



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION

Scientists have uncovered a sprawling burial site in India, belonging to one of the world's earliest urban civilizations, the Indus Society.

9 OCT - 14 OCT 2023

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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GENERAL STUDIES – 1

Topics: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

1. INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION: BURIAL SITE AND TOWN PLANNING

Context:

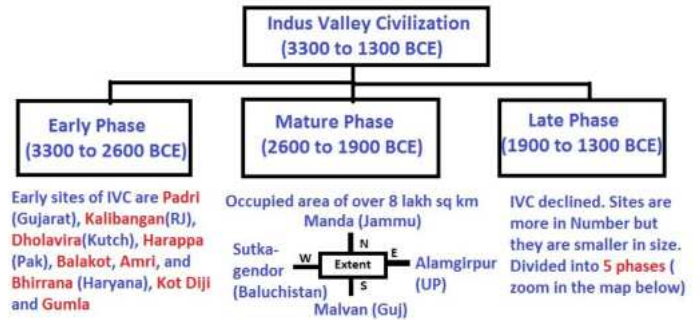
Scientists have uncovered a sprawling burial site in India, belonging to one of the world's earliest urban civilizations, [the Indus Society](#).

What do we know about the site?

- The excavation of the site started in 2019 near **Khatiya village in Kutch Region of Gujarat**
- The 40-acre cemetery, discovered, maybe the largest **"pre-urban" cemetery of its kind**, dating back 5,200 years.
- The Cemetery was in use for **about 500 years**, spanning from 3200BC to 2600BC, making it one of the oldest graves in the world.
- Excavations have revealed **over 500 graves**, including unique features like **sandstone-lined burial shafts** pointing in different directions.
- Artefacts found in the graves include **bangles, beads, and pottery (mostly simple inexpensive items)**.
- Some people were buried with personal ornaments** - bangles, beads, amulets - which could not be passed on to others.
- Some women were buried with a **mirror made of copper**.
- Adults were buried with different types of vessels associated with **serving and storing food**.
- Shell bangles** were typically found on the left arms of adult females
- Infants and children** were not usually buried with any pottery or ornaments.

What was the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)?

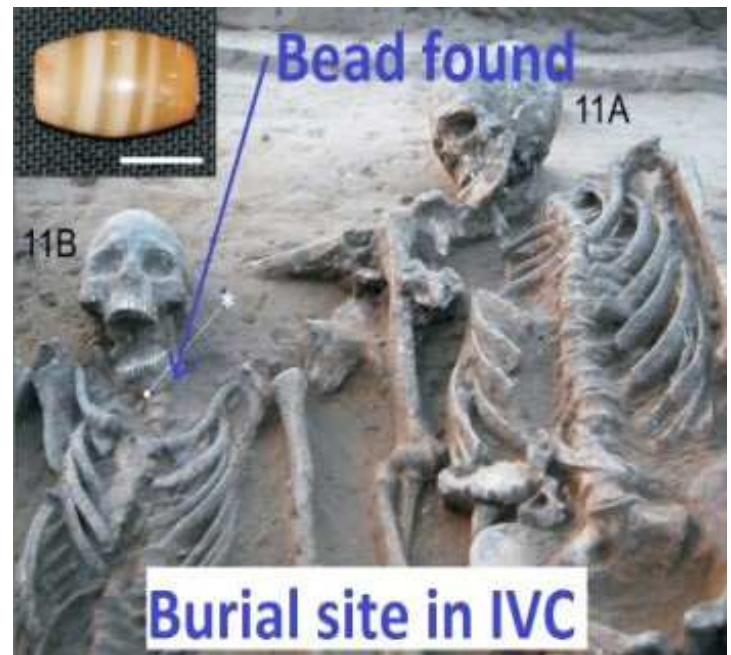
It was a Bronze Age civilization (**3300-1300 BCE; mature period 2600-1900 BCE**) extending from what today is northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and northwest India. Along with Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, it was one of three early civilizations of the Old World, and of the three the most widespread. It flourished in the basins of the Indus River.



Burial Practices of the IVC:

Dead bodies were placed in the **North-South direction (extended inhumation)** and were accompanied by food, pottery, jewellery, etc. The graveyard was within the settlement. They practised three types of burial:-

- Complete burial**
- Fractional burial** (burial of bones after exposure of the body to birds and beasts)
- Cremation** followed by burial of the ashes



Significance: It shows their **strong belief in life after death**, which was similar to the belief system of other contemporary civilizations, however; the items kept were **not as expensive as other civilizations** (unlike those of the elites in Egypt and Mesopotamia).

Influence and lessons that can be derived from the urban planning and cultural aspects of IVC for present-day cities:

Aspect	Influence and Lessons for Present-Day Cities
City Planning	Present-day cities can focus on sustainable development, efficient land use, and robust infrastructure networks inspired by the systematic urban planning of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Sanitation Systems	Learning from the advanced sanitation systems of the Indus Valley, modern cities can prioritize well-designed sanitation systems, waste management, and access to clean water for public health.
Planned Neighbourhoods	Present-day cities can promote walkable neighbourhoods, mixed land-use planning, and public spaces to enhance community and social connectivity, taking inspiration from the planned neighbourhoods of the Indus Valley cities.
Cultural Diversity	Embracing cultural diversity , modern cities can create inclusive spaces, cultural events, and opportunities for dialogue among diverse communities, similar to the cultural diversity exhibited in the Indus Valley Civilization.
Environmental Awareness	Inspired by the environmental awareness of the Indus Valley, present-day cities can prioritize green spaces, sustainable transportation, and eco-friendly urban design to address environmental challenges and ensure a sustainable future.

Difference between the Indus Valley Civilization and other ancient civilizations:



Indus Valley Civilization

Indus Valley Civilisation differs from other ancient civilizations because inequality levels were far lower than in other civilizations. This was because the Indus, unlike the other rivers, changed its course often. **This changed the structure of the society of the Indus Valley Civilization**



Civilization	Indus Valley	Nile	Mesopotamia	Yellow River
Period	2600-1900 BCE	3100-1070 BCE	4000-2500 BCE	5000-3000 BCE
Location	South Asia (Pakistan and northwest India)	Northeast Africa (Egypt)	Middle East (Iraq and surrounding areas)	East Asia (China)
Key Cities	Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro	Memphis, Thebes	Ur, Uruk, Babylon	Anyang
Writing System	Undeciphered script	Hieroglyphics, hieratic script	Cuneiform	Oracle bone script
Religion	Polytheistic (mother goddess)	Polytheistic (emphasis on pharaoh as divine)	Polytheistic (emphasis on city-state patron deities)	Ancestor worship, with some evidence of shamanism and totemism
Architecture	Large, planned cities with brick buildings, public baths, and sewage systems	Pyramids , temples, and monumental tombs	Ziggurats , palaces, and monumental gates	Large walled cities with ceremonial architecture and burials of elite
Trade	Likely traded with Mesopotamia and Gulf region for luxury goods	Traded with Nubia, Levant, and Mesopotamia for luxury goods	Traded with Indus Valley and Persian Gulf region for luxury goods	Traded with Southeast Asia, Korea, and Japan for luxury goods
Decline	Unknown, potentially due to environmental factors or invasion	Conquered by foreign invaders and assimilated into larger empires	Declined due to political instability and invasion	Conquered and assimilated into larger empires

To know more Visit [Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs](#)

Insta Links

- [Fall of Indus Valley Civilisation](#)

Mains Links

Q. To what extent has the urban planning and culture of the Indus Valley Civilisation provided inputs to present-day urbanisation? Discuss. (UPSC 2014)

Prelims Links

Q. With reference to the difference between the culture of Rigvedic Aryans and Indus Valley people, which of the following statements is/are correct? (UPSC 2017)

1. Rigvedic Aryans used the coat of mail and helmet in warfare whereas the people of Indus Valley Civilization did not leave any evidence of using them.
2. Rigvedic Aryans knew gold, silver and copper whereas Indus Valley people knew only copper and iron.
3. Rigvedic Aryans had domesticated the horse whereas there is no evidence of Indus Valley people having been aware of this animal.

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

Answer: C

Topics: History of the world will include events from 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.- their forms and effect on the society.

2. CURRENT CONFLICT IN ISRAEL AND THE YOM KIPPUR WAR

Context:

The Yom Kippur War, also known as the October War or Ramadan War, fought in 1973 [between Israel Egypt and Syria](#), is being compared to the current conflict involving Hamas and Israel.

What is currently happening in Israel?

Israel has declared war on **Hamas after the Palestinian militant group** carried out unprecedented attacks on Israeli territory, killing and abducting hundreds of Israeli citizens.

Who is Hamas?

Hamas is a **Palestinian political and militant organization** that currently governs the Gaza Strip, one of the two Palestinian territories. Though it is headquartered in **Gaza City**, it also has a presence in the West Bank, in which **Fatah exercises control**.

Difference between Hamas and Fatah:

Aspect	Hamas	Fatah
Origins	Rooted in the Muslim Brotherhood	Emerged as a secular nationalist movement
Goals	Aims for an Islamic state in historic Palestine, including Israel	Pursues a two-state solution , with a Palestinian state alongside Israel

Methods	Employs armed resistance and suicide bombings	Engages in both armed and diplomatic efforts, but mostly has renounced violence
Control	Controls the Gaza Strip	Governs the West Bank
International Status	Considered a terrorist organization by many countries, including Israel and the U.S.	Has received more international recognition



BBC

Timeline of the [conflict](#):

Year	Event
Root	The roots of the conflict lie in the First World War and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire .
1917	Through the Balfour Declaration in 1917, Britain supported establishing a national home for Jewish people in Palestine.
1947	In 1947 the UN voted to split Palestine between Arabs and Jews . Jewish residents accepted the agreement and declared independence from Israel in 1948 while Arabs rejected the agreement
1949: 1st war	Israel signs truces with Arab countries, Gaza Strip under Egypt's control.
1956: Suez Crisis: 2nd War	Israel invades the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip after the Suez Canal nationalization.
1957	Israel withdrew from Egyptian land, except the Gaza Strip and the Gulf of Aqaba area.

1967 War: 3rd War	Israel gained control of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula during the Six-Day War.
1973: 4th war	Yom Kippur War : Egypt and Syria attempted to negotiate better terms, leading to a war.
1978 Accord	Camp David Accords in 1978 marked the first instance of an Arab country (Egypt) recognising Israel as a state and Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt.
1987	First Intifada begins in West Bank and Gaza against Israeli occupation.
1993 Accord	Oslo Accords signed; Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) formally recognised the state of Israel . In return, Israel allowed Palestinians some form of limited self-governance in Gaza and the West Bank. Hamas rejects the accord and launches suicide bombings in Israel in opposition.
2006	Hamas won the Palestinian parliamentary election and later seized control of Gaza.
2021	Israeli police raid Al Aqsa Mosque , sparking an 11-day war between Israel and Hamas.

What is Yom Kippur?

Yom Kippur is the holiest day in Judaism and Samaritanism. It occurs annually on the **10th of Tishrei**, corresponding to a date in September or early October.

What was the Yom Kippur War?

The **Yom Kippur War**, also known as the **Ramadan War**, the **October War**, the **1973 Arab–Israeli War**, or the **Fourth Arab–Israeli War**, was an armed conflict fought from October 6 to 25, 1973, between **Israel and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria**.

On the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur, **otherwise called the Day of Atonement**, Israel was caught off guard by invading forces from Egypt and Syria.

Motive: Egyptian and Syrian forces launched a coordinated attack against Israel on Yom Kippur, hoping to win back territory lost to Israel during the third Arab-Israeli war, in 1967

Comparison with current [conflict](#):

Aspect	Yom Kippur War (1973)	Current Conflict 2023
Parties Involved	Israel, Egypt, Syria	Israel, Hamas, Others
Surprise Attack	Yes	Yes

Reason for Conflict	Territorial disputes	Ongoing tensions
Civilian Abductions/Killings	Limited	Occurred
International Involvement	US, Soviet Union	Various countries
Outcome	Diplomatic resolution	Ongoing conflict
Peace Initiatives	Camp David Accords	Multiple attempts
Diplomatic Relations	Israel-Egypt peace treaty signed	Ongoing tensions

Result of the Yom Kippur War: 1973 war thus ended in an Israeli victory but at great cost to all the parties.

Significance of the Yom Kippur war:

- The Yom Kippur War marked a **significant shift** as it **showed that Israel**, despite its prior aura of **invincibility**, could be vulnerable in battle.
- The **heavy casualties suffered by Israel** during the war made it clear that they could be battered in combat, impacting its reputation.
- The war initiated a **peace process, leading to the Camp David Accords in 1978**, where Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, and the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the first Arab country to recognize Israel as a state.
- However, **Syria did not benefit from the war** and ended up with no gains, while Israel expanded its occupation of the **Golan Heights**.
- In essence, the Yom Kippur War **changed perceptions about Israel's military invincibility** and paved the way for diplomatic negotiations and peace agreements in the region.

Insta links:

- [Israel Palestine conflict](#)
- [India-Palestine relations: Ignoring the dispossessed people goes against India's anti-colonial legacy](#)

Mains Links:

Q. "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss. (UPSC 2018)

Prelims Links: (UPSC 2015)

Q. The area known as 'Golan Heights' sometimes appears in the news in the context of the events related to

- Central Asia
- Middle East
- South-East Asia
- Central Africa

Ans: b

Topics: Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

3. ZEALANDIA (WORLD'S EIGHTH CONTINENT)

Context:

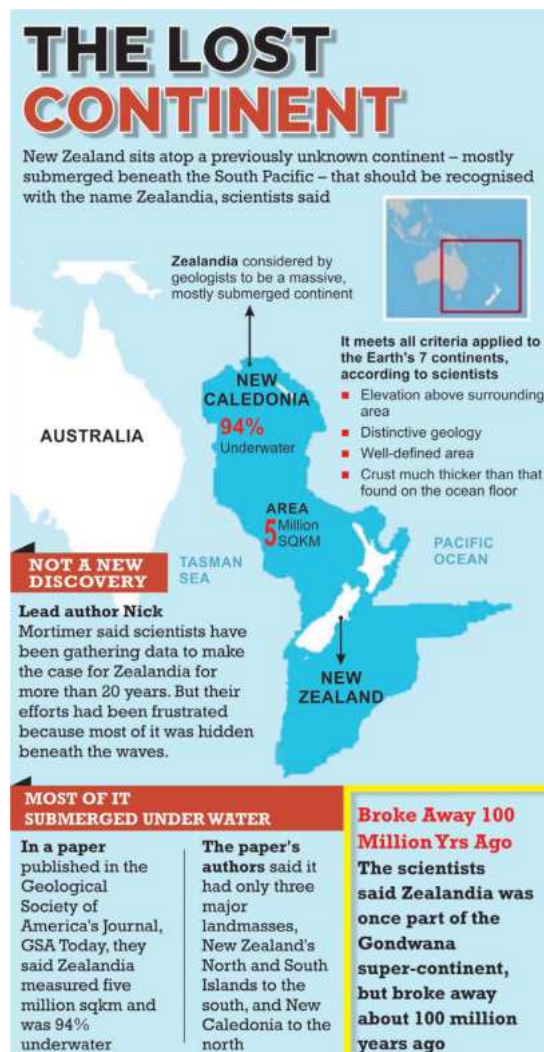
Recent research on Zealandia, an underwater continent to the southeast of Australia, is shedding light on its **geological history** and why it remained hidden for so long.

- Recently, an international team released **highly detailed maps of Zealandia**, covering its entire **five million square kilometres**.

What is Zealandia?

Zealandia is an **underwater continent** located to the south-east of Australia. It was recognized as Earth's eighth continent in 2017. Zealandia formed around **83 million years ago** during the **Late Cretaceous period** and started as part of the supercontinent **Gondwana** before breaking away.

- The existence of Zealandia was **first recorded in 1642** by Dutch businessman and sailor Abel Tasman

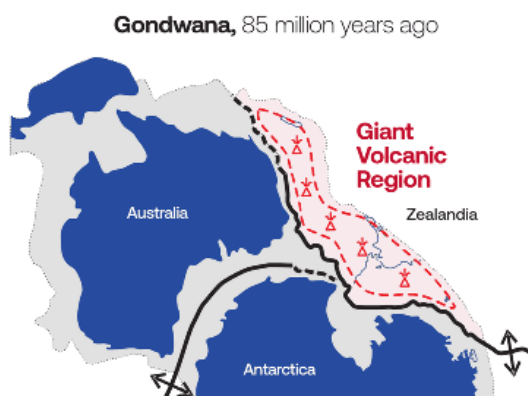


How was Zealandia formed?

Gondwana formed when Earth's ancient supercontinent, **Pangea**, split into two fragments.

- **Laurasia** in the north became Europe, Asia, and North America.
- **Gondwana** in the south dispersed to form modern-day Africa, India, Antarctica, South America, and Australia.

Zealandia began as part of the **supercontinent Gondwana**, which started breaking apart. As Zealandia began to break away from Gondwana, "**The Giant Volcanic Region**" formed – where **magma flooded out of cracks**. Zealandia **separated from the landmasses** to its north and south, eventually becoming its own continent. Over millions of years, it underwent stretching and thinning due to tectonic forces, creating ruptures that later formed oceanic crust. Around 25 million years ago, Zealandia largely sank beneath the ocean, becoming the submerged continent we know today.



Evidence in support of Zealandia as a continent:

Evidence	Explanation
Bathymetry	Zealandia's seabed is considerably shallower compared to the surrounding oceanic plates, indicating it's underlain by a continental rather than an oceanic crust.
Geological Composition	Analysis of rocks and sediments from Zealandia reveals continental characteristics , not typical of oceanic crust.
Tectonic Separation	Zealandia separated from the Gondwana supercontinent and moved independently, forming its distinct landmass
Geological Fit	Geological features of Zealandia align with West Antarctica , suggesting that these regions were once connected as part of a larger continent
Magnetic Anomalies	Measurements of magnetic anomalies in the ocean floor around Zealandia provide insights into its stretching and thinning processes over millions of years

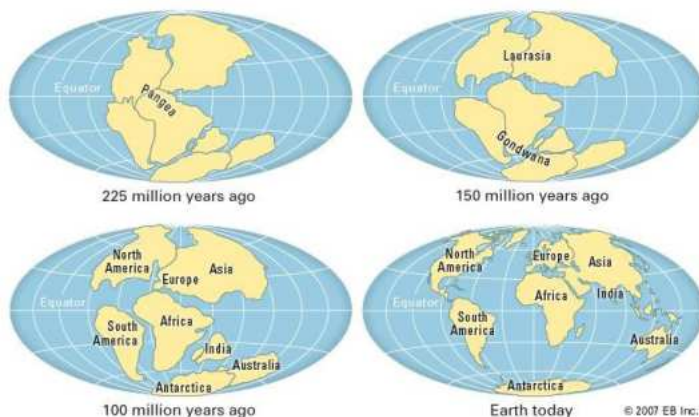
Size	While mostly submerged, Zealandia covers an extensive area of approximately five million square kilometres , meeting the size criterion for continent status
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What is plate tectonics and how continents are formed?

Plate tectonics is the scientific theory that explains **the movement of the Earth's lithosphere**, which is divided into large, rigid plates. These plates "float" on the semi-fluid asthenosphere beneath them.

Process of Continental Formation:

Process	Description
1. Breakup of Supercontinents	Continents are initially part of larger landmasses known as supercontinents. Over millions of years, tectonic forces caused the supercontinent to break apart. Example: Pangea began breaking apart approximately 175 million years ago .
2. Fragmentation	As the supercontinent breaks apart, it results in the separation of continental fragments or blocks . These fragments are composed of continental crust .
3. Drifting and Movement	Continental fragments start to drift and move across the Earth's surface . This movement is driven by the motion of tectonic plates .
4. Collision and Assembly	Over time, some continental fragments may collide with each other or with other landmasses. These collisions often lead to the formation of mountain ranges . Gradually, the fragments merge together to form larger continents
5. Continual Change	The process of continental formation and transformation is continuous. Continents keep moving, colliding, and changing shape due to plate tectonics. This dynamic process involves mountain building, volcanic activity, and the opening and closing of ocean basins .



Insta Links:

- [New map of Earth's tectonic plates to help understand earthquakes, and volcanoes better](#)

Mains Links:**Prelims Links:****Q. Consider the following (UPSC 2013)**

1. Electromagnetic radiation
2. Geothermal energy
3. Gravitational force
4. Plate movements
5. Rotation of the earth
6. Revolution of the earth

Which of the above is responsible for bringing dynamic changes on the surface of the earth?

- (a) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
 (b) 1, 3, 5 and 6 only
 (c) 2, 4, 5 and 6 only
 (d) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

GENERAL STUDIES – 2

Topics: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

1. DIGITAL INDIA ACT 2023 (DIA) AND CONCERNS




Context:

The [Digital India Act](#) 2023 (DIA) is a significant move by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) to establish a future-ready framework for India's digital ecosystem

What is the [Digital India Act \(DIA\) 2023?](#)

Digital India Act 2023 (DIA)



Feature	Description
	The Digital India Act (DIA) 2023 is a proposed legislation aimed at updating the legal framework to address digital challenges and opportunities. It will replace the outdated Information Technology Act of 2000 .
	Objective Formulate rules adaptable to changing technology trends. Provide accessible adjudicatory mechanisms for online civil and criminal offenses. Deliver timely remedies for citizens, resolve cyber disputes , and enforce the rule of law online. Responsible use of " New-Age technologies " such as Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain
	Key Components Open Internet: Ensures choice, competition, diversity, fair market access, and ease of doing business. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Internet is free and open to all, and not under the control of any government or organization Online Safety and Trust: Focuses on safeguarding users against cyber threats and digital rights. Accountable Internet: Introduces legal mechanisms for complaint redressal, transparency, and norms for data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote ethical AI practices, data privacy in blockchain applications, and mechanisms for accountability.
	Salient Features Replaces the outdated Information Technology Act of 2000 to address contemporary digital challenges. Focuses on online safety, trust, and accountability , ensuring an open internet and regulating new-age technologies. Reviews the 'safe harbor' principle for online platform accountability (Safe Harbor rule shields platforms from liability related to user-generated content) Mandates stringent Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements for wearable devices with criminal law sanctions. Aligns with Digital India Goals for 2026 to establish a USD 1 trillion digital economy.

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Need for the Digital India Act (DIA):

Need	Description
Outdated Regulations	The IT Act of 2000 is outdated and inadequate for today's internet with 850 million users and new user harms.
Inadequacy of Current Regulations	Existing regulations like Intermediary Guidelines are insufficient for governing new-age technologies.
Need for Legal Adaptation	An evolving legal framework is required to address challenges posed by technologies like AI, Blockchain, and IoT .
Addressing E-commerce and Online Content	Growing e-commerce and online content sharing necessitate updated regulations covering consumer protection and content moderation.
Global Alignment and Best Practices	India's regulations must align with international standards and practices to be effective in the global digital landscape.

Challenges associated with the Digital India Act (DIA):

Challenges	Description
Hinder Innovation and Ease of Doing Business	Stricter regulations, especially in emerging technologies, may hinder innovation and discourage investments and entrepreneurship.
Affect Freedom of Expression	The review of the "safe harbour" principle could affect freedom of expression on online platforms
Infrastructure Requirements	Effective enforcement of the DIA will demand substantial resources, expertise, and infrastructure , necessitating investments in these areas.
Balancing Stakeholder Interests	Balancing the interests of various stakeholders, including tech giants and citizens' rights , presents a significant challenge that requires inclusive consideration.
Surveillance and Privacy Concerns	Critics raise concerns about certain provisions potentially granting excessive surveillance powers to the government , compromising privacy rights. Strong safeguards are needed to prevent abuse and violations of privacy.
Data Localization and Cross-Border Data Flows	The approach to data localization in the DIA is contentious . While it can enhance data protection and security, it may disrupt cross-border data flows, affecting global businesses that rely on efficient data transfers.

Data protection laws in other countries:

Country	Legislation	Focus
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European Union	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	Comprehensive data protection for personal data, upholding privacy as a fundamental right .
United States	Privacy Act, Electronic Communications Privacy Act	Limited sector-specific regulations for data protection, distinguishing between public and private sectors.
China	Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL), Data Security Law (DSL)	PIPL grants new rights to data subjects and prevents personal data misuse , while DSL classifies business data by importance and restricts cross-border data transfers

Way forward:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve all relevant parties in the law's creation for a balanced framework.
- **Balancing Regulation and Innovation:** Maintain a balance to avoid stifling innovation.
- **Capacity Building:** Invest in law enforcement and regulatory agencies.
- **Global Collaboration:** Work with international bodies for global alignment.
- **Public Awareness:** Digitally educate citizens about digital rights and responsibilities.

Conclusion:

The DIA represents a forward-looking approach to regulation, shaping India's digital future with the potential for both positive and unintended consequences. Monitoring and adaptability will be crucial in its implementation.

Insta Links:

- [The Digital India Bill](#)
- [New draft digital data protection bill: How it compares with the older version and laws elsewhere](#)

Mains Links:

Q. Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on the Right to Privacy. (UPSC 2017)

Prelims Links:

Q. 'Right to Privacy' is protected under which Article of the Constitution of India? (UPSC 2021)

- (a) Article 15
 (b) Article 19
 (c) Article 21
 (d) Article 29

Ans: C

Q. Right to Privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of the Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Which of the following in the Constitution of India correctly and appropriately implies the above statement? (UPSC 2018)

- (a) Article 14 and the provisions under the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution.
 (b) Article 17 and the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV.
 (c) Article 21 and the freedoms guaranteed in Part III.
 (d) Article 24 and the provisions under the 44th Amendment to the Constitution.

Ans: C

Topics: Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.

2. MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS (MDBs): BIGGER, BETTER, AND BOLDER BY 2030

Context:

The G20 expert group has presented a roadmap (in its report The Triple Agenda: A Roadmap for Better, Bolder and Bigger MDBs) for enhancing the **performance of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)** to be bigger, better, and bolder by 2030. The group, led by **Lawrence Summers** (US treasury secretary) and **NK Singh** (chair of the 15th Finance Commission), has recommended several measures for MDBs.

What are MDBs?

MDB is a financial institution established by multiple member countries and falls under international law. E.g., International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Asian Development Bank etc.

Objectives of MDBs: Stabilizing the global financial system during the time of crisis; Providing long-term financing; Providing lower-cost financing

Role of MDBs in global stability and development

Role of MDBs	Description	Examples/Actions
Funding Development Projects	ADB's support for the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor	
	World Bank's assistance in the development of National Waterway 1 on the Ganges River	
Crisis Management	World Bank's support for India during the COVID-19 pandemic	
Supporting the Implementation of the SDGs	World Bank provided grants to support education and healthcare programs, such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All) program and the National Rural Health Mission	

Policy Advice and Capacity Building	Providing policy advice and technical assistance for governance and capacity building	IMF's advice on macroeconomic policy for countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan
Providing Concessional Finance and Grants	Offering concessional finance and grants to LICs and FCS to address development challenges	MDBs' support for low-income countries and fragile states
Promoting Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity	Assisting MICs in reducing inequalities and improving access to essential services	

Despite playing a crucial role in promoting development and global stability, multilateral development banks (MDBs) face several challenges that need to be addressed



Other challenges for Reforming MDBs:

- **Adapting to Global Challenges:** MDBs must adapt to address emerging global issues like pandemics and conflicts, responding quickly to changing circumstances.
- **Resource Constraints:** MDBs face limitations in funding to meet growing demands, especially in climate change and infrastructure development.
- **Mobilizing Private Sector:** MDBs struggle to attract private sector investments, requiring risk mitigation and incentives.
- **Addressing Climate Change:** MDBs need to incorporate climate considerations into policies, strategies, and project financing for sustainable development.
- **Domination by Developed Countries:** Currently,

MDBs are dominated by developed Countries (WB by USA, IMF by EU and ADB by Japan); they impose conditionality in loans; there is a lack of Transparency and Accountability.

Recommended steps by G20 Expert groups for better functioning of MDBs:

Aspects	Recommended Steps
MDB Operating Models	Implement multi-year country programs and initiatives
	Speed up project and program approvals processing time from concept note to first disbursement shrink from 25 months (the average in 2017 for World Bank Group) to 12 months
	Collaborate on regional and global approaches to global public goods
	Simplify rules and procedures using a risk-based tailored approach
	Redesign delivery of policy and institutional support
Scaling Up Financing at an Affordable Cost	Triple lending volumes to \$390 billion by 2030
	Increase private capital mobilization from 0.6 dollars (the average in 2019) for each dollar they lend to 1.5-2 dollars
	Expand the use of guarantees
	Provide automatic liquidity through debt and loan contracts in disaster situations
Building on Comparative Advantages	Focus on areas with solid economic returns
	Offer policy and regulatory advice
	Invest in institutional capacity and local consultation
Expanding the Financial Capacity of MDBs	Explore balance sheet optimization for increased lending capacity
	Implement pooled portfolio guarantees for additional lending
	Consider hybrid capital to generate more funds annually
	Introduce Global Challenges Funding Mechanism (GCFM) to attract investors
Tripling Concessional Finance	- Pledge more donor contributions to the International Development Association (IDA)
	- Aim for at least a tripling of donor contributions to IDA by 2030

Enhancing Private Sector Engagement	Follow the cascade principle, letting the private sector handle what it can
Managing Risk and Allocating Risk in Global Capital Markets	Partner with governments to mitigate and allocate risk
	Strengthen the Global Infrastructure Facility (GIF)
	Enhance transparency in the Global Emerging Markets (GEM) database
	Offer sovereign and project guarantees
	Empower the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
	Support local currency risk management systematically
	Include disaster and pandemic contingency clauses in debt contracts

Other Measures to Improve MDB Effectiveness:

- **Reduce Conditionalities:** Simplify loan conditions to accommodate unique country circumstances.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaborate with governments, civil society, and the private sector for better decision-making.
- **Capacity Building:** Invest in local capacity and skill development for project sustainability.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Enhance transparency in decision-making and clarify loan conditions.

India's Role:

- India plays a key role in shaping MDB reforms to address global challenges.
- India is a significant borrower and beneficiary of MDBs, receiving support in various sectors.
- India is a contributor and shareholder in these institutions, supporting their operations.
- India actively participates in their governance and decision-making processes.

Conclusion

Making MDBs more relevant for addressing 21st-century challenges would contribute towards enhancing **human welfare** and global stability and development. Reforming MDBs requires extensive consultations and deliberations among various stakeholders to ensure that it is inclusive, participatory and future proof. India has a key role and responsibility in reforming MDBs to make them more relevant and effective for the development of the Global South.

Mains Links:

Q. India has recently signed to become a founding member of New Development Bank (NDB) and also the Asian Infrastructure Bank (AIIB). How will the role of the two Banks be different? Discuss the strategic significance of these two

Banks for India. (UPSC 2012)

Q. Critically evaluate the working of Multilateral Development banks such as the World Bank and IMF in their efforts to promote global stability and development. Also, suggest measures to improve their effectiveness. (15M)

Prelims Links:

Q. With reference to Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), consider the following statements: (UPSC 2019)

1. AIIB has more than 80 member nations.
 2. India is the largest shareholder in AIIB.
 3. AIIB does not have any members from outside Asia.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

Ans: A

GENERAL STUDIES – 3

Topics: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

1. 2023 NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS: CLAUDIA GOLDIN

Context:

Claudia Goldin, a Professor of Economics at Harvard University, has been awarded the **Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel for 2023 (also known as the Nobel Prize in Economics)** for her contributions to understanding **women's labour market outcomes**

- She is only the third woman to receive this honour since its inception in 1969.


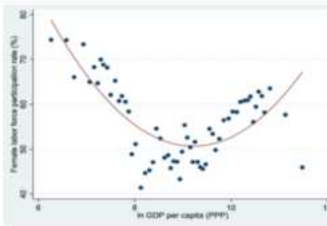



The article can be read in continuation of Saturday's article: [Low Female Labour Force Participation Rate in India](#)

About Claudia Goldin:

Claudia was born in **New York, in 1946** and completed her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1972. She is known for her pioneering research into **women's roles in the economy**, with a focus on **historical data from the United States**.

Claudia Goldin's ground-breaking Work:


2023 Nobel Prize in Economics: Claudia Goldin


Aspect	Key findings of her research
Historical Perspective 	Goldin's research challenged the belief that women's labour force participation always increased with economic growth . She looked at historical data spanning 200 years and found that women's involvement in economic activities varied. Before industrialization , more women worked in agriculture and cottage industries. With industrialization , work shifted to factories, limiting women's opportunities to work outside their homes. Goldin's research revealed a U-shaped curve in female labour force participation over time, influenced by structural changes and evolving social norms.
	
Marriage and Employment 	Goldin's work highlighted the impact of marriage on women's employment. "Marriage bars" legislation often restricted married women from certain professions. Women's career decisions were influenced by the expectations based on their mothers' experiences .
Contraceptive Pills 	The availability of contraceptive pills in the 1960s allowed women to plan careers and motherhood. This led to greater educational and career opportunities in fields like law, economics, and medicine.
Gender-Based Pay Gap 	Despite progress in education and career choices, the gender-based pay gap persisted. The pay gap for women widened after the birth of the first child . Women faced slower career advancement and lower earnings compared to men, even with similar education and professions.

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Significance of her work:

Claudia Goldin's work has shed light on important questions about **gender differences in the labour market**, education, marriage, and parenthood. Goldin's research has provided valuable insights for policymakers and society, helping to address barriers to women's participation in the labour market.

While her research focused on the **U.S.**, its findings have broader applicability, providing valuable insights into labour market dynamics in many countries.

For more read: [Low Female Labour Force Participation Rate in India](#)

2022 Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded to Ben S. Bernanke, Douglas W. Diamond and Philip H. Dybvig "for research on banks and financial crises." Unlike the other prizes, the **economics award wasn't established in Alfred Nobel's will of 1895** but by the **Swedish central bank** in his memory. The first winner was selected in 1969.

Mains Links:

Q. Distinguish between 'care economy and 'monetized economy'. How can the care economy be brought into monetized economy through women empowerment? (UPSC 2023)

Topics: [Conservation related issues, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.](#)

2. BIOHYDROGEN AND INDIA'S GREEN HYDROGEN PATHWAY

Context: The article discusses the **role of biohydrogen in India's green hydrogen pathway**. It also discusses the **indus-**

trial interest in biogas reforming, which converts biogas into environmentally friendly chemicals like syngas or bio-hydrogen.

The key difference between biohydrogen and green hydrogen is in their sources of production:

- **Biohydrogen:** Derived from biological sources such as biogas, and often considered a form of renewable hydrogen due to its environmentally friendly conversion process.
 - Biohydrogen is hydrogen produced from **biological sources, typically through biogas reforming**. It converts **biogas (CH₄ and CO₂) into hydrogen**, often referred to as syngas or bio-hydrogen
- **Green Hydrogen:** Produced through the electrolysis of water using renewable energy sources like solar or wind power, and is considered the purest form of clean hydrogen.

Definition of Green Hydrogen:

In August 2023, the **Union Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Government of India**, provided a **definition for green hydrogen**, specifying it as having a **well-to-gate emission** (encompassing water treatment, electrolysis, gas purification, drying and compression of hydrogen) **not exceeding 2 kg CO₂ equivalent per kg H₂**. In contrast, **grey hydrogen**, on average, emits **10 kg of CO₂ per kg** of H₂ produced.

Nodal Agency: The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) (under the Union Ministry of Power) is the nodal authority responsible for accrediting agencies for monitoring, verifying and certifying green hydrogen production projects.

Challenges in Green Hydrogen Production:

Not Sufficient	Green hydrogen constitutes less than 1 per cent of the world's hydrogen production and usage (as per the Global Hydrogen Review 2023 by the International Energy Agency (IEA))
	Green hydrogen production needs to grow significantly to align with Net Zero Emissions goals .
Energy inefficient	30% of renewable energy is lost while producing hydrogen
Carbon emissions.	Existing methods involve fossil fuels with high carbon emissions.
Low Adoption	Low-emission hydrogen adoption in various sectors is slow.

Economic Sustainability	Low economic sustainability of extracting green hydrogen. For transportation fuel cells, hydrogen must be cost-competitive with conventional fuels and technologies on a per-mile basis
Access to critical minerals	Access to critical minerals such as nickel, platinum group metals and rare earth metals such as lanthanum, yttrium and zirconium could hinder scaling up electrolyser manufacturing capability in India

Biohydrogen as a Promising Solution:

Challenge	How Biohydrogen Addresses It
Source Diversity	Utilizes biogas as a readily available source , offering diversity in raw materials for hydrogen production.
Environmental Benefits	Converts methane and CO2 in biogas into hydrogen , reducing harmful emissions and promoting a more sustainable process.
Cost-Effective	Biogas-based hydrogen production is often cost-effective, making it a practical solution for green hydrogen. It is cost-effective mainly due to the similarity between biogas and natural gas
Carbon Capture	The biohydrogen process inherently captures carbon from biogas , contributing to carbon-neutral or even carbon-negative outcomes. Biogas reforming can help reduce carbon deposition through the use of excess steam
Infrastructure Compatibility	Biohydrogen production methods can be integrated with existing natural gas infrastructure , minimizing the need for new infrastructure development.
Research and Development	Attracts significant research interest and investment, driving innovation in the field of biohydrogen production.

Government Initiatives for Bio and Green Hydrogen:

Initiative	Key Points
Global Biofuel Alliance	Leading efforts to establish global standards for hydrogen from biomass.
National Hydrogen Mission	Targeting a production increase to 5 million metric tonnes (MMT) by 2030, meeting 40% of domestic requirements.
Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme	Proposing a Rs 15,000-crore PLI scheme for electrolysers.

Green Hydrogen Mission	Development of Green Hydrogen Production Capacity of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonne) per annum; Renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW in the country by 2030 Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT): Funding domestic electrolyser manufacturing and green hydrogen production. Green Hydrogen Hubs: Identifying and developing states/regions for large-scale hydrogen production/utilization. Strategic Hydrogen Innovation Partnership (SHIP): Under this Public-private partnership framework R&D will be facilitated under the mission.
International Collaboration	Actively partnering with other countries, research institutions, and private entities for expertise and technology development.
Renewable Energy Integration	Integrating green hydrogen production with India's expanding renewable energy capacity for improved efficiency and sustainability.

India's status for Green Hydrogen:

- **Oil India Limited (OIL)** recently commissioned **India's first 99% pure green** hydrogen plant in eastern Assam's Jorhat
- **NTPC (in Kawas, Surat)** has started **India's 1st Green Hydrogen Blending operation** in the Piped Natural gas (PNG) Network.
- **The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB)** has given approval for a 5% blending of green hydrogen with PNG (later to be scaled to 20%)
- **Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC)** has collaborated with business management consultant
- **The Green Billions (TGBL)** to manage its waste and generate it into useable green hydrogen (under the waste-to-hydrogen project)
- **Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP)** to mobilise finance and speed up green energy development

Way forward

- Investment in R&D on green Hydrogen technology is required.
- There is a need to announce incentives to convince enough users of industrial hydrogen to adopt green hydrogen.
- India needs to develop supply chains in the form of pipelines, tankers, intermediate storage and last-leg distribution networks.
- Need to establish an end-to-end electrolyser manufacturing facility.
- Need a manufacturing strategy that integrates with

the global value chain and can maximize existing strengths.

Conclusion

Bio-hydrogen will be a critical industrial fuel of the 21st century. India is well-positioned to show leadership, which is in India's and the planet's collective interest.

Insta Links:

[India's green hydrogen challenge](#)

Mains Links:

Q. What are the key features of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) initiated by the Government of India? (UPSC 2020)

Topics: Disaster and management.

3. DANGERS OF LARGE DAMS IN INDIA

Context:

The article highlights the **dangers of large dams in India**, especially in the Himalayas. It discusses the recent collapse of the [Chunghang dam in Sikkim due to the eruption of South Lhonak Lake](#).

Status of Dam in India:

India is the **3rd largest dam-owning nation** in the world. There are around 5,700 large dams in the country, of which about **80% are over 25 years old**.

Benefits of dams

- **Generation of hydroelectric power-** Dams provide hydropower, which contributes **12% to India's total energy mix**.
- **Irrigation-** Between 1950- 2000, dams contributed to 35% of the total irrigated land, and increased food grain production by 25%.
- **Provision of water to households and industries-** The regulated flow of water dilutes harmful dissolved substances in river waters during lean periods by supplementing low inflows and maintaining the quality of water within safe limits.
 - Ex- **Tansa dam** supplies water to Mumbai city.
- **Drought mitigation-** dams store water that can be used when rainfall is below normal limits. Ex- Sardar Sarovar dam in Gujarat.
- **Flood prevention-** dams check the flow of water and prevent flooding in low-lying areas, protecting lives and property.
- **Inland navigation-** provide navigation channels throughout the year, due to controlled levels of water.

- **Recreation-** dams offer recreational activities such as boating, fishing and swimming.

Harmful impacts of dams:

Impact	Description	Example
Dam-induced earthquakes	Stresses generated by the water load can lead to earthquakes.	Koyna earthquake - Hoover Dam, USA
Loss of life	Rapid release of water during a dam failure can result in a significant loss of lives, especially in downstream areas.	Chunghang Dam failure in Sikkim (Recent); Machhu Dam, Morbi, Gujarat (1979)
Damage to the ecosystem	Dams alter migratory routes of aquatic life, leading to the loss of forest land and wetlands.	Narmada Bachao Andolan; Hirakud dam construction
Displacement of people	Dam construction displaces local populations and causes the loss of indigenous cultures.	Hirakud dam construction
Sedimentation	Sedimentation reduces the storage capacity of dams and requires frequent maintenance.	
Soil erosion	Dams can cause erosion in surrounding areas.	China's Three Gorges Dam
Disasters due to lack of coordination	Lack of coordination between authorities can lead to disasters, such as floods due to the release of dam water.	Kerala floods 2018
High cost	Dams are expensive to build and maintain.	Sardar Sarovar dam

Various causes of dam failures:

- **Seismic damage:** Earthquakes can subject dams to strong ground shaking, which may lead to structural damage or foundation failure.
 - **Kobe Earthquake, Japan (1995):** While not a dam failure, the Kobe Earthquake in Japan caused damage to dams and their components.
- **Erosion and piping:** Erosion occurs when the flow of

water erodes the soil or rock supporting the dam's structure. Piping, a related issue, involves the internal erosion of dam materials, creating channels through which water can escape.

- **Extreme weather events:** Intense and prolonged rainfall, hurricanes, or typhoons can result in dam failures due to increased water inflow, exceeding the dam's storage capacity.
 - **Kedarnath Floods, India (2013):** While not a traditional dam failure, the catastrophic flooding in the Kedarnath region of Uttarakhand, India, in 2013, was triggered by heavy rainfall and the sudden release of water from a glacial lake.
- **Glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF):** In mountainous regions with glaciers, the sudden release of meltwater from a glacier-dammed lake can trigger a GLOF. These events can lead to massive floods downstream, posing a significant threat to communities and infrastructure.
- **Human factors:** This includes poor operational decisions, inadequate maintenance, conflict and war can contribute to dam failures.
- **Design limitations:** Flaws in the original design, including inadequate spillways, improper materials, or underestimated water flow calculations can lead to structural weaknesses.

Two examples of large dam failures:

- **The recent Derna dam collapse** Failure of two roughly 75 and 45-meter tall dams following heavy rain from Storm Daniel against the backdrop of the Libyan civil war resulting in the city of Derna.
- **Kakhovka Dam failure:** The dam in **Ukraine was breached in June 2023**, causing extensive flooding along the lower Dnieper River. Many experts have concluded that Russian forces likely blew up a segment of the dam to hinder the Ukrainian counter-offensive.

While dams contribute extensively towards water management, there are significant risks associated with dams, on account of their ageing and poor management.

Measures taken to ensure dam safety:

Measure	Description
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Dam Safety Act 2021	Aims at surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of specified dams (dams with height over 15 meters or dams between 10-15 meters with certain design and structural conditions)
	Constitutes 2 national bodies: The National Committee on Dam Safety (Formulation of policies and recommendations for dam safety) and the National Dam Safety Authority (implementation of policies of the National Committee).
	Constitutes 2 state bodies: State Dam Safety Organization (for inspection and monitoring of dams) and State Committee on Dam Safety (for supervision of dam rehabilitation programs).
	Provides for inspection of specified dams twice a year (pre and post-monsoon)
	Includes an emergency action plan in case of disasters
	Lists the responsibilities of dam owners and ensures that these responsibilities are carried out through penal measures.
Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)	Implemented by the Central Water Commission with assistance from the World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
	Aims to improve the safety and operational performance of selected existing dams.
	Includes DHARMA (Dam Health and Rehabilitation Monitoring System) to monitor the health of dams.

Mega dams are large structures over 15 metres in height generating over 400 megawatts of power on average. They cause severe damage to ecosystems and lead to the displacement of indigenous populations.

Alternatives to mega-dams

- **Construction of smaller sub-surface dams.** Ex- Japan. They reduce evaporation losses and cause less damage to the environment.
- **Improving the capacity of existing dams,** instead of the construction of new dams- causes less ecological damage.
- **Usage of traditional water storage methods-** tanks and canals, with the usage of micro irrigation techniques, to reduce requirements of water for irrigation.
- **Focus on alternative sources of renewable energy-** solar and wind power
- **Reuse of water-** use of recycled sewage water for irrigation and industrial purposes. This reduces the need for dam construction.

Conclusion:

Dams are the lifeline of Indian agriculture and India’s water security. Dam management should be done in a sustainable way to ensure that they do more good than harm.

Insta Links:

- [Dam Safety Act](#)
- [Dam Safety](#)

Mains Links:

Q. Dam failures are always catastrophic, especially on the downstream side, resulting in a colossal loss of life and property. Analyze the various causes of dam failures. Give two examples of large dam failures. (UPSC 2023)

GENERAL STUDIES – 4

1. EXAMPLES OF ETHICS

Example 1: NewsClick Raid Case

The Special Cell of Delhi Police conducted raids on the homes and offices of journalists associated with the news portal NewsClick in connection with an alleged terror financing case. Some have been arrested under the under the [Unlawful Activities \(Prevention\) Act](#).

Ethical Issues in the Case:

Ethical Issue	Description
Right to Privacy	Concerns about journalists’ privacy rights when their electronic devices are seized during raids.
Right Against Self-Incrimination	Current laws in India do not provide journalists with immunity from disclosing their communication, passwords, documents, etc. This raises the ethical question, of whether journalists can be compelled to share information that may incriminate them or their sources.
Search and Seizure Procedures	Issues related to the proper protocols and documentation followed during the search and seizure of electronic devices.
Integrity of Electronic Materials	Experts have flagged that the police regularly overreach their powers in search and seizures and that incriminating evidence is planted in digital devices (e.g., Bhima-Koregaon case) by not adhering to the documentation protocol at the time of seizure.

Legal Framework for Digital Evidence	The absence of clear legal frameworks for dealing with the distinct and vulnerable nature of digital evidence.
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[Article 20\(3\)](#) of the Constitution **protects against self-incrimination**. In the [K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India \(2017\)](#) case, it was ruled that disclosing passwords in criminal investigations falls under the “**legitimate interests of the State**” exception and doesn’t violate privacy.

Also, the **Karnataka High Court (2021)** ruled that **providing passwords** doesn’t violate this. The [Digital Personal Data Protection Act](#) allows the seeking of information (such as Passwords/Sources) from journalists by the Police, impacting journalistic sources.

Example 2: Gandhi’s Ethical Values (as highlighted in the article)

Ethical Values highlighted	Description
Decentralization	Gandhi emphasized decentralization in governance, emphasizing the importance of empowering local communities and panchayats.
Limiting Power	The ethical value of limiting the concentration of power is highlighted through Gandhi’s philosophical anarchism. It underlines the concern that excessive greed for power , like greed for wealth , must be contained for the greater good of society .
Ethical Research and Scientific Inquiry	Gandhi praised the spirit of inquiry in modern medicine and encouraged scientists to work for the welfare of the poor.
Sustainable Development	Gandhi’s critique of industrialization and his call for sustainable practices reflect ethical concerns about environmental conservation and the consequences of unchecked material growth.

Example 3: IIT Bombay: Segregation of Mess Tables

The article addresses an issue at IIT Bombay where mess tables have been segregated for vegetarians, leading to protests and fines for dissenting students.

Ethical Issues concerned in the case:

Ethical Issues	Description
Segregation of Mess Tables	Segregating mess tables based on food preferences raises ethical concerns about discrimination and exclusion.

Fines for Protesting Students	Imposing fines on students who protest against segregation may be seen as a violation of their freedom of expression and dissent .
Threat to Student Harmony and Education	Segregation can hinder diverse student interactions and impact the quality of education, leading to ethical concerns.
Damage to IIT's Reputation	The controversy may damage IIT Bombay's global reputation , impacting the institute's integrity and values.

Solutions: To address these issues, IIT Bombay should directly tackle prejudices **and caste-based discrimination**, de-segregate the mess, promote a supportive environment, and proactively manage student concerns to foster a harmonious educational environment.

Example 4: Karthyayini Amma

Karthyayani Amma, an inspirational figure in **Kerala's adult literacy program**, has passed away at the age of 101. In 2018, she gained widespread attention by becoming the **top scorer in the state literacy mission's Akshara Laksham project**, which is the flagship adult literacy program.

At the age of 96, she scored an **impressive 98 out of 100 marks in an exam** that assessed her **writing and mathematical skills**. Her dedication to learning was further recognized when she was honoured with the [Nari Shakti Puraskar](#)

Ethical Values shown by her:

Ethical Values	Description
Perseverance	Karthyayani displayed a strong commitment to learning and education at an advanced age, defying traditional expectations.
Diligence	She diligently worked to improve her literacy and mathematical skills , scoring exceptionally well in her exams.
Determination	Her determination to learn English and engage with new skills was evident when she expressed her desire to receive a laptop for this purpose from Kerala's Chief Minister
Inspiration	Karthyayani served as an inspiration to numerous school dropouts, motivating them to pursue education and self-improvement.
Empowerment	Through her actions, she demonstrated the empowerment that comes from education, proving that it's never too late to learn
Generosity	She donated her two month's Old age pension for COVID relief efforts

Example 5: Australia: Indigenous "Voice to Parliament"

Australia is currently conducting a referendum that will determine whether the country's **indigenous peoples should have a formal voice** in the law-making process. The referendum aims to **alter the Constitution** to recognize the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** people and establish an Indigenous "Voice to Parliament."

This move is prompted by **the significant disparities faced by indigenous Australians in terms of socio-economic indicators**, including a life expectancy eight years shorter than non-indigenous Australians, higher disease and infant mortality rates, and a suicide rate twice as high as their non-indigenous counterparts.

Ethical values in the case:

Ethical Values	Description
Recognition and Inclusion	Acknowledging the historical and cultural significance of the First Peoples of Australia, promoting inclusivity, and addressing past injustices.
Equality and Justice	Working towards greater equality and justice in socio-economic indicators, ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities.
Respect for Indigenous Rights	Upholding the rights of indigenous communities to have a say in decisions that impact their lives, fosters self-determination and autonomy.
Reconciliation	Acknowledging historical wrongs and promoting reconciliation by engaging in respectful dialogue and addressing past grievances.
Democracy	Upholding democratic principles by involving indigenous people in the legislative process, enhancing representation in the democracy.
Empowerment	Empowering indigenous communities by providing a formal mechanism for influencing decisions affecting their lives.
Cultural Preservation	Recognizing the importance of preserving and respecting the cultural heritage of indigenous communities, including the Torres Strait Islander people.

Example 6: Abortion at 26 weeks of pregnancy

The Supreme Court is currently deliberating a case involving a **27-year-old married woman** seeking an abortion at 26 weeks of pregnancy.

The **Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP Act)** in **India** allows abortion in various stages of pregnancy, and the court has previously permitted terminations beyond 26 weeks in **certain circumstances**.

However, in this case, there is **consensual conception**, as it is not a result of forced pregnancy.

Ethical Dilemmas in this case are:

Ethical Dilemma	Description
Reproductive Autonomy vs. Foetal Rights	Balancing a woman’s right to choose whether to terminate her pregnancy with the rights of the unborn child.
Late-Stage Abortion vs. Legislative Framework	Determining whether to permit an abortion beyond 26 weeks when the legislative framework is more restrictive
Medical Board vs. Woman’s Autonomy	Examining whether the decision for late-stage abortion should solely rest with medical boards or be more inclusive of a woman’s autonomous choice.
Unborn Child’s Rights vs. Mother’s Fundamental Right to Life	Navigating the balance between the fundamental right to life of the unborn child and the mother’s autonomy in reproductive choices.

Overall, the ethical considerations in this context encompass women’s autonomy, the rights of the unborn child, and the need for clarity and updated legislation in cases of late-stage abortions.

What is the concept of foetal viability?

It refers to the **stage of pregnancy at which a foetus has developed sufficiently to potentially survive outside the womb** with medical assistance. It varies with advancements in medical technology and typically falls between **23 to 24 weeks of gestation** in modern healthcare settings. This concept influences decisions related to late-stage abortions and the rights of the unborn child.

2. GUIDELINES FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION AMONG STUDENTS

The Union Ministry of Education has released **draft guidelines to [prevent student suicides](#) in schools**

These guidelines are titled **UMMEED** (Understand, Motivate, Manage, Empathise, Empower, Develop)

Aim of the Guidelines: The guidelines aim to help schools enhance sensitivity, understanding, and support for students, emphasizing the importance of every child’s well-being, **“Every Child Matters”**

Key Features		Description
School Wellness Team (SwT)	Well-Team	The guidelines propose the formation of a School Wellness Team led by the school principal . These teams should be trained to handle crisis situations and provide immediate support when a student exhibits signs of self-harm.
Teacher and Family Orientation	and Family Orientation	It recommends conducting annual orientations for teachers and family members to raise awareness about student suicides. Schools are responsible for capacity-building among various stakeholders through these orientations.
Responding to Warning Signs	to Warning Signs	The guidelines outline specific actions that school individuals or members of the wellness team should take when encountering a student displaying warning signs or attempting self-harm .
Destigmatizing Mental Health Issues	Mental Health Issues	Schools are encouraged to destigmatize mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, suicide, and substance abuse through activities like storytelling, rallies, posters, exhibitions, and other initiatives.
Safety Measures	Measures	The guidelines also suggest practical safety measures , such as locking all empty classrooms and ensuring there are no dark corridors or areas within the school premises.

Usage: The Measures can be used in Case studies or Ethics answers/ Indian Society Answers

Insta Links:

- [‘Academic Distress’ and Student Suicides in India](#)
- [“Student Cell”: For suicide prevention](#)

3. ETHICAL VALUES SHOWN BY NCF FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION 2023

The [National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023](#) emphasizes the importance of inculcating values in education.

It articulates **five 'Aims of Education'**:

Aim of Education	Description
1. Rational Thought and Independent Thinking	Fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent inquiry among students.
2. Health and Well-being	Promoting physical and mental well-being, including awareness of health and hygiene.
3. Democratic and Community Participation	Encouraging active participation in a democratic society, understanding community engagement.
4. Economic Participation	Preparing students for economic roles and employment opportunities.
5. Cultural Participation	Promoting an understanding of cultural diversity and heritage, encouraging cultural engagement.

Values categorized in the framework are:

Category	Values
Ethical and Moral Values	1. Empathy
	2. Sensitivity
	3. Integrity
	4. Courage
Democratic Values	1. Commitment to Liberty
	2. Commitment to Equality
	3. Embracing Diversity
	4. Fraternal Spirit
	5. Social Responsibility
Epistemic Values (it refers to the virtues associated with the pursuit of knowledge and truth)	1. Scientific Temper
	2. Recognizing Sources of Knowledge in Different Domains

How these values can be developed?

Method	Description
Classroom Discussions	Regular discussions in the classroom to foster values
Sports and Activities	Engagement in sports and activities to develop virtues
Curricular Content	Inclusion of stories and historical events that promote values
Role Models	Positive role models in school culture and practices
Age-Appropriate approaches	Tailored strategies for different age groups

Moral and Ethical Course	Introduction of specific courses to address values
Dialogue and Empathy	schools need to manage conflicts in values , like disparities between school-taught values and those practiced in communities by deploying dialogue and empathetic actions
Teacher and Community Influence	The behaviour of teachers, principals, and the community plays a significant role
Non-Judgmental Assessment	Assessment through observation of behaviour rather than judgment
Curriculum Development	Development of engaging teaching materials
Constitutional Understanding	Discussions on constitutional values and duties

Conclusion:

Despite these efforts, it is more important to enable students to understand and apply complex moral and ethical reasoning in **real-world scenarios**, so the focus must be on the application of these ethical principles in the [NCF 2023](#) in day-to-day life.

Insta Links:
[Value Education](#)

Mains Links:

Q. "Education is not an injunction; it is an effective and pervasive tool for all-round development of an individual and social transformation." Examine the New Education Policy, 2020 (NEP, 2020) in light of the above statement. (UPSC 2020)

CONTENT FOR MAINS ENRICHMENT

1. SARAH SUNNY (INDIA'S 1ST DEAF LAWYER IN SC)

Context:

Sarah Sunny, a **27-year-old lawyer from Bengaluru**, recently achieved a historic milestone by becoming the **country's first deaf lawyer** to argue in the Supreme Court.

Her groundbreaking journey began **when Chief Justice DY Chandrachud** allowed a sign **language interpreter to assist her during proceedings**. Subsequently, the court-appointed its **own interpreter**, a first in its history, to ensure **her understanding of the proceedings**.

Significance:

- Observers believe that **Sarah's presence in the top court will promote inclusivity and accommodation** for the deaf community within the Indian legal system.
- This achievement has **broken stereotypes** and is expected to inspire **more deaf students** to study law, making the legal system more accessible.

Topic	Details
Mission LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment) (launched in Oct 2022) is a global movement initiated by India to promote an environmentally conscious lifestyle .	
Need	Addressing environmental degradation and climate change at the individual and community level
Aim	It aims to replace mindless consumption with mindful utilization and encourages individuals and communities to undertake climate-friendly actions in their daily lives.
Approach	Focus on individual behaviours, co-create globally, leverage local cultures
Objectives	Promote environmentally conscious lifestyle , nudge individuals to undertake climate-friendly actions, create a global network of Pro-Planet People (P3)
Example	Promoting Sustainable Transportation : Encouraging individuals to use public transport, carpooling, cycling, or walking instead of private vehicles to reduce carbon emissions and promote a greener commute.
Other related initiatives	Glasgow Climate Meet (COP26), Panchamrit strategy, International Solar Alliance, National Action Plan on Climate Change, National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), National Biofuel Policy

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2. TRAVEL FOR LIFE INITIATIVE

Context:

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is partnering with India to expand the **Travel for LiFE (Lifestyle of the Planet, for the Planet, and by the Planet)** initiative across the Asia-Pacific region.

The Ministry of Tourism in India will establish a **PATA desk to enhance engagement with PATA regarding Travel for LiFE** and other tourism-related cooperation.

About Travel for LiFE:

It is a **sectoral program** launched by the **Ministry of Tourism in India** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on September 27, 2023, **World Tourism Day**

Aim of the initiative:

The initiative aims to bring about **behavioural changes in both tourists and tourism businesses**, focusing on environmental protection and socio-cultural sustainability. The program also encourages tourism businesses to adopt sustainable practices and earn certification levels.

Eight Themes of Travel for LiFE –

1. Save Energy
2. Save Water
3. Say No to single-use plastic
4. Reduce Waste
5. Empower Local Businesses and Communities
6. Respect Local Culture and Heritage
7. Consume Local Foods
8. Conserve Nature

About PATA

It was founded in 1951, and is a **not-for-profit membership-based association** that promotes the responsible development of travel and tourism in the Asia-Pacific region.

Usage: The initiative can be used in **Environment/ Tourism Questions**

3. KERALA: “BACK TO SCHOOL” PROGRAM

Kerala is launching a “back to school” program for 46 lakh women enrolled in the **Kudumbashree poverty alleviation mission**. Over the next two months, more than **2,000 schools will open on weekends** to provide training on adapting to the digital age.

The program aims to **empower women, enhance household incomes, and strengthen the mission's functioning**.

Classes will cover topics like **organizational strength, community life security, and digital age skills**.

Usage: The example can be used in Indian society/ Social Justice/ Governance/Women-related questions on the Empowerment of Women.

4. MENTAL HEALTH AS A UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHT (UHR)

Context:

On World Mental Health Day 2023 (October 10), WHO underscores the theme that “**Mental health is a universal human right.**”

It advocates for **mental health as a fundamental human right**, emphasizing the need to protect individuals from **mental health risks, provide accessible and quality care**, and ensure liberty, independence, and inclusion in the community.

Initiatives taken for Mental Health are:

- Adoption of the **Paro Declaration**, which aims to provide universal access to People-centred Mental Health Care and Services.
- **Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking**

[Across States](#) (Tele MANAS)

- **National Mental Health Programme** (launched 1982)
- WHO calls for establishing **Mental Health as a Universal Human Right (UHR)**

5. NAIK YESHWANT GHADGE

Naik Yeshwant Ghadge was an **Indian war hero who served during World War II's Italian campaign (1943-45)**. He epitomizes the **forgotten Indian heroes of the war**.

Ghadge, at the age of 23, **single-handedly captured an enemy post in Montone, Italy**. He was posthumously awarded the **Victoria Cross**, Britain's highest military honour.

Indian soldiers, part of the British Indian Army, contributed **over 2.5 million troops** to the Allied war effort, with about 50,000 participating in the Italian campaign.

Usage: The example shows values of Bravery, Duty and Sacrifice, Valour, and Service

6. UNICEF'S PASSPORT TO EARNING (P2E) INITIATIVE

Context:

[UNICEF's](#) Passport to Earning (P2E) Initiative has **achieved a significant milestone** by certifying **over one million young people** in India in the areas of [financial literacy](#) and **digital productivity**.

About the initiative:

P2E is an e-learning solution, launched in 2022, by UNICEF India, YuWaah and partners. This initiative **aligns with the [National Education Policy](#)** and provides free access to certificate courses in relevant skills. It aims to **empower 5 million youth** between the ages of 14-29 with skills (by **2024**) and connect them to **job and self-employment opportunities** to achieve financial independence.

- **62 per cent of all young learners** who benefitted from P2E courses in India are adolescent girls and young women.
- It was celebrated during an event on the **UN International Day of the Girl Child (11th October)**

Usage: The example can be used in Economy (Skill Development)/ Social Justice etc.


FACTS FOR PRELIMS

GS-1

1. THREE INDIGENOUS PRODUCTS FROM ARUNACHAL PRADESH RECEIVED (GI) TAG

Context:

Three **indigenous products from Arunachal Pradesh** - **Yak Churpi, Khamti rice, and Tangsa textile** - have received the prestigious [Geographical Indication](#) (GI) tag from the GI Registry

Product	Description	Benefits/Features
 Yak Churpi	Fermented milk product (cheese) made from the unique Arunachali yak breed .	It has a high percentage of protein . It also contains omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants . It is a source of calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, zinc, vitamin A, vitamin D and vitamin E .
 Khamti rice	Sticky rice is produced in Namsai district, Arunachal Pradesh .	Known for its taste. Contains insoluble fiber promoting beneficial gut bacteria .
 Tangsa textile	Product of the Tangsa tribe in Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh . Tangsa tribe is mainly based in Changlang and consists of sub-tribes.	Textiles are known for their exotic designs and colours .

2. LINKS BETWEEN CONSANGUINITY AND GENETIC DISEASES

Context:

Consanguinity, the [practice of marrying close relatives](#), is a widespread tradition still practised in many human societies, particularly in Asia and West Africa.

Key points regarding consanguinity and genetic diseases:

- **Prevalence:** An estimated **15-20% of the world's population practices consanguinity**, with **India having numerous endogamous groups** (people marrying within the same caste or tribe).
- **Consanguinity and Disease:** Consanguineous societies, like the **Amish population in the U.S.**, have been studied for **recessive diseases**, leading to the **discovery of new genetic diseases and insights into genetic predisposition to common diseases**. Research suggests that consanguinity may increase **the risk of diseases like type-2 diabetes**.

- The site is well-preserved due to its **covered nature**, and there are **plans to create a protective fence and clear a path for visitors to view the art while ensuring its conservation**.

Prehistoric rock paintings:

The term 'Prehistory' refers to the distant past when there **was no paper or language**, and hence painting and drawing were the oldest art forms practised by human beings to express themselves, using the cave walls as their canvas. The first discovery of rock paintings was made in India in **1867-68 by an archaeologist, Archibald Carlleyle**, twelve years before the discovery of **Altamira in Spain**.

Period	Upper Paleolithic (40000 – 10000 BC)	Mesolithic (10000 – 4000 BC)	Mesolithic Rock Painting
Paintings	Linear representations of animal and human figures	Smaller in size with hunting scenes predominating	Made with natural white kaolin and red ochre pigments
Prominent Locations	Vindhya ranges of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh	Langhnaj (Gujarat), Bhimbetka, Adamgarh	Guntur
Themes	Daily life events to sacred and royal images	The naturalistic style for animals, stylistic for humans	Depicts social life and culture, man tilling the land

3. GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI) TAG FOR GOAN CASHEW (KERNEL)

Context:

The **cashew industry in Goa** recently received a [Geographical Indication \(GI\) tag](#), which has significant implications for the region.

- The GI tag signifies that Goan cashews have **unique characteristics and qualities due to their geographical origin**.

Significance:

- **Differentiation from Non-Goan Cashews**
- **Export Potential**
- **Economic Contribution:** Cashew was introduced to **Goa by the Portuguese in the 16th century**, and it has since become a significant contributor to the state's economy.



4. MESOLITHIC ROCK ART FIND ADDS TO HYDERABAD'S HISTORY

Context: A significant archaeological discovery was made in the **Manchirevula Forest Trek Park near Hyderabad**.

- **Ancient rock paintings that appear to date back to the Mesolithic period.**
- The paintings, which are in **red pigment**, depict **three tortoises, a fish, and a geometric motif**.
- The paintings are **approximately 6,000 to 12,000 years old**, placing them within the Mesolithic era, which spans from **10,000 to 4,000 BC**.

5. ROYALTY RATES FOR THREE CRITICAL AND STRATEGIC MINERALS

Context:

The Union Cabinet approved amendments to the [Mines and Minerals \(Development and Regulation\) Act, 1957](#), specifying royalty rates for three critical and strategic minerals: **Lithium, Niobium, and Rare Earth Elements (REEs)**.

What are Royalty rates?

Royalty rates are **fees paid to the government** for the extraction of minerals or resources from a specified area. **2nd Schedule of MMDRA 1957** deals with the royalty rates of minerals.

These minerals were **delisted from atomic minerals and can now be auctioned** to the private sector. The approved royalty rates are as follows:

- **Lithium** (3% of London Metal Exchange price)

- **Niobium** (3% of Average Sale Price)
- **REEs** (1% of the Average Sale Price of Rare Earth Oxide)

If not specified, the **royalty rate for minerals is 12% of the Average Sale Price (ASP)**.

Significance of fixing Royalty Rates: Encouraging indigenous mining of these minerals is crucial for **reducing imports, boosting mining sector investment, promoting economic development, and supporting India's energy transition** and national security. The move is also expected to **create job opportunities in the mining sector**.

Initiatives for Critical Minerals exploration:

Initiative	Details
Amendment to MMRDA	Amendment to MMRDA in 2023 delisted six minerals , including Lithium and Niobium, from the list of atomic minerals, thereby allowing private sector participation
	Provided for the auction of mining leases and composite licenses of 24 critical and strategic minerals by the central government
K h a n i j Bidesh India Ltd	It is a government joint venture that aims to secure critical minerals globally, with a focus on Australia and South America .

Presently, **India's mineral royalty rates are among the highest in the world**, thus impacting the competitiveness of the sector and putting an economic burden on mining companies.

About the Minerals:

Mineral	Description	Common Uses
Lithium	An alkali metal used in rechargeable batteries for mobiles, laptops, electric vehicles, and medical devices like pacemakers.	Rechargeable batteries, energy storage.
Rare Earth Elements	A group of 17-odd minerals including scandium, yttrium, cerium, and more.	Catalysts, magnets, alloys, glass, electronics, petroleum extraction, electric motors, wind turbines.

Niobium	A silvery metal with a corrosion-resistant oxide layer on its surface. The main source of Niobium is the mineral columbite , which is found in countries such as Canada, Brazil, Australia, and Nigeria .	Alloys (stainless steel), jet engines, construction materials, superconducting magnets (particle accelerators, MRI scanners).
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GS-2

1. OTT PLATFORMS DO NOT FALL UNDER TRAI JURISDICTION

Context:

The **Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)** in India has ruled that [Over the Top \(OTT\) streaming platforms](#), like Disney + Hotstar, **do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)**.

- Instead, they are **governed by the Information Technology Rules of 2021**, as notified by the IT Ministry.
- This decision is **significant as both TRAI and the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) have been attempting to regulate OTT services**, a move that has been contested by the IT Ministry.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is a government body that regulates the **telecommunications sector in India**. TRAI was established in **1997 by the Government of India**.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 52ND GST COUNCIL MEETING

Context:

The **52nd GST Council Meeting** made several important recommendations:

- **Amendments in Appointment of GST Appellate Tribunals** - in the conditions for appointing the President and Members of the proposed GST Appellate Tribunals.
- **GST Rates for Millet Flour:** GST rates for food preparation of millet flour in powder form, containing at least 70% millets by weight, were specified as follows:
 - 0% when sold in **non-pre-packaged and unlabelled form**.
 - 5% when sold in **pre-packaged and labelled form**.
- **Exclusion of Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) from GST**

- **Reduced GST on Molasses:** The GST rate on molasses was reduced from 28% to 5%.
- **IGST Exemption for Foreign Going Vessels**
- **Changes in GST Rates for Services**

About GST Council:

It is a constitutional body under **Article 279A (101 Constitution Amendment Act, 2016)**. **Function:** Making recommendations on issues related to the implementation of GST

3. AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION IN ENERGY SECTOR

Context:

[India and Saudi Arabia](#) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the **energy sector**.

- This agreement **outlines several areas of collaboration, including renewable energy, energy efficiency, hydrogen, electricity, grid interconnection, petroleum, natural gas, strategic petroleum reserves, and energy security.**
- Both countries also aim to **encourage bilateral investments in renewable energy, electricity, hydrogen, storage, and oil & gas.**
- The MoU emphasizes **addressing climate change through circular economy technologies like carbon capture and storage.** It also promotes digital transformation, innovation, and cybersecurity in the energy sector.

4. TELE-MANAS

Context:

India's [Tele-MANAS](#), a round-the-clock [mental health](#) **helpline** launched on World Mental Health Day in 2022, has received over 3,40,000 calls from 32 states and union territories.

- The helpline was initiated in response to the **increased mental health challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic**, providing essential mental health first-aid support.

Tele-MANAS is a **mental health helpline in India**. It was launched in **October 2022** by the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**. The program's objectives are:

- To enable people to **seek support for their mental health issues while maintaining anonymity**
- To **facilitate timely referral for specialist care and follow-up**
- To **enhance mental healthcare capacity and networking**

Tele-MANAS **offers 24/7 mental health care services** in every Indian state, in regional languages. The service is **accessible through the toll-free numbers 14416 or 1-800-891-4416**

5. HABITAT RIGHTS

Context:

The **Baiga Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)** in Chhattisgarh has been granted [habitat rights](#), making it the **second PVTG to receive such rights in the state**.

- Out of **75 PVTGs** in India, **only three have received habitat rights**, including the **Bharia PVTG in Madhya Pradesh**, the **Kamar tribe**, and now the **Baiga tribe in Chhattisgarh**.

About Habitat Rights:

- Habitat rights are **granted under the Forest Rights Act** and provide communities with rights over **their customary territories, cultural practices, livelihood means, biodiversity knowledge, and protection of their natural and cultural heritage.**
- Habitat rights help **safeguard traditional livelihoods and ecological knowledge**, and they **empower PVTG communities to access government schemes and initiatives to develop their habitats.**

PVTGs are a **sub-classification of Scheduled Tribes in India**. They are considered **more vulnerable than regular Scheduled Tribes**.

PVTGs are characterized by:

- **Declining or stagnant population**
- **Low level of literacy**
- **Pre-agricultural level of technology**
- **Economically backward**

The Government of India **renamed Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as PVTGs in 2006**. The **Dhebar Commission created the PTG category in 1973**

6. PROTOCOL FOR MANAGEMENT OF MALNUTRITION IN CHILDREN

Context:

The Indian government has introduced a **national protocol** called the '**Protocol for Management of [Malnutrition](#) in Children**' aimed at **identifying and providing comprehensive care for malnourished children in the country**.

- The protocol was launched by the **Union Minister for Women and Child Development**.

Features:

- It outlines a **10-step process for identifying and managing malnutrition in children at the [Anganwadi](#) level**, incorporating aspects such as **growth monitoring, appetite testing, nutritional management, and follow-up care.**
- The protocol also introduces innovative approaches, such as the **"Buddy mother" concept**, where a **mother with a healthy child guides the mother of a malnourished child at an Anganwadi centre.**
- This initiative is **part of the government's efforts to combat malnutrition through the 'Poshan Abhi-**

yan,' with a focus on treating malnourished children and promoting their healthy growth.

7. UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTS 15 NEW MEMBERS TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Context:

Russia is facing a challenging battle to regain a seat on the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#).

- Russia is competed against Albania and Bulgaria for two seats in the East European regional group.
- The United States and other nations have been actively campaigning against Russia's re-election, citing concerns about its human rights record, including alleged war crimes in Ukraine.
- Human Rights Watch has also criticized Russia and China, stating that they are unfit to serve on the council due to their ongoing human rights abuses.
- By secret ballot, the Assembly elected Albania, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Malawi and the Netherlands. All 15 members will serve three-year terms **beginning on 1 January 2024**

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an **intergovernmental body that promotes and protects human rights around the world.**

ranked 111th out of 125 countries, indicating a serious level of hunger.

- The GHI score is based on four indicators, **including under-nourishment, child stunting, child wasting, and child mortality.**
- India's progress in **combating hunger has almost come to a halt since 2015**, and this trend is **consistent with global findings.**

Key Findings:

- India's GHI score is **28.7 on a 100-point scale**, where lower scores represent less hunger, and higher scores indicate more severe hunger. This categorizes India's hunger severity as **"serious."**
- Globally, the **2023 GHI score is 18.3**, considered moderate.
- The report highlights that **South Asia and Africa South of the Sahara have the highest hunger levels, with GHI scores of 27.0 each.**
- **Latin America and the Caribbean are the only regions where GHI scores worsened between 2015 and 2023.**
- **East and Southeast Asia, led by China, have the second-lowest 2023 GHI score**, while Europe and Central Asia have the lowest score

About GHI:

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is an **annual report that measures and tracks hunger at the global, regional, and country levels.** The GHI is published by the Irish **NGO Concern Worldwide** and the German **NGO Welthungerhilfe.** The GHI's goal is to **trigger action to reduce hunger around the world**

8. RESILIENT AND INCLUSIVE SUPPLY-CHAIN ENHANCEMENT (RISE) INITIATIVE

Context:

The **World Bank and Japan**, have **launched the Resilient and Inclusive Supply-chain Enhancement (RISE) initiative in Morocco.**

- This initiative is **designed to tackle the dual challenges of job creation and climate change** by aiding **emerging markets and developing countries** in expanding their **clean-energy product manufacturing** and increasing their participation in the **minerals industry.**
- The initiative aims to **stimulate economic growth and generate local employment opportunities, ultimately contributing to poverty reduction.**
- This collaborative effort emphasizes the **importance of international cooperation in promoting economic growth** in these countries while strengthening **clean energy and critical minerals supply chains.**

9. GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

Context:

In the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2023**, India has been

10. MERA YUVA BHARAT

Context:

The Union Cabinet has granted approval for the **establishment of "Mera Yuva Bharat" (MY Bharat).**

MY Bharat, an autonomous body will benefit youth in the age group of 15-29 years, in line with the definition of 'Youth' in National Youth Policy.


- The **primary objective of MY Bharat** is to **serve as a comprehensive platform for youth development** across the government.
- It is set to be dedicated to the nation, in honour of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary.**
- This platform will **function as a one-stop solution for engaging with youth and promoting initiatives designed to benefit them.**

11. INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA)



Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

Context: Sri Lanka is set to assume the role of Chair in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) during the 23rd Council of Ministers' Meeting.

Aspects	Information
<p>The Indian Ocean Rim Association (founded 1997; HQ: Ebene, Mauritius), formerly known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative is an international Intergovernmental organisation consisting of 23 states bordering (including India) the Indian Ocean and 11 dialogue partners.</p> <p>To know more Visit Insights IAS Daily Current Affairs</p>	 <p>23 Members of Indian Ocean Rim Association</p>
Previous Presidency	Bangladesh held the chairmanship from November 2021 - November 2023
Goal	To strengthen regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region
Origin	The vision for IORA originated during a visit by Nelson Mandela to India in 1995, emphasizing socio-economic cooperation in the Indian Ocean rim
Member States	Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
Dialogue Partners	China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America
Fisheries Support Unit (FSU)	Provides advice and makes decisions on fisheries management and issues such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing
Significance of the Indian Ocean	It commands control of major sea lanes carrying half of the world's container ships , one-third of the world's bulk cargo traffic, and two-thirds of the world's oil shipments, serving as a vital lifeline for international trade and transport.

GS-3

1. CARD-ON-FILE TOKENISATION FOR DEBIT AND CREDIT CARDS

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor, has proposed the introduction of card-on-file **tokenisation** (CoFT) at the issuer-bank level.

- This move aims to **enhance data security and provide customers with more control over managing their card tokens**.

Need:

- Under the current system, **cardholders have to create different tokens for each merchant, which can be time-consuming and pose data security concerns**.
- With CoFT, tokens will be **created at the issuer bank-level and linked to the user's existing accounts with various e-commerce applications**. This eliminates the need for duplicate tokenization processes at each app or website, enhances transaction security, and reduces card-data-related fraud.

About Tokenisation:

Tokenisation **replaces a card's 16-digit number with a unique token, specific to a user's card and one merchant at a time**. These tokens **hide the card's actual details**, improving security, especially in case of data leaks from merchant websites. **Users can choose to let their cards be tokenised for future online purchases**

What should a cardholder do under tokenization?



2. PUSA-44 PADDY VARIETY

Context:

The Punjab Chief Minister has announced a **ban on the cultivation of the PUSA-44 paddy variety** starting next year.

- PUSA-44 was developed in 1993** and gained immense popularity among Punjab's farmers, covering **70 to 80 per cent of the state's paddy cultivation area** due to its high yield.

The reasons behind the ban on PUSA-44:

- Extended Maturity Period:** PUSA-44 has a longer maturity period, requiring around 160 days to mature, which is approximately 35 to 40 days longer than other paddy varieties.
- Water Conservation:** Punjab faces severe groundwater depletion, and the government aims to conserve one month of irrigation water by banning PUSA-44.
- Stubble Burning:** **PUSA-44 exacerbates the problem of stubble burning in Punjab**. Its harvesting just before the ideal time for wheat sowing (typically at the end of October) leaves a limited timeframe of 20 to 25 days for stubble disposal before wheat sowing.

3. NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE SERVICES

Context:

India is launching its **first national-level framework for climate services**, known as the **National Framework for Climate Services (NFCS)**, led by the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**.

- The NFCS aims to **provide climate information and services to various sectors, including agriculture, energy, disaster management, health, and water**, to help them make informed decisions and mitigate climate risks.
- The NFCS is based on the **Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS)**, which focuses on **generating high-quality climate data and information**, with priority sectors including agriculture, energy, health, water, and disaster risk reduction.
- The need for NFCS arises from the **gaps in weather and climate data across India**, particularly in the Himalayan regions and oceans, limiting the IMD's abil-

ity to make long-term climate predictions.

Benefits:

- The NFCS aims to **strengthen the observational network, improve data collection, and run weather and climate models to provide tailored climate data and information.**
- This information will **support preparations for new climate conditions and adaptation to their impacts on various aspects of society**, such as water supplies, health, agriculture, infrastructure, and energy generation.

Countries like **Switzerland, China, Germany, and the United Kingdom** have already launched their NFCS, while several others are in the advanced stages of implementation.

4. COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY (CTBT)

Context:

Russia has recently suggested the **possibility of withdrawing its ratification of the [Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty \(CTBT\)](#)**, not to resume nuclear testing but to align with the United States.

- The CTBT is a **global treaty**, adopted by the **United Nations in 1996**, aimed at **prohibiting all nuclear explosions for military or peaceful purposes**. However, it has not yet entered into force due to the incomplete ratification process by several countries.

About the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT):

- The origins of the CTBT can be traced back to the **arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union**, which conducted **numerous nuclear tests from 1945 to 1996**, causing concerns about the environmental and health impacts of radioactive fallout.
- Various attempts to limit nuclear testing were made, including the **Limited Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty in 1963**, which prohibited tests in the **atmosphere, outer space, and underwater** but allowed underground testing.
- The CTBT, established in 1996, sought to **impose a complete ban on explosive nuclear testing**, taking advantage of reduced geopolitical tensions after the end of the Cold War. Despite its adoption, some countries have conducted nuclear tests since then, including **India, Pakistan, and North Korea**.
- The treaty requires **ratification by 44 specific countries with nuclear technology**, and eight of them, including **China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, and the United States**, have yet to do so.

5. WATERMEAL

Context:

Scientists are **conducting research on watermeal**, the

world's smallest flowering plant, to explore its potential as a **source of nutrition and oxygen for astronauts**.

- The study, conducted at the **European Space Agency's (ESA) ESTEC technical centre** in the Netherlands, involves **subjecting watermeal to hypergravity conditions using ESA's Large Diameter Centrifuge (LDC)**, which can replicate gravity levels up to **20 times that of Earth**.
- The researchers placed watermeal samples in specially designed boxes equipped with LED lighting to mimic natural sunlight and subjected them to **hypergravity conditions within the LDC**. After two weeks of experimentation, they **will examine the watermeal plants and conduct chemical analyses on solid pellet extracts to understand how hypergravity affects their growth and development**.

Watermeal, known for its **tiny size and floating habit on water bodies**, offers a unique subject for this research due to its **simplicity and rapid growth rate**. It lacks roots, stems, or leaves, making it an ideal candidate for studying the effects of altered gravity on plant development.

Watermeal is not only scientifically intriguing but also has practical benefits. It is a **prolific producer of oxygen through photosynthesis** and a **rich source of protein**. In Thailand, it has been part of the local diet for generations.



6. ASIATIC WILD DOG-TIGER COEXISTENCE

Context:

A recent study conducted in **Assam's Manas National Park** has revealed that the **coexistence and potential cooperation** between **Asiatic wild dogs (dholes)** and **tigers** are influenced by factors such as **prey availability and habitat suitability**.

- Dholes are an **endangered species** and the **only pack-living canid in India's tropical forests**.
- The study revealed a **positive relationship between the two species in terms of habitat use**. This unexpected finding suggests that factors like **overlapping prey availability and habitat suitability** could facilitate coexistence or even cooperative behaviours.

between dholes and tigers.

Dholes are **wild dogs native to Asia**.

The [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) lists dholes as endangered. There are only 1000–2000 adults.

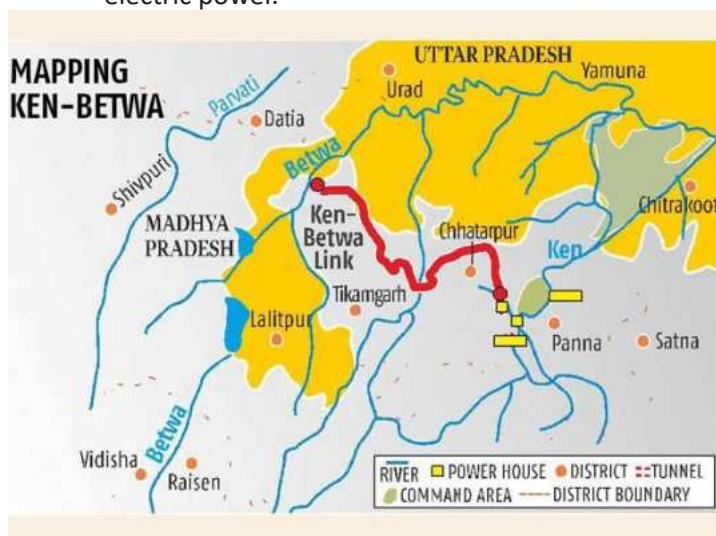


7. KEN-BETWA RIVER LINKING

Context:

The [Ken-Betwa Link Project \(KBLP\)](#), a major irrigation project in India, has recently secured its final forest clearance after six years.

- The Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP) is a river inter-linking project that aims to transfer surplus water from the Ken River in Madhya Pradesh (MP) to Betwa in Uttar Pradesh (UP). The project is the first under the National Perspective Plan for the inter-linking of rivers.
- The KBLP aims to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region. The dam will be built within Panna Tiger Reserve and will generate 103 MW of hydro-electric power.



8. TERRITORIAL ARMY

Context:

The Indian Army is considering converting its logistics and transport units into the [Territorial Army \(TA\)](#) as part of a larger manpower optimization plan. The TA is also recruiting Chinese language interpreters for border personnel meetings and cyber security experts to support the Army.

The Indian Territorial Army, established in 1949, is an auxiliary military organization of the Indian Army, often requested by ministries and state governments for various roles, including plantation drives, petroleum supply, oil exploration, and protection of critical infrastructure.

9. OVER 70 SCHEMES UNDER EP-4

Context:

The Indian Army has successfully completed the fourth phase of Emergency Procurements (EP-4).

- These procurements were carried out to address critical capability gaps, especially along the Northern Borders. The Indian Air Force also concluded 64 contracts under EP-4.

Key highlights of the EP-4 procurements include:

- Weapon Systems
- Protective Equipment
- Intelligence, Reconnaissance, and Surveillance
- Drones and Counter-Drones
- Communication and Non-Communication Equipment
- Survivability and Training

10. EXPORTER STATUS CERTIFICATES

Context:

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry in India has launched a digital system for issuing automatic 'Status Holder' certificates under the [Foreign Trade Policy \(FTP\) 2023](#).

- This system eliminates the need for exporters to apply to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for a Status Certificate.
- Instead, the IT system will determine export recognition based on the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) merchandise export electronic data and other risk parameters.

The new system simplifies the process, reduces compliance burdens, and promotes ease of doing business. The Status Holder certification program enhances the credibility of Indian exporters in international markets and offers privileges like simplified procedures, priority custom clearances, and exemptions from certain requirements.

11. PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (PLFS) ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Context:

The [Periodic Labour Force Survey \(PLFS\)](#) Annual Report for 2022-2023 has been released, focusing on key **employment and unemployment indicators**. The survey's key findings are as follows:

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):

The labour force participation rate (LPR) is a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that is actively engaged in the labour market.

- An increasing trend in LFPR for persons aged 15 years and above was observed.
- In rural areas, LFPR increased from 50.7% in 2017-18 to 60.8% in 2022-23.
- In urban areas, LFPR increased from 47.6% to 50.4% over the same period.
- LFPR for males in India increased from 75.8% in 2017-18 to 78.5% in 2022-23.
- For females, LFPR increased from 23.3% to 37.0% during this time.

Worker Population Ratio (WPR):

The worker-population ratio (WPR) is the ratio of a country's working population to its population, multiplied by 100. It's calculated by dividing the total number of workers by the total population.

- The survey showed an increasing trend in WPR for persons aged 15 years and above.
- In rural areas, WPR increased from 48.1% in 2017-18 to 59.4% in 2022-23.
- In urban areas, WPR increased from 43.9% to 47.7% during the same period.
- WPR for males in India increased from 71.2% in 2017-18 to 76.0% in 2022-23.
- For females, WPR increased from 22.0% to 35.9% over this time frame.

Unemployment Rate (UR):

The unemployment rate is the percentage of unemployed workers in the total labour force. The labour force includes all people who are employed or unemployed. The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the number of unemployed people by the total labour force.

- A decreasing trend in UR for persons aged 15 years and above was observed.
- In rural areas, UR decreased from 5.3% in 2017-18 to 2.4% in 2022-23.
- In urban areas, UR decreased from 7.7% to 5.4% during the same period.
- UR for males in India decreased from 6.1% in 2017-18 to 3.3% in 2022-23.
- For females, UR decreased from 5.6% to 2.9% over this time frame.

12. MULTIMODAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Context:

Multimodal [artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) is gaining prominence as the next frontier in AI development.

- Multimodal AI systems **allow users to interact with AI through various means**, such as **images, sounds, videos, and text**. This approach is important because it **aligns more closely with how humans understand and interpret information from diverse sources**.

Key points regarding multimodal AI:

- Leading AI companies like OpenAI and Google are **actively pursuing multimodal AI systems**. OpenAI, known for GPT-3 and GPT-4, has enabled its models to **understand and analyze images**, and its mobile apps are being equipped with speech synthesis for more interactive conversations with chatbots.

Working of Multimodal Artificial Intelligence:

- It involves **combining different modalities such as text and images or text and audio during training**. This enables AI systems to understand and generate content across various modalities. For example, OpenAI's DALL.E model **connects text and images to generate visual content based on text prompts**, while GPT's voice processing capabilities are rooted in Whisper, its speech-to-text translation model.

Applications of Multimodal AI:

- Multimodal AI has practical applications, such as **automatic image caption generation, detecting hate speech in memes, predicting dialogue in videos**, and even potential uses in fields like medicine, autonomous driving, and robotics.
- In medicine, **multimodal AI is useful for processing complex datasets from sources like CT scans**. In speech translation, AI models can perform text-to-speech, speech-to-text, speech-to-speech, and text-to-text translations for various languages.

13. GLOBAL AMPHIBIAN ASSESSMENT

Context:

The second [Global Amphibian Assessment](#), conducted by over 1,000 experts and analysing 8,011 species worldwide, has revealed that the **elusive dancing frogs of the Western Ghats** are one of the most threatened amphibian genera.

Key Findings:

- This assessment points out that **41 per cent of amphibian species are on the brink of extinction globally**, with climate **change, habitat loss, disease, fire**,

invasive species, and over-exploitation posing significant threats to them.

- The dancing frog genus, *Micrixalus*, which is part of the endemic family *Micrixalidae*, is identified as the most threatened frog genus in India.
- Additionally, the *Nyctibatrachidae*, commonly known as night frogs, has 83.9 per cent of its species threatened across the southern states of Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
- Amphibians are currently the second most declining taxa globally, after corals, making their conservation a matter of great concern.



14. BIMA VAHAK

Context:

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has announced that the guidelines for the women-centric insurance distribution channel called “Bima Vahak” will become effective upon the launch of “[Bima Vistaar](#),” an all-in-one standard insurance product currently under development.

- The primary objective of Bima Vahak is to establish a dedicated distribution channel focused on enhancing insurance inclusion and awareness in every village/gram panchayat, thereby increasing the accessibility and availability of insurance throughout the country.

IRDAI stands for the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India. It was established on April 19, 2000 to regulate the insurance industry in India.

IRDAI's responsibilities include:

- Regulating and licensing the insurance and re-insurance industries in India
- Protecting the interests of policyholders
- Promoting the orderly growth of the insurance industry in India

15. 'A-HELP' PROGRAM

Context:

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India, introduced the 'A-HELP' (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) program in the state of Jharkhand.

- This program aims to empower women by engaging them as Accredited Agents who play a vital role in disease control, animal tagging, and livestock insurance.

The 'A-HELP' initiative is being implemented in various Indian states and union territories, including Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand, through an MoU between the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying and the National Rural Livelihoods Mission

16. HEMOCHROMATOSIS

Context:

Hemochromatosis is a rare genetic disorder characterized by iron overload, which can lead to severe dysfunction in various organs.

- There are two main types of hemochromatosis: hereditary hemochromatosis and secondary hemochromatosis.

About Hemochromatosis:

Hereditary Hemochromatosis: This genetic disorder results from a mutation in the HFE gene, causing individuals to absorb excessive iron from their diet.

Unlike the body's natural ability to regulate iron intake, people with hereditary hemochromatosis accumulate iron gradually in their system, which can lead to health problems over time.

The excess iron can affect vital organs such as the liver, heart, and pancreas, potentially causing cirrhosis, heart failure, diabetes, and arthritis.

Secondary Hemochromatosis: This type is typically caused by external factors like frequent blood transfusions, excessive iron supplementation, or certain medical conditions. Iron accumulation in secondary hemochromatosis can be more rapid and lead to organ dysfunction.

17. PROSOPIS JULIFLORA

Context:

The National Security Guard (NSG) is waging a battle against the invasive plant species, vilayati kikar, at its Manesar campus, located near the Delhi-Ajmer highway.

- These invasive trees have led to a depletion of the water table in the region.
- The NSG is also employing the Miyawaki plantation method in the foothills of the Aravallis, which involves overcrowding the plantation with diverse saplings to encourage faster growth.
- The invasive vilayati kikar has been detrimental to the area's biodiversity, blocking sunlight and pre-

venting the growth of other plants.



18. NATURAL RUBBER

Context:

The annual rubber conference of the Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries (ANRPC) took place in Guwahati.

Issues faced in Rubber Industry:

- Mechanization in [rubber](#) plantations, sustainable agricultural practices, supply chain strengthening, and value addition for rubber wood to ensure the sustainability of rubber farming.

The conference also discussed the 'INROAD' project, which aims to expand rubber cultivation in north-eastern states with the support of the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) and explored the potential for carbon crediting

ANRPC is an inter-governmental organization comprising 13 member countries, including India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. The organization was established in 1970 to promote collaboration among natural rubber-producing nations.

Rubber

Natural rubber is a polymer of isoprene, an organic compound and obtained from the latex of a number of tropical trees of which Para Rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*) is the most important.

- **Age:** around 32 years in plantations.
- **Soil:** Well-drained and well-weathered soils e.g., Lateritic type, alluvial, sedimentary types
- **Precipitation and Temperature:** An evenly distributed rainfall with at least 100 rainy days a year and a temperature range of about 20 to 34°C.
- **Conditions:** A humidity of around 80%, 2000 hours of sunshine, and absence of strong winds
- **Uses:** Natural rubber is preferred over synthetic rubber due to its high tensile strength and vibration dampening properties, along with tear resistance.



World (major producers): Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, India: Kerala (over 75%) > Tamil Nadu > Karnataka
 India fifth largest producer and 2nd largest consumer of Natural Rubber (India currently meets 40% of its requirement through imports)



Rubber Research Institute (RRI) is under the Rubber Board.



Rubber Board of India (est. 1955; HQ: Kottayam, Kerala): The Board (under Ministry of Commerce and Industry) is responsible for the development of the rubber industry in India.

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19. OPERATION AJAY

Context:

India has initiated "Operation Ajay" to evacuate its citizens from conflict-stricken Israel.

- This marks the second evacuation operation of the year, following Operation Kaveri, which brought back Indian citizens from Sudan earlier.
- The decision to initiate Operation Ajay comes in response to recent conflicts in the region, including a Hamas attack on Israel and the subsequent military strike on the Gaza Strip.

Various other past operations are: –

Operation Name	Year	Reason for Evacuation
Operation Dost	2023	Turkey-Syria earthquake
Operation Ganga	2022	Tensions between Russia and Ukraine
Vande Bharat	2020	Covid-19 pandemic
Operation Samudra Setu	2020	Covid-19 pandemic
Evacuation from Brussels	2016	Terrorist strikes
Operation Raahat	2015	Conflict in Yemen
Operation Maitri	2015	Nepal earthquake
Operation Safe Homecoming	2011	Conflict in Libya
Operation Sukoon	2006	Conflict in Lebanon
1990 Kuwait Airlift	1990	Invasion of Kuwait by Iraq

20. ICRISAT JOINS ONE CGIAR INITIATIVE

The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics ([ICRISAT](#)) has joined the **One CGIAR** (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) **integrated partnership**.

This partnership involves the CGIAR System Organization and 12 One CGIAR research centres (including [ICRISAT](#)), aiming to **unify efforts in transforming food, land, and water systems** to address the challenges posed by the climate crisis.

CGIAR (est. 1971; founder: Forrest F Hill) is a **network of publicly-funded agri-food systems** research centres. It aims to **reduce rural poverty, increase food security**, improve human health and nutrition, and sustainable management of natural resources.

About ICRISAT

The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) (HQ: Patancheru, Hyderabad; founded 1972 with support from the Ford and Rockefeller foundations) is an international organization that conducts agricultural research for rural development.

It has regional centres in **Mali and Kenya**, along with research stations in several African countries. ICRISAT operates under the **charters of the FAO and UNDP**. It holds a special status as a **UN organization in India**, granting it certain immunities and tax privileges.

21. PROJECT NILGIRI TAHR

Context:

Tamil Nadu has launched '[Project Nilgiri Tahr](#),' a **wildlife conservation initiative**.

- The project aims to protect the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, a species native to the Western Ghats.
- It focuses on understanding the population, distribution, and ecology of Nilgiri Tahr, reintroducing them to their historical habitats, addressing immediate threats to their survival, raising public awareness, and developing eco-tourism activities.

Project Nilgiri Tahr

Project Nilgiri Tahr of Tamil Nadu Forest (India's first) aims to restore the fragmented habitat especially **Shola grasslands** where it thrives, reintroduce the **Tahr population** in its historic habitat and ensure proper rehabilitation facilities are provided



The shola forest-grassland is the **tropical montane forest** found in the upper reaches of India's Western Ghats. This mosaic ecosystem is native only to the southern Western Ghats and found in the high altitude mountains of **Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**.



About Nilgiri Tahr

- Only mountain ungulate in Southern India among the **12 species present** in India.
- **Population:** It's population has been estimated at 3,122 in the wild (WWF India 2015 estimates)
- It is **endemic** to Western Ghats and locally known as '**Varaiaadu**'.
- **Threats:** A large part of its population has been wiped out from its historical range of Western Ghats. The existing populations are under severe stress due to **habitat loss and hunting**
- **State animal** of Tamil Nadu
- IUCN: **Endangered**

Ungulates consists of large mammals with hooves.



22. 'MAKHIR' GINGER

Context:

Trinity Saioo, the 2021 Padma Shri winner known as the “Turmeric Trinity,” who was recognized for her work in promoting Lakadong turmeric cultivation in Meghalaya, is now focusing on promoting the unique “Makhir” ginger of the state.

- **Makhir ginger** is known for its **distinct pungency** and **medicinal properties**.

Meghalaya is home to two popular types of ginger, Makhir and Nadia, both known for their health benefits despite their small size.

About Lakadong turmeric:

- Under the **“One District One Product”** scheme, Lakadong turmeric **gained recognition in the West Jaintia Hills district.**
- It is distinguished by its **high curcumin levels and antioxidant properties.**

SPORTS CORNER

1. THE HANGZHOU 19TH ASIAN GAMES

Context: India achieved a historic milestone at [the Hangzhou 19th Asian Games](#) with a record-breaking medal haul of 107 medals, including 28 gold, 38 silver, and 41 bronze. The game was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notable features of this year's Game:

Feature	Description
Total Medals	India secured a total of 107 medals, including 28 gold, 38 silver, and 41 bronze (India's best in Asian Games)
Improved Ranking	India's performance elevated its rank to fourth place (after China, Japan and South Korea), up from eighth in the 2018 Asian Games.
Athletics Excellence	Neeraj Chopra's gold in javelin throw and a total of 29 medals, including six gold, in athletics.
Historic Badminton Win	Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty secured India's first Asian Games doubles gold in badminton.
Triumphant Hockey Team	The men's hockey team won gold and secured direct qualification for the Olympics next year.
Other Sport Achievements	Impressive performances in archery, shooting, and various sports, showcasing diversification. India's medal tally expanded into new disciplines such as roller skating, sailing, table tennis, rowing, and equestrian sports

Other features of this year's Asian Games

Esports introduced	Esports officially debuted as an official event at the Asian Games 2022 , featuring seven top titles, including League of Legends, and involving teams from over 30 countries. Gold medals were awarded for each game.
Number of Sports	Medals were contested across 61 disciplines , including Non-Olympic sports such as Kabaddi, sepaktakraw, cricket, Go board game and newcomers like breaking, sport climbing and e-sports
Motto	The motto of Asian Games 2023 is ' Heart to heart, @ Future '
Next Asian Games	The 20th Asian Games will be held in Japan in 2026 in the city of Nagoya

About the Asian Games:

The Asian Games, also known as **Asiad**, is a major continental **multi-sport event held every four years**, featuring athletes from across Asia. The Games were initially regulated by the **Asian Games Federation (AGF) from 1951 to 1978**. Since 1982, they have been organized by the **Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)** after the dissolution of the AGF. These Games are recognized by the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** and are considered the **second-largest multi-sport event globally**, following the Olympic Games.

Why Israel is not included in the Asian Games?

Israel has been excluded from **the Games since 1976**, the reason cited as being due to **security reasons**. Israel requested to participate in the **1982 Games**, but the request was rejected by the organizers due to **the Munich massacre**

India held the first and ninth editions of the Asian Games in New Delhi in 1951 and 1982 respectively. India has consistently ranked in the top 10 in medals tally (except in the 1990 games). India has **won at least one gold medal** in all the Asian Games held till now.

India's initiatives in sports:

- Support from initiatives like the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** and the **Khelo India Scheme**.
- **Specialized training camps**, foreign experts, and foreign exposure trips for athletes.
- Individualized support for top athletes like Neeraj Chopra, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, and others

Prelims Links:

Q. Consider the following statements in respect of the 32nd Summer Olympics: (UPSC)

1. The official motto for this Olympics is 'A New World'.
2. Sport Climbing, Surfing, Skateboarding, Karate and Baseball are included in this Olympics.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

2. IOC APPROVES INCLUSION OF CRICKET IN 2028 LOS ANGELES OLYMPIC



IOC approves inclusion of Cricket in 2028 Los Angeles Olympic



Context: The International Olympic Committee's executive board has approved the inclusion of cricket in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, marking a significant step toward ending crickets over 100-year absence from the Olympics.

What is the rule?

Olympic host cities can propose new sports for the games they host. However, the total number of athletes **must not exceed 10,500** to control costs.

E.g., Tokyo 2020's organising committee was allowed to add surfing, sport climbing, karate, baseball/softball and skateboarding when it hosted the event.

So, if cricket and other sports are added, some existing categories may be removed.



Previous history of Cricket in Olympic:

Cricket's only previous appearance at the Olympics was at **Paris 1900**, when Great Britain beat France in the final. It was also the only match after the Netherlands and Belgium withdrew.

Aim of inclusion of Cricket:

This move aims to engage new athlete, draw new countries in Cricket and attract numerous fan communities. Also, Cricket's inclusion makes sense due to T20's popularity and financial potential. It would draw a large South Asian audience and significantly increase broadcasting revenue for the host city.

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MAPPING

1. MARRAKESH (MOROCCO)

Context:

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have convened in Marrakesh, [Morocco](#), marking their **first annual meetings on African soil in half a century**.

These meetings, traditionally held **outside their Washington headquarters every three years**, were initially scheduled for 2021 but were postponed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite facing challenges, such as a [recent earthquake in the region](#), the Moroccan government decided to proceed with the event.

[Morocco](#), a **North African** country bordering the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, is distinguished by its Berber, Arabian and European cultural influences.



2. HERAT (AFGHANISTAN)

Context:

A powerful earthquake with a magnitude of **6.3** struck **Herat province** in Afghanistan, resulting in the flattening of entire villages and causing the death of over 1,000 people.

The Taliban government has appealed for urgent aid, but [Afghanistan's](#) economic crisis has hindered relief efforts.

Afghanistan is prone to earthquakes because it lies near the **junction of the Eurasian and Indian tectonic plates**, making it a seismically active region.

Herat is one of the **thirty-four provinces of Afghanistan**, located in the northwestern part of the country. Together with **Badghis, Farah, and Ghor provinces**, it makes up the northwestern region of Afghanistan. Its primary city and administrative capital is **Herat City**.



3. TANZANIA

Context: India and [Tanzania](#) have elevated their ties to a **strategic partnership level**. They **signed six agreements** covering digital cooperation, culture, sports, maritime industries, and white shipping information sharing.

Additionally, they agreed on a **five-year roadmap** to expand their defence cooperation. Both countries are working on a **trade agreement in local currencies**. India views Tanzania as a valued partner in the Indo-Pacific.

[Tanzania](#) is an East African country known for its vast wilderness areas. They include the plains of Serengeti National Park, populated by the "big five" game (elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo, rhino), and Kilimanjaro National Park, home to Africa's highest mountain.



4. HAITI

Context:

The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** has approved a multinational security mission **led by Kenya** to intervene in Haiti due to a surge in deadly gang violence and instability in the country.

Aim: This intervention aims to **restore security, protect critical infrastructure, and control escalating violence** in Haiti.

Haiti is a Caribbean country that shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic to its east. It's still recovering from a 2010 earthquake and has been grappling with armed groups taking control of large parts of the country.



avg. of 90m) on the **European continental shelf**, it connects to **the Atlantic Ocean** through the **English Channel** in the south and the **Norwegian Sea** in the north.



6. BALTIC-CONNECTOR GAS PIPELINE

Context: [Finland](#) is investigating potential sabotage of the **Baltic-connector gas pipeline** that connects it with **Estonia**.

The pipeline is crucial for **Finland's gas supply**, but alternative sources are available to ensure energy security.

The Baltic Sea is an arm of the Atlantic Ocean that is enclosed by Denmark, Estonia, [Finland](#), Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the North and Central European Plain. It separates the **Scandinavian Peninsula** from the rest of continental Europe.

5. UK'S ROSEBANK OIL FIELD

Context: The row over the UK's Rosebank oil field revolves around the British government's approval of a **major oil and gas project in the North Sea**. This decision has sparked Environmental Concerns (contradictory to the UK's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050)

The Rosebank oil field, located northwest of the **Shetland Islands**, is a significant untapped reserve with the potential to produce 300 million barrels of oil. It's expected to contribute 8% of the UK's total oil production and generate jobs until 2051.

The North Sea lies between Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. **An epeiric sea** (on the continental plate and having a very low depth

