



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

BHOJSHALA TEMPLE-KAMAL MAULA MOSQUE COMPLEX

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has confirmed that the existing structure at the Bhojshala complex in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district was built using remnants of an earlier temple.

15 JULY - 20 JULY 2024

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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GENERAL STUDIES – 1

Topics: [Women and women related issues.](#)

1. REDEFINING WORK: THE MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY DEBATE

Context:

The Supreme Court has emphasized the complexity of mandatory menstrual leave policies and called for a model policy to prevent misuse and hinder women's workforce participation.

What is a Menstrual leave?

It is a type of leave where a woman may have the option to take paid or unpaid leave from her employment if she is menstruating and is unable to go to work because of this. A study shows 20% of 40% of women experience dysmenorrhea, a menstrual pain condition, affecting 40% of the labor force.

Paid menstrual leave boosts workforce participation and promotes gender inclusivity:

1. **Addresses physical and emotional challenges:** Menstrual leave promotes inclusivity and support
2. **Breaks taboos:** Implementing menstrual leave can reduce stigma and silence, fostering openness.
3. **Reduces absenteeism:** Paid leave for menstruation-related issues can decrease unplanned sick leaves.
4. **Increases productivity:** Allowing women to rest and recover during menstruation boosts productivity.
5. **Improves health and comfort:** Recognizing menstrual health improves employee well-being, job satisfaction, and loyalty.
6. **Enhances work-life balance:** Helps women manage health without compromising professional responsibilities.

Challenges and considerations for implementation:

1. **Gender Bias:** Negative perceptions or stigma associated with menstrual leave could discourage women from using it.
2. **Business Continuity:** Employers may face challenges in managing workforce schedules and ensuring business continuity.
3. **Economic Impact:** Funding for menstrual leaves may increase hiring costs, similar to the Maternity Benefit Act 2016.
4. **Inadequate Reach:** Period leave policies may not benefit casual women workers in the informal economy.

Global Menstrual Leave Policies

1. **Taiwan and Zambia:** Have policies but face implementation challenges.
2. **Spain:** Introduced paid menstrual leave in 2023, with low uptake due to complex processes and fear of discrimination.
3. **Indonesia:** Offers two-day leave, seldom used due to required medical examinations.

Draft Menstrual Hygiene Policy:

Suggests flexible hours and support leaves to help all employees and prevent stigma or assumptions about productivity related to menstrual cycles, serving as a starting point for policy discussions.

Government Schemes:

1. **Menstrual hygiene scheme** launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
2. [Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram](#)
3. **SABLA** programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development
4. National Rural Livelihood Mission of the Ministry of Rural Development
5. Swachh Bharat Mission and Swachh Bharat: **Swachh Vidyalaya (SB:SV)**
6. Guidelines for **Gender Issues in Sanitation, 2017**
7. The National Guidelines on **Menstrual Hygiene Management**
8. **Scheme for Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene** among adolescent girls in the age group of 10-19 years (supported by the National Health Mission)

Way forward:

1. **Clear communication:** Ensure understanding and acceptance of menstrual leave.
2. **Optional use:** Allow women to use menstrual leave at their discretion.
 - a. **E.g. Zomato has a 10-day paid period of leave per year.**
3. **Holistic approach:** Integrate menstrual leave with other health and wellness initiatives, such as providing access to **sanitary products, comfortable rest areas, and health education programs.**
4. **Monitoring and evaluation:** Regularly assess policy's impact on workforce participation, employee well-being, and organizational culture.
5. **Inclusive policies:** Menstrual leave should be part of a broader effort to promote gender inclusivity, including policies on maternity leave, paternity leave, **flexible working hours, and other supportive measures.**

Conclusion

- Policies should not only benefit formal workforce but **also informal sector women, where 90% of them are involved.**
- Given all these apprehensions, we need to **find a balance between creating space for women to seek period leave** when required and ensuring **that it doesn't become another ground for employers to favour men over women.**

Insta Links:

- [Demand for paid Menstrual leave and Gender Equality](#)

Mains Links:

Q. What are the continued challenges for women in India against time and space? (UPSC 2019)

Q. Male membership needs to be encouraged in order to make women's organisations free from gender bias.

Comment. (UPSC 2013)

GENERAL STUDIES – 2

Topics: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

2. SC AGREES TO LIST PETITIONS ON MONEY BILL ROUTE

Context:

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud agreed to **list petitions challenging the Money Bill route taken by the Centre.** This issue was referred to a **seven-judge Bench** in 2019 by a **five-judge Bench led by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi.**

Money Bills and Financial Bills:

Any bill related to revenue or expenditure is a **Financial Bill.**

A Money Bill is a specific type of Finance Bill that deals only with matters specified under **Article 110(1) and deals with taxes, borrowing, expenditure,** etc. It can only be introduced in the Lok Sabha and must be certified by the Speaker.

All Money bills are Financial bills but all Financial bills are not Money bills

About Article 110:

1. **Article 110(1):** A Bill is deemed to be a Money Bill if it deals only with matters specified in **Article 110(1)(a) to (g)** — taxation, borrowing by the government, and appropriation of money from the Consolidated Fund of India, among others.
2. **Article 110(1)(g):** Adds that “any matter incidental to any of the matters specified in **Articles 110(1)(a)-(f)**” can also be a Money Bill.
3. **Article 110(3):** “If any question arises whether a Bill is a Money Bill or not, the decision of the Speaker of the House of the People thereon shall be final.

For a comparison between Money and Finance Bills: [Click Here](#)

Recent controversies regarding Money Bill:

Controversies	Details
Circumventing the Rajya Sabha	Passing contentious amendments as a Money Bill allows the government to bypass the Rajya Sabha, undermining the bicameral nature of Parliament.
Reduced Legislative Scrutiny	The Rajya Sabha's bypass reduces opportunities for comprehensive debate and oversight , diminishing additional scrutiny.
Violation of Article 110	Concerns exist that certain amendments labelled as Money Bills do not adhere strictly to Article 110 , which specifies what constitutes a Money Bill.
Speaker's Certification	The Speaker of the Lok Sabha certifies a bill as a Money Bill under Article 110, a decision not subject to judicial review , raising concerns about potential misuse to circumvent legislative processes.
Aadhaar Act Controversy	The Aadhaar Act, 2016, classified as a Money Bill , sparked controversy. The Supreme Court upheld its constitutionality , but Justice Chandrachud dissented, calling it an "abuse of the constitutional process" .
Finance Act, 2017 Concerns	The Finance Act, 2017 included amendments unrelated to Article 110 subjects. A five-judge Bench referred the Money Bill aspect to a larger seven-judge Bench in 2019.
PMLA Amendments	Amendments to the PMLA passed as Money Bills gave the Enforcement Directorate extensive powers. The Supreme Court upheld these amendments' legality but left the Money Bill question to the seven-judge Bench.
Limited Role of Rajya Sabha	Classification as a Money Bill restricts the Rajya Sabha to only recommending changes , without the power to amend or reject the bill.

Potential consequences of misclassifying Money Bills:

- Undermining Bicameralism:** Example: The Finance Act of 2017 altered appointments to key judicial tribunals without Rajya Sabha input.
- Erosion of Checks and Balances:** Example: Amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) were passed, granting broad powers to the Enforcement Directorate.
- Constitutional Violations:** Misclassification may **breach Article 110** of the Constitution, which defines Money Bills' scope.
- Concentration of Executive Power:** Example: The **Finance Act of 2017** potentially extended executive control over judicial tribunals by altering selection committee compositions.
- Political Manipulation:** Encourages the ruling party to misuse the Money Bill route to pass controversial laws without sufficient opposition debate.
 - Example:** Critics argue that contentious amendments are dressed up as Money Bills to avoid Rajya Sabha rejection.

Conclusion:

Misclassifying Money Bills undermines legislative scrutiny and leads to executive overreach, emphasizing the **need for strict adherence to legislative processes** to maintain the integrity of governance.

Insta Links:

[What are money Bills?](#)

Mains links:

Q. How does a money bill differ from a financial Bill? Analyze whether the process of classifying a bill as a money bill needs to change. (250 words)

Prelims Link:**Q1. Regarding the Money Bill, which of the following statements is not correct? (UPSC 2018)**

- (a) A bill shall be deemed to be a Money Bill if it contains only provisions relating to the imposition, abolition, remission, alteration or regulation of any tax.
- (b) A Money Bill has provisions for the custody of the Consolidated Fund of India or the Contingency Fund of India.
- (c) A Money Bill is concerned with the appropriation of money out of the Contingency Fund of India.
- (d) A Money Bill deals with the regulation of borrowing of money or giving of any guarantee by the Government of India.

Ans: (c)**Q2. What will follow if a Money Bill is substantially amended by the Rajya Sabha? (UPSC 2013)**

- (a) The Lok Sabha may still proceed with the Bill, accepting or not accepting the recommendations of the Rajya Sabha.
- (b) The Lok Sabha cannot consider the Bill further.
- (c) The Lok Sabha may send the Bill to the Rajya Sabha for reconsideration.
- (d) The President may call a joint sitting to pass the Bill.

Ans: (a)

[Topics: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.](#)

3. MAHARASHTRA'S 2024 BILL: A NEW FRONT AGAINST URBAN NAXALISM

Context:

The Maharashtra government introduced the **Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024**, to combat **urban Naxalism**, proposing severe penalties for individuals supporting Naxal-affiliated organizations, including indirect members.

What is Urban Naxalism?

- It refers to the presence and **activities of Naxalites or CPI (Maoist) in urban areas**.
- As per the Maoist strategy, urban areas are crucial for **providing cadres, leadership, and logistical support** for the people's war.
- The key objectives are **mobilizing masses, building a united front, and military tasks**.
- Activities include maintaining safe houses, providing logistics, and recruiting youth and workers.

Key provisions of the Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill 2024

Key Provisions	Details
Purpose and Scope	Combat the increasing threat of Naxalism, especially in urban areas through Naxal-affiliated organizations.
Declaration of Unlawful Organizations	The state can declare an organization as " unlawful ". An advisory board of three qualified individuals (current/former/qualified High Court judges) will review such decisions.
Definition of Unlawful Activities	Activities threatening public order, peace, and tranquillity. Interference with law administration and public servants. Violence, vandalism, use of firearms, explosives, and disruption of transportation. Encouraging disobedience to law and institutions. Collecting funds or goods for unlawful activities.
Cognizable and Non-bailable Offences	All offences under this law are cognizable and non-bailable and will be investigated by a police officer not below the rank of a Sub-Inspector.

Punishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of Unlawful Organizations: Imprisonment up to 3 years and fines up to Rs 3 lakh. • Non-members Contributing or Aiding Unlawful Organizations: Imprisonment up to 2 years and fines up to Rs 2 lakh. • Management or Promotion of Unlawful Organizations: Imprisonment up to 3 years and fines up to Rs 3 lakh. • Committing, Abetting, or Planning Unlawful Activities: Imprisonment up to 7 years and fines up to Rs 5 lakh.
Seizure and Forfeiture	If an organisation has been declared unlawful, the District Magistrate or Commissioner of Police can notify and take possession of any place used for its activities. The government can forfeit money and assets intended for unlawful organizations.
Legal Review	An advisory board must review the declaration of unlawful organizations within six weeks and submit a report within three months. The high court can review government actions through revision petitions.

Issues with the Bill:

- **Vague Definitions:** Sections 2(f)(i) to (vii) have vague definitions of “unlawful activities,” prone to misuse and arbitrary interpretation.
- **Overriding Powers:** Section 9 grants draconian powers to the District Magistrate and Commissioner of Police, potentially impacting residents’ rights.
- **Broad Scope:** The bill’s broad definition of “unlawful” actions could stifle press freedom and public dissent, criminalizing activities that are essential for democratic discourse.
- **Misuse Potential:** Concerns raised about potential misuse against journalists reporting on sensitive issues like socio-economic disparities or governmental failures.
- **Lack of Public Scrutiny:** The bill was introduced without prior consultation, raising questions about transparency and the democratic process.
- **Constitutional Concerns:** The bill’s provisions are repressive, unconstitutional, and overly broad, undermining civil liberties.

Way Forward:

- Conduct **public consultations and seek expert feedback.**
- **Ensure transparency** by making draft bills **accessible for public scrutiny.**
- **Incorporate safeguards to fundamental rights** like freedom of expression and dissent.
- **Strengthen judicial oversight** to **prevent misuse of law enforcement powers.**
- **Balance security imperatives and civil liberties** to effectively target unlawful activities **without infringing on constitutional rights.**

Conclusion:

The **Maharashtra Urban Naxal Bill 2024** aims to address urban Naxalism but faces criticism for potentially infringing on civil liberties and stifling dissent. Proponents see it as essential for maintaining public order and security. Its implementation and impact will spark ongoing debate over balancing security measures with fundamental rights.

Insta Links:

- [RSTV: THE BIG PICTURE- TACKLING NAXAL THREAT](#)

4. SC JUDGMENT ON THE MUSLIM WOMEN’S RIGHT TO MAINTENANCE

Context:

The recent Supreme Court judgment in “**Mohd Abdul Samad vs The State of Telangana**” has affirmed that the **Muslim Women Act of 1986** does not override the rights of divorced **Muslim women to claim maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC.**

What was the issue about?

A Muslim man challenged an order to pay maintenance to his divorced wife under **Section 125 of the CrPC.** He argued that the **Muslim Women Act of 1986**, which has **special rules for maintenance**, should override **Section 125.**

What does Section 125 of the CrPC say?

Section 125 of the CrPC mandates that a **Magistrate can order a person with sufficient means to pay monthly maintenance to:**

1. His wife, if she cannot maintain herself.
2. His minor child (legitimate or illegitimate) is unable to maintain itself.
3. His adult children with physical or mental disabilities are unable to maintain themselves.
4. His father or mother, if they cannot maintain themselves.

What is the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986?

- Muslim Women's Rights Act of 1985 was enacted **to safeguard the rights of Muslim women post-Shah Bano case.**
- Ensures fair **maintenance for divorced Muslim women during iddat period.**
- **Addresses mahr (Dower) payment and** the return of properties received at the time of marriage.
- **Allows divorced couples to choose to be governed by Sections 125 to 128 of CrPC, 1973,** if they declare so jointly or separately at the first hearing of the application.
- **Reaffirms 2009 Shabana Bano case, allowing maintenance claim under Section 125 of CrPC post-iddat period, regardless of religious affiliation.**

What does the Supreme Court say?

SC affirmed Section 125 CrPC applies universally to all women, not just married ones, and **Muslim women** can seek maintenance under **Section 125 CrPC despite the 1986 Act.**

Significance of SC decision:

1. **Affirms equality: and non-discrimination,** especially for divorced Muslim women seeking maintenance.
2. **Financial Empowerment:** The Supreme Court stressed the **importance of financial empowerment for women** who lack independent income.
3. **Right to Maintenance:** The Court affirmed that divorced Muslim women, including those divorced through triple talaq (which has been declared void and criminalized), **retain the right to seek maintenance under Section 125 CrPC,** reinforcing the principle of equitable treatment under Indian law.

It is important for women to have the right to maintenance:

- **Ensures financial independence for women.**
- **Provides social security, especially during divorce or separation,** reducing vulnerability to poverty and homelessness.
- **Upholds gender equality, providing equal access to resources.**
- **Offers legal protection for women facing economic hardship.**
- **Supports child welfare, ensuring adequate parental support.**
- **Promotes women's dignity and well-being by recognizing their right to financial support,** irrespective of marital status.

Insta Links:

1. [Insights into Editorial: Beyond talaq: On Muslim divorce bill](#)
2. [Plea in SC against uniform civil law on divorce and alimony](#)

Mains Link:

Q. Customs and traditions suppress reason leading to obscurantism. Do you agree? (UPSC 2020)

Prelims Link:

Q. Which Article of the Constitution of India safeguards one's right to marry the person of one's choice? (UPSC 2019)

- (a) Article 19
- (b) Article 21
- (c) Article 25
- (d) Article 29

Ans: (b)

5. THE KARNATAKA STATE EMPLOYMENT OF LOCAL CANDIDATES IN INDUSTRIES, FACTORIES, AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS BILL, 2024

Context:

The Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in Industries, Factories, and Other Establishments Bill, 2024 has sparked controversy since its cabinet approval on July 15, 2024.

Provisions of Karnataka Employment Bill, 2024:

Provisions	Details
Reservation Percentages	50% of management jobs and 70% of non-management jobs must be reserved for local residents.
Definition of 'Local Candidate'	Must be born in Karnataka and domiciled there for 15 years
	Capable of speaking, reading, and writing Kannada.
	Secondary school certification in Kannada or passing a proficiency test conducted by the Nodal Agency .
Relaxation Clause	Industries lacking sufficient local candidates can apply for relaxation, however, reservations for locals must be:
	Not less than 25% for management roles.
	Not less than 50% for non-management roles.
Penalties for Non-compliance	Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 25,000 penalty for violations. Daily penalty for continued non-compliance
Compliance Reporting	Companies must report compliance to the nodal agency.

Previous cases of similar bills in other states:

Earlier, **several states such as Haryana, Andhra Pradesh etc.** have enacted similar legislation to ensure reservation for locals in the private sector. The Act enacted by Haryana was **declared unconstitutional by the Punjab and Haryana High Court** as it violated **Part III (Fundamental rights) and the constitutional morality principle**.

Why states are pushing for local Reservations in the Private Sector?

1. **Job Creation:** The private sector is the **largest source of employment**, making reservation a tool for social justice.
2. **Son of Soil:** There's a belief that jobs created within a state should prioritize its residents.
3. **Government Support:** Given benefits like tax breaks and loans, the private sector can be encouraged to adopt affirmative action policies.
4. **Socio-economic Development:** To promote socio-economic development by ensuring locals benefit from local industries.
5. **Cultural and Language Preservation:** To preserve local culture and language by promoting employment of people who are familiar with local customs and languages.
6. **Political Considerations:** To fulfil political promises and aspirations of local populations.
7. **Addressing Migration:** To mitigate the need for migration of local talent to other states in search of job opportunities.
8. **Balanced Regional Development:** To promote balanced regional development by encouraging local industries to hire from the local workforce.
9. **Supporting Local Businesses:** To support local businesses and industries by ensuring a skilled local workforce is available.
10. **Reducing Dependency:** To reduce dependency on non-local or migrant labour and encourage self-sufficiency in employment.

Issues with the local Reservation in Private sector:

Cons	Explanation
Can Trigger Exodus of Investors	Local job reservations may lead to an exodus of domestic and multinational investors, especially in sectors like auto and IT that rely on highly skilled manpower. E.g., Haryana witnessed a 30% drop in investment in 2022 due to the local reservation law, impacting its ranking among states in terms of new investment projects.
Affect Existing Industries	The focus on the “son of the soil” and restrictions on the free movement of manpower can adversely affect existing industries in the state.
Extreme Talent Crunch	Imposing reservations on gig and platform companies may result in a severe talent crunch, affecting the availability of skilled individuals.
Constitutional and Legal Issues	It is beyond the power of states to create domicile as a condition for employment as the constitution provides this provision for public employment and only parliament is empowered to make such laws under Article 16(3).
	75% reservation also goes beyond the reservation ceiling of 50%
	Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Act, 1957 abolished Residence as a criterion for a job. A few exceptions were made for Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, and Himachal Pradesh.
	Violation of Article 19: Previously, the Punjab High Court had criticized the reservation in private sector law for imposing excessive control on private employers, creating an “Inspector Raj,” and impairing individuals’ rights under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution.
	Private jobs are skill-based and analytical , and citizens have the fundamental right to work anywhere in India.
Promotes Regionalism	Local job reservation policies pose threats to unity in diversity, potentially creating local vs. non-local divisions.
Undermines Merite system	They undermine the merit system, affect economic efficiency, and may lead to a shortage of qualified workers, impacting economic development.
Promotes Vote Bank Politics among states	

What does the Constitution Say?

The Constitution of India **guarantees freedom of movement and consequently** employment within India through several provisions.

1. **Article 14** provides for equality before the law irrespective of place of birth.
2. **Article 15** guards against discrimination based on place of birth.
3. **Article 16** guarantees no birthplace-based discrimination in public employment.
4. **Article 19** ensures that citizens can move freely throughout the territory of India.

Judicial Pronouncements:

Legal Cases	Key Points
Dr Pradeep Jain v Union of India, 1984	Legislation for “sons of the soil” deemed unconstitutional
Sunanda Reddy v State of Andhra Pradesh, 1995	Supreme Court affirmed the unconstitutionality of a state policy giving 5% extra weightage based on the medium of instruction.
2002 Rajasthan Case	Supreme Court invalidated the appointment of government teachers in Rajasthan, which favoured applicants from specific districts or rural areas.
2019 UP-Subordinate Service Selection Commission Case	Allahabad High Court struck down a UP recruitment notification that preferred women who are “original residents” of Uttar Pradesh alone.
2023	The Punjab and Haryana High Court invalidated a 2020 Haryana government law that reserved 75% of private-sector jobs for state residents.

Conclusion:

What is more important for states is **to focus on skill training (capacity building of Youths), economic recovery and education** to provide ample job opportunities, fostering competition in the free market. While local reservations may offer short-term gains, they could hinder long-term economic development and national unity.

Insta Links:

[Haryana private sector quota law](#)

Prelims Links:

Consider the following statements : (UPSC 2023)

Statement-I : The Supreme Court of India has held in some judgements .that the reservation policies made under Article 16(4) of the Constitution of India would be limited by Article 335 for maintenance of efficiency of administration.

Statement-II : Article 335 of the Constitution of India defines the term 'efficiency of administration'.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

Topics: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

6. RTI APPEALS DISPOSAL NEARS 100%

Context:

Union Minister recently announced **that nearly 100% of Right to Information (RTI) appeals are being disposed of**, with pendency decreasing annually, (from approximately **35,000 (2019-20) to 23,000 (2023-24)**)

About RTI Act 2005

- Purpose:** Grants citizens the right to access information from Public Authorities (PAs) to promote transparency, accountability, and public participation in governance, while combating corruption.
- Nodal Agency:** Department of Personnel and Training under MoPPG&P.
- Replacement:** Replaced the Freedom of Information Act, 2002.

Key Features

- Information Commissions:** Establishes Central and State Information Commissions, outlining their constitution, composition, and functions.
- Public Information Officers:** Obligates PAs to designate Central/State Public Information Officers (CPIO/SPIOs) to provide requested information.

Appeals System:

- First Appeal:** To a senior officer within 30 days of filing the RTI application.
- Second Appeal:** To the Central/State Information Commissioner (CIC/SIC) within 90 days of the first appeal decision.
- Burden of Proof:** On CPIO/SPIOs to justify denial of information.
- Appeal Resolution:** Must be resolved within 30 days, extendable to 45 days.
- Binding Decisions:** CIC/SIC decisions are binding.

RTI Act's Impact on India

- Fosters transparency and accountability:** RTI applications have helped identify and address ghost workers in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGN-REGS)
- Curbs corruption:** Increased transparency exposes corrupt practices, empowering citizens to hold authorities accountable, as observed by Transparency International's report Corruption Perception Index.
- Promotes good governance:** Fosters citizen participation in decision-making and policy formulation.
- Empowers citizens:** Access to information allows disadvantaged groups to access entitlements and hold authorities accountable, with RTI applications registered reaching a whopping 3.02 crores in last 15 years.
- Democratizes knowledge:** RTI increases public awareness about government functioning and social issues. The Press Council of India has affirmed that the RTI Act has significantly boosted the quality of investigative journalism in India.

Hurdles in the Right to Information Act

- Vacant posts:** There are currently **seven vacancies** out of 11 positions in the Central Information Commission, and several state information commissions are also facing vacancies.
- Backlog of requests:** Public authorities often grapple with overwhelming backlogs of RTI requests, leading to delays and frustrations for applicants.
 - Eg: over 3.2 lakh appeals and complaints were pending as of June 2023.

3. **Non-compliance and apathy:** Some public officials exhibit apathy towards adhering to the Act's provisions, failing to respond to requests within the stipulated timeframe or providing incomplete or misleading information.
 - Eg: The [Official Secrets Act](#) of 1923 has also been frequently used as an excuse to not implement RTI wholly.
4. **Frivolous and repetitive requests:** While the Act encourages active citizen engagement, a surge in frivolous or repetitive requests can strain resources and divert attention from genuine queries of public interest.
5. **Fee barriers and intimidation tactics:** Such tactics against RTI applicants can discourage individuals from exercising their right to information, particularly marginalized communities.
6. **Lack of awareness and training:** Inadequate public awareness about the Act and insufficient training for public officials on its proper implementation hamper its effectiveness.
 - **Eg:** In 2021, a study found that 40% of RTI requests **denied** were without a **valid reason**.

Conclusion:

- The right to information is a fundamental right under **Article 19 (1)** of the Indian Constitution.
- In light of the recent case, the court has directed the government to collate information on vacancies and pending complaints under the RTI Act and take immediate steps to fill the vacancies.
- This and other challenges must be addressed to realise the fundamental rights of the citizens.

Insta Links:

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

Mains Links:

Q. The Digital Personal Data Protection Bill must ensure that individuals' personal data is collected and processed in a manner that respects their privacy rights under Article 21 of the Indian constitution. Comment. (250 Words)

GENERAL STUDIES – 3

Topics: Government Budgeting.

1. ANALYSIS OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT (FRBM) ACT

Context:

The [Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management \(FRBM\) Act of 2003](#) set a target to reduce the gross fiscal deficit (GFD) to 3% of GDP by 2008. By April 2018, this was **replaced with a debt-GDP ratio of 40%**, with the GFD of 3% as an operational target.

What is FRBM?

The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act of 2003 is an Indian law aimed at **improving the government's fiscal management**. It sets targets for **reducing the gross fiscal deficit (GFD) and the government's debt-to-GDP ratio**, ensuring fiscal discipline, and enhancing transparency in budgeting.

The main objectives of the FRBM Act include:

Objective	Description
Fiscal Discipline	Instils discipline in managing public finances, aiming to progressively reduce revenue and fiscal deficits to sustainable levels.
Debt Management	Keeps public debt within reasonable limits, enhancing transparency and accountability through specific fiscal targets and regular reporting.
Long-Term Sustainability	Ensures long-term fiscal sustainability by controlling deficits and managing debt.

Resource Allocation	Optimizes resource allocation by reducing wasteful expenditures and prioritizing essential sectors like education and infrastructure.
Macroeconomic Stability	Brings macroeconomic stability by controlling inflation, maintaining the exchange rate, and avoiding economic imbalances.

How was India’s journey towards fiscal consolidation?

Period	Reduction in GFD	Pace and Method
First Period (2003-2008)	GFD reduced from 5.8% in 2002-03 to 2.6% in 2007-08. However, GFD surged to 6.6% by 2009-10 due to the global financial crisis.	Rapid consolidation averaging 0.6% of GDP annually; achieved by compressing expenditure (2.1%) and augmenting revenue (1.1%). Gross tax-GDP ratio increased from 9.1% to 12.1% .
Second Period (2010-2019)	GFD reduced to 3.4% of GDP by 2018-19. However, the Pandemic pushed GFD to 9.2% of GDP in 2020-21 and the debt-GDP ratio to 61%.	Slowed consolidation averaging 0.2% of GDP annually; achieved by expenditure compression (1.5%) and revenue augmentation (0.2%). Tax-GDP ratio remained at 10.5% .

FRBM has been successful in achieving fiscal consolidation because:

1. The FRBM Act initially succeeded in reducing the fiscal deficit from **5.8%** of GDP in 2002-03 to **2.6% in 2007-08**. The revenue deficit also saw a decline during this period.
2. **Fiscal policies on target like FY25**, the government estimates the **fiscal deficit at 5.1** per cent of the GDP which spiked up due to COVID.
3. **Strong accountability** due to the mandatory medium-term and strategy statements which are required to be presented annually before Parliament.

However, FRBM is ineffective on various fronts like:

- **Reduced expenditure in critical sectors like education and health.**
- **Budgetary innovations achieved deficit targets by manipulating revenue and expenditure accounts.**
- **Introduction of an Effective primary deficit indicator led to deficit decline.**
- **High debt to GDP Ratio due to government’s use of escape clauses in FRBM.**
- **State policies divergent, leading to revenue deficits despite FRBM limit of 3.5%.** Ex - 12 states face a revenue deficit even after the central grant.
- **Hiking macroeconomic indicators: Vulnerability in stable prices, CAD, and unemployment due to lack of fiscal prudence.**

India’s fiscal consolidation journey highlights key lessons:

1. **Impact of Shocks:** Exogenous shocks can disrupt consolidation, stressing the need for ample fiscal space in stable conditions.
2. **Tax-GDP Ratio:** Improving the tax-GDP ratio is crucial for sustainable consolidation; relying solely on expenditure cuts is insufficient.
3. **Rationalizing Expenditure:** Efficient expenditure management is necessary to handle future shocks.

Conclusion:

The government should focus on revamping of FRBM Act along the lines of **NK Singh’s committee recommendation** such as **adaptation of the glide path to achieve the target**, establishing of independent fiscal council, conscience use of escape clause and coordinating monetary and fiscal policy to achieve the Fiscal consolidation and prudence.

Mains Link:

Q. Public expenditure management is a challenge to the Government of India in the context of budget-making during the post-liberalization period. Clarify it. (UPSC 2019)

Prelims Links:

Q. Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2018)

- 1) The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Review Committee Report has recommended a debt to GDP ratio of 60% for the general (combined) government by 2023, comprising 40% for the Central Government and 20% for the State Governments.

- 2) The Central Government has domestic liabilities of 21% of GDP as compared to that of 49% of GDP of the State Governments.
- 3) As per the Constitution of India, it is mandatory for a State to take the Central Government's consent for raising any loan if the former owes any outstanding liabilities to the latter.

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: C

Topics: Major crops cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

2. TELANGANA UNVEILS ₹1 LAKH CROP LOAN WAIVER

Context:

The Telangana government has released **₹31,000 crore for the Crop Loan Waiver Scheme** for waiving farmers' loans. This scheme, aimed at **benefiting over 40 lakh farmers** by August end, **marks the largest loan recovery** in the country.

What are Farm loan waivers?

They are government measures that forgive certain agricultural loans to reduce farmers' distress, often promised during elections. These waivers involve the **government covering the farmers' debt**, providing temporary relief but not solving long-term agrarian issues.

Historical Instances of Farm Loan Waivers:

Year	Waiver Scheme	Key Details
1990-91	Agricultural and Rural Debt Relief Scheme (AR-DRS)	Relief up to Rs 10,000 on select loans
2008	Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme (ADWDRS)	Rs 60,000 crores allocated for farmer relief. Full waiver for small farmers (<2 hectares). One-time settlement (OTS) of 25% for farmers with >2 hectares if they pay the remaining 75%
Post-2014	Various State Government Waivers	Total amounting to Rs 2.52 lakh crores . States: Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu

Benefits of Loan Waiver:

- For farmers: Farm loan waivers allow farmers to reinvest in agriculture** and diversify into activities like poultry, dairy, and horticulture.
- Political Benefit:** A **NABARD** study (1987-2020) found that only **4 out of 21 state governments** lost elections after announcing waivers.

Drawbacks of Loan Waivers:

- Limited Coverage:** Only half of beneficiaries of nine farm loan waivers since 2014 received write-offs.
- Partial Relief:** Half of the loans are for non-farm purposes.
- Multiple Loans Per Household:** Households with multiple loans receive multiple waivers.
- Exclusion of Agricultural Laborers:** Laborers, often more distressed, are excluded.
- Erosion of Credit Culture:** Encourages non-repayment expectations, leading to reduced repayment rates.
- Implementation Errors:** Prone to exclusion and inclusion errors. Eg - CAG found ineligible farmers benefited from the 2008 scheme while deserving ones did not.
- Impact on Developmental Expenditure:** Diverts funds from other developmental projects.

What needs to be done?

- **Inclusive identification of vulnerable farmers** for immediate relief.
- **Enhancing non-farm income to raise agricultural income** and access non-farm sources.
- **Improving technology**, expanding irrigation coverage, and diversifying crops for increased productivity and income.
- **Increased public investment in agriculture** for irrigation, electricity, storage, and transportation.
- **Implementing direct income support schemes like PM-KISAN and Kisan Credit Card.**
- **Market reforms to ensure fair pricing for farmers.**
- **Encouragement of cooperative societies** for bulk purchasing and better marketing.
- **Risk Mitigation:** Provision of accessible crop insurance schemes for natural calamities.

Observations made by RBI:

As per RBI, loan waivers not only inhibit investment in the farm sector but put pressure on the fiscal of states which undertake farm loan waivers.

In every state election during the last five years, a loan waiver promise is made by one political party or another. Also, loan waivers, as the RBI has repeatedly argued, vitiate the credit culture, and stress the budgets of the waiving state or central government.

Way ahead:

The agrarian crisis in India requires comprehensive, short- and long-term solutions, including both short-term and long-term measures, to address the numerous issues and provide temporary relief.

Mains Link:

Q. Given the vulnerability of Indian agriculture to vagaries of nature, discuss the need for crop insurance and bring out the salient features of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). (UPSC 2016)

Prelims Link:

Q1. Under the Kisan Credit Card scheme, short-term credit support is given to farmers for which of the following purposes? (UPSC 2020)

1. Working capital for maintenance of farm assets
2. Purchase of combine harvesters, tractors and mini trucks
3. Consumption requirements of farm households
4. Post-harvest expenses
5. Construction of family house and setting up of village cold storage facility

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (b)

Topics: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

3. OVERHAULING PDS: REDUCING HOUSEHOLD COSTS AND ESSENTIAL REFORMS

Context:

The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) data offers insights into the impact of the Public Distribution System (PDS) on household spending.

Impact of PDS on Household Food Consumption Diversity

- The Public Distribution System (PDS) provides **subsidized foodgrains to eligible households, covering up**

- **to 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban populations** under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.
- This subsidy allows households to **save money on staples and allocate more resources to diverse foods like vegetables, milk, pulses, and meat, potentially enhancing their overall nutrition and dietary variety.**

Implications of PDS for Poverty:

1. **Economic Relief for Poorer Households:**
 - The PDS provides food grains at highly subsidized rates.
 - Reduces financial burden on poorer households.
 - Enables allocation of resources to other essential needs.
2. **Enhanced Measurement of Poverty:**
 - Imputes value of free or subsidized items received through PDS.
 - Improves accuracy in measuring household consumption.
 - Provides a more comprehensive assessment of economic well-being.
3. **Policy Insights and Targeting:**
 - Helps policymakers target social welfare programs effectively.
 - Guides allocation of resources based on poverty metrics.
4. **Diversification of Diet:**
 - Access to subsidized food grains frees up resources.
 - Enables purchase of diverse, nutrient-rich foods.
 - Enhances overall nutrition and dietary variety.

Reforms in PDS: Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in the Public Distribution System (SMART-PDS)

It is a **comprehensive initiative launched by the Indian government to revamp the existing Public Distribution System (PDS)**. SMART-PDS aims to address the prevalent inefficiencies and leakages in the system while ensuring fairer and more transparent distribution of subsidized food grains to beneficiaries.

Key Components of SMART-PDS:

1. **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC):** Data: It functions under ONORC where over 3.6 crore ration cards are issued nationwide, granting beneficiaries access to subsidized foodgrains across any PDS shop.
2. **Technology-Driven Reforms:** SMART-PDS builds upon existing initiatives like **End-to-End Computerization**, ensuring continued digitization and preventing regression in states.
3. **Infrastructure Interventions:** Upgrades hardware, software, and technical manpower across all states/UTs, addressing limitations and creating a **unified national system**.
4. **Standardization and Integration:** Encourages uniform PDS operations through technology, **linking** with FCI, CWC, Education Ministry, and UIDAI for data sharing and improved targeting.
5. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** The scheme emphasizes leveraging **data analytics and business intelligence** tools to analyse beneficiary needs, consumption patterns, and distribution trends.

How is it helping reform the PDS in India?

- **Reduction of Leakages and Corruption:** Standardized processes and biometric verification minimize diversion and pilferage. Ex - the existing PDS system has been highly “leaky”, with large amounts of grains (40 to 50 per cent).
- **Improved Efficiency and Transparency:** Real-time data tracking and a centralized system enhance transparency and accountability.
- **Empowerment and Flexibility:** ONORC allows beneficiaries to access rations across India, empowering vulnerable populations.
- **Enhanced Policymaking:** Data-driven insights inform policy decisions, allowing targeted interventions and adjustments. Ex - targeted public distribution system (TPDS) providing rice/wheat in areas of preference of either.
- **Sustainable Reforms:** Continuous monitoring and upgrades prevent stagnation, ensuring adaptability to evolving needs and challenges. Ex - Linkage with Aadhaar ensures further innovation.

Mains Links:

Q. How has the emphasis on certain crops brought about changes in cropping patterns in the recent past? Elaborate on the emphasis on millet production and consumption. (UPSC 2018) (200 WORDS, 10 MARKS)

Topics: [Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.](#)

4. TRADE IN INDIAN RUPEE

Context:

India and Russia have significantly increased their rupee-rouble transactions in 2024, **doubling them since the previous year despite U.S. and EU sanctions.**

What does the data show?

1. **Trade Volume between India and Russia:** Bilateral trade is already at \$65 billion in 2023-24, with \$60 billion from Russian exports to India, mainly in energy.
2. **Future Prospects:** Trade target of \$100 billion by 2030
3. **Banking Developments:** Russia’s Sberbank reports a six-fold increase in corporate deposits in rupees since January.

What does internationalisation of the rupee mean?

Internationalisation of the rupee refers to **expanding Rupee usage in international transactions** between residents of India and non-residents. Initially focused on trade transactions like imports and exports, this process aims to gradually extend to other current account dealings and eventually capital account transactions.

Government steps towards Internationalization of the Indian Rupee:

- **1950s:** Wide use of Indian rupee in UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar.
- **Devaluation of Rupee in 1966** led to introduction of sovereign currencies in these countries.
- **1974: Asian Clearing Union (ACU) established by 10 Asian central banks,** to facilitate multilateral trade transaction settlements.
- **GIFT City Developments.**
- **2022:** RBI circular on **“International Trade Settlement in Indian Rupees”** introduced, External commercial Borrowings in rupees (**Masala Bonds**).
- **2023:** RBI introduced mechanism for rupee trade settlement with **18 countries**, which were authorized to open **Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs)**.
- **2023: Agreement with UAE allowed Indian Oil Corporation to pay in rupees for crude.**

Advantages:

Benefit	Description
Reduced dependency on dollars	International use of rupee <u>reduces overdependence on US dollar</u> for India’s import payments, insulating from pricing fluctuations and political sanctions.
Currency stability	Greater global use can lead to <u>more stability and confidence in the rupee</u> , similar to historical examples with currencies like the pound sterling or Japanese Yen.
Lower transaction costs	<u>International rupee invoicing and settlement should reduce transaction costs</u> on bilateral trades settled in dollars or euros, saving on currency conversion.
Soft power and investor appeal	Wider adoption <u>enhances India’s soft diplomacy</u> , positioning it among emerging economies, and potentially boosting growth and investment appeal over the long term.
Macroeconomic discipline effect	Wider use encourages Indian policymakers to <u>maintain stricter fiscal and monetary discipline</u> , ensuring stability and signalling reliability to global markets.

Limitations of Internationalization of the Indian Rupee:

- **High volatility and low stability:** Rupee’s high volatility and low stability make it less attractive for global trade and investment.
- **Capital flight concerns:** Opening up the rupee to international markets could lead to capital flight, straining foreign exchange reserves.
- **Limited capital account convertibility:** India lacks full capital account convertibility, a risk due to past currency crises and high external debt.
- **Underdeveloped corporate debt and securities markets:** An essential for rupee internationalisation, but Indian markets lack depth, especially in derivative instruments.

- **High inflation history:** Dependence on import of commodities like oil and gold increases risk of imported inflation through rupee internationalization.

Way forward:

- **Develop Deeper Domestic Bond Markets:** Increase investment options for foreign investors and Indian trade partners.
- **Make the Rupee More Freely Convertible:** Aim for full convertibility by 2060 for easier financial investment movement.
- **Streamline Trade Settlement Processes:** Optimize documentation and procedures for rupee-denominated settlement to promote internationalization.
- **Expand Bilateral Currency Swap Agreements:** Allow settlement of bilateral trade and investment in rupee terms.
- **Offer Incentives for Rupee Usage:** Provide tax and regulatory incentives for international businesses to invoice more transactions in Indian rupee.
- **Ensure Macroeconomic Stability:** Pursue fiscal prudence, low inflation, and predictable currency issuance procedures.
- **Implement Recommendations of Tarapore Committee:** Work towards goals like reducing fiscal deficit below 3.5% of GDP and banking sector non-performing assets below 5% for stability.

Conclusion

The Tarapore Committee's recommendations (1997, 2006) to reduce fiscal deficits, inflation rates, and banking non-performing assets are crucial steps towards rupee internationalization. Advocating for rupee as an official currency in international organizations would boost its profile and global acceptance

Insta Links:

- [Internationalisation of rupee](#)

Prelims Links:

Q1. Convertibility of rupee implies (UPSC 2015)

- being able to convert rupee notes into gold
- allowing the value of rupee to be fixed by market forces
- freely permitting the conversion of rupee to other currencies and vice versa
- developing an international market for currencies in India

Ans: (c)

Q2. With reference to Balance of Payments, which of the following constitutes/ constitute the Current Account? (UPSC 2014)

- Balance of trade
- Foreign assets
- Balance of invisibles
- Special Drawing Rights

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1 only
- 2 and 3
- 1 and 3
- 1, 2 and 4

Ans: (c)

[Topics: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.](#)

5. HURDLES IN THE QUANTUM MISSION

Context:

A new report, surveying the existing capabilities of India in the field of Quantum technology, has found that **countries like China and the United States have a huge head start over India.**

What is Quantum Computing?

Quantum computing uses quantum mechanics principles to perform calculations, allowing multiple calculations simultaneously. Qubits, which can be both 0 and 1 simultaneously, are used in superposition, making it faster than traditional computing for certain problems.

Applications of Quantum Technology:

1. **Higher Problem-solving Capabilities:** Solves complex problems in cryptography, optimization, materials science, and drug discovery.
2. **Enhanced AI Models:** Improves machine learning algorithms for more efficient and accurate AI applications.
3. **Optimization:** Optimizes complex processes like supply-chain management and financial portfolio optimization.
4. **Secure Communication:** Enables ultrasecure communication with quantum encryption, preventing hackers from intercepting information.
5. **New Medicines:** Simulates complex molecular interactions to discover and optimize new drugs.

What is the National Quantum Mission?

The National Quantum Mission, launched in 2023 with a budget of over Rs. 6,003 crore for 2023-2031, **aims to bolster India's capabilities in this cutting-edge field.**



Quantum Computing



Context: Union Cabinet has approved the National Quantum Mission (NQM)



Quantum computing uses quantum bits (qubits) that can be both 0 and 1 at the same time, allowing for multiple calculations to be performed simultaneously, making quantum computing exponentially faster than traditional computing for certain types of problems.

About National Quantum Mission

	Description
Objective	Develop and promote Quantum Technology in India
Timeframe	2023 – 2031 (8 years)
Major themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantum Computing: Develop physical qubit computers with a capacity ranging from 50-1000 qubits (to be completed within 3-8 years) • Quantum Communication: Develop secure satellite-based communication with a range of 3000 km and communication lines using Quantum Key Distribution over 2000 km (to be completed within 3-8 years) • Quantum Sensing and Metrology: Develop quantum sensors (magnetometers with high sensitivity in atomic clock systems) for Navigation, healthcare and diagnostics, defence, and energy sectors (to be completed within 8 years) • Quantum Material and Devices: Develop devices and materials (superconductors, novel semiconductor structures, and topological materials) for quantum technology (to be completed within 3-8 years)
Key Agencies Involved	Department of Science & Technology, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Telecommunications, DRDO, ISRO
Other Aim	The Mission also aims to establish four thematic hubs (T-Hubs) at research institutes and R&D centres (based on above themes)
Significance	India will be among the top six leading nations (US, Canada, France, Finland, China and Austria.) involved in the research and development in quantum technologies.
Other programmes	National Mission for Quantum Technologies and Applications (NM-QTA); Quantum-Enabled Science & Technology (QuEST); C-DOT's Quantum Communication Lab and Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) solution.

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Importance of National Quantum Mission

Significance	Details
Economic Growth and Job Creation	Expected to contribute \$280-310 billion to the economy by 2030 and spur job creation in research, development, and manufacturing of quantum technologies.
Boost to Industries	Enhances the industrial ecosystem across sectors like aerospace, weather prediction, cybersecurity , advanced manufacturing, health, agriculture, and education.
Solving difficult Problems	Aids in finding solutions for issues like clean energy and affordable healthcare .
Improvement of Security Infrastructure	Secures communication and financial transactions through Quantum Key Distribution .
Complement Socio-economic Development	Supports initiatives like Digital India, Make in India, and Sustainable Development Goals .

Challenges for India in Implementing the National Quantum Mission:

- India's investment in quantum technology is less than China's and the US's.
- The country lags behind in quantum research papers, with only 1,711 published between 2000 and 2018.
- Indian researchers registered only 339 quantum-related patents between 2015 and 2020.
- India's researcher density is poor, is 11% of Italy's.
- India heavily relies on developed countries for quantum technology.
- Only 3% of deep tech start-ups in India are involved in quantum technology manufacturing.

Way forward:

1. **Increase funding** for quantum R&D.
2. **Enhance research output** through grants and collaborations.
3. **Boost patent activity** with incentives and IP protection.
4. Develop talent through **scholarships and dedicated programs**.
5. Foster collaboration **between academia, industry, and government**.
6. Prioritize key domains: **computing, communications, sensors, and materials**.
7. **Engage public-private partnerships** for scaling quantum technologies.
8. Ensure **global competitiveness** by leading in quantum research areas.

Insta Links:

Quantum Computing

Mains Links:

Q. What is quantum computing? Explain its applications and steps taken by India to promote quantum technologies in the country. (250 words)

Topics: Conservation related issues, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

6. ADB BOOSTS ROOFTOP SOLAR REVOLUTION IN INDIA

Context:

The ADB has approved a **\$240.5 million loan** for **rooftop solar systems in India**. Recently **Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana** was approved with a budget of 75,021 crores and aims **to provide 300 units of free electricity monthly to 1 crore households** through rooftop solar setups.

Status of Rooftop solar system in India:

- **As of March 2024, India has 11.87 GW of installed rooftop solar capacity**, with a **2.99 GW** increase in 2023-2024.
- **Gujarat and Maharashtra** lead in rooftop solar installations, while residential sectors make up only 20% of the total.
- India's potential for rooftop solar is about 796 GW, with 250 million households capable of installing up to 637 GW.
- Overall solar capacity reached **73.31 GW** by December 2023, led by **Rajasthan and Gujarat**.

Rooftop Solar Systems in India: Key Benefits

- **Reduces electricity bills:** Benefits both the poor and middle classes.
- **Promotes energy self-reliance:** Helps India become self-reliant in the energy sector.
- **Enhances energy security:** Diversifies energy sources and reduces dependence on fossil fuels.
- **Supports environmental sustainability:** Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and pollution.
- **Increases energy access:** Targets individual households, especially in rural and remote areas.
- **Fulfills international commitments:** Aligns with India’s international efforts to increase non-fossil fuel-based energy sources.
- **Creates opportunities for economic growth:** Creates jobs and technological innovation.
- **Provides uniform distribution of solar potential:** Can be installed across all states and regions.

Challenges in the Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana:

Challenges	Details
Free electricity issue	The provision of free electricity by many states discourages people from adopting rooftop solar systems.
Financial Constraints for DISCOMs	Discoms foresee losses due to the net metering system, as they already incur fixed costs and pay contracted charges to power generators.
	Fear of increased costs for discoms due to compensating consumers for absorbing power from rooftop solar plants.
The limited success of previous schemes	The rooftop solar program fell short of expectations, achieving only about 11 GW by December 2023, compared to the 40 GW target.
	The majority of capacity is contributed by commercial and industrial consumers, with limited adoption by households.
Flip-Flopping Policies	GST hike on solar system components increases capital cost, affecting the attractiveness of rooftop solar.
Regulatory Framework	Slow growth due to the absence or withdrawal of state-level policy support, especially for business and industrial segments
Inconsistent Rules on Net and Gross Metering	Power ministry’s new rules exclude rooftop solar systems above 10 kW from net-metering, potentially stalling the adoption of larger installations.
Low Financing	Banks advised by MNRE to offer loans for rooftop solar at subsidized rates, but nationalized banks have limited offerings. Private players in the market offer loans for rooftop solar at higher rates, up to 10-12%, posing financing challenges for adoption.

Rooftop Solar Future Strategies:

- **Increase long-term solar benefits awareness.**
- **Offer incentives or subsidies to offset installation costs.**
- **Review net metering policies for fair compensation.**
- **Establish stable regulatory frameworks for stakeholder certainty.**
- **Empower distribution companies for greater solar penetration.**
- **Develop innovative financing mechanisms for rooftop solar projects.**

About Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana:

About	Description
Name of the Scheme	Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana
Objective	Aims to provide 300 units of free electricity monthly to 1 crore households through rooftop solar setups
Definition of Rooftop Solar Panels	Photovoltaic panels installed on building rooftops connected to the main power supply unit
Subsidies	60% of installation costs are covered for 2 kW systems. 40% of installation costs covered for systems of 2-3 kW capacity

National Portal	It will facilitate subsidy applications and assist in finding a suitable vendor for installing rooftop solar. Additionally, it will aid decision-making by providing relevant information as needed.
Related Government Initiatives	The Rooftop Solar Programme was launched in 2014. Aims for 40 GW rooftop solar capacity by 2022 (deadline extended to 2026). Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana complements efforts to achieve the 40 GW target
Other Government Initiatives to Harness Solar Energy	National Solar Mission ; Solar Park Scheme ; Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) ; Surya Mitra Skill Development Programme; International Solar Alliance

Insta Links:[Rooftop solar scheme](#)**Mains Links:**

Q. India has immense potential for solar energy though there are regional variations in its developments. Elaborate. (UPSC 2020)

Prelims Links:

With reference to solar power production in India, consider the following statements: (UPSC 2018)

1. India is the third largest in the world in the manufacture of silicon wafers used in photovoltaic units.
2. The solar power tariffs are determined by the Solar Energy Corporation of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: D

'Net metering' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of promoting the (UPSC 2016)

- (a) production and use of solar energy by households/consumers
- (b) use of piped natural gas in the kitchens of households
- (c) installation of CNG kits in motor cars
- (d) installation of water meters in urban households

Ans: A

Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2016)

1. The International Solar Alliance was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015.
2. The Alliance includes all the member countries of the United Nations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: A

Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2022)

1. Gujarat has the largest solar park in India.
2. Kerala has a fully solar-powered International Airport.
3. Goa has the largest floating solar photovoltaic project in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B: 2 only

GENERAL STUDIES – 4

7. THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

Context:

A study from **Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health** indicates that **practising gratitude can extend lifespan**.

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude is the **feeling of thankfulness and appreciation for what one has**. It involves recognizing and acknowledging the good things in life, whether big or small.

For example:

1. **Expressing thanks to a friend for their help**
2. Appreciating a beautiful sunset
3. Being grateful for good health.

How does Gratitude help improve lifespan?

- **Reduces Stress:** Shifts focus away from negative thoughts and emotions.
- **Promotes Positive Outlook:** Maintains a more optimistic perspective, **improving mental well-being and physical health**.
- **Encourages Healthy Behaviors:** Encourages healthier lifestyle choices like regular exercise and better sleep.
- **Strengthens Social Connections:** Fosters **stronger relationships and social support networks**.
- **Enhances Coping Mechanisms:** Cultivates effective coping strategies, helping individuals **manage challenges and adversity more effectively**.
- **Improves Emotional Resilience:** Contributes to overall mental and physical health.
- **Supports Cardiovascular Health:** Lowers the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- **Boosts Immune Function:** Positive emotions associated with gratitude enhance immune function.

Quote: Let us Rise Up and be Thankful, for if We didn't Learn a Lot Today, at Least We Learned a Little— **Gautama Buddha**

Perspective on Gratitude:

Thinker	Perspective on Gratitude
Mahatma Gandhi	Emphasized gratitude as a spiritual and moral practice, essential for personal and societal well-being.
Swami Vivekananda	Advocated for gratitude as a path to spiritual growth and fulfilment.
Aristotle	Considered gratitude a moral virtue that fosters human flourishing and strengthens social bonds.
Cicero	Advocated gratitude as a moral duty crucial for building strong relationships and societal harmony.
Immanuel Kant	Viewed gratitude as a moral sentiment rooted in recognizing and valuing others' contributions to one's life.
Marcus Aurelius	Stoic philosopher who saw gratitude as essential for maintaining inner peace and resilience.

How can one practice Gratitude?

1. **Keep a Gratitude Journal:** Write down things you are grateful for daily or weekly.
2. **Express Appreciation:** Verbalize gratitude to others for their kindness or support.
3. **Count Your Blessings:** Reflect on the positive aspects of your life regularly.
4. **Focus on the Present:** Appreciate the current moment and what it offers.
5. **Use Gratitude Affirmations:** Repeat affirmations that express gratitude.
6. **Perform Acts of Kindness:** Helping others can enhance feelings of gratitude.

7. **Mindful Meditation:** Practice meditation focused on gratitude and positive emotions.
8. **Create a Gratitude Jar:** Fill a jar with notes of things you are grateful for and review them periodically.
9. **Celebrate Successes:** Acknowledge and appreciate your achievements and milestones.
10. **Write Thank-You Notes:** Send notes of gratitude to people who have positively impacted your life.

8. RULES GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF CIVIL SERVANTS

Context:

Puja Khedkar, a probationary IAS officer, is under scrutiny by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) for **alleged misconduct and issues related to her appointment under the OBC and PH quotas.** The centre has set up a **single-member committee under the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)** to review her appointment process.

What is the Issue about?

Puja Khedkar, **despite a low rank, obtained IAS 2022** position through OBC and PH reservations. **Allegations question her OBC and PH certificates' validity, and her failure to attend a medical examination** raises concerns.

Rules Governing civil servants in India:

Rules on Integrity of Services	Rules for Probationers
All IAS, IPS, and IFoS officers are governed by the All-India Services (Conduct) Rules from the time they join their respective services and begin their probation period.	Probationers are governed by additional rules during their probation period , which lasts at least two years after selection.
Integrity and Devotion to Duty	IAS (Probation) Rules
Rule 3(1): Officers must uphold absolute integrity and dedication to their duties at all times.	Officers undergo training at LBSNAA in Mussoorie and must pass an examination at the end of two years to be confirmed in their service.
Gifts and Benefits	Salary and Allowances
Rule 11(1): Officers may accept gifts only from near relatives, with strict reporting requirements for any gift exceeding Rs 25,000 to prevent influence on their duties.	Probationers receive a fixed salary and travel allowance but do not have entitlements like an official car, official accommodation, or an official chamber with staff.
Unbecoming of an Officer	Probationer Discharge
Rule 4(1): Officers must not use their position or influence to secure employment for any family member with private undertakings or NGOs.	Rule 12: Circumstances for discharge include being found ineligible or unsuitable by the central government, neglecting duties, or lacking essential service qualities.
Property Details	Enquiry Process
Rule 13: Officers must annually submit property returns detailing all immovable properties owned, inherited, acquired, or held through lease or mortgage by themselves or family members.	If disciplinary action is initiated, a summary enquiry by a DoPT-appointed committee submits its report within two weeks to inform decisions regarding the probationer's status.
Sub-Rules Added in 2014	
Added standards include maintaining high ethical standards, integrity, honesty, political neutrality, accountability, transparency, responsiveness to the public, and courtesy in public interactions.	

Ethical issues concerning Puja Khedkar's case:

Ethical Issues	Description
Misuse of Reservation Quotas	Allegations that Khedkar may have falsely claimed OBC and PH status to secure a position in the IAS, exploiting affirmative action meant for disadvantaged groups.

Misconduct and Special Privileges	Accusations include seeking undue privileges, such as using an unauthorized beacon on her car and occupying official premises improperly.
Falsification of Documents	Concerns were raised about the authenticity of her OBC and PH certificates , which, if proven false, could indicate deception in securing her civil service appointment.
Integrity and Ethical Conduct	Questions about adherence to the All India Services (Conduct) Rules , including maintaining integrity, avoiding misuse of position, and transparency in dealings.
Legal and Disciplinary Violations	Issues related to disciplinary actions for failure to attend mandatory medical examinations and other alleged breaches of conduct as outlined by the rules for probationers.
Public Trust and Accountability	Impact on public trust in the civil service, given the sensitive nature of the allegations and the importance of ethical behaviour in upholding the integrity of governance.

Other rules regarding the conduct of Civil servants:

- Code of Conduct for Civil Servants:** Mandates that every member of the service maintains:
 - Integrity and honesty
 - Political neutrality
 - Promotion of merit, fairness, and impartiality
 - Accountability and transparency
 - Responsiveness to the public, particularly the weaker sections
 - Courtesy and good behaviour towards the public.
- Draft Public Service Bill (2007):** Proposed by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions to establish generic standards known as **“values” for civil servants. Major values include:**
 - Allegiance to constitutional ideals
 - Apolitical functioning
 - Prioritization of good governance for public welfare
 - Objective and impartial duty performance
 - Accountability and transparent decision-making
 - Highest ethical standards maintenance
 - Merit-based selection respecting cultural and ethnic diversities
 - Economy in expenditure
 - Promotion of a healthy work environment
 - Communication, consultation, and cooperation in management.

Committee Recommendations:

Committee Recommendations	Description	Year
Santhanam Committee	Recommended reforms in recruitment processes and ethical standards for civil servants.	1964
Hota Committee	Suggested measures to enhance transparency and merit-based selection in civil service recruitment.	2003
Second ARC	Advocated for reforms to improve efficiency and accountability in recruitment and training.	2006
Alagh Committee	Proposed reforms to align civil service selection processes with modern requirements.	2008
Khanna Committee	Examined issues related to civil service reforms and competency in public service delivery.	2010

Conclusion:

The Puja Khedkar controversy highlights the **critical need for honesty and transparency in civil services**. Rules are in place to **prevent misuse of authority for personal benefit**. The incident also prompts scrutiny of the reservation system’s integrity and implementation. Ethics are pivotal in ensuring public trust and confidence in civil service operations.

9. NEUROETHICS: PROTECTING OUR NEURORIGHTS

Context:

As neurotechnology advances, safeguarding neurorights becomes crucial.

What is Neurotechnology?

It refers to **tools and devices that interact with the nervous system to monitor**, understand, or influence brain activity. Examples include:

1. **EEG (Electroencephalography)**: Records electrical activity of the brain and is used in diagnosing and treating brain disorders.
2. **MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)**: Provides detailed images of brain structures.
3. **BCI (Brain-Computer Interfaces)**: Allows direct communication between the brain and external devices, helping restore functions for physically impaired individuals, like **Elon Musk's Neuralink**.

What are Neurorights?

They are **ethical and legal principles aimed at protecting individuals' mental privacy** and cognitive liberty.

Key aspects include:

1. **Mental Privacy**: Protecting thoughts and brain data from unauthorized access or surveillance.
2. **Free Thought**: Ensuring individuals' cognitive processes remain uninfluenced by external manipulations

For instance, Chile has legally recognized neurorights, mandating respect for brain activity and information. The **U.S. states like Colorado** are also enacting laws to safeguard neurological privacy. **These rights aim to prevent misuse of neurotechnology** in contexts like employment, healthcare, and marketing.

What is Neuroethics?

It addresses the ethical, legal, and social implications of neuroscience and neurotechnologies, ensuring these advancements benefit humanity while minimizing harm.

Digitisation of Neuro-Data: Opportunities and Concerns

Opportunities:

1. **Enhanced Cognitive Assistance**: Wearable EEGs and BCIs like Neuralink aid cognitive functions and help restore lost functions in physically impaired individuals.
2. **Medical Advancements**: Real-time health monitoring and personalized healthcare, improving diagnosis and treatment of brain disorders.
3. **Commercial and Research Value**: Valuable insights for neuromarketing to understand and influence consumer behavior.

4. **Integration with Daily Life**: Smartwatches and apps track physiological activities and emotions, integrating neurotech into everyday activities.

Concerns:

1. **Surveillance Risks**: Potential misuse of neuro-data for monitoring by employers, governments, and private companies.
2. **Privacy and Security**: Threats to mental privacy and autonomy through the collection and analysis of sensitive neuro-data.
3. **Ethical and Legal Challenges**: Ethical dilemmas in mental privacy, consent, and neurotech use in societal contexts.
4. **Impact on Individual Rights**: Compromise of the right to think freely and safeguard mental states, risking exploitation and loss of personal control.

Neuroethics Initiatives:

1. **U.S. Presidential Commission on Bioethics**: Published the 'Gray Matters' report in 2015, addressing cognitive enhancement, consent capacity, and legal implications.
2. **OECD Recommendations**: In 2019, recommended principles to safeguard personal brain data and monitor misuse of neurotechnologies.
3. **UNESCO's Concerns**: In 2022, highlighted issues related to human identity, freedom of thought, and privacy, stressing the risks of unauthorized access to neural data.
4. **Institute of Neuroethics**: In 2023, emphasized proactive consideration of scientific advances and ethical research training.

Way Forward for Addressing Neuroethics Concerns:

1. **Robust Regulations**: Implement clear laws for the collection, use, and sharing of neuro-data.
2. **Protect Mental Privacy**: Safeguard against unauthorized access and misuse of neuro-data.
3. **Informed Consent**: Ensure explicit consent from individuals before using their neuro-data.
4. **Ethical Standards**: Develop and enforce guidelines for ethical neurotech research and applications.
5. **International Collaboration**: Promote global cooperation to establish consistent neuroethical standards.
6. **Ethical Review Boards**: Create diverse boards to evaluate the ethics of neurology research.
7. **Equity**: Ensure fair access to neurological interventions for all individuals.

Conclusion:

Governments and international bodies should collaborate to create robust regulations for the ethical use of neuro-data, protecting mental privacy, consent, and individ-

ual rights.

Insta Links:

- [Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude](#)

10. ETHICAL ISSUES ON GST ON ESSENTIAL DISABILITY AIDS

Context:

GST on essential **disability aids like wheelchairs and Brailers** is unjustly discriminatory. Since the GST regime began in 2017, disabled individuals must pay an **additional 5% tax on these aids**, which penalizes their disability.

Issues with tax on disability aid instruments:

Issue	Details
Article 14	GST on disability aids is argued as unreasonable under Article 14, which ensures equality. For example, a ₹1 lakh wheelchair incurs ₹5,000 GST, costing ₹10 per kilometre.
Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016	Section 3 of the Act prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities, challenging the GST on mobility aids.
Indirect Discrimination	Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud's 2021 judgment highlighted the need to address indirect discrimination, applicable to the GST on disability aids.
Contradicts Government Stand	The GST on disability aids contradicts the government's concern for disabled individuals, as referred to by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as " divyang ."
Supreme Court Judgments	The Supreme Court has invalidated discriminatory taxes in the past, such as in Sakal Papers (1961), Indian Express (1984), and Aashirwad Films (2007).

Ethical Issues with Disability Aid Taxation

- **Discrimination:** Taxing disability aids imposes financial burdens on disabled individuals.
- **Violation of Equality:** Taxes violate Article 14's principle of equality.
- **Economic Burden:** Additional tax on essential aids like wheelchairs and Braille books exacerbates economic strain.
- **Social Marginalization:** Taxes reinforce social marginalization by increasing the cost of mobility and learning

tools.

- **Indirect Discrimination:** GST disproportionately affects disabled individuals compared to able-bodied population.

View of World Ethical Thinkers on Disabled People:

1. **Immanuel Kant:** Emphasized respect for individuals' dignity and autonomy, advocating for the equal treatment of disabled people as moral agents deserving of respect.
2. **John Stuart Mill:** Supported utilitarian principles, which would favour policies that maximize overall well-being, including the fair treatment and inclusion of disabled individuals.
3. **Martha Nussbaum:** Proposed the Capabilities Approach, focusing on providing all individuals, including the disabled, with the capabilities to lead a flourishing life.

View of Indian Ethical Thinkers on Disabled People:

1. **Mahatma Gandhi:** Advocated for the upliftment and inclusion of disabled individuals, emphasizing compassion and equal opportunities.
2. **B.R. Ambedkar:** Supported social justice and equality, stressing the need for legal and social reforms to ensure the rights and dignity of all, including the disabled.
3. **Swami Vivekananda:** Highlighted the importance of treating all individuals with respect and ensuring their well-being, including those with disabilities.

What should be done?

Reform tax policies to **avoid disproportionate impacts on marginalized groups**, including disabled individuals, and enhance legal protections to prevent indirect discrimination and ensure inclusivity and fairness.

11. EXAMPLES OF ETHICS

Example 1: Operation Nanhe Farishtey

Context: Over the **past seven years (2018-May 2024)**, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) has rescued **84,119 children through 'Operation Nanhe Farishtey.'** This initiative aims to protect vulnerable children at railway stations and on trains.

Ethical Values from Operation Nanhe Farishtey:

1. **Compassion:** Prioritizing the welfare and protection of vulnerable children.
2. **Dedication:** Continuous and unwavering efforts to rescue children in need.
3. **Responsibility:** Safeguarding the most vulnerable members of society.
4. **Collaboration:** Working with various stakehold-

ers to ensure comprehensive care and protection.

5. **Awareness:** Raising public awareness about the plight of runaway and missing children.

Example 2: Paris Mayor Swims in Seine River to Prove Cleanliness for 2024 Olympics

Context: Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo swam in the Seine on July 17, 2024, to show the river is clean enough for upcoming Olympic events. She swam about 100 meters to demonstrate the improved water quality following a **€1.4 billion investment** to prevent sewage leaks.

Ethical Values from Paris Mayor's Seine Swim:

1. **Transparency:** Demonstrating the river's cleanliness openly to the public.
2. **Accountability:** Ensuring promises about water quality for the Olympics are met.
3. **Commitment:** Investing in long-term environmental improvements.
4. **Leadership:** Leading by example to build public trust and confidence.
5. **Community Benefit:** Prioritizing public health and recreational opportunities.

CONTENT FOR MAINS ENRICHMENT

Topic in News	Usage in Answers
15-minute neighbourhoods	<p>Context: The article discusses the potential of 15-minute neighbourhoods to address Bengaluru's urban challenges, such as congestion, water crises, and erratic weather.</p> <p>What are 15-minute neighborhoods? The 15-minute neighbourhood concept is an urban planning approach where all essential services and amenities—such as groceries, schools, healthcare, and recreational facilities—are accessible within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from residents' homes. This model aims to reduce car reliance, improve environmental sustainability, and enhance community well-being by promoting walkability and local accessibility.</p> <p>How is it helping meet urban challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces traffic congestion by promoting walking and cycling. • Enhances air quality by reducing vehicle use. • Fosters stronger community interaction by providing close proximity to essential services. • Improves safety through better infrastructure for non-motorized transport. • Supports vulnerable groups with accessible services within walking distance. • Promotes physical health and well-being through active transport.

FACTS FOR PRELIMS

GS-1

Art & Culture

1. BHOJSHALA TEMPLE-KAMAL MAULA MOSQUE COMPLEX

Context:

The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has **confirmed that the existing structure at the Bhojshala complex in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district** was built using **remnants of an earlier temple**.

ASI Report on Temple Mutilation

- Temple pillars and pilasters mutilated, originally temple-like.
- Archaeological survey reveals temple dating back to **Paramara dynasty**.
- Hindu deities' images found on pillars, defaced for mosque use.

- 13th century CE inscriptions discovered.
- Historical accounts of temple's conversion into a mosque by Khilji king Mahmud in 1455 CE referenced.

THE BHOJSHALA DISPUTE

➤ In 1997, entry to Bhojshala complex was banned by the district administration, triggering resentment in the Hindu community

➤ On Basant Panchami in 2002, the Dhar collector ordered a lathicharge on devotees who gathered for puja at Bhojshala and demanded the gates to be opened. About two dozen injured

➤ The lathicharge sparked a movement throughout to 'free Bhojshala'

➤ On April 7, 2003, ASI issued an order, permitting Hindus to worship inside Bhojshala every Tuesday, and Muslims to offer namaz on Fridays

➤ The same year 1 lakh devotees gathered at the gate on Basant Panchami. When the administration refused to open the gates, they tried to force in. Police lathicharge; 200 people injured

➤ Devotees set police vehicles on fire and beat cops. Govt estimates say public property worth Rs3 crore was destroyed



Pravin Barmale

Bhojshala complex in Dhar

➤ Then CM Digvijaya Singh ordered action; 1,400 booked for beating cops and arson. Many booked under NSA or or externed. Govt passes gazette notification to attach property to recover the loss

➤ After BJP's Uma Bharti became CM, all cases were withdrawn, gazette notification cancelled

➤ In 2006, a similar situation arose when Basant Panchami fell on a Friday, when namaz is offered at Kamal Maula Mosque. Hundreds injured in clashes. Riots broke out in town. Over 200 booked

➤ In 2013, Basant Panchami was again on a Friday. Police were strict. People were controlled with a show of strength

History

2. BASTILLE DAY

Context:

Celebrated in France on July 14, 1789, marking the **storming of the Bastille prison**.

- This event was a **defining moment in the French Revolution**, symbolizing the fall of the **oppressive ancien régime**.
- By the mid-18th century, **France faced severe financial crises, famine, and social inequality**, leading to widespread discontent.
- The **Estates-General's failure to address commoners' grievances** led to the formation of the **National Assembly and escalating tensions**.

Bastille Day has been **celebrated since 1790**, and in **1879**, it was officially declared France's National Day.

GS-2

Salient features of Indian Constitution

3. ARTICLE 341 OF THE CONSTITUTION

Context:

The Supreme Court ruled that **states cannot modify the Schedule Caste (SC) list published under Article 341** of the Constitution.

The court quashed a Bihar government notification from 2015 that classified the **Tanti-Tantwa community as SC**, reverting them back to the category of Extremely Backward Class. The court called **the notification “mala fide”** and emphasized that **only Parliament has the authority to amend the SC list through legislation, not state governments.**

About Article 341:

Article 341 of the Indian Constitution **empowers the President to specify castes, races, or tribes as Scheduled Castes (SC)** for various states and union territories. This designation is made **after consulting with the Governor of the concerned state.**

1. The list of Scheduled Castes is **intended to provide special privileges and benefits to these communities** to promote their social and educational advancement.
2. Parliament holds the **authority to amend this list by including or excluding groups** through legislation, ensuring the criteria for inclusion are clearly defined and adhered to.

Constitutional and Non – Constitutional Bodies

4. FOREIGNERS TRIBUNALS

Context:

The **Foreigners Tribunals (FTs) in Assam** are **quasi-judicial bodies** formed under the **Foreigners (Tribunals) Order of 1964.**

- They are **designed to determine whether a person is an Indian citizen or a foreigner.**

Formation and Structure:

- Established through the **Foreigners (Tribunals) Order of 1964**, linked to the **Foreigners’ Act of 1946.**
- **Although 300 FTs are sanctioned, only 100 are currently operational.**
- The Assam government has recently instructed the **Border police not to refer cases of non-Muslims who entered India before 2014 to the FTs**, aligning with **the Citizenship (Amendment) Act**

of 2019.

- This Act offers a **citizenship application window for non-Muslims fleeing persecution from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.**

The **FTs are quasi-judicial bodies** formed by the central government through the **Foreigners (Tribunals) Order of 1964 under Section 3 of the Foreigners’ Act of 1946**, to let local authorities in a State refer a person **suspected to be a foreigner to tribunals.**

Governance

5. ASMITA PROJECT

Context:

The **Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission (UGC)** launched the **ASMITA (Augmenting Study Materials in Indian Languages through Translation and Academic Writing) project** to develop 22,000 books in **Indian languages over the next five years.**

- This initiative, in collaboration with the **Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti**, **aims to promote Indian languages in education.**
- The project includes three key components: **ASMITA, Bahubhasha ShabdKosh, and Real-time Translation Architecture.**
- These initiatives are expected to **enhance learning in Indian languages, empower students, and preserve linguistic traditions, aligning with the National Education Policy (NEP).**

Thirteen nodal universities will lead the project, with a standard operating procedure (SOP) guiding the book-writing process.

6. INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR AUDIT OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Context:

The **International Centre for Audit of Local Governance (iCAL)** was inaugurated by the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.**

- **iCAL, the first of its kind in India**, aims to set global standards for **auditing local governance bodies.**

Objectives and Functions of iCAL:

- **Collaborative Platform:** Brings together policymakers, administrators, and auditors for enhanced auditing practices.
- **Global Standards:** Sets international benchmarks for local governance audits.
- **Empowers auditors**, executives, and elected representatives through training and leadership development.
- **Knowledge Hub:** Functions as a knowledge hub and think tank for governance issues.

Need for iCAL:

- **Increased Funding:** Proper auditing is crucial for efficient utilization of significant funds.
- **Global Practices:** Adoption of global best practices in local government auditing is emphasized.
- **Capacity Building:** Enhancing auditors and local government employees' capacity is crucial.
- **Facilitates open communication,** data accessibility, and cooperation in addressing audit findings.
- **CAG aims to** foster cooperation, enhance auditing standards, and improve financial accountability.

7. FIRST OVERSEAS JAN AUSHADI KENDRA

Context:

India's **first overseas Jan Aushadi Kendra** was inaugurated in **Mauritius**.

- This event highlights the **strong bilateral cooperation in the health sector between India and Mauritius**.
- The Jan Aushadi Kendra aims to **provide affordable generic medicines to enhance public healthcare in Mauritius**.

About Janaushadhi Kendras:

Janaushadhi Kendras are centres that provide **quality generic medicines to the public**.

Supported by the **Bureau of Pharma PSUs in India (BPPI)** under the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**, these centres aim to make **affordable healthcare accessible**.

The government has set a **target to increase the number of Janaushadhi Kendras to 10,500 by the end of March 2025**.

8. KIRTI PROGRAMME

Context:

The **Union Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs** inaugurated the **second phase of the Khelo India Rising Talent Program (KIRTI)**.

- This phase focuses on assessing the **sporting talent of 20,000 students from Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) schools**.

About KIRTI programme:

The KIRTI Programme is **aimed at school children aged 9 to 18**, with two main objectives: **discovering talent nationwide and using sports to reduce drug addiction and gadget distractions**.

It plans to conduct **20 lakh assessments through Talent Assessment Centres to identify potential athletes**.

The programme aims to **reach every block in India to connect with children interested in sports**.

KIRTI launched across 50 centres, assessing 50,000 applicants in its first phase across 10 sports, including **athletics, boxing, and hockey**.

It features a transparent selection process **using IT and AI-based data analytics to predict athletic potential**.

International Relations

9. RESOLUTION ON UKRAINE'S NUCLEAR SAFETY

Context:

The **UN General Assembly** adopted a resolution addressing the **safety of Ukraine's nuclear facilities**, including the **Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP)**.

- It expressed **"grave concern"** over the **safety at the ZNPP and emphasized the need to follow the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) guidelines** for nuclear safety and security.
- **India abstained from voting on a UN General Assembly resolution**.
- Countries like **Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Egypt, Nepal, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Sri Lanka** also abstained, while Belarus, Cuba, North Korea, Russia, and Syria voted against the resolution.

Russia criticized the resolution as politicized and non-consensual, claiming it would escalate the conflict rather than promote peace.



GS-3

Indian Economy

10. FRAUD RISK MANAGEMENT

Context:

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has revised its **rules on fraud risk management for Regulated Entities (REs)**, including commercial banks, cooperative banks, NBFCs,

and housing finance companies.

What are REs?

REs, or Regulated Entities, refer to **financial institutions that are under the regulatory oversight of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**. These include:

- **Commercial Banks:** Includes all scheduled commercial banks, including regional rural banks, and other banking institutions.
- **Cooperative Banks:** This category encompasses urban cooperative banks, state cooperative banks, and central cooperative banks.
- **Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs):** This includes entities engaged in financial activities like lending, investments, and financial intermediation, but do not hold a banking license. It also includes housing finance companies.

These entities are regulated by the RBI to ensure **compliance with financial regulations, maintain stability in the financial system**, and protect the interests of depositors and investors. The RBI issues guidelines and directives that REs must adhere to regarding operations, risk management, governance, and compliance.

Major Points of RBI's Master Directions:

- **Compliance with Principles of Natural Justice:** REs must adhere to principles of natural justice before classifying Persons/Entities as fraud, as per the Supreme Court's 2023 judgment.
- **Mandatory Data Analytics and Market Intelligence Unit:** Required to strengthen risk management systems.
- **Enhanced Early Warning System:** Strengthened for early fraud detection and prevention.
- **Timely Reporting:** Ensured to law enforcement agencies and supervisors.

11. INVERSE ETF

Context:

Sebi's new asset class proposal for high-risk investors is expected to provide access to advanced strategies like **long-short equity funds and inverse ETFs**.

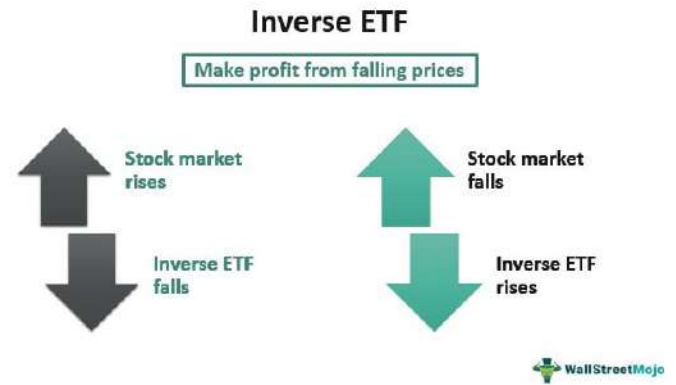
What is an ETF?

An Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) is a type of investment fund that holds a collection of assets like stocks, bonds, or commodities and is traded on stock exchanges, much like individual stocks. ETFs offer investors a way to diversify their portfolios with a single investment and are known for their lower fees and ease of trading.

What is an Inverse ETF?

An Inverse ETF is designed to provide returns that move in the opposite direction of a specific index or benchmark. If the underlying index declines in value, the

Inverse ETF aims to increase in value by the same percentage, effectively allowing investors to profit from a market downturn.



Agriculture

12. MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE (MSP)

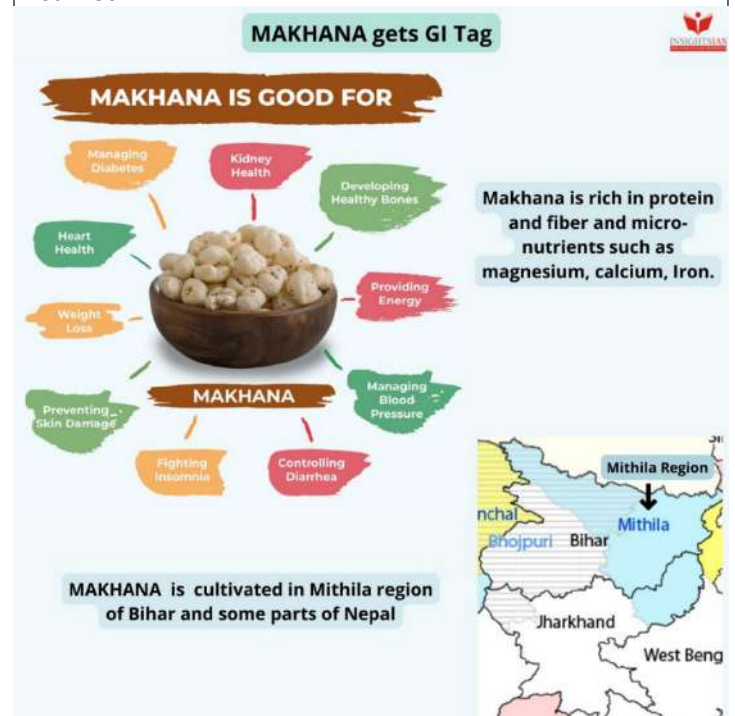
Context:

Bihar's Agriculture Minister has requested the Centre to declare a **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for makhana**, an **aquatic crop extensively cultivated in Bihar**.

- This request is significant as **Bihar contributes 85% of the country's makhana production**, involving **around 10 lakh people, primarily from poorer backgrounds**.

About MSP:

Minimum Support Price (MSP) is the **minimum price set by the government for certain agricultural products**, at which the products would directly be bought from the farmers if the open market prices are less than the cost incurred.



13. TIRZEPATIDE

Context:

India is set to **approve the weight-loss drug tirzepatide** marking a significant advancement **in obesity treatment**.

- Follows global trends of **semaglutide for weight loss (drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy)**.
- Other benefits: **- Decreased Blood Sugar, Reduces Hunger, Reduced Body Fat, Reduces the risk Of Chronic Disease.**
- **Boosts GLP-1 and GIP hormones for satiety and glucose management.**
- **Clinical trials show substantial weight loss with tirzepatide (participants losing up to 20.9% of their body weight).**
- Tirzepatide is **administered once a week via subcutaneous injection.**
- Ongoing use required to maintain results, **stopping the medication leads to weight regain.**
- **Side effects include nausea, vomiting, and risk of thyroid tumors.**

14. MV SEA CHANGE

Context:

The MV Sea Change, **the world's first commercial passenger ferry powered by 100% zero-emission hydrogen fuel cells**, was launched in San Francisco.

It can travel **300 nautical miles and operate for 16 hours** before refuelling.

What are hydrogen fuel cells?

Hydrogen fuel cells **generate electricity through an electrochemical reaction** between hydrogen and oxygen, producing water vapour as the only emission. They are a clean and efficient alternative to traditional combustion engines, offering zero tailpipe emissions and the potential for use in various applications, including transportation and stationary power generation.

15. ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAM (EEG)

Context:

This year marks the **100th anniversary of the first human electroencephalogram (EEG)**, pioneered by German physiologist Hans Berger.

What is EEG?

EEG stands for electroencephalography, **combining "Electro" for electricity, "encephalo" for the brain, and "graphy" for representation.** It is an instrument that

measures brain electrical activity generated by neurons, essential in fields such as neuroscience and neuro-linguistics.

- **Uses:** Common applications include **epilepsy diagnosis, monitoring anaesthesia effects, assessing sleep patterns**, coma activity, and brain death.
- **Functioning:** Neurons in the brain create electrical signals, detected by EEG to differentiate normal and abnormal brain states.
- **Advantages:** EEG is cost-effective, non-invasive, portable, and emits no radiation or noise.
- **Disadvantages:** Setup involves time and sensitivity to hair thickness, and it primarily detects surface brain activity, sometimes needing support from MRI and advanced data processing for deeper insights.

16. COALITION OF EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS INNOVATIONS (CEPI)

Context:

Asia's **first "Pre-clinical Network Facility" under the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)** at the Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI) was inaugurated recently.

- This facility, **capable of handling BSL3 pathogens**, becomes the **9th such lab globally and the first in Asia, enhancing research capabilities for infectious diseases.**
- The Genetically Defined Human Associated Microbial Culture Collection (Ge-HuMic) Facility was also inaugurated which will serve as a **repository for microbial cultures and genetically characterized animals, fostering collaborations among academic institutions, hospitals, and industry for R&D.**

17. CHANDIPURA VIRUS

Context:

The **Chandipura virus (CHPV)**, a rare and potentially deadly pathogen, has been identified **as the cause of recent deaths in Gujarat.**

- Identified in **1965** in Maharashtra.
- Spreads primarily by **Phlebotomus** genus sandflies, thrive in **the dry, tropical conditions** of north Gujarat.
- Symptoms include **sudden high fever, severe headache, muscle pain, altered consciousness, seizures, coma, and death.**
- Primarily affects **children under 15 due to low immunity.**
- **Diagnosis challenging** due to symptom similarity with **other viral encephalitis.**
- **No specific antiviral treatment, focusing on symptom management and intensive care.**

Prevention strategies include **reducing exposure to**

sandflies through insecticide use, protective clothing, insect repellents, and improved sanitation.

18. LUNAR CAVE

Context:

Scientists have confirmed the existence of a large lunar cave connected to a pit in Mare Tranquillitatis, providing potential shelter for astronauts against the moon's extreme conditions.

- This cave, was discovered through archival radar measurements from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter.
- Such caves, formed by volcanic processes, can protect humans from radiation, micrometeorites, and temperature extremes, facilitating long-term lunar habitation.

Further exploration could yield insights into the moon's volcanic history and internal structure, with plans for future missions to examine these caves in detail.

Environment & Ecology

19. VULTURE CONSERVATION

Context:

A study on vulture conservation awareness in Mudumalai (MTR) and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserves (STR) in Tamil Nadu revealed that local communities lack knowledge on "vulture-safe" livestock practices and the importance of vultures.

- Researchers found that although large veterinary doses of the harmful drug diclofenac were not sold, smaller human doses were available, potentially being used for cattle.
- Other harmful NSAIDs like Ketoprofen, Aceclofenac, and Nimesulide were still available in veterinary pharmacies.

What if vultures are gone?

Nine species of vultures are found in India, most of them threatened.

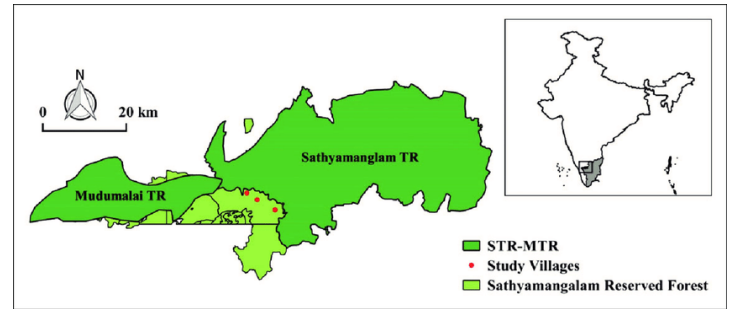
- Essential for maintaining environment and disease control.
- No other scavenger can replace their service.
- Reduced vulture populations lead to increased free-ranging dog populations.
- Dogs carry diseases affecting humans and animals.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SAVE VULTURES?

- Stop the use of drugs toxic to vultures.
- Prevent poisoning of animals and carcasses.
- Infrastructure, including for electricity

should be sensitively sited.

- Do not disturb the nesting and roosting sites.
- Gain knowledge about vulture species.



20. DOGFISH SHARK SQUALUS HIMA

Context:

Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered a new species of deep-water dogfish shark, named Squalus hima, from Kerala along the Arabian Sea.

- Identified species often misidentified with S. mit-sukurii and S. lalannei.
- Detailed morphological, meristic, and morphometric analyses reveal distinct species.
- Features include number of precaudal vertebrae, total vertebrae, teeth count, trunk and head heights, fin structure, and fin colour.
- Squalus and Centrophorus species exploited for liver oil, rich in squalene, used in high-end cosmetics and anticancer products.

21. VALORIZATION OF DREDGED SEDIMENTS

Context:

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoP-SW) has approved a research proposal on the valorization of dredged sediments, led by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay).

- This three-year project aims to transform dredged sediments, often considered waste, into valuable construction aggregates.
- Valorisation refers to the act of making something valuable or useful from an existing substance.
- This initiative not only promotes sustainable development but also addresses environmental concerns by efficiently utilizing resources.

22. GEARSHIFT CHALLENGE

Context:

NITI Aayog, in collaboration with IIM Bangalore, Smart Freight Centre India, CALSTART/Drive to Zero, and

WRI India, has launched the **NITI GearShift Challenge as part of the e-FAST India initiative.**

- Aims to **develop innovative business models** to promote the **adoption of zero-emission trucks (ZETs) in India**, addressing economic and environmental issues.
- The first round focuses on **initial business models, while the second round involves detailed models and implementation roadmaps**, mentored by industry leaders.

With the freight sector being crucial to India's economy and a significant contributor to diesel consumption and CO2 emissions, the challenge aims to **accelerate the shift to electric trucks, improving air quality and energy security.**

23. KASHMIR WILLOW

Context:

Kashmiri willow bats have gained global attention.

About Kashmir willow:

- The **Kashmir Willow (Salix alba)** is a **deciduous tree** that can reach heights of up to 30 meters.
- It is primarily found in the **Kashmir region of India, where it was extensively planted by the British.**
- Key features include its **high productivity, attributed to its efficient conversion of solar radiation into chemical energy.**
- **Willows are known for their extensive fibrous root system** and their ability to form symbiotic associations with mycorrhizal fungi.

24. JERDON'S COURSER

Context:

Jerdon's Courser, a **nocturnal bird endemic to Andhra Pradesh's Sri Lankamalleswara wildlife sanctuary** in Kadapa, **has not been seen in over a decade.**

- This bird, **scientifically named Rhinoptilus bitorquatus**, was thought extinct **until its rediscovery in 1986.**
- It **lives in open patches within scrub forests in the Eastern Ghats and is found exclusively in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.**

Its call is a short series of two-noted whistles, "tuick-tu-oo." The species is **listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.**

25. DUAL-TOWER SOLAR THERMAL PLANT

Context:

China has introduced the **world's first dual-tower solar thermal power plant in Gansu Province**, enhancing en-

ergy efficiency by 24%.

- **This innovative plant features two 200-meter-tall towers**, each surrounded by nearly 30,000 mirrors that **concentrate sunlight onto the towers to generate steam and drive turbines for electricity production.**

Key Features:

- **Dual-Tower Configuration: The plant's unique design involves two towers and overlapping mirror circles**, allowing mirrors to **serve either tower, boosting efficiency.**
- **Molten Salt Storage: Acts as a thermal battery**, storing excess **heat collected during the day and releasing it at night for continuous power generation.**
- **High Reflection Efficiency: Mirrors are made from specialized materials achieving a 94% reflection efficiency.**
- **Sun-Tracking Mirrors: Automatically adjust to follow the sun's movement**, concentrating rays on **the eastern tower in the morning and shifting westward in the afternoon.**

Internal Security

26. HAMAS

Context:

Argentina, has designated **Hamas as a terrorist organization and frozen its financial assets.**

- This move **aligns Argentina with the US and Israel** following a deadly Hamas attack on Israel.










About Hamas:

Hamas is a **Palestinian Islamist political organization and militant group** that has waged war on **Israel since the group's 1987 founding**, most notably through suicide bombings and rocket attacks.

It seeks to **replace Israel with a Palestinian state.** It also **governs Gaza independently of the Palestinian Authority.**



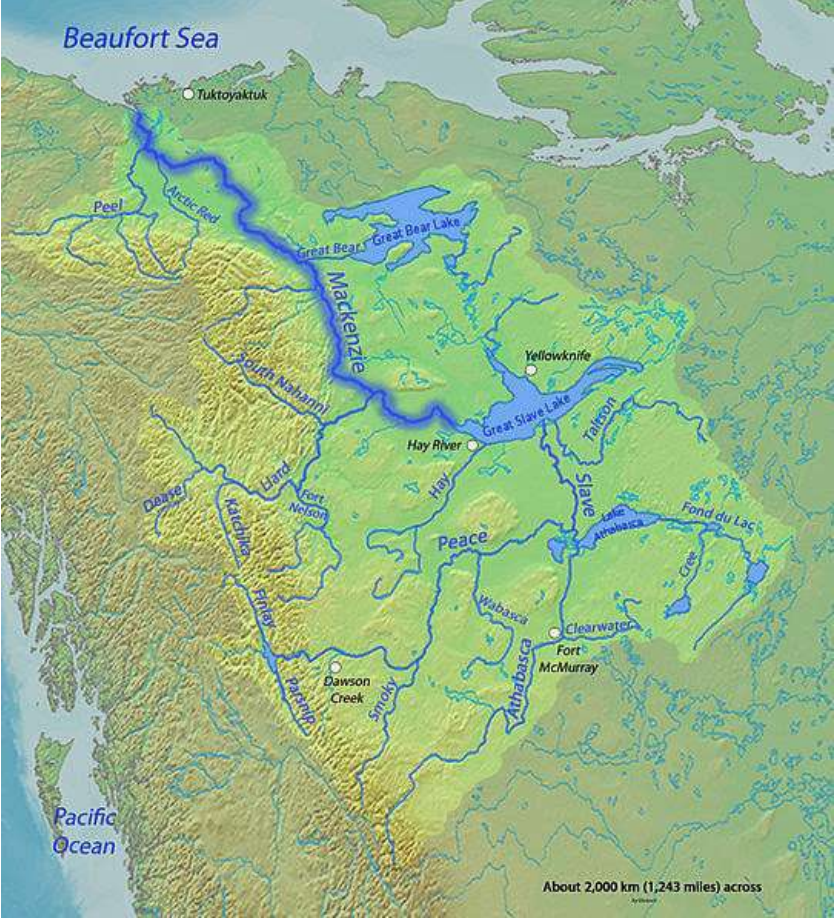
27. REPORTS IN NEWS

Reports	Description		
<p>“CITES Rosewoods: The Global Picture” Report</p>	<p>Launched by CITES</p> <p>The report, details characteristics, ecosystem roles, regeneration rates, and threats of CITES-listed rosewood species. This information aids CITES parties in making informed non-detriment findings (NDFs), a mandatory analysis ensuring exports of Appendix I and II species do not threaten their survival.</p>		
	<p>Rosewood: Tropical Hardwoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fabaceae family, known for rich, dark hues and aromatic properties. • Used in high-quality furniture and musical instruments. • Malabar rosewood, Shisham, and African rosewood are listed as Vulnerable, Least Concern, and Endangered on IUCN Red List. • Improve soil quality and fix atmospheric nitrogen. 		
	<p>About CITES</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 65%;"> <p>CITES is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals from the threats of international trade. It was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 (but came into effect in 1975) at a meeting of members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India became its 25th member when it joined it in 1976, Currently it has 184 members. <p>Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties - in other words they have to implement the Convention - it does not take the place of national laws.</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;">  <p>Administered by: UNEP HQ: Geneva (Switzerland).</p> </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Classification of species under CITES</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"> <p>Appendix I Trade permitted only in exceptional circumstances - 3% of all species</p>  <p>(Example: African rhinoceros - threatened with extinction)</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> <p>Appendix II Trade strictly controlled - 97% of all species</p>  <p>(Example: Orchidaceae - at risk of becoming threatened)</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> <p>Appendix III Request for assistance in controlling trade of species protected in a specific country</p>  <p>(Example: Chilean toad)</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Appendix I Trade permitted only in exceptional circumstances - 3% of all species</p>  <p>(Example: African rhinoceros - threatened with extinction)</p>	<p>Appendix II Trade strictly controlled - 97% of all species</p>  <p>(Example: Orchidaceae - at risk of becoming threatened)</p>
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<p>Study: Air pollution harms pollinators more than pests</p>	<p>A recent study in Nature Communications reveals that air pollution disproportionately harms pollinators like bees and butterflies while crop-destroying pests remain unaffected.</p> <p>Key findings include air pollutants disrupting scent-based communication, and impairing bees' and wasps' ability to locate flowers, mates, or prey. Ozone is the most harmful pollutant, reducing beneficial insects' ability to thrive by around 34%, with nitrogen oxides also having negative effects. These impacts occur even at low pollution levels.</p> <p>Pollination is crucial for plant reproduction, transferring pollen grains from male anthers to female stigmas, and can occur within or between plants, involving abiotic and biotic agents.</p> <p>Who are pollinators? Insects, Birds, Rodents, Reptiles, Squirrels, Monkeys and Humans.</p>		

Reports	Description																
WHO / UNICEF Estimates of National Immunization Coverage (WUENIC) 2023 released	<p>In 2023, global childhood immunization stalled, leaving 2.7 million children unvaccinated, with over 50% in conflict-affected areas.</p> <p>India faces significant gaps in vaccination, with 1.6 million children missing DPT and measles vaccines, and 2 million being zero-dose, despite the Universal Immunization Programme and initiatives.</p>																
Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2024	<p>Released by UNESCO</p> <p>It is part of the 'Education 2030 Incheon Declaration,' highlighting the impact of climate change on education systems.</p> <p>Over the past 20 years, schools have been closed during 75% of extreme weather events, affecting over 5 million people.</p> <p>In India, rainfall shocks have harmed early vocabulary and later academic skills. Despite its importance, education's role in addressing climate change is often overlooked, with only 2 out of 72 climate initiatives addressing SDG 4.</p> <p>Climate change destroys educational infrastructure, displaces people, and exacerbates vulnerabilities, particularly in marginalized and low-income communities, significantly harming educational outcomes.</p>																
'India's Energy Storage Landscape' Report	<p>A report released by Mercom India Research</p> <p>As of March 2024, India has installed a cumulative Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) capacity of 219 MWh, with Chhattisgarh leading at over 54% of this capacity.</p> <p>BESS involves electrochemical devices that store renewable energy, such as solar and wind, for later use. Common types include Lithium-ion, Lead-acid, and Sodium-sulfur batteries.</p> <p>To promote BESS, India has introduced initiatives such as the Viability Gap Funding scheme, which aims to develop 4,000 MWh of projects by 2030-31, a waiver of inter-state transmission charges for projects commissioned up to June 2025, and the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for advanced battery storage.</p>																
Report of India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) released.	<p>In 2023, a task force was established under India's G20 Presidency to promote Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and financial inclusion globally.</p> <p>DPI includes platforms like digital identity, financial infrastructure, and data exchange solutions that enhance digital inclusion and empower individuals.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">What is DPI?</td> <td>Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) refers to the technological foundation that enables the delivery of essential digital services to people. DPI facilitates the flow of people, money, and information through digital ID systems, real-time payment systems, and secure data sharing.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Goal</td> <td>The goal of DPI is to empower citizens, promote inclusion, and improve lives by leveraging digital technology to provide accessible and efficient public services.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Three Pillars of DPI</td> <td>DPIs enable three fundamental things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flow of people through a digital ID System E.g., Aadhar • Flow of money through a real-time fast payment system E.g., UPI • Flow of personal information through a consent-based data sharing system e.g., Account Aggregator </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other examples of DPI in India</td> <td>India, through India Stack, became the first country to develop various types of DPI for services to people. E.g., Aadhaar; DigiYatra (biometric-enabled technology for faster travel clearance and based on facial recognition system); DigiLocker (digital document storage platform) and UPI (Unified Payment Interface)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>What is India Stack?</td> <td>India Stack is a set of APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) that provide a unique digital infrastructure to solve India's challenges in presence-less, paperless, and cashless service delivery. 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MAPPING

INTERNATIONAL

Place	Why in News?
<p>1. MACKENZIE RIVER</p>	<p>The Mackenzie River, Canada's longest river, is experiencing historically low water levels, stranding communities that rely on it for essential goods. The river spans 1,738 kilometres from Great Slave Lake to the Beaufort Sea, covering parts of five provinces and territories.</p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">About 2,000 km (1,243 miles) across</p>

2. RWANDA

Context: Rwandan President Paul Kagame has **won a fourth term, securing 99.15% of the vote according to partial results from the recent election.**

About Rwanda:

Rwanda is a landlocked country **located in East-Central Africa.**

Rwanda is **bordered by Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, Burundi to the south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west.** The country is known as the **“Land of a Thousand Hills”** due to its hilly and mountainous terrain.



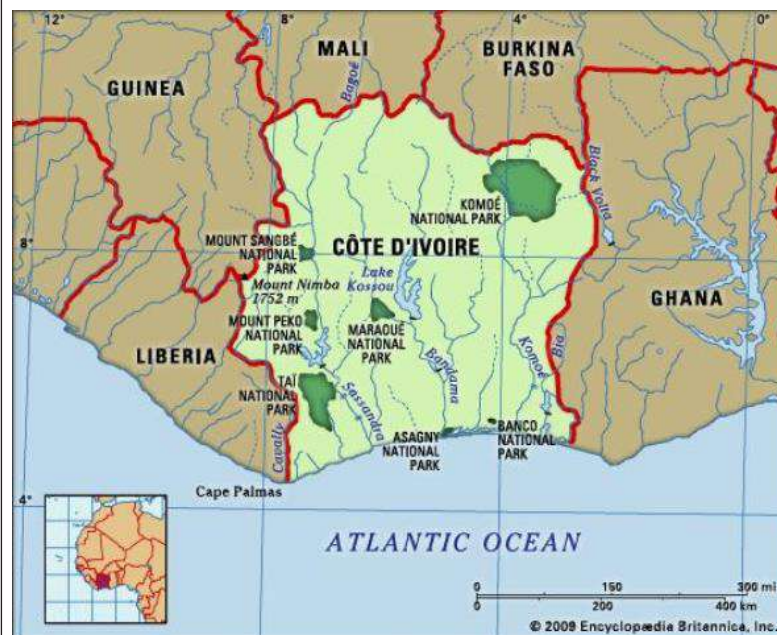
3. IVORY COAST

Context: Ivory Coast became the **first country to roll out the newest malaria vaccine, R21/Matrix-M,** targeting about **250,000 children under the age of two.**

- Developed by Oxford University and authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO) **this three-dose vaccine is over 75% effective in preventing severe disease and death in the first year, with extended protection through a booster.**

About Ivory Coast:

Côte d’Ivoire, commonly known as **Ivory Coast**, is a country located on the **southern coast of West Africa.**



4. PERU - MASHCO PIRO TRIBES

Context: The recent sighting of more than **50 Mashco Piro tribespeople, one of the largest uncontacted tribes in the world, is raising concerns.**

- The **Mashco Piro, who live deep in the Amazon rainforest of southeastern Peru, are being pressured by logging activities close to their territory.**
- The **Peruvian government has forbidden contact with the tribe to prevent disease transmission, but large parts of their land have been sold for logging.**


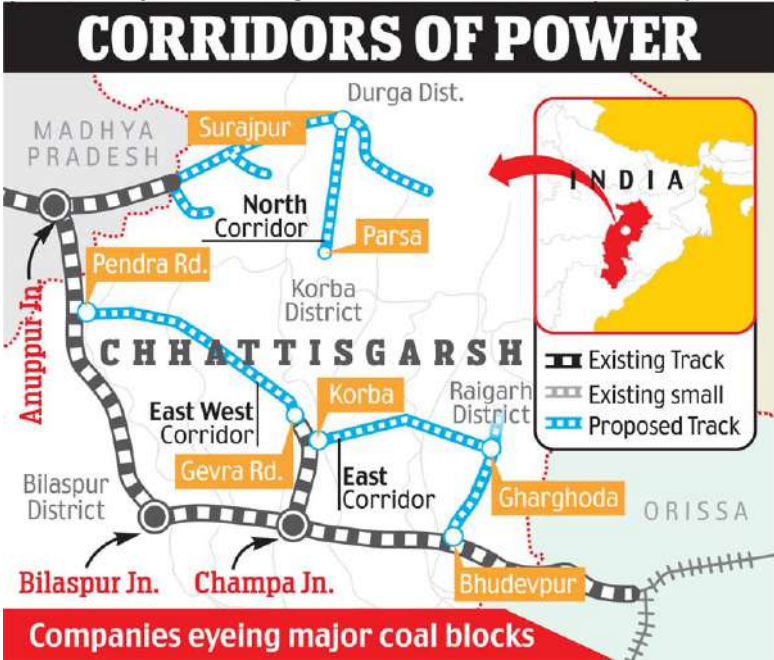
About Peru:

It is a **country in South America** that's home to a **section of the Amazon rainforest and Machu Picchu, an ancient Incan city high in the Andes mountains.**

The **region around Machu Picchu, including the Sacred Valley, Inca Trail and the colonial city of Cusco, is rich in archaeological sites.**

Check out the map to see neighbouring countries and geographical features.



Place	Why in News?
<p>1. TIZU AND ZUNGKI RIVER (NATIONAL WATERWAYS 101)</p>	<p>Context: The government has announced initiatives for the economic development of Nagaland through the harnessing of Tizu and Zungki rivers (National Waterways 101)</p> <p><u>About Tizu and Zungki River:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tizu River: Originates near Longkhim in Tuensang district, Nagaland. It flows into the Chinwin River (also known as Ningthi River) in Myanmar, a major tributary of the Irrawaddy River. Main Tributaries: Include Zungki, Lanye, and Likimro rivers. Zungki River: The largest tributary of the Tizu River within Nagaland.  <p>The map shows Nagaland divided into districts: Kohima, Phek, Tuensang, Zungkhong, Longleng, Mon, Wokha, Chokhanga, Jorhat, Noklak, Dimapur, Kohima, Phek, Tuensang, Zungkhong, Longleng, Mon, Wokha, Chokhanga, Jorhat, Noklak. It also shows neighboring states Assam, Manipur, and Myanmar (Burma). Rivers like Zungki, Lanye, and Likimro are marked.</p>
<p>2. GEVRA AND KUSMUNDA COAL MINES (CHHATTISGARH)</p>	<p>Context: Chhattisgarh-based South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), a subsidiary of Coal India, has achieved a significant milestone with its Gevra and Kusmunda coal mines ranking 2nd and 4th among the world's largest coal mines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These mines are located in the Korba district and collectively produce over 100 million tons of coal annually, constituting about 10% of India's total coal production.  <p>The map titled 'CORRIDORS OF POWER' shows coal corridors in Chhattisgarh. It highlights existing tracks (solid black line) and proposed tracks (dotted blue line). Key locations include Anuppur Jn., Bilaspur Jn., Champa Jn., Bhudevpur, Gharghoda, Korba, Gevra Rd., Pendra Rd., Surajpur, Parsa, and Raigarh District. It also shows neighboring states Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. A red banner at the bottom says 'Companies eyeing major coal blocks'. An inset map shows the location of Chhattisgarh within India.</p>