a working political system, government institutions, a police force and its own currency.



Why in News?

- **Israel** has recognised Somaliland as an independent nation, sparking condemnation from many other countries.
 - Israel became the first in the world to do so, more than 30 years after the region declared independence from Somalia.
- Following the recognition, Somaliland granted Israel **access to parts of Berbera Port and Berbera Airport**, key facilities along the **Red Sea** that serve as vital hubs for trade and regional security.

2) Strait of Hormuz

About

- The Strait of Hormuz is a **narrow waterway** (only 30 miles wide at the narrowest point) located between the **Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman**.
- It is bounded to the **north by Iran** and to the **south by Oman** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.

Significance

- The Strait of Hormuz serves as the **only sea exit from the Persian Gulf into the Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean**, making it **one of the world's most strategically important choke points**.



- About a **fifth of the world's crude oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz** and any disruption to traffic can significantly affect global oil trade.

Did you know?

- **India**, the **world's third largest oil importer**, imports roughly half of its crude needs through the Strait of Hormuz.

Why in News?

- As the United States and Israel escalate military operations against Iran, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has declared the Strait of Hormuz closed and warned that any vessel



attempting to pass through the waterway would be attacked.

3) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

3.1. Baltic Sea

About

- The Baltic Sea is a **brackish inland sea**, a branch of the **Atlantic Ocean**.
 - It is enclosed by the Scandinavian peninsula and the north-east of central European landmass.

Did you know?

- The Baltic Sea is the **youngest sea** on our planet, emerging some 10,000-15,000 years ago as the glaciers retreated at the end of the last Ice Age.
- It is considered to be the **largest expanse of brackish water in the world**.

- Countries bordering the Baltic Sea: **Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Germany.**



MISCELLANEOUS

1) India wins Third ICC Men's T20 World Cup Title

About

- The **ICC Men's T20 World Cup** is the premier international championship for Twenty20 International cricket, organized by the **International Cricket Council (ICC)** every two years.
- It features **20 teams** playing in **20-over matches**.
- Inaugurated in **2007**, it is a major tournament to determine the world champion in the 20-over format.

Why in News?

- **India** scripted history by winning the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup** title for a record **third time**, beating **New Zealand** by 96 runs in the final match at **Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad**.

- With this, **India** has won the most **T20 World Cup titles (three)** and is the **only team to have successfully defended its crown**. **West Indies** and **England** are both **two-time champions**.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OTHER ARTICLES

1) Mascots Pragati, Vikas

News:

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah has unveiled two mascots, **Pragati** (female enumerator) and **Vikas** (male enumerator), for the **upcoming Population Census 2027**.



2) Durand Line

About

- The Durand Line is a 2,640-kilometer border **dividing modern Afghanistan and Pakistan**.
- The Durand Line was established during the tenure of **Mortimer Durand**, who served as the **Foreign Secretary of the Government of India** from 1884 to 1894.
- His time in office coincided with the **peak of the rivalry between British India and Russia**, also known as the **Great Game**, over **imperial expansion into Central Asia**.
- The legality of the Durand Line lies in Article 5 of the **Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1919**, which formally accepted the Durand Line as the boundary between Afghanistan and British-ruled India.

3) Operation Sankalp

About

- Operation Sankalp is an **ongoing Indian Navy initiative** launched in **2019** to **ensure the safety and security of Indian-flagged merchant vessels** in the **Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman**.

- It was initiated following regional maritime security incidents to protect critical energy trade routes and combat piracy, with warships deployed for surveillance and escort duties.

4) India sustains progress in reducing child deaths

News:

- According to the latest **UN report on child mortality** titled '**Levels and Trends in Child Mortality**', an estimated **4.9 million children died before their fifth birthday in 2024**, including 2.3 million newborns.
- The report said that **most of these deaths were preventable with proven, low-cost interventions and access to quality healthcare**.
- **India** is among the countries demonstrating **steady progress in reducing child mortality** through sustained public health efforts.
 - The **Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR)** recorded a decline from 1990. In 1990, India had an NMR of 57 per 1,000 live births, which fell to **17** in 2024.
 - Also, the **Under 5 Mortality Rate (U5MR)** witnessed a sharp fall — in 1990, the U5MR stood at 127 per 1,000 live births, while in 2024 it declined to **27**.

5) India's Fertilisers Imports

News:

- The ongoing U.S.–Israel–Iran conflict shows how India's agriculture and food security can be affected by global politics.
 - About **one-third of the world's urea trade** passes through the **Strait of Hormuz**.
- While **India** is **self-sufficient in the production of most food and non-food crops**, barring oilseeds and pulses, the



country continues to **rely heavily on imports for its fertilizer needs.**

- In 2025-26 (April-March), India is expected to import nearly 10 million tonnes (mt) of urea and 6.5 mt of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), as against domestic production of 30 mt and 3.5 mt respectively.
- The **share of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in India's urea imports is around 75% during 2024-25.** In DAP (India's second most-consumed fertiliser after urea), the largest source of India's imports is Saudi Arabia.

6) International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue

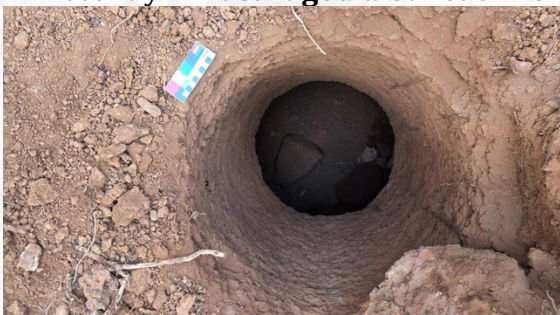
About

- The **International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR Convention)** is a maritime safety convention of the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** adopted in **Hamburg, Germany, in 1979.** It entered into force in 1985.
- The Convention is designed to improve existing arrangements and provide a framework for **carrying out search and rescue operations following accidents at sea.**
- **India is a signatory to the Convention, ratified in 2001.**

7) Ancient laterite rock-cut chamber unearthed in Kerala

News:

- A **laterite rock-cut chamber**, believed to be **nearly 2,000 years old** and linked to the **Megalithic period**, was unearthed recently in **Kasaragod district of Kerala.**



- Megalithic communities constructed such chambers by interring pottery of varying shapes and sizes as **part of ritual belief systems.**

8) Economic Stabilisation Fund

News:

- In response to the heightened geopolitical volatility in West Asia, the Union Government has created a **₹1 lakh crore 'Economic Stabilisation Fund'.**
- This dedicated fund is designed to **insulate the Indian economy from unforeseen external shocks** and maintain **long-term macroeconomic stability.**

9) Red Herring Prospectus

About

- A Red Herring Prospectus (RHP) is a **preliminary registration document for an Initial Public Offering (IPO).**
- It contains **all the vital business and financial data** of the company but typically **excludes the final price or the number of shares** being offered.
- It is used to generate interest and invite bids from potential investors.

10) UMANG

About

- **UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance)** is developed by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** and **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)** to drive **Mobile Governance** in India.
- Launched in 2017, UMANG provides a **single platform for all Indian Citizens to access pan India e-Gov services** ranging from **Central to Local Government bodies.**

11) Udyam Portal

About

- Udyam is an online system for **registering Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** in India.



- It was launched by the **Ministry of MSME** in 2020.
- Any person can avail a **free Udyam registration** for their enterprise through a fully digital and paperless process based on self-declaration.
- Udyam registration is a **prerequisite for availing the benefits of several schemes or programmes** of the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.
- Udyam Registration Number is a **permanent identification number**, and there will be no need for renewal of Registration.

12) India holds Fifth-Largest Coal Reserves

News:

- **India** is currently the **second-largest producer and consumer of coal globally**.
- The country holds the **fifth-largest coal reserves** in the world.
- Around 74 per cent of the country's electricity generation is based on coal-based thermal power plants.

13) PM e-VIDYA

About

- PM eVidya is an initiative of the **Ministry of Education** to **facilitate multi-mode access to digital/online teaching-learning contents** of various types among **students and teachers**.
- Launched in **2020** as an **emergency multi-mode digital education response amid the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown**, it caters the education content to all with its **multi-mode set-up of remote learning platforms** including **internet, radio, community radio, podcast, and TV**.

14) GOBARdhan

About

- Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan) is a major **multi-ministerial initiative** of the Government of India, aimed at **converting biodegradable/ organic waste,**

including cattle dung and agricultural residues and other biomass, **into valuable resources** such as biogas, compressed biogas (CBG), and organic manure.

- Launched in **2018** under **Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)**, it aims to **promote a circular economy** through a **"Whole of Government"** approach.

15) Exercise LAMITIYE-2026

News:

- The Indian Armed Forces recently participated in the 11th edition of **Joint Military Exercise LAMITIYE-2026** with the **Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF)**, held in Seychelles.

16) Advance Pricing Agreement

About

- An Advance Pricing Agreement (APA) is an **agreement between a taxpayer** (usually a multinational corporation, or MNC) and a **tax authority** (e.g., India's Central Board of Direct Taxes) that **pre-determines the method for calculating transfer prices for international transactions between related entities**.
 - *Transfer Pricing refers to the pricing of goods, services, or intangible assets exchanged between related entities of the same MNC across different tax jurisdictions.*

Purpose of APAs:

- MNCs often face **tax disputes** when tax authorities challenge their inter-company pricing (e.g., royalty payments, intra-group services). APAs **provide certainty** by fixing the pricing methodology upfront.
- Since the tax authority agrees in advance, the **risk of audits, penalties, and double taxation decreases**.

17) India eases rules to allow Chinese investments to enter

News:

- The Union Cabinet has amended its **2020 rules** that had **placed restrictions on Foreign Direct Investment** from



countries that shared a land border with India.

- The amendment now incorporates a provision of **'beneficial ownership'** and specifies that **companies with non-controlling stake** (up to 10%) **belonging to entities from these countries can invest in India without first seeking Indian government approval.**
- **Press Note 3**, issued in 2020, had specified that **any entity of a country that shares a land border** with India can invest in India **only after securing Government approval.**
 - While India shares borders with China, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Myanmar, the restrictions were primarily aimed at **limiting investments from China**, following the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020.

18) Only Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs can claim SC status: Supreme Court

News:

- The **Supreme Court** has ruled that **only individuals belonging to Hindu, Sikh, or Buddhist faiths are eligible to claim Scheduled Caste status.**
- Upholding an order of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, the Court clarified that **conversion to any other religion**, such as Christianity, results in the **immediate and complete loss of Scheduled Caste status.**
- The Court emphasised that this position is clearly established under the **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.**

19) AgriPV

About

- Agri-photovoltaics (AgriPV) is the **dual use of land that integrates solar**

systems with farming, allowing farmers to generate electricity and cultivate crops on the same parcel of land.

- The panels are mounted at a suitable height to allow farm operations below, and are spaced between crop rows to minimise conflict between agricultural production and energy generation.

20) India ranks second globally for children who are overweight

News:

- According to the World Obesity Atlas 2026, released by the World Obesity Federation (a global organisation focused on obesity), **nearly 15 million children aged five to nine years and more than 26 million children aged 10 to 19 years in India were overweight or obese in 2025.**
 - The **World Health Organization (WHO)** defines overweight and obesity as **abnormal or excessive fat accumulation** that presents a risk to health. A **body mass index (BMI) over 25** is considered **overweight**, and **over 30 is obese.**
- The Atlas found that **more than one in five (20.7%) children aged five to 19 worldwide are living with obesity and are overweight.**
 - This was an increase from 14.6% in 2010.
- **India stood second only to China in the number of children with high BMI.**
- Childhood obesity and being overweight can lead to **many of the same health conditions seen in adults**, including **hypertension and cardiovascular disease.**



PRACTICE WITH PYQS

1. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Labor and Employment.
2. It, among other things, will also impart training in soft skills, entrepreneurship, financial and digital literacy.
3. It aims to align the competencies of the unregulated workforce of the country to the National Skill Qualification Framework.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

2. Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana is aimed at (2016)

- A. Bringing the small entrepreneurs into formal financial system
- B. Providing loans to poor farmers for cultivating particular crops
- C. Providing pensions to old and destitute persons
- D. Funding the voluntary organizations involved in the promotion of skill development and employment generation

3. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 replaced the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954.
2. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is under the charge of Director General of Health Services in the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

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. With reference to Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, consider the following statements: (2022)

1. Private and public hospitals must adopt it.
2. As it aims to achieve universal health coverage, every citizen of India should be part of it ultimately.
3. It has seamless portability across the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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



5. 'Mission Indradhanush' launched by the Government of India pertains to (2016)

- A. Immunization of children and pregnant women
- B. Construction of smart cities across the country
- C. India's own search for the Earth-like planets in outer space
- D. New Educational Policy

6. With reference to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, consider the following statements: (2024)

While any resolution for the removal of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha is under consideration

- 1. He/She shall not preside.
- 2. He/She shall not have the right to speak.
- 3. He/She shall not be entitled to vote on the resolution in the first instance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

7. Consider the following statements: (2020)

- 1. The weightage of food in Consumer Price Index (CPI) is higher than that in Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
- 2. The WPI does not capture changes in the prices of services, which CPI does.
- 3. The Reserve Bank of India has now adopted WPI as its key measure of inflation and to decide on changing the key policy rates.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

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

8. The term 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of (2016)

- A. Pledges made by the European countries to rehabilitate refugees from the war-affected Middle East
- B. Plan of action outlined by the countries of the world to combat climate change
- C. Capital contributed by the member countries in the establishment of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- D. Plan of action outlined by the countries of the world regarding Sustainable Development Goals

9. With reference to the Agreement at the UNFCCC Meeting in Paris in 2015, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2016)

- 1. The Agreement was signed by all the member countries of the UN and it will go into effect in 2017.
- 2. The Agreement aims to limit greenhouse gas emissions so that the rise in average global temperature by the end of this century does not exceed 2°C or even 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.



3. Developed countries acknowledged their historical responsibility in global warming and committed to donate \$1000 billion a year from 2020 to help developing countries to cope with climate change.

Select the correct answer using the code given below

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

10. Consider the following pairs: (2016)

Terms have sometimes seen in the news

1. Annex-I Countries
2. Certified Emissions Reductions
3. Clean Development Mechanism

Their origin

- Cartagena Protocol
- Nagoya Protocol
- Kyoto Protocol

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

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

11. Consider the following countries: (2015)

1. China
2. France
3. India
4. Israel
5. Pakistan

Which among the above are Nuclear Weapons States as recognized by the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)?

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

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

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

Select the correct answer using the code given below

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



13. India is one of the founding members of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a multimodal transportation corridor, which will connect (2025)

- A. India to Central Asia to Europe via Iran
- B. India to Central Asia via China
- C. India to South-East Asia through Bangladesh and Myanmar
- D. India to Europe through Azerbaijan

14. What is/are the purpose/purposes of 'District Mineral Foundations' in India?

- 1. Promoting mineral exploration activities in mineral-rich districts
- 2. Protecting the interests of the persons affected by mining operations
- 3. Authorizing State Governments to issue licenses for mineral exploration

Select the correct answer using the code given below

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

15. Consider the following statements in respect of BIMSTEC: (2025)

- 1. It is a regional organization consisting of seven member States till January 2025.
- 2. It came into existence with the signing of the Dhaka Declaration, 1999.
- 3. Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Nepal are founding member States of BIMSTEC.
- 4. In BIMSTEC, the subsector of 'tourism' is being led by India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. I and II
- B. II and III
- C. I and IV
- D. I only

16. Consider the following countries: (2025)

- 1. Austria
- 2. Bulgaria
- 3. Croatia
- 4. Serbia
- 5. Sweden
- 6. North Macedonia

How many of the above are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization?

- A. Only three
- B. Only four
- C. Only five
- D. All the six



17. With reference to the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), consider the following statements: (2018)

1. IRNSS has three satellites in geostationary and four satellites in geosynchronous orbits.
2. IRNSS covers entire India and about 5500 sq. km beyond its borders.
3. India will have its own satellite navigation system with full global coverage by the middle of 2019.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. None

18. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The Earth's magnetic field has reversed every few hundred thousand years.
2. When the Earth was created more than 4000 million years ago, there was 54% oxygen and no carbon dioxide.
3. When living organisms originated, they modified the early atmosphere of the Earth.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

19. Which of the following are the reasons for the occurrence of multi-drug resistance in microbial pathogens in India? (2018)

1. Genetic predisposition of some people
2. Taking incorrect doses of antibiotics to cure diseases
3. Using antibiotics in livestock farming
4. Multiple chronic diseases in some people

Select the correct answer using the code given below

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

20. 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 |



- (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

21. With reference to 'Astrosat', the astronomical observatory launched by India, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2016)

1. Other than USA and Russia, India is the only country to have launched a similar observatory into space.
2. Astrosat is a 2000 kg satellite placed in an orbit at 1650 km above the surface of the Earth.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answers:

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

