

For UPSC CSE



MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE



JUNE 2026

YOUR SIMPLIFIED GUIDE TO CURRENT AFFAIRS



A Note to Our Readers

Dear Readers,

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

The content for the 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) and DD News**, ensuring coverage that is both relevant and reliable.

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

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

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

With best wishes,
Team Simply Current Affairs.



Mr. Guna Mathivanan,
Founder-Director, Simply Current Affairs



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SCHEMES

1) Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan

About 	Launched in 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyaan (PMSMA) provides free, quality antenatal care to pregnant women, particularly in the second and third trimesters.
Nodal Ministry 	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Features 	- Conducted on the 9th of every month — at designated government health facilities, the initiative aims to ensure early risk detection, timely medical interventions, and safer pregnancies. - PMSMA also invites active participation from private practitioners on a voluntary basis. - Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) and Anganwadi Worker (AWW) play a pivotal role in mobilization of the community and potential beneficiaries in both rural and urban areas for availing of services during the PMSMA.  PRADHAN MANTRI SURAKSHIT MATRITVA ABHIYAN 9th of Every Month Did you know? - India has achieved a 43 points reduction in Maternal Mortality Ratio, bringing it down from 130 to 87 maternal deaths per lakh live births between 2014-16 and 2022-24.
Why in News? 	The Government of India is commemorating 10 years of PMSMA.



2) PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

About 	- PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (PM-SGMBY) is the world's largest domestic rooftop solar initiative which aims to provide free electricity upto 300 units per month to eligible households in India by promoting rooftop solar plant installations. - Launched in 2024, the scheme aims to install rooftop solar in one crore households nationwide.
Nodal Ministry 	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
Features 	- Under the scheme, the households who opt to install rooftop solar electricity units will get 300 units of electricity for free every month. - The scheme focuses on the household segment with up to 3 kW systems, which covers most of the residential consumers in India. - The initiative offers a subsidy of 60% of the solar unit cost for systems up to 2 kW capacity and 40% for systems between 2 and 3 kW capacity, with benefits capped at 3 kW. - Households will also be able to access collateral-free low-interest loan products of around 7% for installation of residential Rooftop Solar systems up to 3 kW. - Through this scheme, the households will be able to save electricity bills as well as earn additional income through sale of surplus power to DISCOMs. - A Model Solar Village will be developed in each district of the country to act as a role model for adoption of rooftop solar in rural areas.
Eligibility criteria for availing subsidy 	- The applicant must be a citizen of India. - Must own a house with a roof that is suitable for installing solar panels. - There should be a valid electricity connection to the property. - Subsidy is provided only once per household.
Why in News? 	40 lakh households have been covered with rooftop solar under PM Surya Ghar scheme.



3) Samagra Shishu Bal Swasthya Karyakram

What's in News? 	In a significant step towards strengthening newborn and child healthcare services across the country, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched the Samagra Shishu Bal Swasthya Karyakram (SSBSK).
About 	- It is a unified national programme that provides a seamless continuum of home and community-based care for every child from birth to 36 months of age. - The programme integrates the existing Home-Based Newborn Care (HBNC) and Home-Based Care for Young Child (HBYC) programmes into a single comprehensive framework.
Nodal Ministry 	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Features 	- Recognising the critical importance of the first 28 days for newborn survival and the first three years for optimal brain development, the initiative integrates home-based newborn care, risk-based screening, maternal mental health support, digital child tracking and continuous monitoring. - A key feature of SSBSK is the introduction of a risk-stratified approach for newborns and young children identified as 'At-risk' due to conditions such as low birth weight, prematurity, delayed initiation of breastfeeding, discharge from newborn care units, malnutrition, recurrent illness or developmental delays. - These children will receive intensified follow-up through additional home visits by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), Community Health Officers (CHOs) and Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) tailored to their level of risk.

4) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

4.1. Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana

About 	- In 2025, the Government of India launched a new Employment-Linked Incentive Scheme, officially titled Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY). - The scheme provides incentive of up to Rs 15,000 in two instalments to newly employed youth and upto Rs 3000 per month per new employee to employers for creation of new job opportunities.
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Aim 	With an outlay of Rs 1 lakh crore, the scheme aims to support creation of over 3.5 crore jobs in two years.
Implementation 	The scheme is operated by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
Features 	Part A – Support to First-Time Employees: Targeting first-time employees registered with EPFO, this Part will offer one-month wage up to Rs 15,000 in two installments. - The 1st instalment will be payable after 6 months of service and the 2nd instalment will be payable after 12 months of service and completion of a financial literacy programme by the employee. Employees with salaries up to Rs 1 lakh will be eligible for the incentives. - All payments to the first time employees will be made through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode using Aadhaar Bridge Payment System (ABPS). Aadhaar Payment Bridge System: - It is a unique payment system implemented by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which uses Aadhaar number as a central key for electronically channelizing the Government subsidies and benefits in the Aadhaar Enabled Bank Accounts (AEBA) of the intended beneficiaries. Part B – Incentives for Employers: - This part will encourage generation of additional employment in all sectors, with a special focus on the manufacturing sector. - The Government will incentivize employers, up to Rs 3000 per month, for two years, for each additional employment with salaries up to Rs 1 lakh, sustained for at least six months. - For the manufacturing sector, incentives will be extended to the 3rd and 4th years as well. - Payments to the employers under Part B will be made directly into their PAN-linked Accounts.
Why in News? 	Prime Minister Narendra Modi disbursed incentives amounting to ₹2,400 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana.

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation:

- EPFO is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Labour & Employment**.
- It administers the **Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952** and the **Schemes framed thereunder (Employees' Provident Funds Scheme 1952, Employees' Pension Scheme 1995, and Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme 1976)** under the overall supervision of the **Central Board of Trustees (CBT)**.



- CBT is a **tripartite body** having representatives from employer organisations, employee unions and Central & State Governments.
- The **Union Minister for Labour & Employment** is the **Chairman** of the Board.

Employees' Provident Fund:

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

4.2. Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan

About 	• Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (Drugs-Free India Campaign), launched in 2020, is a nationwide campaign addressing substance abuse through prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
Nodal Ministry 	• Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment,
Features 	• The campaign is backed by a three-pronged strategy—supply control, demand reduction, and medical treatment. • Initially implemented in 272 high-risk districts, the Abhiyaan has since expanded to encompass all districts nationwide.

4.3. PM-KISAN

About 	• Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% funding from Government of India.
Aim 	• The scheme aims to provide financial assistance to landholding farmer families across the country.
Features	• Launched in 2019, the Scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families across the country, holding cultivable land upto



	2 hectares. Its ambit was later expanded to cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their land holdings. • Under the Scheme, Rs. 6000/- per year is transferred in three installments of Rs. 2000/- directly into the bank accounts of the farmers, subject to certain exclusion criteria.
Exclusions 	• Excluded from the scheme: ◦ Institutional land holders, ◦ Farmer families holding constitutional posts, ◦ Serving or retired officers and employees of state/central government as well as PSUs and government autonomous bodies. ◦ Professionals like doctors, engineers and lawyers as well as retired pensioners with a monthly pension of over Rs 10,000 and ◦ Those who paid income tax in the last assessment year. • The responsibility of identifying the eligible beneficiary farmers under the scheme is entirely with the state governments.

4.4. Bharatmala Pariyojana

About 	• Bharatmala Pariyojana is an umbrella scheme launched in 2017.
Nodal Ministry 	• Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)
Aim 	• The scheme aims to optimize the efficiency of movement, both freight and passenger, across India by developing critical infrastructure – corridors, highways, waterways, etc. • It also aims to create direct and indirect employment in the sector besides enabling National Highway linkages for over 500 districts in the country.
Features 	• Improvement in the quality of roads; • Improvement in the efficiency of corridors through operationalization of Multimodal Logistics Parks and by addressing the issue of choke points; • Improvement in the levels of connectivity in the North East and also increasing alignment of connectivity efforts with inland waterways; • Emphasis on the use of science and technology in planning, implementing and monitoring of the programme.



4.5. PM MITRA Parks

About 	The PM MITRA Scheme, announced in 2021, aims to develop large scale and integrated textile parks to help the Indian textiles industry to build scale, reduce logistics costs and improve its competitiveness.
Nodal Ministry 	Ministry of Textiles.
Aim 	Anchored in the 5F vision (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign), the scheme aims to facilitate India's textile industry to achieve global size and scale along with the creation of a modern and integrated textile value chain at one location covering the entire value chain.
Features 	- Under this scheme, the Government has approved 7 sites for setting up of PM MITRA Parks, one each in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. - The scheme envisages a Development Capital Support (DCS) of 30% of the total project cost upto Rs. 500 crore for Greenfield Park and Rs. 200 crore for Brownfield Park. - The scheme also envisages a Competitive Incentive Support (CIS) of upto Rs. 300 crore per park as an incentive to manufacturing units to set up early in the park. - The scheme aims to create nearly 20 lakh direct and indirect jobs.



INITIATIVES

1) IndiaAI Mission

About

- Launched in **2024**, the IndiaAI Mission aims to establish a **comprehensive ecosystem catalyzing AI innovation** through strategic programs and partnerships across the public and private sectors.

What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

- AI is the **ability of machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence.**
- It **enables systems to learn from experience, adapt to new situations, and solve complex problems independently.**



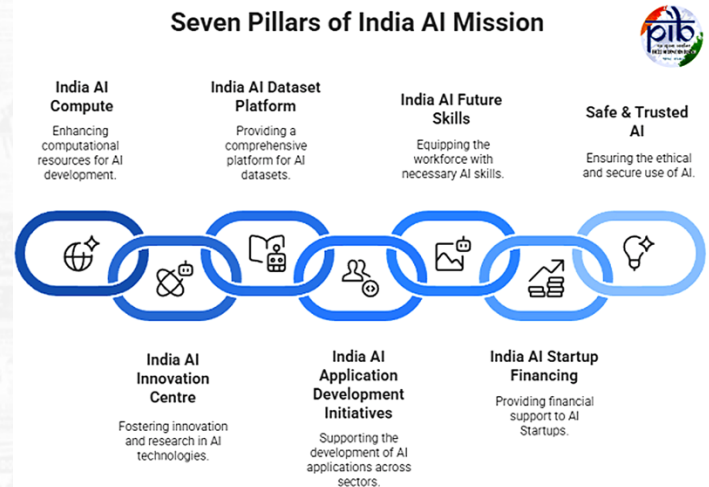
- Implemented by **IndiaAI**, an independent business division under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, the mission aims to drive innovation, support startups, strengthen data access, and ensure the **responsible use of AI for public good.**

7 Pillars of IndiaAI Mission

1. IndiaAI Compute Capacity:

- This pillar aims to provide **high-end compute power (GPUs) to Indian startups and academia at an affordable cost.**
 - A Graphics Processing Unit (GPU) is a powerful computer chip that helps machines think faster, process images, run AI programs, and handle complex tasks more efficiently than a regular processor.*
- This platform where AI will be offered is called **AI Marketplace.**

Seven Pillars of India AI Mission



2. IndiaAI Innovation Centre:

- These Centre will undertake the **development and deployment of indigenous Large Multimodal Models (LMMs) and domain-specific foundational models** in critical sectors.

3. IndiaAI Datasets Platform (AI Kosh):

- AI Kosh (dataset platform) aims to **collect, clean and offer ethical access for non-personal high-quality datasets** to Indian researchers and startups for AI Innovation.

4. IndiaAI Application Development Initiative:

- This pillar aims to **develop AI applications for India specific challenges in sectors** such as climate change and disaster management, healthcare, agriculture, governance, and assistive technologies for learning disabilities.

5. IndiaAI FutureSkills:

- It is conceptualized to **mitigate barriers to entry into AI programs** and will increase AI courses in undergraduate, masters-level, and Ph.D. programs.
- Further, **Data and AI Labs will be set-up in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities** across India to impart foundational level courses.

6. IndiaAI Startup Financing:

- This pillar is conceptualized to **support and accelerate deep-tech AI startups** and provide them streamlined access to funding to enable futuristic AI Projects.



7. Safe & Trusted AI:

- This pillar will enable the implementation of **Responsible AI projects** including the development of indigenous tools and frameworks, self-assessment checklists for innovators, and other guidelines and governance frameworks.

Why in News?

- Homegrown AI startup **Avataar** has announced the launch of **Varya**, an indigenous video-generation AI model developed with support from the IndiaAI Mission.
- The model uses an **advanced distillation technique** that reduces the video-generation process from 50 steps to just four while maintaining comparable output quality at an affordable price.

What is Distilled Video Generation?

- Distilled video generation is a **model compression technique from machine learning** where a compact "student" model replicates the outputs of a larger, slower "teacher" model transferring capabilities while eliminating redundant computation.
- Standard video models iterate through over 50 noisy steps before producing clean output; distillation teaches the student to skip most steps and deliver the same quality in just a few iterations.

2) Government e-Marketplace

About

- Launched in **2016**, the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is **India's national public procurement portal** with a mission to **enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement**.
- The **fully digital, cashless platform** is a **100 percent government-owned non-profit company** set up under the aegis of the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The government has made **procurement of products and services available on GeM mandatory** to all the **central government ministries, departments and central government organisations**.
- In 2022, the government gave its approval for expanding the mandate of GeM to **allow**

procurement by Cooperatives as buyers on GeM.

- As per existing mandate, **GeM is not available for use by private sector buyers. Suppliers (sellers) can be from across all segments: government or private.**



Womaniya Initiative

- GeM launched the **Womaniya initiative** in 2019 to **enable women entrepreneurs and women self-help groups [SHGs]** to sell products manufactured by women to various ministries, government departments and institutions.
 - The move aligns with the Government's **mandate to reserve 3 per cent in state procurement from women-owned and women-led enterprises.**

Why in News?

- The GeM platform hosts over 1.36 lakh government buyers and nearly 25 lakh sellers and service providers, with nearly 72% of active sellers comprising Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs).

3) 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.

Why in News?

- The Union Health Ministry has launched the **Unified Health Interface (UHI)**, an **interoperable digital network under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission**, that will allow patients to **discover, book and access verified healthcare services across multiple digital platforms** without being tied to a single application.
- Launched as the **service layer of the ABDM**, UHI seeks to **address fragmentation in India's digital health ecosystem** by enabling patients and healthcare providers to connect irrespective of the application they use.
 - At present, both users and providers must be on the same application to interact, limiting access and choice.
- UHI operates through **open protocols on the ABDM Gateway**, developed and maintained by the **National Health Authority**.

4) Overseas Citizens of India

Who are OCI?

- The **Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme** was introduced by amending the **Citizenship Act, 1955** in 2005.
- The scheme provides for the **registration of Persons of Indian Origin (PIO)** as **Overseas Citizens of India**, provided they were **citizens of India on or after 26th January 1950**, or were **eligible to become citizens on that date**.
 - A **PIO** means a **foreign citizen** whose **ancestors were a permanent Indian resident** and, at some point, held an **Indian passport**.
- However, **individuals** who are or had been or whose **parent or grandparent or great grandparent citizens of Pakistan or Bangladesh** (or such other country as the



Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify) **are not eligible.**

Benefits & Restrictions:

- A registered OCI is granted **multiple entry, multipurpose, life-long visa** for visiting India and he/she is **exempted from registration with Foreign Regional Registration Officer or Foreign Registration Officer** for any length of stay in India.
- OCI is **entitled to general parity with Non-Resident Indians** in respect of all facilities available to them in **economic, financial and educational fields except in matters relating to the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties.**
- The OCI card holder is **NOT entitled:**
 - To **vote;**
 - To be a **member of a Legislative Assembly or of a Legislative Council or of the Parliament of India;**
 - To **hold Indian constitutional posts** such as that of the President, Vice President, Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court etc.;
 - He/she **cannot normally hold employment in the Government;**
 - To undertake any **Missionary work, Mountaineering and Journalism work without prior permission** of the Govt. of India;
 - OCI cardholder shall also **require Protected Area Permit (PAP)/Restricted Area Permit (RAP)** to visit any place which falls within the Protected/Restricted Area notified by the Government as in the case of any other foreigner.

Why in News?

- The Government of India has introduced the **e-OCI facility**, aimed at transforming OCI services for the global Indian diaspora through a fully digital system.
- Under this system, applicants can complete the entire OCI process online - from submitting the application and uploading supporting documents to downloading the digitally generated card after approval.

5) UPI in Cambodia

About UPI

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is a **real-time payment system** that enables **instant money transfers between bank accounts** through a **mobile application**, using a **single identifier** (like a mobile number or a Virtual Payment Address (VPA)) **without needing to enter bank account details.**
- It is built on the **Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) infrastructure.**

Immediate Payment Service:

- IMPS is an **instant payment system** developed by the **National Payments Corporation of India** that enables **real-time interbank fund transfers.**
- It is available **24/7, including weekends and public holidays**, allowing users to send and receive money instantly across India.
- With IMPS, any user can transfer funds **as low as Rs.1.** The per transaction limit on IMPS is **Rs. 5 lakh.**

- UPI brings **multiple bank accounts into a single app** and **supports various features** such as **fund transfers, merchant payments, and peer-to-peer payment requests.**
- UPI was developed by the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** in 2016.

National Payments Corporation of India:

- NPCI is an **umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems** in India.
- It was established in **2008** as a **"Not for Profit" Company** under the **Companies Act 1956 (now Companies Act 2013).**
- NPCI is an **initiative of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks' Association (IBA)** under the provisions of the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**, for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure and **promoting financial inclusion** in India.

How is it unique?

- **Immediate money transfer** through mobile device **round the clock 24*7 and 365 days.**
- **Single Click 2 Factor Authentication.**



- **Virtual address of the customer** for Pull & Push provides for incremental security with the customer **not required to enter the details** such as Card no, Account number; IFSC etc.
- UPI facilitates **both peer-to-peer (P2P) and peer-to-merchant (P2M) payments**.



Did you know?

- India's UPI is now the **world's number one real-time payment system**. It has surpassed Visa to take the lead in processing daily transactions. UPI handles more than 640 million transactions every day, compared to Visa's 639 million.

UPI in Other Countries

- UPI is now live in **eight countries**, including the **UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius** and **Qatar**.

Why in News?

- The Reserve Bank of India has announced that the UPI services will now be available in **Cambodia**.

6) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

6.1. PM-WANI

About

- Prime Minister's WiFi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) is an initiative of the **Department of Telecommunication, Ministry of Communications** to **enhance the proliferation of public WiFi hotspots** to create robust digital communications infrastructure in the country, especially in rural areas.
- Launched in **2020**, PM-WANI aims to build a **decentralized network of public Wi-Fi hotspots**, enabling **local shops and establishments** to provide **last-mile**

internet delivery without requiring a licence or paying a registration fee.



Working of PM-WANI

- To **access public hotspots** under the PM-WANI scheme one needs to download a **relevant App** which shows the available networks.
- The user can then choose from a list of available connections and **make a payment to use the network**. The user can access the network till his/her balance is exhausted.

Components of PM-WANI

- The PM-WANI ecosystem consists of **four parts: Public Data Office (PDO), Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA), App Provider, and Central Registry**.
 - PDO establishes the Wi-Fi Hotspots and provides internet access to users.
 - PDOA provides authorisation and accounting services to PDOs.
 - The app provider displays the available hotspots in the phone's proximity.
 - The central registry, which is overseen by the **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)**, maintains details of App Providers, PDOs, and PDOAs.

Centre for Development of Telematics:

- C-DOT is the **Telecom Technology development centre** of the **Government of India**.
- It was established in **1984** as an **autonomous body**.
- It was vested with full authority and total flexibility to develop state-of-the-art telecommunication technology to meet the needs of the Indian telecommunication network.



6.2. DigiLocker

About

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



- The issued documents in DigiLocker system are **deemed to be at par with original physical documents** as per the Information Technology (Preservation and Retention of Information by Intermediaries providing Digital Locker facilities) Rules, 2016.
- DigiLocker is designed with **robust security measures** to ensure data and privacy protection. Key practices include:
 - 2048-Bit SSL Encryption:** Ensures secure data transmission.
 - Multi-Factor Authentication:** Includes OTP, biometric, and PIN validation for sign-up and sign-in.
 - ISO 27001 Certified Hosting:** Data is stored in secure, certified facilities.

6.3. GI Tag

About

- Geographical Indication (GI) is a **specialized form of Intellectual Property Right (IPR)** that **identifies a product as originating from a specific**

geographical region and which **possess characteristics or reputation tied to that region.**

- It is used for **agricultural, natural and manufactured goods.**

Did you know?

- Darjeeling tea** became the first GI tagged product in India.
- In terms of Statewide GI registered, **Uttar Pradesh** has the highest registration, followed by **Tamil Nadu** and **West Bengal.**
- The registration of GI is valid for **10 years** after which it needs to be renewed.



Regulations

- Unlike trademarks that protect individual brand owners, **GI tags are collective rights**; they belong to all authorized producers within the defined geographical region.
- A GI **cannot be transferred, assigned, or licensed** like traditional intellectual property because its value is tied inherently to its location.
- In India, GI is given under the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.**
 - The Act aligns with **India's obligations under the World Trade Organization (WTO) TRIPS Agreement (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights)**, which mandates member countries to recognize and protect geographical indications.



- The **GIs Registry** is **headquartered in Chennai**, and administers applications and registrations of GI tags.
- The **Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks**, under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, serves as the **Registrar of Geographical Indications**.

Significance

- A GI tag serves as a **certification of authenticity**, ensuring that only those goods actually produced within the designated region, and adhering to the prescribed standards, can legally use the registered name.
- GI protection helps **preserve traditional practices and supports rural economies** by boosting the market value of local and indigenous products.
- Registration affords **better legal protection** to facilitate an action for infringement.

Did you know?

- India has set an ambitious target of reaching **10,000 GI tags by 2030**. Currently, there are over 800 GI tags in the country.

birth anniversary of Sardar Patel and to **revive a sense of 'nationhood'**.

- The programme aims to **actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures** living in different States and UTs in India, with the objective of promoting greater mutual understanding amongst them.
- As per the programme, each year, **every State/UT would be paired with another State/UT** in India for **reciprocal interaction** between the people.
 - The states carry out activities to promote a sustained and structured cultural connect in the areas of language learning, culture, traditions & music, tourism & cuisine, sports and sharing of best practices, etc.
- The **Ministry of Education** has been designated as the Nodal Ministry for co-ordination of the programme.

Did you know?

- The **Ministry of Education** has developed a **mobile app 'Bhasha Sangam'** to foster the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat by **enabling people across India to learn different languages of different states of India** and come closer to their culture.

6.4. Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

About

- 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' was launched by the Government of India on **31st October, 2015** to commemorate the **140th**



The broad objectives of the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' initiative are as follows:



CELEBRATE

the Unity in Diversity of our Nation and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our Country.



PROMOTE

the spirit of national integration through a deep and structured engagement between all Indian States and Union Territories through a year-long planned engagement between States.



SHOWCASE

the rich heritage and culture, customs and traditions of either State for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity that is India, thus fostering a sense of common identity.



ESTABLISH

long-term engagements.



CREATE

an environment which promotes learning between States by sharing best practices and experiences.



POLITY

1) PCPNDT Act

About

- The **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994** was enacted in 1994 to **stop female foeticides and arrest the declining sex ratio** in India.

Key Provisions of the Act

- The Act provides for the **prohibition of sex selection, before or after conception.**
- It **regulates the use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques**, like ultrasound machines by allowing their use only to detect :- genetic abnormalities, metabolic disorders, chromosomal abnormalities, certain congenital malformations, haemoglobinopathies, Sex linked disorders.
- No laboratory or centre or clinic will conduct any test including ultrasonography for the purpose of determining the sex of the foetus.**
- No person**, including the one who is conducting the procedure as per the law, will **communicate the sex of the foetus** to the pregnant woman or her relatives by words, signs or any other method.
- The Act **mandates compulsory registration** of all diagnostic laboratories, all genetic counselling centres, genetic laboratories, genetic clinics and ultrasound clinics.
- The Act provides for the constitution of a **Central Supervisory Board (CSB)** whose function is mainly **advisory** and for the appointment of an **Appropriate Authorities (AAs)** in States and Union Territories to **enforce the law and penalize defaulters.**
- Offences** under this act include **conducting or helping in the conduct of prenatal diagnostic technique** in the unregistered units, **sex selection** on a man or woman, **conducting PNDT test** for any purpose other than the one mentioned in the act, **sale, distribution, supply, renting etc. of any ultra sound machine or any other equipment** capable of detecting sex of the foetus.

Why in News?

- The Supreme Court has observed that deep-seated patriarchal preferences towards a male child and the behind the curtains prevalence of sex-selection practices continue to exist in the country, and has called for strict enforcement of the PCPNDT Act.

2) Cabinet approves increase in the Judge strength of SC to 37

Background

- Article 124 (1) of Constitution of India** provided "There shall be a **Supreme Court of India** consisting of a **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** and, **until Parliament by law prescribes a larger number, of not more than seven other Judges.**"
- To increase the Court's strength, Parliament enacted the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956**, raising the number of judges (excluding the CJI) from 7 to **10**. Subsequently, the sanctioned strength was increased to **13** in 1960 and to **17** in 1977 through amendments to the Act.
 - The **working strength** of the Court was, however, **restricted to 15 Judges by the Cabinet, excluding the Chief Justice of India**, till the end of **1979**, when the **restriction was withdrawn at the request of the Chief Justice of India.**
- Thereafter, the strength of the Court was **progressively expanded**: from 17 to **25** judges in 1986, from 25 to **30** in 2008, and from 30 to **33** in 2019.

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026** in Parliament.
- The proposed legislation seeks to **amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956** for **increasing the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court** from 33 to **37 judges, excluding the Chief Justice of India.**



3) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

3.1. SHANTI Act

About

- The **Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025**, was passed by the Parliament to allow **participation of private entities in the nuclear sector**.
- It seeks to **repeal the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010**, and replace them with a single, comprehensive law aligned with India's present and future energy requirements.

Key Provisions of the Act

Private Sector Integration:

- The Act **opens India's nuclear power sector to private and foreign participation**, which was earlier entirely State-controlled and deeply regulated.
- Under the Act, the **private sector** can seek **licences to own, build, and operate nuclear power plants; fabricate nuclear fuel; and carry out R&D in the field of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes**.
 - They can also **use ionizing radiation for non-power applications** such as medicine, agriculture, industrial applications etc.

Activities Under Exclusive Central Government Purview:

- The Act allows **up to 49% private participation**, while maintaining **51% government control over sensitive activities** such as nuclear fuel production, heavy water manufacturing, radioactive waste management, safety mechanisms, licensing, and strategic oversight.

Graded Liability Structure:

- In contrast to existing laws that impose a **single statutory cap on operator liability**, the SHANTI Act establishes a **graded liability framework** (liability limit ranging from **Rs 100 crore to Rs 3,000 crore** based on power capacity).
 - The **central government** will bear liability beyond the operator's cap,

with additional support from a dedicated **nuclear liability fund**.

- Earlier, **operators could hold suppliers liable** for defective parts, faulty equipment, design inefficiency, and deliberate acts causing damage. The new Act **removes supplier liability completely**.

Regulation of Non-Power Applications:

- Provides a **regulatory framework for the use of nuclear and radiation technologies** in health care, agriculture, industry, research, and other peaceful applications.

Exemption for Certain Activities:

- Allows **exemption from a license for limited activities** like research, development, and innovation-related work.

Statutory Body:

- The **Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)**, constituted in **1983** under the **Atomic Energy Act**, has now been given **statutory status** and is **answerable to Parliament rather than solely to the executive**.
- The AERB is **responsible for ensuring nuclear safety, radiation protection, emergency preparedness, and quality assurance across civilian nuclear installations**.

Dispute Redressal Mechanism:

- Establishes an **Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council** to facilitate the redressal of disputes.

Appellate Tribunal Provision:

- The **Appellate Tribunal for Electricity**, set up under the **Electricity Act, 2003**, will serve as the **appellate authority**, empowered to hear appeals under provisions of the Act and any additional matters as notified by the Central Government.

Claims Commissioner Appointment:

- Empowers the **Central Government** to appoint **Claims Commissioners** for **adjudicating compensation claims** related to nuclear damage.

Nuclear Damage Claims Commission:

- Provides for a dedicated Commission to **handle cases involving severe nuclear damage** and ensure timely adjudication.



Territorial jurisdiction for claims:

- Under the **2010 Act**, **compensation** may be claimed for **damages within India's territory or its jurisdiction**.
- The **new Act extends the coverage to nuclear damage in the territory of a foreign state from incidents in India**, subject to certain conditions.

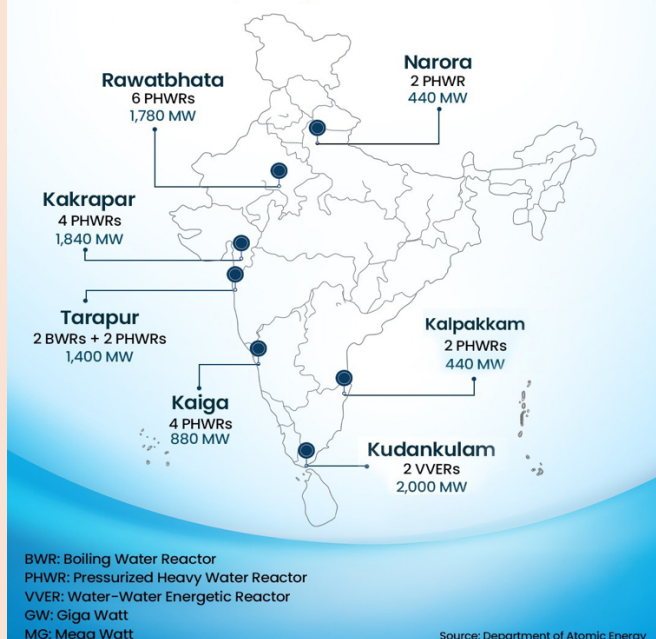
What is Nuclear Energy?

- Nuclear energy is the **use of controlled atomic reactions to produce power**.
- At its core, it relies on **splitting atoms in a process called fission**, which **releases large amounts of heat**. This heat is then **used to generate electricity without producing greenhouse gases**.
- Globally, nuclear energy is valued as a **clean, dependable source that complements renewable options** like solar and wind.

Present Outlook:

- **Nuclear power** contributed only around **3% of the electricity generated in India** in 2024-25.
- The present nuclear capacity stands at **8.78 GW**. The government has set a **target to install 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047**.

India currently operates 24 reactors across 7 locations, with a total installed capacity of 8.78 GW



Nuclear Energy Mission:

- Announced in **Union Budget 2025-26**, it allocates **₹20,000 crore** to drive **design, development, and deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**.
 - SMRs are **small nuclear reactors** with a **maximum output of 300 Megawatt electric (MWe)**, which is about one-third of the generating capacity of traditional nuclear power reactors.
 - They are:
 - **Small** – physically a fraction of the size of a conventional nuclear power reactor.
 - **Modular** – making it possible for systems and components to be factory-assembled and transported as a unit to a location for installation.
 - **Reactors** – harnessing nuclear fission to generate heat to produce energy.
 - They all use **nuclear fission reactions** to generate heat that can be used directly or for generating electricity.
- **Target: At least five indigenously designed SMRs to be operational by 2033**, strengthening India's clean energy roadmap.



ECONOMY

1) Index of Industrial Production

About

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) measures the **short-term changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products** during a given period with respect to that in a chosen base period.
- It is **published every month** by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.

Revised IIP

- MoSPI recently revised the IIP by **updating the item basket, revising the weighting structure, and expanding sectoral coverage** to better capture recent developments in industrial activity across the economy.
- Under the revised series, the **base year** has been updated from 2011-12 to **2022-23**.
- In the new IIP series, the **coverage has been broadened** by incorporating **Gas Supply and Water Supply, Sewerage & Waste Management activities**, while **retaining the existing three core sectors—Mining, Manufacturing, and Electricity**.
 - Sectoral Weightage** in the Revised Series:
 - Manufacturing (76.062%)**
 - Mining & Quarrying (11.053%)**
 - Electricity & Gas Supply (10.865%)**
 - Water Supply, Sewerage & Waste Management (2.020%).**

STATEMENT I: INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION - SECTORAL

(Base: 2022-23=100)

Mining & Quarrying	Manufacturing	Electricity & Gas Supply	Water Supply, Sewerage & Waste Management
11.053	76.062	10.865	2.020

- In the **Mining sector**, the new series includes **minor minerals and rare earth minerals** in addition to **major minerals**.

- Similarly, the **electricity index** has been classified into **renewable and non-renewable sources**.
- The **new basket of goods** to calculate IIP consists of **1,042 products mapped to 463 item groups**. The older series had just 839 items mapped to 407 item groups.

Why in News?

- According to the first official release of the revised Index of Industrial Production with the new base year of 2022-23, India's industrial output grew 4.9% year-on-year in April 2026, driven primarily by strong manufacturing activity.

2) National Investment and Infrastructure Fund

About

- National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) is an **Indian-government backed entity** established in **2015** to **provide long-term capital to the country's infrastructure sector**.
- The Indian government has a **49 per cent** stake in NIIF with the **rest held by foreign and domestic investors**.



- NIIF is registered with SEBI as an **Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)**.

Alternative Investment Funds:

- AIF is a **privately pooled investment vehicle**, which collects funds from investors, for investing it in accordance with a defined investment policy for the benefit of its investors.
- AIF **does not include funds covered under the SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996, SEBI (Collective Investment Schemes) Regulations, 1999 or any other regulations of the**



Board to regulate fund management activities.

- **Categories of AIF:**
 - **Category I AIF:**
 - Venture capital funds (including Angel funds)
 - Social venture funds
 - Infrastructure funds
 - **Category II AIF** (real estate funds, private equity funds, funds for distressed assets, etc.)
 - **Category III AIF** (hedge funds, private investment in public equity (PIPE) Funds, etc.)
- In India, AIFs are regulated by the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (Alternative Investment Funds) Regulations, 2012.**

- NIIF is professionally run and managed by **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL).**
- The activities of NIIF are overseen by a **Governing Council** which is headed by the **Finance Minister.**

Funds under NIIF:

- NIIF currently manages **four funds** each with its distinctive investment mandate.
 - **Master Fund**
 - This fund primarily invests in operating assets in core infrastructure sectors, such as roads, ports, airports, energy etc.
 - **Private Markets Fund**
 - This fund invests in funds managed by third-party managers in infrastructure and associated sectors.
 - **Strategic Fund**
 - This fund is aimed at growth and development-stage investments in large scale projects in a broad range of sectors of economic and commercial importance.
 - **India-Japan Fund**
 - It is **NIIF's first bilateral fund.** IJF invests in environment preservation in India and also seeks to enable

opportunities for collaboration between Indian and Japanese companies.

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved an additional investment by the Government of India of ₹30,000 crore in the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund to be used for its upcoming funds.
 - This would take the government's total commitment in NIIF to ₹60,000 crore.

3) Reforms to Expand Foreign Participation in G-Secs

What's in the news?

- With an aim to attract foreign capital, the government has promulgated the **Income Tax Amendment Ordinance, 2026** to grant a **full tax exemption on income earned from government securities by Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs).**
 - The relief **covers both interest income and capital gains** arising from such investments.
 - The **same relief** has also been extended to the **Bank of International Settlements (BIS).** As a result, any interest income or capital gains generated by the BIS from transactions involving government securities will qualify for exemption.



Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI):

- FPI refers to **investments made by foreign individuals, institutional investors, or funds in financial instruments** such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and government securities.
- FPIs **do not participate in the management or decision-making** of the companies in which they invest and are generally considered **passive investors**.

Foreign Institutional Investment (FII):

- FII is a **category of FPI** that refers specifically to **investments made by foreign institutional investors** such as mutual funds, pension funds, insurance companies, and hedge funds.
- These institutions **invest pooled funds in financial markets** and typically play a **more active role in investment research and decision-making**.

Government Securities (G-Secs):

- G-Sec is a **tradable instrument issued by the Central Government or the State Governments**. It **acknowledges the Government's debt obligation**.
- Such securities are **short term** (usually called **treasury bills**, with **original maturities of less than one year**) or **long term** (usually called **Government bonds or dated securities with original maturity of one year or more**).
- In India, the **Central Government issues both**, treasury bills and bonds or dated securities while the **State Governments issue only bonds or dated securities**, which are called the **State Development Loans (SDLs)**.
- G-Secs carry practically no risk of default and, hence, are called **risk-free gilt-edged instruments**.
- **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) are allowed** to participate in the G-Secs market in India **within the quantitative limits** prescribed from time to time (currently **6%** of outstanding stocks of securities).

Bank for International Settlements (BIS):

- BIS is an **international financial institution owned by central banks**.
- It serves as a **forum for monetary and financial cooperation among central banks globally**.
- It also acts as a **banker and asset manager for central banks and international organizations**.

- At present, FIIs pay 12.5% tax on long-term capital gains, 30% on short-term capital gains, and around 20% tax on interest income.

Classification of Capital Gains:

- **Capital gains** refer to the **profits earned from the sale of capital assets**, such as real estate, stocks, mutual funds, and other investments. **Capital gains tax** is the tax levied on these gains.
- **Long-Term Capital Gains (LTCG)** arise when a Government Security is held beyond the prescribed holding period:
 - Listed G-Secs: More than 12 months.
 - Unlisted G-Secs: More than 24 months.
- **Short-Term Capital Gains (STCG)** arise when a Government Security is held for less than the prescribed holding period:
 - Listed G-Secs: Up to 12 months.
 - Unlisted G-Secs: Up to 24 months.

- The move is aimed at making **Indian debt markets more attractive to overseas investors**.

NEW TAX RATES ON FPI INVESTMENT IN G-SEC



Income Type	Previous Tax Rate	New Tax Rate
Interest Income from Securities	20%	NIL
Short-Term Capital Gains (STCG)	30%	NIL
Long-Term Capital Gains (LTCG)	12.5%	NIL

Source: Ministry of Finance

- Further, the government also announced that **15, 30, and 40-year tenor bonds** will be added to investment under **Fully Accessible Route (FAR) framework**.



- **Foreign investors can invest in Indian G-Secs** through routes such as the **General Route** and the **Fully Accessible Route (FAR)**.

- **General Route** is the **standard channel** for foreign investors. It allows them to **buy and sell** permitted Indian G-secs, but comes with **certain restrictions**, such as caps on how much can be invested in a particular security, how long it must be held, and an overall investment limit.
- **FAR** is an **open-access channel** where foreign investors can **invest in select G-Secs without restrictions** that apply under the General Route.

- As of May 2026, FPIs held G-Secs worth ₹3,75,171 crore, accounting for 3.34% of the total outstanding G-Secs stock of ₹112.42 lakh crore. Notably, **FAR accounted for the majority of these investments**, with FPI holdings of ₹3.21 lakh crore, representing 6.74% of the ₹47.63 lakh crore outstanding stock eligible under FAR.

- **Caps on short-term investment, concentration and security-wise limits on FPI investment through the general route** have also been **removed** while keeping the **overall quantitative investment limit of 6% of the outstanding stock of the Central Government Securities and 2% of the State Government Securities (SGSs)**.

4) India-Oman CEPA

What's in the news?

- The **India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, signed in 2025, has entered into force.

Key Provisions of CEPA

- Under CEPA, **Oman** has offered **zero-duty access on 98% of its tariff lines**, covering 99% of India's exports to Oman.
- **India** is offering **tariff liberalization on 78% of its total tariff lines** which covers 95% of India's imports from Oman by value.

- To safeguard its interest, **sensitive products** have been kept in the **exclusion category** by India without offering any concessions, especially agricultural products, gold and silver bullion, jewellery, and other labour-intensive products.
- The deal also includes **several concessions** that are expected to benefit **India's service sector**.
 - A key highlight is **enhanced mobility for Indian professionals**. For the first time, **Oman** has offered **wide-ranging commitments under Mode 4** (movement of skilled professionals).

Modes of supply of services:

- **International trade in services** typically occurs in any of these four modes of supply:
 - **Cross border trade (Mode 1)**: It is the supply of a service from the territory of one country into the territory of another country.
 - **Consumption abroad (Mode 2)**: It is the supply of a service in the territory of one country to the consumer of another country.
 - **Commercial presence (Mode 3)**: It is the supply of a service by a service supplier of one country, through commercial presence, in the territory of another country.
 - **Presence of natural persons (Mode 4)**: It is the supply of a service by a service supplier of one country, through the presence of natural persons of a country in the territory of another country.

- The CEPA further provides for **100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by Indian companies in major services sectors in Oman through commercial presence**, opening a wide avenue for India's services industry.
- The agreement will also **promote cooperation in AYUSH, wellness, healthcare, and medical tourism**.



Oman:

- Oman is located on the **southeastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula**, bordering the **Arabian Sea** and the **Gulf of Oman**.



- It borders the **Strait of Hormuz** and the **Persian Gulf**. Oman shares land borders with **Saudi Arabia**, the **United Arab Emirates**, and **Yemen**, and it shares maritime borders with **Iran** and **Pakistan**.
- Capital: **Muscat**.

Why does the pact matter?

- Oman is India's **second-largest trading partner in the Gulf region** and is a **key gateway for Indian goods and services** to the wider Middle East and Africa.
- India-Oman bilateral trade** stood at about **\$11.18 billion** in 2025-26, with **India running a trade deficit** largely due to **energy and fertilizer imports**.
- Nearly **7 lakh Indian nationals** live in Oman, and India receives around **\$2 billion in remittances annually** from the country.
- This is India's **second CEPA with a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member** after the **United Arab Emirates (UAE) agreement** implemented in 2022.

Gulf Cooperation Council:

- GCC is a **regional, intergovernmental, political, and economic union** comprising **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates**.



- GCC was established in **1981** in **Riyadh, Saudi Arabia** in view of their special relations, geographic proximity, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny and common objectives.
- The official language is **Arabic**. The Secretariat is located in **Riyadh**.

- For **Oman**, this is its **first bilateral trade agreement** since signing one with **the US** in **2006**.

5) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

5.1. Sovereign Gold Bonds

About

- Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) are bonds that are **issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the Government** on payment of rupees but **denominated in grams of gold**.
- The **value of these bonds is tied to the value of gold**. On redemption, the investor gets interest income and the prevailing price of gold.
- It seeks to **encourage people to buy gold bonds instead of actual gold**, thereby helping to **reduce the annual demand for gold imports**.

Features of SGBs

Eligibility:

- Restricted to **resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), Trusts, Universities and Charitable Institutions**.

Denomination:

- SGBs are **denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold**.

Minimum Permissible Investment:

- One gram of gold**.



Maximum Limit:

- **4 Kg for individuals, 4 Kg for HUF and 20 Kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal year.**

Tenor:

- SGBs are issued with a **maturity period of 8 years**. Investors are allowed **early redemption after 5 years**.

Interest Rate:

- **2.50 per cent per annum**. Interest will be credited **semi-annually**.

Sales Channel:

- SGBs are sold through **Scheduled Commercial Banks** (except Small Finance Banks, Payment Banks and Regional Rural Banks), **Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL)**, **Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL)**, **designated post offices** and **recognised stock exchanges** viz., National Stock Exchange of India Limited and Bombay Stock Exchange Limited.

Other Key Features:

- The investment in SGBs will be eligible for **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)** compliance by banks.
- These bonds can also be used as **collateral for loans**.
- The **interest** on SGBs shall be **taxable** as per the provision of Income Tax Act, 1961.
- The **capital gains tax** arising on redemption of SGB to an **individual** has been **exempted**.

5.2. Types of NRI Accounts

About

- A Non-Resident Indian (NRI) account can be opened by an NRI with any authorized bank in India.

A NRI is a **person resident outside India** who is a **citizen of India**.

- In India, there are **three types of NRI accounts**:
 - Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) Account
 - Non-Resident External (NRE) Account
 - Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) Account.

Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) Account

- A Non-Resident Ordinary account is one of the types of NRI account, which is useful for **managing the income that an NRI is still earning in India**. The income can be in the form of interest, dividend, rent, etc.
- An NRO account **facilitates the money transfer abroad**. In this account, one can **deposit money in Indian or foreign currency**. However, the **withdrawals happen only in Indian currency**.
- This **rupee-denominated account** can be in the form of **savings account, current account, fixed deposit account, and recurring deposit account**.
- **Interest earned** from an NRO Account is **subject to tax** in India.
- The NRIs can **repatriate the funds in this account but with certain limits**.

Non-Resident External (NRE) Account

- A Non-Resident External Account is a bank account for NRIs to **deposit their earnings from abroad in Indian rupee**.
- This **rupee-denominated account** can be a **savings account, current account, fixed deposit account and recurring deposit account**.
- The **withdrawals** happen in the **resident country currency** of the NRI. Hence this account is **subject to exchange rate fluctuations**.
- **Interest earned** from NRE Accounts is **tax-exempt** in India.
- **Funds** in NRE Accounts, including principal and interest, are **fully repatriable**, allowing account holders to transfer money back to their country of residence without any restrictions.

Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) or FCNR(B) Account

- FCNR(B) deposits are **fixed-term bank deposits** that can be opened in India by **NRIs, Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs), and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)**.
- These deposits allow overseas Indians to **maintain their savings in designated foreign currencies** such as the US dollar, pound sterling, euro, Japanese yen, Australian dollar, and Canadian dollar, rather than converting their funds into Indian rupees.



- The deposit and interest amount in this account are **fully repatriable**. Since the deposits and withdrawals made in this account are in **foreign currency**, the funds in this account are **free from any exchange rate fluctuations**.
- **Interest earned** on FCNR(B) deposits is **exempt from income tax** in India as long as the **depositor qualifies as a non-resident under Indian tax laws**.

5.3. Stablecoins

About

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

Cryptocurrency:

- Cryptocurrency is a **digital payment system** that doesn't rely on banks to verify transactions. It's a **peer-to-peer system** that can enable anyone anywhere to send and receive payments.
- Cryptocurrencies run on a **distributed public ledger** called **blockchain**, a record of all transactions updated and held by currency holders.
- Units of cryptocurrency are created through a process called **mining**, which involves using computer power to solve complicated mathematical problems that generate coins.
- Unlike better known **cryptocurrencies** such as Bitcoin (BTC) and Ether (ETH), whose **values can wildly rise and fall** due to investor sentiments and other factors, **stablecoins are designed to maintain relatively steady prices**.
- This is achieved through the process of **"pegging" the stablecoin to an asset** such as fiat currency (like U.S. Dollars, EU Euros, etc.), a commodity (like gold), other cryptocurrencies (such as Bitcoin), by regulating their value via computer algorithms, or by mixing multiple strategies.
 - It means that while the price of Bitcoin might rise or fall in the coming years, a USD-pegged stablecoin should ideally remain around \$1.
- Stablecoins are **different from CBDCs, or Central Bank Digital Currencies**, which

are digital currencies officially issued and controlled by a government's central bank.

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

Regulations

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

5.4. Liberalised Remittance Scheme

About

- The Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS), introduced by the **Reserve Bank of India** in **2004** enables **Indian residents** (including minors) to **freely remit funds abroad for various approved purposes** such as overseas business trip, education, medical treatment, investments in shares, buying immovable properties, etc.
- As per current LRS regulations, Indian residents can remit up to **USD 2,50,000 per Financial Year**.
 - These funds can be used for **any permissible current or capital account transaction, or a combination of both**.

Objective

- The primary objective of LRS is to **liberalize the existing foreign exchange regulations and facilitate the smooth transfer of funds abroad** by Indian residents.
- The scheme also aims at **promoting international trade and investment**, as well as for **facilitating capital flows into and out of India**.

Who can avail the benefits under this scheme?

- In order to avail the benefit of the LRS, the individual must be an **Indian resident** as defined under the **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)**. It **cannot be used by corporations, partnership firms, Hindu Undivided Family (HUF), trusts, etc.**
 - Under FEMA, a person is treated as a resident if he has been in India for **more than 182 days** in the preceding year.



- He/she must also have a **valid PAN card, a bank account in India, and a valid passport.**

Limitations

- The maximum amount that can be remitted in a financial year is **USD 2,50,000**. Any amount **exceeding this limit** requires **prior permission from RBI**.
- Remittances under the scheme are **not permitted for certain activities** such as **purchase of lottery tickets, margin trading, and speculation in foreign exchange markets.**

5.5. Dark Patterns

About

- Dark patterns refer to **deceptive strategies used by online platforms to manipulate users.**
 - These tactics include adding extra items to a consumer's cart without

their knowledge, creating a false sense of urgency by claiming limited stock availability or pressuring consumers into purchasing memberships.

- Such practices fall under the category of **"unfair trade practices"** as defined under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.
- The Department of Consumer Affairs had notified the **Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns in 2023** for prevention and regulation of dark patterns listing **13 specified dark patterns** such as false urgency, basket sneaking, confirm shaming, subscription trap, etc.



ENVIRONMENT

1) Ramsar Sites

About

- The **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance**, signed in Ramsar, Iran in **1971**, is an **intergovernmental treaty** for the **conservation and sustainable use of wetlands**.
- It is the **only environmental treaty dealing with a particular ecosystem (wetlands)**.

Wetlands:

- According to the Ramsar convention, **wetlands are defined** as “areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres”.
 - This definition **includes all lakes, rivers, underground aquifers, swamps, marshes, and other major water bodies**.

Significance:

- Wetlands help **regulate climate conditions through carbon sequestration**, that is, carbon storage from the atmosphere. The plant communities and soil in wetlands **capture carbon instead of releasing it** to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide, one of the major drivers of global warming.
- Wetlands are **among the most productive ecosystems in the world**, comparable to rainforests and coral reefs. An immense variety of species of microbes, plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish and mammals can be part of this ecosystem.
- Wetlands function as **natural sponges** that traps and slowly releases surface water, rain, snowmelt, groundwater and flood waters. This combined water storage acts as a **braking action**

lowering flood heights and reducing erosion.

- They are often called the **‘kidneys of the landscape’** due to their ability to **filter pollutants, purify water and maintain water quality**.

Contracting Parties & Obligations

- More than 170 nations are signatories (including **India**) to the Ramsar Convention.
- Contracting Parties are **committed** to the **Convention’s three pillars**:

1. Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands.

- a. **Wise use** means the **maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland and allowance of sustainable use for the benefit of people and the environment**.

2. Designate suitable wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance and ensure their effective management.

- a. To be **Ramsar site**, it **must meet at least one of the nine criteria** defined by the Ramsar Convention, including supporting vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities; or regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds; or is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks are dependent upon.

3. Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.

Why in News?

- The **Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary** in **Uttar Pradesh** was recently designated as



a **Ramsar site**, making it the **100th such site in India**.

Did you know?

- **India** continues to be the **leading country in Asia** in terms of Ramsar sites under the Ramsar Convention.
- The **United Kingdom** has the most number of sites (176), followed by **Mexico and India**.

Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary

- Located in eastern Uttar Pradesh near the **confluence of the Ganga and Ghaghara river systems**, the Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary encompasses **Surha Tal**, a large **natural freshwater oxbow lake**.
- The sanctuary is renowned for its **rich birdlife**, attracting thousands of **migratory birds** during the winter months from Central Asia, Siberia and other regions. Species commonly recorded here include pintails, gadwalls, common teals, shovelers, pochards, cormorants, egrets, herons and storks, alongside numerous resident bird species.

2) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

2.1. Biochar

About

- **Biochar** is a **carbon-rich charcoal-like substance** produced by **burning organic material** from agricultural and forestry wastes (also called biomass) in a controlled process called **pyrolysis**.
 - *Pyrolysis is the heating of an organic material, such as biomass, in the absence of oxygen.*
- It is **carbon-negative**, as it stores carbon in soil for long periods while reducing emissions from biomass burning.
- Its **highly porous structure** provides a **large surface area that helps retain water, nutrients, and beneficial microorganisms in the soil**.



Applications

- **Carbon sequestration:** Stores carbon in a stable form, reducing CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Improves soil health:** Increases soil organic carbon, fertility, and beneficial microbial activity.
- **Enhances water retention:** Improves soil moisture storage (10–25%), reducing irrigation needs.
- **Boosts crop yields:** Increases productivity (10–30%), especially in degraded and nutrient-poor soils.
- **Improves nutrient efficiency:** Reduces nutrient loss and enhances plant nutrient uptake.
- **Supports waste management:** Converts agricultural and organic waste into a valuable soil amendment, reducing stubble burning and landfill waste.
- **Builds climate resilience:** Helps crops withstand drought, heat, and erratic rainfall.
- **Useful in vertical farming:** Biochar can be used as part of the **growing medium in vertical farming to promote the growth of nitrogen-fixing microorganisms and retain water for a longer period**.

2.2. Namami Gange Programme

About

- Namami Gange Programme is an **Integrated Conservation Mission** approved by the Union Government in **2014** to accomplish the **twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga**.



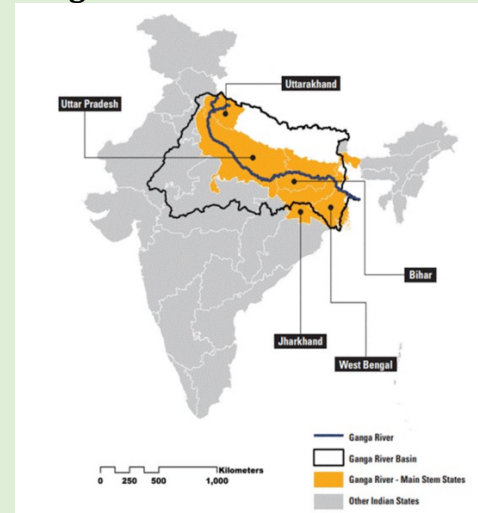
- Namami Gange is premised on the **five important pillars** of –
 - Nirmal Ganga** (unpolluted river),
 - Aviral Ganga** (unrestricted flow),
 - Jan Ganga** (people's participation),
 - Gyan Ganga** (knowledge and research based interventions) and
 - Arth Ganga** (people-river connect through the bridge of economy).
- The program is spearheaded by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**.

National Mission for Clean Ganga:

- NMCG is a **registered society** under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
- NMCG aims to **ensure effective abatement of pollution and rejuvenation of the river Ganga** by adopting a **river basin approach** to promote inter-sectoral co-ordination for comprehensive planning and management.
- It also aims to **maintain minimum ecological flows** in the river Ganga with the aim of ensuring water quality and environmentally sustainable development.
 - Minimum ecological flows is the limit of the living conditions under which the river ecosystem will not degenerate or the aquatic organisms can endure under the natural state.*

River Ganga:

- Ganga (or the Ganges) is **among the largest rivers in Asia**. It rises in the **Gangotri glacier in Uttarakhand**. At its source, the river is called **Bhagirathi**.
- It descends down the valley upto **Devprayag** where after joining another hill stream **Alaknanda**, it is called **Ganga**.



- Important tributaries:
 - Right Bank tributaries:** Yamuna, Chambal, Banas, Betwa, Ken, Sind, Son.
 - Left Bank Tributaries:** Ghagra, Kosi, Gandak, Kali, Ramganga.
- Empties into: Bay of Bengal.**
- The **Ganga River basin is the largest in India, spanning over 11 states** encompassing **27% of the country's land mass** and supporting about **47% of its population**.



SPECIES IN NEWS

1) Nilgiri Tahr

About

- The Nilgiri Tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) is an endangered **mountain ungulate endemic to the Southern Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.**
- It is **one of only three extant tahr species in the world** (alongside the Himalayan Tahr & Arabian Tahr) and the **only species found exclusively in India.**

Did you know?

- Nilgiri Tahr is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.

Distribution:

- The species inhabits **high-altitude montane grasslands** and rocky cliffs of the **shola-grassland ecosystem.**
- The **Eravikulam National Park (Kerala)** has the **highest density and largest surviving population of Nilgiri tahr.**

Characteristics:

- It is a **herbivorous grazer**, feeding mainly on grasses and shrubs, and lives in **social herds.** The species is **polygynous**, with males competing for access to females.
- Ecologically, it **helps maintain montane grassland ecosystems** by controlling vegetation, aiding nutrient cycling, dispersing seeds, and reducing the risk of grassland fires through grazing.

Conservation Status:

- IUCN Red list: **Endangered;**
- Wildlife Protection Act (2022): **Schedule I.**



Why in News?

- The population of the Nilgiri Tahr in Tamil Nadu has risen to an estimated 1,364, according to the third synchronised population survey conducted under Project Nilgiri Tahr.
 - Project Nilgiri Tahr was launched in 2023 by the Government of Tamil Nadu, focusing on habitat management, population monitoring and scientific conservation.
- This marks a **32% increase over the first synchronised survey** conducted in 2024, indicating a **steady recovery of the endangered species.**

2) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

2.1. 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) 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?

- The **green transition board**, announced during the **11th Raisina Dialogue** in March 2026, recently held its inaugural meeting.
 - The Board, **chaired by former Finance Commission chairman N K Singh**, is tasked to make recommendations on climate finance, multilateral development bank (MDB) reforms and India's transition towards 2,500 GW of clean energy by 2047 and net-zero emissions by 2070.

2) Group of Seven

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**.

Why in News?

- The 52nd G7 Summit was recently held in **Evian, France** on the theme **"Working Together to Address Major International Challenges."**
 - The G7 Summit is an international forum **held annually for the leaders of the G7 member States**.

3) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

3.1. India-Russia RELOS

About

- The **India-Russia bilateral Logistics Support Agreement (LSA)**, termed the **Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics**



Agreement (RELOS), was operationalised in January 2026.

- The agreement is aimed at **enhancing military cooperation** between the two strategic partners.



Key Provisions

- Signed initially in 2025, this pact **enables mutual logistical aid** for military operations, joint exercises, training, humanitarian missions, and disaster relief.
- It allows **access to each other's airspace, ports, bases, refueling, repairs, and supplies**, cutting bureaucracy and costs.
- The agreement is **reciprocal and non-binding**, designed to ensure mutual

benefit while respecting national sovereignty.

Significance

- The agreement will enable the Indian Navy and Air Force to **access Russian military facilities across the Arctic and Pacific Oceans**, and potentially in the Mediterranean Sea, increasing the operational reach of India.
- **Russia gains reciprocal access to Indian Ocean ports**, enhancing bilateral interoperability without permanent bases.
- The RELOS agreement with Russia is not a standalone initiative, but **part of India's broader strategy to establish a global network of logistics support partnerships**.
- Similar pacts have been signed with several key nations, including the **India-US Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)**, **India-Japan Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)** and **India-Australia Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA)**, to enable access to military bases, refuelling, repair, and replenishment facilities.



ORGANISATIONS

1) Indian Ocean Rim Association

About

- The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is an **inter-governmental organisation**, established in **1997**. It unites the **Indian Ocean coastal and island states** to **promote sustainable growth and balanced development** of the region and its member states.

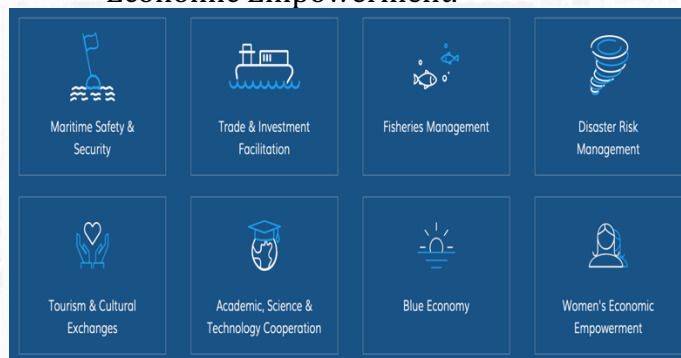


Structure

- The **IORA Council of Ministers (COM)** is the **highest decision-making body** of the organization, comprising the **Ministers of Foreign Affairs of all Member States**.
 - The COM meets annually, or more often as mutually decided to discuss policy and set strategic direction.
- Decisions made within IORA are reached by **consensus** and commitments are undertaken on a **voluntary basis**.
- The IORA Secretariat is based in **Mauritius** and is headed by a fixed term **Secretary-General**.
- IORA became an **observer to the UN General Assembly** in 2015.

Priority Areas

- The Association addresses **six priority areas**: Maritime Safety & Security, Trade & investment Facilitation, Fisheries Management, Disaster Risk Management, Tourism & Cultural Exchanges and Academic, Science & Technology Cooperation as well as **two cross-cutting issues**: Blue Economy and Women's Economic Empowerment.



Did you know?

- The vision for IORA, formerly known as the **Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)**, originated during a visit by the late **President Nelson Mandela** of South Africa to **India** in 1995 where he mentioned: "the natural urge of the facts of history and geography should broaden itself to include the concept of an Indian Ocean Rim for socio-economic co-operation and other peaceful endeavours".

Members

- IORA brings together **23 countries of the Indian Ocean**: Australia, Bangladesh, the Comoros, France, **India**, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.
- In addition, the association is supported by **12 dialogue partners**, which include China, Egypt, the European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States.



Why in News?

- **India currently chairs** the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for the 2025–27 term and will host the IORA Summit in 2027.

2) Financial Action Task Force

About

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an **inter-governmental body** tasked with **setting global standards against money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing**.
- Established in **1989** during the **G7 Summit in Paris**, FATF sets **international standards** that enable national authorities to effectively track and act against illicit funds linked to drug trafficking, the illicit arms trade, cyber fraud, and other serious crimes.
- This **40-member body** has led to more than 200 countries and jurisdictions committing to implement FATF's Standards, forming a co-ordinated global response to prevent organised crime, corruption, and terrorism.
 - **India** became a member of FATF in 2010.
- The **decision-making body** of the FATF, known as its **plenary**, meets **thrice a year**. Its decisions are taken by **consensus**.
- FATF is headquartered in **Paris, France**.



Grey & Black Lists

- The FATF identifies **jurisdictions with weak measures** for anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing

(AML/CFT) in **two FATF public documents**.

- **Grey List:** This list includes countries that are **actively working** with the FATF to **address strategic deficiencies** in their regimes to counter money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing.
 - Currently, more than **20 countries** such as Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, Syria, Vietnam, etc. are on the grey list.
- **Black List:** This identifies **high-risk countries or jurisdictions** with **serious strategic deficiencies** to counter money laundering, terrorist financing, and financing of proliferation and calls for application of **enhanced due diligence and counter measures**.
 - It includes **North Korea, Iran & Myanmar**.
- Being listed under the FATF's lists makes it **hard for countries to get aid from organisations** like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the European Union. It may also **affect capital inflows, foreign direct investments, and portfolio flows**.

Why in News?

- **India** has been elected to the **Vice-Presidency of the Financial Action Task Force** from **July 2026 to June 2027**.
- This is the **first time India will have a leadership position** at the global body.
 - The FATF Presidency runs on a two-year term, and the vice-president assists the president in carrying out the organisation's mandate.



3) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

3.1. Arctic Council

About

- The Arctic Council is the **leading intergovernmental forum** promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic Indigenous Peoples and other Arctic inhabitants on **common Arctic issues**, in particular on **issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic**.
- It was established in **Ottawa, Canada** in **1996** by the **Ottawa Declaration**.
- Member states of the council include **eight Arctic States** (whose territories fall in the Arctic region) — **Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States**.
 - **India** is an **observer** of the Arctic Council.



- The council also has a number of **permanent participants** drawn from groups that **represent communities and peoples indigenous to the Arctic**.
- All Arctic Council decisions and statements require **consensus of the eight Arctic States**.
- Secretariat: **Norway**.

3.2. International Maritime Organization

About

- The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is a **specialized agency of the**

United Nations with responsibility for the **safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships**.

- Headquartered in **London**, the IMO was created by a convention adopted at the **UN Maritime Conference** in **1948**.



- IMO is the **global standard-setting authority** for the **safety, security and environmental performance of international shipping**.
- **Key treaties** of the IMO include: International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (**SOLAS**), the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (**MARPOL**), and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (**STCW**).
- IMO currently has more than 170 members (including **India**).

Structure

- The governance structure of the IMO consists of the **Assembly**, representing the member states, and a **40 member Council** elected by the members at **two-year intervals**.
 - The council acts as an **executive body** and performs all the responsibilities of the assembly when it is not in session. The council is also responsible for **appointing the secretary-general** of the organization.
 - In 2025, **India** was re-elected to the Council of IMO.



3.3. Zonal Councils

About

- Zonal Councils are **statutory bodies** set up under the **States Re-organization Act, 1956** to provide a common meeting ground to the States and UTs for **resolution of inter-state and regional issues** and **building harmonious Centre-State relations**.

Did you know?

- The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, **Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru** in **1956**.

Composition

- The **States Re-organisation Act** established **five Zonal Councils** namely:
 - **Northern Zonal Council**, comprising States/UTs of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh;
 - **Central Zonal Council**, comprising Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;
 - **Eastern Zonal Council**, comprising Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal;
 - **Western Zonal Council**, comprising Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu;
 - **Southern Zonal Council**, comprising Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the UT of Puducherry.
- The **North Eastern States** i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland are not included in the Zonal Councils and their special problems are looked after by the **North Eastern Council**, set up under the **North Eastern Council Act, 1972**.
 - The **State of Sikkim** has also been included in the **North Eastern Council** from 2002.



Structure

- **Chairman: Union Home Minister.**
- **Vice Chairman: Chief Ministers of the States** included in each zone by **rotation** (each holding office for a period of **one year** at a time).
- **Members: Chief Minister and two other Ministers** as **nominated by the Governor** from each of the States and **two members from Union Territories** included in the zone.
- **Union Ministers** are also invited to participate in the meetings of Zonal Councils depending upon necessity.
- Each Zonal Council has set up a **Standing Committee** consisting of **Chief Secretaries** of the member States of their respective Zonal Councils.
 - These Standing Committees meet from time to time to resolve the issues or to do necessary ground work for further meetings of the Zonal Councils.
- Each Council is an **advisory body** providing a structured forum for dialogue on inter-state and centre-state issues, acting as a key platform to foster mutual cooperation.



3.4. APEDA

About

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is a **statutory body** established under the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985**.
 - The Authority **replaced the Processed Food Export Promotion Council (PFEPIC)**.
- APEDA functions under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The Authority has its headquarters in **New Delhi**.



Functions of APEDA

- **Development of industries** relating to the scheduled products for **export**;
- **Registration of persons as exporters** of the scheduled products;
- **Fixing of standards and specifications** for the scheduled products for the purpose of exports;
- **Carrying out inspection** of meat and meat products in slaughterhouses, processing plants, storage premises, conveyances or other places for the purpose of **ensuring the quality** of such products;
- **Improving of packaging** of the Scheduled products;
- **Improving of marketing** of the Scheduled products outside India;
- **Promotion of export oriented production and development** of the Scheduled products.

Products Monitored

- APEDA is mandated with the responsibility of **export promotion and development** of the following **scheduled products**:
 - Fruits, Vegetables and their Products.
 - Meat and Meat Products.
 - Poultry and Poultry Products.
 - Dairy Products.
 - Confectionery, Biscuits and Bakery Products.
 - Honey, Jaggery and Sugar Products.
 - Cocoa and its products, chocolates of all kinds.
 - Alcoholic and Non-Alcoholic Beverages.
 - Cereal and Cereal Products.
 - Groundnuts, Peanuts and Walnuts.
 - Pickles, Papads and Chutneys.
 - Guar Gum.
 - Floriculture and Floriculture Products.
 - Herbal and Medicinal Plants.
 - De-oiled rice bran.
 - Green pepper in brine.
 - Cashew Nuts and Its Products.
- **Basmati Rice** has been included in the **Second Schedule** of APEDA Act.
 - The Second Schedule of the APEDA Act was introduced by the **APEDA (Amendment) Act, 2009** to list products for which **APEDA is mandated to protect intellectual property rights and facilitate registration, both within and outside India**.
- In addition to this, APEDA has been entrusted with the responsibility to **monitor import of sugar**.
- APEDA also functions as the **Secretariat to the National Accreditation Board (NAB)** for the implementation of accreditation of the Certification Bodies under **National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)** for Organic exports.



National Programme for Organic Production:

- NPOP was launched in **2001** by the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry** for exports of Organic products.
- The programme involves the accreditation of Certification Bodies, standards for organic production, promotion of organic farming and marketing etc.
- **No organic products can be exported** unless it is **certified under NPOP**.
- **APEDA** acts as the Secretariat for the implementation of the NPOP.

BHARATI

- Bharat's Hub for Agritech, Resilience, Advancement and Incubation for Export Innovation (BHARATI) is **APEDA's flagship export acceleration programme**.
- The initiative aims to **foster innovation-led growth in the agri-food export sector**.
- It also aimed to **support India's target of achieving 50 billion US dollars in exports of APEDA-scheduled products by 2030**.

3.5. INCOIS

About Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)

- ESSO-INCOIS was established as an **autonomous body** in **1999** under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** and is a **unit of the Earth System Science Organization (ESSO)**.

- It is headquartered in **Hyderabad**.



ESSO operates as an **executive arm of MoES**. It was established in 2007 as a virtual organization, bringing all meteorological and ocean development activities under one umbrella.

Mandate

- ESSO-INCOIS is mandated to provide the best possible **ocean information and advisory services** to society, industry, government agencies and the scientific community.
- It provides round-the-clock **monitoring and warning services** for the coastal population on tsunamis, storm surges, high waves, etc. through the in-house **Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC)**.
- ESSO-INCOIS also provides **daily advisories to fisher folk** to help them easily locate areas of abundant fish in the ocean while saving on both fuel and time used to search for the same.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1) Nipah

About

- Nipah virus disease is an infectious disease caused by **Nipah viruses (NiV)** which first appeared in domestic pigs in Malaysia and Singapore in 1998.
- **Fruit bats of the *Pteropodidae* family** (also known as 'flying foxes') are the natural host of Nipah virus.
 - NiV can also be transmitted by pigs and other domestic animals like goats, horses, dogs, and cats.



Transmission:

- It is a **zoonotic virus** (transmitted from animals to humans) which can also be transmitted through **contaminated food** or **directly between people**.
- **Consumption of fruits or fruit products contaminated** with urine or saliva from **infected fruit bats** is the most likely source of infection.
- In infected people, it causes a **range of illnesses** from asymptomatic infection to **acute respiratory infection** (mild, severe), and **fatal encephalitis** (inflammation in the brain).
- The virus can also cause **severe disease in animals** such as pigs, resulting in significant economic losses for farmers.

Treatment:

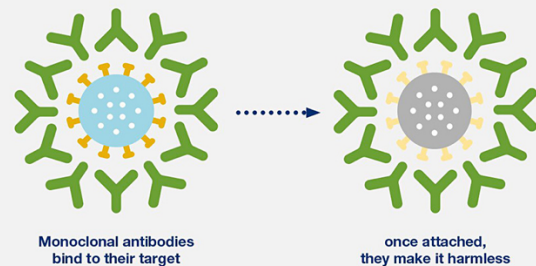
- There are currently **no drugs or vaccines** specific for Nipah virus infection. Treatment consists of managing symptoms and supportive care.

- Several experimental therapies are in development or in early clinical trials, including **monoclonal antibodies**.

Monoclonal Antibodies:

- Monoclonal antibodies are **laboratory-made proteins** that mimic the behavior of antibodies produced by the immune system to protect against diseases and foreign substances.
- They are created by **cloning a single B-cell**, producing **identical antibodies** that **bind to one specific antigen**.
 - *B cells are a type of white blood cell called lymphocytes that produce antibodies.*

How monoclonal antibodies work



- Examples include monoclonal antibodies engineered to bind to the spike protein of the **SARS-CoV-2 virus** during the Covid pandemic. The binding prevented the protein from exercising its regular functions, including its ability to infect other cells.

Applications of Monoclonal Antibodies:

- **Diagnostic Uses:** Their specificity allows wide use in Enzyme Linked Immuno Sorbent Assay (ELISA), rapid test kits (e.g., COVID-19, pregnancy tests) for accurate detection of pathogens and biomarkers.
- **Therapeutic Uses:** They play a major role in treating autoimmune diseases, cancers, asthma, and viral infections like COVID-19 and Nipah virus.



Why in News?

- Nipah virus has recently been reported again in Kerala, prompting the state health department and the Union Ministry of Health to intensify surveillance, contact tracing, testing, and containment measures.

2) James Webb Space Telescope

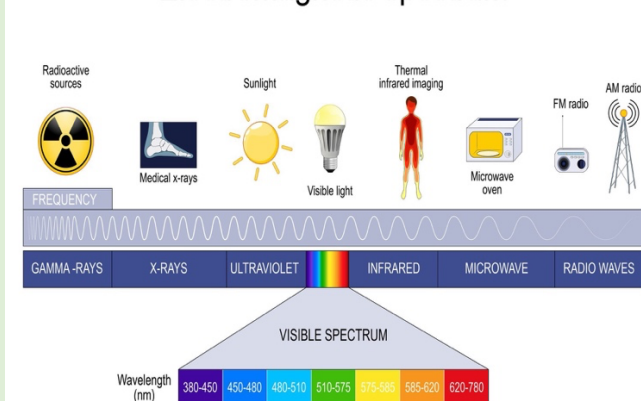
About

- The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) is **NASA's flagship observatory** launched in **2021**. It is the **largest, most powerful space telescope** ever built.
- The telescope, **optimized for infrared wavelengths**, is an **international collaboration led by NASA in partnership with the European and Canadian space agencies**.

Electromagnetic Spectrum:

- The electromagnetic (EM) spectrum encompasses the **entire range of electromagnetic radiation**, including **radio waves, microwaves, infrared, visible light, ultraviolet rays, X-rays, and gamma rays**.
 - Among these, **visible light** is the only portion that can be **detected by the human eye**, while the remaining forms of electromagnetic radiation are **invisible** to us because they are **either blocked by Earth's atmosphere or lie beyond the range of human vision**.

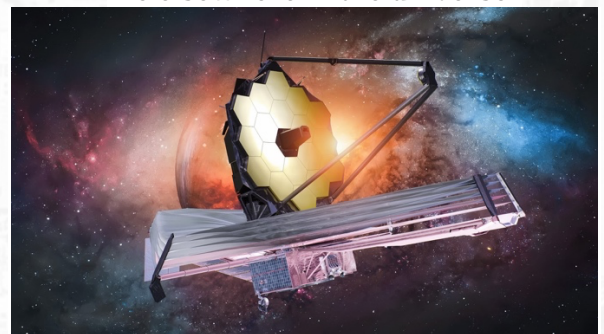
Electromagnetic spectrum



- All EM waves are fundamentally the same, consisting of **electric and magnetic energy traveling at the speed of light**, but they **differ in their wavelength, frequency, and energy**.
- Infrared waves** have **longer wavelengths than visible light** and can **pass through dense regions of gas and dust** in space with **less scattering and absorption**. Thus, infrared energy can also **reveal objects in the universe that cannot be seen in visible light** using optical telescopes.

Mission's Objective

- The science goals for the Webb can be grouped into **four themes**.
 - The first is to **look back around 13.5 billion years** to see the first stars and galaxies forming out of the darkness of the early universe.
 - Second, to **compare the faintest, earliest galaxies to today's grand spirals** and **understand how galaxies assemble** over billions of years.
 - Third, to **see where stars and planetary systems are being born**.
 - And fourth, to **observe the atmospheres of exoplanets**, and perhaps find the building blocks of life elsewhere in the universe.



Orbit

- Webb does not orbit the Earth**, instead it sits at the **Earth-Sun L2 Lagrange point**, 1.5 million km away.
- This means that **Webb orbits the Sun along with the Earth**, but will stay fixed

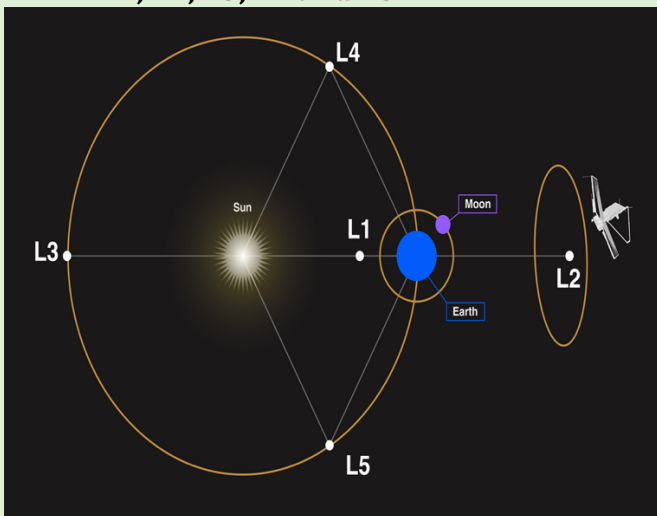


at the same spot in relation to the Earth and the Sun.

- At the L2 point, Webb's solar shield will block the light from the Sun, Earth, and Moon, which will help it stay cool — important for an **infrared telescope**.

Lagrange Points:

- Lagrange points are positions in space where **objects sent there tend to stay put**. At Lagrange points, the **gravitational pull of two large masses** (like the Sun and the Earth) **precisely equals the centripetal force required for a small object to move with them**.
- These points in space can be used by spacecraft to **reduce fuel consumption** needed to remain in position.
- There are **five such points** in the **Sun-Earth system** and they are denoted as **L1, L2, L3, L4 and L5**.



- Of the five Lagrange points, **three are unstable and two are stable**.
 - The **unstable Lagrange points** - labeled **L1, L2 and L3** - lie along the line connecting the two large masses.
 - The **stable Lagrange points** - labeled **L4 and L5** - form the apex of two equilateral triangles that have the large masses at their vertices. L4 leads the orbit of earth and L5 follows.

Significance of every lagrange points:

- **L1 point** of the Earth-Sun system affords an **uninterrupted view of the sun**.
- **L2 point is ideal for astronomy** because a spacecraft is close enough to readily communicate with Earth, can keep Sun, Earth and Moon behind the spacecraft for solar power and (with appropriate shielding) provides a clear view of deep space for our telescopes.
- **L4 and L5 points** are home to **stable orbits**. Objects found orbiting at the L4 and L5 points are often called **Trojans**.
- The significance of the L3 point is still **unknown** because it stands behind the sun.

Significance of JWST

- JWST is **100x more powerful than its predecessor the Hubble telescope**, NASA's flagship telescope that has been in service for more than three decades now.
- It has **longer wavelength coverage** and **greatly improved sensitivity**. The longer wavelengths enable Webb to look further back in time to find the first galaxies that formed in the early Universe.
- **Hubble** was designed to look mainly into the **ultraviolet and visible regions** of the electromagnetic spectrum. **JWST** is primarily an **infrared telescope**, allowing it to peer through much deeper into the universe, and see through obstructions such as gas clouds.
- **Webb's mirror is much larger than Hubble's**; it can, therefore, **look farther back into time** than Hubble. Webb's primary mirror is approximately **6.5 metres in diameter** compared to Hubble's mirror has a diameter of 2.4 metres, which means Webb's collecting area is around 6.25 times that of Hubble's.

Why in News?

- Scientists recently used the **James Webb Space Telescope** to directly observe weather patterns on the **exoplanet WASP-94A b**, located about **700 light-years from Earth**.



- A light year is defined as the distance that light travels in vacuum in one year.

Exoplanets:

- An exoplanet is **any planet beyond our solar system**.
- **Most of them orbit other stars**, but **some free-floating exoplanets**, called **rogue planets**, are **untethered to any star**.
- Exoplanets are **very hard to see directly with telescopes**. They are hidden by the bright glare of the stars they orbit.
- So, astronomers use **other ways** to detect and study these distant planets. They search for exoplanets by looking at the **effects these planets have on the stars they orbit**.
- The first exoplanets were discovered in the **1990s** and since then we've identified thousands using a variety of detection methods.

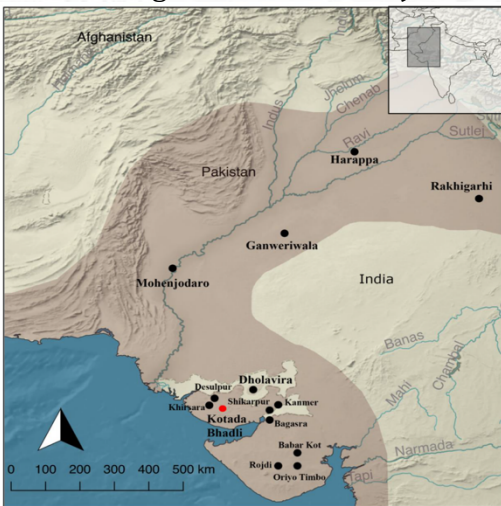


ART & CULTURE

1) Rakhigarhi

About

- Rakhigarhi, spread across approximately 550 hectares in **Haryana's Ghaggar-Hakra river plain**, is widely recognised as the **largest known settlement of the Harappan Civilization**.
- Rakhigarhi constitutes **one of the only two cities of the Harappan Era** (6th millennium–1900 BC) **situated within India's current political boundary**, the other being **Dholavira in Gujarat**.



- Archaeological excavations have revealed **evidence of continuous habitation**, from the **Early Harappan** (circa 3300-2600 BCE) to the **Mature Harappan periods** (circa 2600-1900 BCE).
- Archaeological excavations at the site have revealed evidence of a **planned urban settlement** including **mud-brick fortifications, streets and drains**.
- The site also boasts a **well-developed craft tradition** with the discovery of **pottery, terracotta figurines, and uninscribed seals**.
- A **lapidary workshop** was identified, providing **evidence of beadmaking**. There is also **evidence of bone and ivory working**.
- Rakhigarhi is also significant as one of the Harappan sites where **cemeteries and human burials** have been discovered.

Why in News?

- Human skeletal remains excavated from the archaeological site of Rakhigarhi in Haryana have been formally handed over by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** to the **Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI)** for detailed scientific investigation.
- The transfer is expected to strengthen multidisciplinary studies on one of the world's earliest urban civilizations.

Archaeological Survey of India:

- ASI is the premier organization for the **archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage** of the nation.
- Headquartered in **New Delhi**, ASI was founded in **1861** by **Sir Alexander Cunningham** and functions under the **Ministry of Culture**.
- Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance** is the prime concern of the ASI.
- Besides, it regulates all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**. It also regulates the **Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972**.

Anthropological Survey of India:

- AnSI is a premier research organization under the **Ministry of Culture**.
- Established in **1945**, it is the **leading institution for anthropological research** in India.
- Headquartered in **Kolkata**, AnSI conducts extensive field studies and research in various domains of anthropology, including **bio-cultural, social-cultural, and linguistic aspects** of the diverse communities of India.



DEFENCE & SECURITY

1) S-400 Missile

About

- The S-400 Triumf, developed by **Russia's Almaz Central Design Bureau**, is widely regarded as **one of the most advanced surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems** in the world.
- The S-400 is designed to provide a **multi-layered air defence shield capable of intercepting a broad spectrum of aerial threats**, including fighter jets, ballistic and cruise missiles, drones and stealth aircraft within the **range of 400km**.
- Equipped with **sophisticated phased-array radar**, these missiles can **engage multiple targets simultaneously** flying at **speeds up to Mach 14** (approximately 17,000 km/h) and at **altitudes ranging from 10 metres to 30 kilometres**.



Why in News?

- India has received the fourth squadron of the S-400 air defence system, strengthening the country's long-range air defence network.
 - The delivery is part of a \$5.43 billion agreement signed between India and Russia in 2018 for the acquisition of five S-400 regimental systems. Three S-400 squadrons have already been inducted into service; the fourth has now arrived, following delays linked to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

2) RudraM-II

About

- RudraM-II is an **anti-radiation air-to-surface missile** that can reach a **peak speed of Mach 5.5**.
 - *Anti-Radiation Missiles (ARMs) are designed to detect, track and neutralise the radar, communication assets and other radio frequency sources belonging to the adversary, which are generally part of their Air Defence Systems.*
- RudraM-II has been **developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad**, the nodal Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) laboratory for the programme, in collaboration with several other DRDO establishments.
- It is **capable of striking targets at a distance of approximately 300 km** and can carry a **warhead weighing up to 200 kg**.
- RudraM-II employs an **advanced hybrid navigation system** that integrates an Inertial Navigation System, GPS-based navigation, and a sophisticated passive homing seeker capable of detecting and tracking radio-frequency emissions across a broad spectrum, **enabling highly accurate strikes against enemy radar and air-defence assets**.

Why in News?

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) have successfully conducted flight-tests of the RudraM-II air-to-surface missile from a Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter off the coast of Odisha.





3) Chief of Defence Staff

About

- The post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was created in **2019** as **part of reforms in higher defence management** in India.
 - The creation of a CDS was suggested in 1999 by the **Kargil Review Committee (KRC)** headed by **K Subrahmanyam** to provide single-point professional military advice to the political leadership.
- The CDS holds the **rank of a four-star General**, with **salary and perks equivalent to those of a Service Chief**.
- The CDS is the **Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister on all tri-Services matters** and **Permanent Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC)** which has the three service chiefs as members.
- The CDS also **heads the Department of Military Affairs (DMA)**, established within the **Ministry of Defence**, and functions as its **Secretary**.
- The CDS is also a **member of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, chaired by the **Defence Minister**.

Mandate

- The broad mandate of the CDS includes **bringing about jointness** in operations, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance of the three Services.

- The CDS is also meant to bring about **synergy and optimise procurements, training and logistics** and **facilitate restructuring of military commands** for optimal utilisation of resources.
- The CDS **do not exercise any military command**, including over the three Service Chiefs.

Why in News?

- General N.S. Raja Subramani has assumed charge as India's third Chief of Defence Staff and Secretary, Department of Military Affairs.

4) OTHER NOTABLE TOPICS

4.1. iDEX

About

- The **iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence)** framework was launched in **2018** by the **Ministry of Defence** to **make the country self-reliant and self-sufficient in matters of Defence**.
- The objective of the framework is to **foster innovation, entrepreneurship and technology development in the Defence and Aerospace sector** by collaborating with startups, innovators, MSMEs, incubators, and academia.
- iDEX offers **grants and support for R&D** with significant potential for future adoption in Indian defence and aerospace.

Implementation

- iDEX is being implemented by the **Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)**, a **special purpose vehicle** under the aegis of the **Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence**.
- DIO has been formed as a **'not for profit' company** as per the Companies Act 2013 by **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** and **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, both Defence Public Sector Undertakings.
- DIO acts as a **bridge** between the requirements of the Armed Forces and the solution providers.

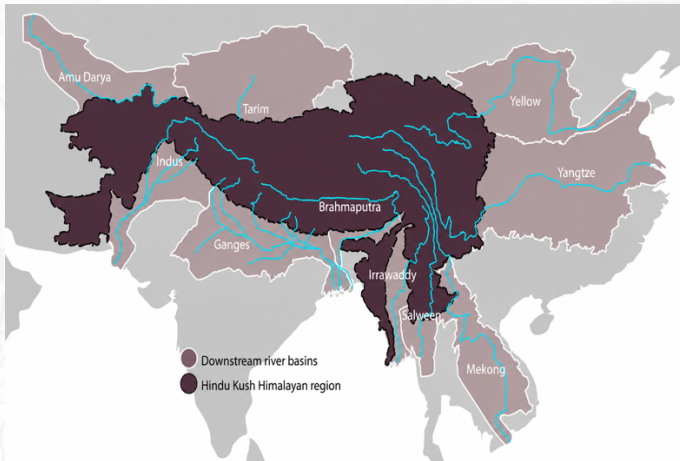


PLACES IN NEWS

1) Hindu Kush Himalayas

About

- The Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region is a mountain arc **stretching 3,500 km across 8 countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, India, China, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan.**
- **Home to thousands of glaciers and large river basins** such as **Ganga, Indus, Brahmaputra, Yangtze, Irrawaddy, Mekong and Amu Darya**, they support the food and livelihood security of about two billion people in this region of Asia.
- Often referred to as the **“Third Pole” or the “Water Tower of Asia”**, this region stores more ice and snow than anywhere else on Earth outside of the Arctic and Antarctic.



Impact of Climate Change

- According to the United Nations, glaciers across the globe are rapidly thinning, with those in the **HKH region experiencing the most dramatic losses due to climate change — retreating 65 per cent faster in 2011-2020** than in the previous decade.
- If **global temperatures rise by 1.5°C to 2°C**, glacier volume in the HKH region could **decline by 30-50 per cent by 2100**. If **warming exceeds 2°C**, the region may

lose **45 per cent** of its 2020 glacier volume.

2) Red Sea

About

- The Red Sea is an **inland sea** between **Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.**
- **Strategically connecting Europe and Asia**, the Red Sea stretches from the **Suez Canal** through the **Bab el Mandeb Strait** to the **Gulf of Aden.**
- Bordering Countries:
 - **Yemen and Saudi Arabia - East.**
 - **Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti - West.**
 - Additionally, **Israel and Jordan** have access to the Red Sea via the **Gulf of Aqaba.**



- No water enters the Red Sea from rivers, and the Red Sea region **receives very little precipitation in any form**, although prehistoric artifacts indicate that there were periods with greater amounts of rainfall.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OTHER ARTICLES

1) Bolides

About

- A bolide is an **exceptionally bright meteor that breaks apart or explodes in the earth's atmosphere.**
- These objects are originally small pieces of rock or metal in space that, after a close encounter with the earth, enter the atmosphere as meteors.
- As such a meteor falls, the air in front becomes compressed and heated, causing it to glow and produce a **bright streak of light across the sky.**

2) Right to be forgotten

News:

- The Delhi High Court has held that the **"right to be forgotten" flows from the constitutional right to privacy under Article 21** and enables individuals to seek removal of personal information from public digital accessibility when it no longer serves a legitimate public purpose.

3) Pyroprocessing

About

- Pyroprocessing is a way to **change a solid material physically or chemically using high temperature.**
- It is a **dry process** and **very energy-intensive.**
- The three sectors that use it most are **cement-making, metallurgy, and nuclear power.**

4) Sambhar Lake

About

- Located in **Rajasthan**, Sambhar Lake is **India's largest inland saltwater wetland.**
- It is **surrounded by the Aravali hills.**
- The lake is also designated as a **Ramsar site** and serves as a **key wintering area for pink flamingos and other birds.**

5) India expands nuclear arsenal

News:

- According to the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, **India** is estimated to have **modestly expanded its nuclear arsenal** in 2025 to around **190 warheads.**
 - *SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament. It is based in Stockholm, Sweden.*
- Beyond the nuclear domain, **India** retained its position as the **world's fifth-largest military spender** in 2025. SIPRI estimated India's military expenditure at **\$92.1 billion**, an increase of 8.9% over the previous year. The country ranked behind only the **United States, China, Russia and Germany** in defence spending.
- India also remained the **world's second-largest importer of major arms** (after **Ukraine**) during the 2021-25 period, accounting for 8.2% of global arms imports.

6) 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.

7) Petcoke

About

- Petroleum coke (Petcoke) is a **carbon-rich solid fuel** produced as a **by-product during crude oil refining.**
- It contains **high carbon content** and has a **high calorific value**, making it an **inexpensive industrial fuel.**



- Petcoke is widely used as a **fuel in cement plants, power generation units, lime kilns, and various industrial heating applications**. Depending on its quality and processing, it is also used in **metallurgical and aluminum industries**.
- However, it is **extremely polluting** because of its **high sulphur content** as well as **emissions of heavy metals and mercury**.
 - Long-term exposure to petcoke emissions can lead to **respiratory and cardiovascular diseases**.
- In 2017, the **Supreme Court imposed a ban** on use of pet coke in **Delhi-NCR states**.

8) MY Bharat

About

- Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) is an initiative of the **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** to **empower Indian youth** in the age group of **15-29 years** through **social mobility, educational equity, and practical skills**.
- It was launched on **31st October 2023** on **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas** (marking the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel) as an **autonomous body** to provide an overarching institutional mechanism for **youth development and youth-led development**.
- It is a **'Phygital Platform'** (physical + digital) comprising physical activity along with an opportunity to connect digitally.
- MY Bharat offers **experiential learning programs**, complementing theoretical knowledge with practical work exposure.

9) Trade Watch Quarterly

About

- The Trade Watch Quarterly Report is published by the **NITI Aayog**.
- It provides comprehensive, data-driven analysis of **India's export performance, import shifts, sectoral growth** and highlight **opportunities** in high-demand segments.

10) National Internet Exchange of India

About

- The National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) is a **not-for-profit organization** set up under the aegis of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
- NIXI plays a critical role in **strengthening India's Internet infrastructure** by facilitating **efficient exchange of domestic Internet traffic, managing the .IN and .भारत (.Bharat) country-code top-level domains**, and promoting adoption of Internet services across the country.

11) Exercise KHAAN QUEST

News:

- The Indian Army recently participated in the **multilateral joint military exercise - Exercise KHAAN QUEST** held in **Mongolia**.
- The exercise first started as a **bilateral event between USA and Mongolian Defence Forces** in 2003. Subsequently, from 2006 onwards the exercise graduated to a Multilateral Peacekeeping Exercise.

12) PM conferred with the highest national honour of the Slovak Republic

News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the **Slovak Republic's highest State honour**, the **"Order of the White Double Cross, First Class"**.
- The prestigious award was presented in recognition of PM Modi's contribution to strengthening bilateral ties between India and Slovakia and advancing cooperation between the two nations.

13) Doublet Earthquake

News:

- Two powerful earthquakes recently struck **Venezuela's** northern coast, killing more than 4,000 people in a rare seismic phenomenon known as a **"doublet earthquake."**
- A doublet occurs when **two earthquakes of comparable magnitude strike the**



same general area within a short period of time.

- Double earthquakes are **very destructive**. The **main difference** is that **double earthquakes have similar energy**, whereas a single earthquake and smaller aftershocks are lesser in energy.
- In a gesture of solidarity, India has launched **Operation Amistad**, a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) mission, in response to the devastating earthquake.

14) World Gold Council

About

- The World Gold Council (WGC) is a **non-profit association** of leading gold producers to promote and increase demand for gold globally. It was formed in **1987**.
- Based in **London**, WGC covers markets responsible for about three-quarters of the world's annual gold consumption.
- The WGC supports gold usage through marketing, research, and lobbying efforts.

15) Mombasa Declaration

About

- **Fifteen countries from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, and the Pacific** have adopted the **Mombasa Declaration** at the **11th Our Ocean Conference** (held in **Mombasa, Kenya**), committing to **advance global fisheries transparency** and strengthen efforts to **combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing**.
 - **India is not a signatory** to the Declaration.
- The **Our Ocean Conference** is an **annual conference** of governments, NGOs, and the private sector, focusing on addressing the key ocean issues, including climate change, biodiversity loss, food security and pollution.
- The **Our Ocean Secretariat** is hosted by the **World Resources Institute (WRI)**, a global non-profit research organization.

16) SC declares right to walk on footpath a fundamental right

News:

- The Supreme Court has ruled that the **freedom to walk on demarcated and well-maintained footpaths is a fundamental right** which has priority over movement by motorised vehicles.
- The apex court held that **citizen's right to walk on a demarcated footpath forms part of the right to movement** guaranteed under **Article 19 (1) (d)** and other fundamental rights, including **Article 21 - Right to life and liberty**.

17) India Becomes World's Top Ship Recycling Nation in 2025

News:

- **India has emerged as the world's leading ship recycling nation in 2025, ranking first globally.**
 - India's share of global ship recycling increased to **35.4%** in 2025 from **30.1%** in 2024.
- With this achievement, the **target set under Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030** to become **the world's leading ship recycling nation** has been achieved well ahead of schedule.
- The Government of India enacted the **Recycling of Ships Act, 2019**, to develop a **ship recycling ecosystem** aligned with the **Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (HKC)**, which **India ratified in 2019**.
 - The Hong Kong International Convention is a **globally binding framework** of the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** to ensure that ships, when recycled after reaching the end of their operational life, do not pose unnecessary risks to human health, safety or the environment.
 - Adopted in Hong Kong, China, in 2009, the Convention entered into force in **2025**.



18) Kisan Sarathi

About

- Kisan Sarathi, launched in 2021, is **India's largest integrated digital agro-advisory platform**.
 - It provides timely, authentic, and multilingual advisories to farmers. Farmers also get **access to schemes, weather updates, and expert consultations**.
- It is a **joint initiative of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.
- The **Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute** (under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)) and the **Digital India Corporation** (under MeitY) implement the platform.

19) Jan Samarth Portal

About

- The Government of India launched the Jan Samarth Portal in 2022 as a **unique digital platform for credit-linked schemes**.
- It is a first of its kind platform which **directly connects lenders with beneficiaries**.
- It was conceptualised with the **twin objectives of expanding the reach of government-sponsored schemes and streamlining the credit delivery process**.

20) PM Modi Honoured With Seychelles' Highest Distinction

News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was recently conferred with the **Guardian of the Blue Horizon**, Seychelles' highest distinction for leadership in environmental conservation and sustainable development.

21) Shigellosis

About

- **Kerala** has reported a sharp increase in Shigellosis recently, with hundreds of

confirmed cases and a few deaths, particularly among children.

- Shigellosis is a **highly contagious bacterial infection** that primarily affects the **intestines**, leading to **severe diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever**.
- It is caused by a group of bacteria known as **Shigella**, which can be **transmitted through contaminated food, water, or direct person-to-person contact**.
- **Risk factors** include being **under the age of five**, having a **weakened immune system**, travelling to an area with unsafe food or water, etc.
- It is **one of the leading bacterial causes of diarrhoea worldwide**. **Humans** are the **only natural reservoir** of the Shigella bacteria.

22) Downblending

About

- Downblending is the **process of reducing the concentration of uranium-235 (U-235) in enriched uranium by mixing it with natural or depleted uranium**. It is the **reverse of uranium enrichment**.
 - **Natural uranium** contains only **0.72% U-235** (the fissile isotope capable of **sustaining a nuclear chain reaction**) while the remaining **99.28% is uranium-238 (U-238)**.
 - **Enrichment** increases the proportion of U-235, and **highly enriched uranium can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons**.
- Through downblending, the U-235 concentration is reduced to **below 5%**. Uranium at this level is **suitable for civilian nuclear power generation but is not suitable for making nuclear bombs**.
- By reducing the availability of weapons-grade uranium, **downblending increases the "breakout time"**—the time required for a country to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon.
- Consequently, it is a **key nuclear non-proliferation measure** and an important



indicator of a country's commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

23) Carbon Stabilisation

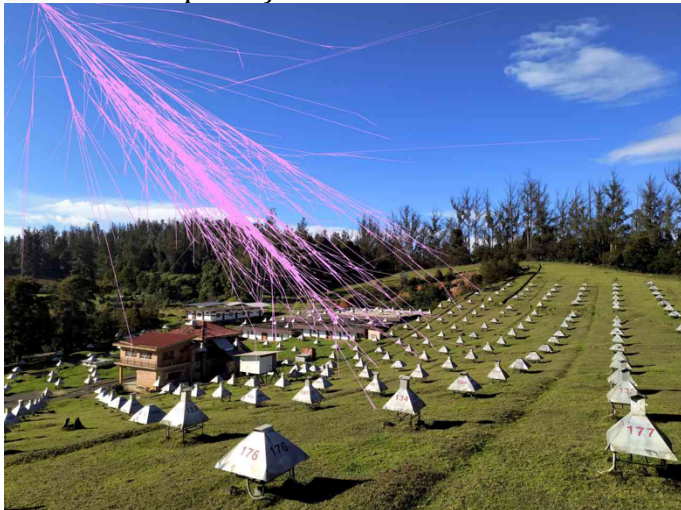
About

- Carbon stabilisation is the process of **capturing atmospheric carbon and locking it into stable solid forms**, such as **soil or organic matter**, where it resists decomposition and prevents the release of carbon back into the atmosphere.

24) GRAPES 3 observatory

News:

- Researchers from India and Japan recently analysed 22 years of data from the GRAPES-3 telescope.
- The GRAPES-3 observatory, located in **Ooty, Tamil Nadu** at an altitude of **2200m meter**, is designed to **study the origin, acceleration and propagation of cosmic rays** (high energy particles that move through space at nearly the speed of light).
- It also **studies solar and thunderstorm phenomena** using **cosmic ray muons** (tiny subatomic particles produced by cosmic rays bombarding the top-of-the-atmosphere).



- The observatory is operated by the **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai**.

25) Vinimay

News:

- The **Home Ministry** has launched the **Land Port Management System (LPMS), 'Vinimay'** to **digitize and streamline cargo processing and passenger movement across India's land borders**.
- A land port is a designated entry and exit point on an international border that connects neighbouring countries via roads or railways.
 - 15 land ports are currently operational across India.
- Land Ports Authority of India** is a **statutory organization** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** for building land ports on borders, to provide secure, seamless & efficient systems for cargo & passenger movement with low trade transaction for promotion of regional trade.
- The system is a **digital platform** designed to **integrate operations across land ports into a unified system**.
- It will enable **secure, real-time exchange of logistics and regulatory information**, bringing land ports on a par with digital systems already in place at airports and seaports.
- The platform is expected to **ensure seamless movement of goods and passengers across India's international land borders**.



PRACTICE WITH PYQS

1. Which of the following is not a member of 'Gulf Cooperation Council'? (2016)

- A. Iran
- B. Saudi Arabia
- C. Oman
- D. Kuwait

2. What are the duties of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) as Head of the Department of Military Affairs? (2024)

1. Permanent Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee
2. Exercise military command over the three Service Chiefs
3. Principal Military Advisor to Defence Minister on all tri-Service matters

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

3. The power to increase the number of judges in the Supreme Court of India is vested in (2014)

- A. the President of India
- B. the Parliament
- C. the Chief Justice of India
- D. the Law Commission

4. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) helps in promoting financial inclusion in the country.
2. NPCI has launched RuPay, a card payment scheme.

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

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

5. Which of the following is a most likely consequence of implementing the 'Unified Payments Interface (UPI)'? (2017)

- A. Mobile wallets will not be necessary for online payments.
- B. Digital currency will totally replace physical currency in about two decades.
- C. FDI inflows will drastically increase.
- D. Direct transfer of subsidies to poor people will become very effective.

6. Consider the following countries: (2025)

- I. United Arab Emirates
- II. France
- III. Germany



IV. Singapore
 V. Bangladesh

How many countries amongst the above are there other than India where international merchant payments are accepted under UPI?

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

7. Consider the following statements (2024)

1. In India, Non-Banking Financial Companies can access the Liquidity Adjustment Facility window of the Reserve Bank of India.
2. In India, Foreign Institutional Investors can hold the Government Securities (G-Secs).
3. In India, Stock Exchanges can offer separate trading platforms for debts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

8. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The Reserve Bank of India manages and services Government of India Securities but not any State Government Securities.
2. Treasury bills are issued by the Government of India and there are no treasury bills issued by the state Governments.
3. Treasury bills are issued at a discount from the par value.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

9. Consider the following statements. (2024)

1. The Red Sea receives very little precipitation in any form.
2. No water enters the Red Sea from rivers.

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

10. With reference to 'Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)', consider the following statements: (2015)

1. It was established very recently in response to incidents of piracy and accidents of oil spills.
2. It is an alliance meant for maritime security only.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

11. With references to organic farming in India, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) is operated under the guidelines and directions of the Union Ministry of Rural Development.
2. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) functions as the Secretariat for the implementation of NPOP.
3. Sikkim has become India's first fully organic State.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

12. Which of the following has/have been accorded 'Geographical Indication' status? (2015)

1. Banaras Brocades and Sarees
2. Rajasthani Daal-Bati-Churma
3. Tirupathi Laddu

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

13. India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 in order to comply with the obligations to (2018)

- A. ILO
- B. IMF
- C. UNCTAD
- D. WTO

14. India is a party to the Ramsar Convention and has declared many areas as Ramsar sites. Which of the following statements best describes how we should maintain these sites in the context of this convention? [2010]

- A. Keep all the sites completely inaccessible to man so that they will not be exploited.
- B. Conserve all the sites through ecosystem approach and permit tourism and recreation only.
- C. Conserve all the sites through an ecosystem approach for a period without any exploitation, with specific criteria and specific period for each site, and then allow sustainable use of them by future generations.
- D. Conserve all the sites through ecosystem approach and allow their simultaneous sustainable use.



15. "If rainforests and tropical forests are the lungs of the Earth, then surely wetlands function as its kidneys." Which one of the following functions of wetlands best reflects the above statement? (2022)

- A. The water cycle in wetlands involves surface runoff, subsoil percolation and evaporation.
- B. Algae form the nutrient base upon which fish, crustaceans, molluscs, birds, reptiles and mammals thrive.
- C. Wetlands play a vital role in maintaining sedimentation balance and Soil stabilization.
- D. Aquatic plants absorb heavy metals and excess nutrients.

16. Which of the following bodies does not/do not find mention in the Constitution? (2013)

- 1. National Development Council
- 2. Planning Commission
- 3. Zonal Councils

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

17. With reference to India, consider the following: (2025)

- I. The Inter-State Council
- II. The National Security Council
- III. Zonal Councils

How many of the above were established as per the provisions of the Constitution of India?

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

18. 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

19. With reference to 'National Investment and Infrastructure Fund', which of the following statements is/are correct? (2017)

- 1. It is an organ of NITI Aayog.
- 2. It has a corpus of Rs. 4,00,000 crore at present.



Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

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

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

Select the correct answer using the code given below

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

21. What is/are the purpose/purposes of the Government's 'Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme' and 'Gold Monetization Scheme'? (2016)

1. To bring the idle gold lying with Indian households into the economy.
2. To promote FDI in the gold and jewellery sector.
3. To reduce India's dependence on gold imports.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

22. Consider the following countries: (2014)

1. Denmark
2. Japan
3. Russian Federation
4. United Kingdom
5. United States of America

Which of the above are the members of the 'Arctic Council'?

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

23. With reference to the 'Pradhan Mantri Surkashit Matritva Abhiyan' consider the following statements. (2024)

1. This scheme guarantees a minimum package of antenatal care services to women in their second and third trimesters of pregnancy and six months post-delivery health care service in any government health facility.
2. Under this scheme, private sector health providers of certain specialities can volunteer to provide services at nearby government health facilities.



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

24. With reference to monoclonal antibodies, often mentioned in news, consider the following statements: (2025)

- I.They are man-made proteins.
- II.They stimulate immunological function due to their ability to bind to specific antigens.
- III.They are used in treating viral infections like that of Nipah virus.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

25. What is the use of biochar in farming? (2020)

- 1. Biochar can be used as a part of the growing medium in vertical farming.
- 2. When biochar is a part of the growing medium, it promotes the growth of nitrogen-fixing microorganisms.
- 3. When biochar is a part of the growing medium, it enables the growing medium to retain water for a longer time.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answers:

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



15. D
16. D
17. A
18. B
19. D
20. C
21. C
22. D
23. B
24. D
25. D

