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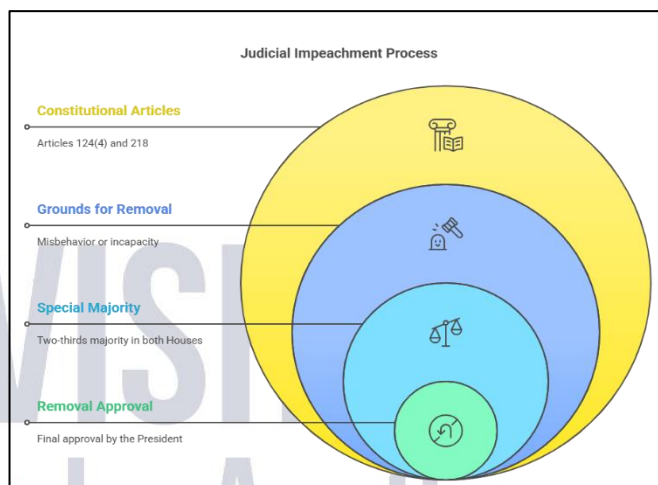
CONSTITUTION, POLITY & GOVERNANCE

1. Judiciary's In-House Inquiry

Context: The Chief Justice of India (CJI) has initiated a three-member in-house inquiry into allegations of misconduct against a Delhi High Court judge. The Supreme Court's in-house procedure provides a confidential mechanism to address judicial misconduct without resorting to impeachment.

Constitutional Provisions for Removal of Judges

- **Articles:**
 - ✓ **124(4):** Removal of Supreme Court (SC) judges.
 - ✓ **218:** Removal of High Court (HC) judges.
- **Grounds for Removal:**
 - ✓ Proven misbehavior or incapacity (undefined in the Constitution).
- **Impeachment Process:**
 - ✓ Requires a special majority (two-thirds of members present and voting, with more than 50% of the total membership in both Houses).
 - ✓ Final removal is approved by the President.



Evolution of In-House Mechanism

- **1995:** SC highlighted the gap between conduct warranting impeachment and behavior inconsistent with judicial office (*Ravichandran Iyer v. Justice A.M. Bhattacharjee*).
- **1997-1999:** SC adopted a structured internal procedure for investigating judicial misconduct.

In-House Inquiry Process

- **Preliminary Scrutiny:** Complaints are examined by the CJI (for SC judges) or HC Chief Justice (for HC judges).
- **Committee Formation:** A three-judge committee is constituted if a prima facie case is established.
- **Inquiry Proceedings:** Evidence is reviewed, and the judge is questioned to assess the allegations.
- **Report Submission:** Findings are submitted to the CJI for a decision on further action.

- **Possible Outcomes:**
 - ✓ **Guilty of Misconduct:** Report sent to the President for potential removal via Parliament.
 - ✓ **Minor Misconduct:** Judge advised to resign.
 - ✓ **Baseless Allegations:** Case is dismissed

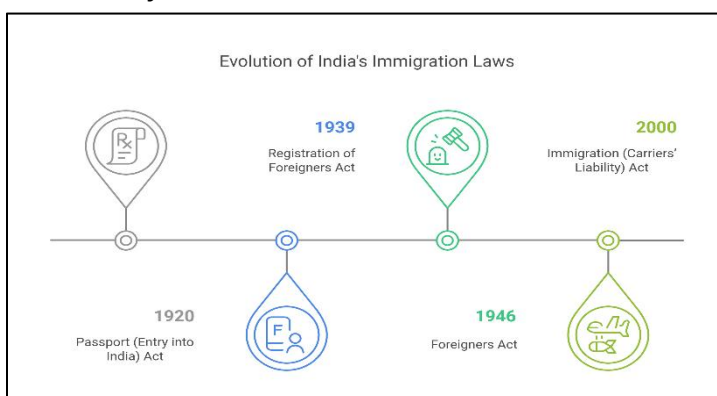
2. Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025

Context: The Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, was introduced in the Lok Sabha to modernize and consolidate immigration laws for the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners in India. The Opposition has raised concerns about its constitutional validity and sought its referral to a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

Objective:

The Bill aims to replace outdated immigration laws, including:

- Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920
- Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939
- Foreigners Act, 1946
- Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000



Nodal Ministry:

- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India.

Key Features:

- **Regulation of Foreign Nationals:**
 - ✓ Mandates passport and visa requirements.
 - ✓ Provides a legal framework for deportation, detention, and registration.
- **Centralized Monitoring:**
 - ✓ Implements digital tracking of foreigners through a centralized database.
 - ✓ Requires institutions like hospitals and universities to report foreign nationals.
- **Streamlining Laws:**
 - ✓ Consolidates and updates outdated pre-Constitution laws into a unified framework.
- **No Appeal Mechanism:**
 - ✓ Immigration officers have the final authority over decisions related to entry and stay.
 - ✓ Critics highlight concerns over violations of natural justice and constitutional rights.

3. Sansad Bhashini Initiative

Context: The Lok Sabha Secretariat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), has launched the Sansad Bhashini Initiative to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in parliamentary processes.

What is the Sansad Bhashini Initiative?

Sansad Bhashini is an AI-driven digital platform designed to enable real-time translation, transcription, and access to parliamentary records in multiple Indian languages.

Nodal Ministry:

- Lok Sabha Secretariat
- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)

Aim:

- To improve multilingual support in parliamentary proceedings.
- To make parliamentary debates, documents, and archives easily accessible for Members of Parliament (MPs), researchers, and the public.
- To promote linguistic diversity and digital inclusivity in governance.

4. India's Ranking in the Global Free Speech Index

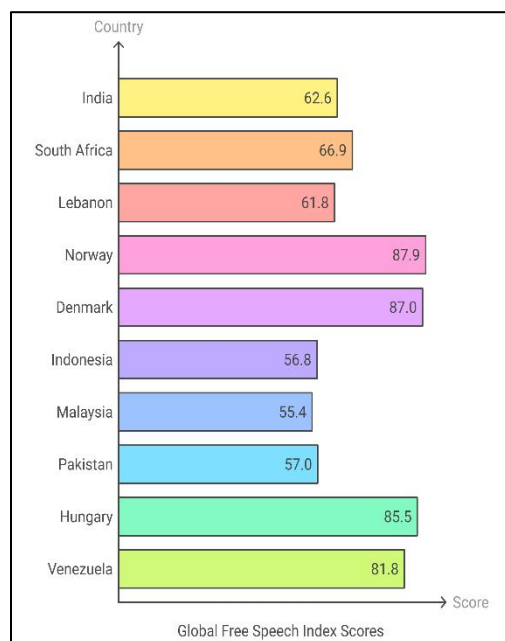
Context: A global survey by The Future of Free Speech, a U.S.-based think tank, has ranked India 24th out of 33 countries in the Global Free Speech Index. The report, titled "Who in the World Supports Free Speech?", sheds light on public perceptions and conditions of free speech globally, highlighting both improvements and challenges.

India's Position

- **Rank:** 24th
- **Score:** 62.6
- Positioned between South Africa (66.9) and Lebanon (61.8).
- The survey highlights a disconnect between public perception and actual conditions of free speech in India.

Global Trends in Free Speech

- **Top Performers:**
 - ✓ Norway (87.9) and Denmark (87.0) lead the index, reflecting strong societal and institutional support for free speech.
- **Improving Nations:**
 - ✓ Indonesia (56.8), Malaysia (55.4), and Pakistan (57.0) showed significant improvements in public attitudes toward



free speech despite their relatively low rankings.

- **Authoritarian-Leaning States:**

- ✓ Surprisingly, countries like Hungary (85.5) and Venezuela (81.8) scored high due to public perception, despite concerns about actual free speech practices.

- **Global Concern:**

- ✓ The report highlights a global decline in the commitment to protecting controversial speech, although India remains an outlier where perception and conditions differ.

5. Model Women-Friendly Gram Panchayats Initiative (MWFGP)

Context: The Ministry of Panchayati Raj recently organized the National Convention on Model Women-Friendly Gram Panchayats (MWFGP) to promote gender-sensitive governance at the grassroots level.

About:

- **Objective:** Establish at least one Model Gram Panchayat per district that prioritizes the welfare of women and girls.
- **Focus Areas:** Empowering women through leadership development, awareness, and implementation of women-centric initiatives.

Key Features:

- **Virtual Training Programs:**
 - ✓ Designed for elected representatives and officials of MWFGPs.
 - ✓ Aims to enhance leadership skills and promote effective grassroots governance.
- **Real-Time Monitoring Dashboard:**
 - ✓ Tracks progress through real-time data on women's participation and welfare.
 - ✓ Ensures transparency and accountability in gender-focused governance.

6. Panchayat Devolution Index 2024

Context: The Devolution Index (DI) 2024 report, released by the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), ranks states on the effectiveness of devolution to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). It evaluates performance across six dimensions essential for grassroots governance.

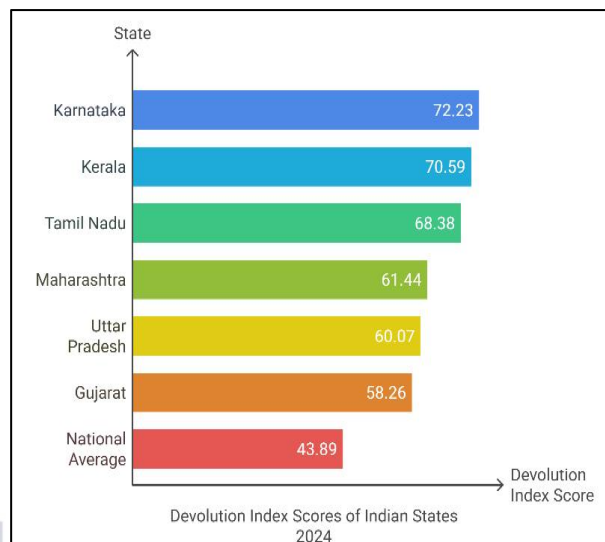
Top Performers in Overall Rankings

- Karnataka – 72.23 (Rank 1)
- Kerala – 70.59 (Rank 2)
- Tamil Nadu – 68.38 (Rank 3)
- Other notable states: Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat.

Key Dimensions and Leading States

- **Framework (Legal and Institutional Structure):**
 - ✓ Top State: Kerala (83.56)

- ✓ Assesses legal provisions, regular elections, reservation policies, and Panchayat commissions.
- **Functions (Powers Delegated to Panchayats):**
 - ✓ Top State: Tamil Nadu (60.24)
 - ✓ Evaluates taxation and administrative powers of Panchayats.
- **Finances (Fiscal Decentralization):**
 - ✓ Top State: Karnataka (70.65)
 - ✓ Measures fund disbursement under the 15th Finance Commission and State Finance Commission (SFC).
- **Accountability (Transparency and Monitoring):**
 - ✓ Top State: Karnataka (81.33)
 - ✓ Highlights governance quality, social audits, and financial transparency.
- **Functionaries (Manpower and Resources):**
 - ✓ Top State: Gujarat (90.94)
 - ✓ Focuses on resource availability and staffing at Panchayats.
- **Capacity Building (Training and Skill Development):**
 - ✓ Top State: Telangana (86.19)
 - ✓ Evaluates training programs for Panchayat officials.



National Trends

- National Average Score: 43.89.
- Moderate Performers: Bihar, Assam, Sikkim, Uttarakhand.
- Karnataka's Strengths: Financial transparency, Gram Sabha effectiveness, and anti-corruption measures.

7. Anti-Defection Law and Judicial Oversight

Context: The Supreme Court of India recently emphasized its role in ensuring timely decisions on disqualification petitions under the Tenth Schedule, addressing concerns over delays by Speakers in acting on such matters. This highlights the judiciary's role in upholding the Anti-Defection Law (ADL).

Key Provisions of the Anti-Defection Law (ADL)

- **Introduced by:** 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985.
- **Objective:** To prevent political instability caused by elected representatives switching parties for personal or political gains.

Grounds for Disqualification

- **For Members of Political Parties:**
 - ✓ Voluntarily giving up membership of their party.
 - ✓ Voting/abstaining from voting contrary to party directions (without prior permission or condonation within 15 days).
- **For Independent Members:**
 - ✓ Joining a political party after being elected.
- **For Nominated Members:**
 - ✓ Joining a political party six months after nomination.

Exemptions from Disqualification

- If at least two-thirds of the members of a party agree to merge with another party, they are exempted from disqualification.

Decision-Making Authority

- **Presiding Officer's Role:**
 - ✓ The Speaker (Lok Sabha) or Chairman (Rajya Sabha) acts as a quasi-judicial authority under the ADL.
 - ✓ No specific time limit is prescribed for deciding disqualification cases, which has often led to delays.

Judicial Oversight

- **Supreme Court's Observations:**
 - ✓ The judiciary is empowered to intervene if the Speaker delays decisions indefinitely.
 - ✓ Under Article 142, the Court can ensure compliance with its directives.
- **Significance of Judicial Oversight:**
 - ✓ Protects the sanctity of democratic processes.
 - ✓ Prevents misuse of the Speaker's discretionary powers.

8. Supreme Court: Visually Challenged Persons Eligible for Judicial Service

Context: In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court of India set aside Rule 6A of the Madhya Pradesh Judicial Service Examination (1994, amended in 2023), which barred visually impaired candidates from judicial service. This decision reinforces the principles of inclusivity and equality in the legal profession.

About

- **Origin:** The case originated from a letter by the mother of a visually impaired aspirant, challenging Rule 6A, which she deemed discriminatory.
- **Judicial Intervention:** The Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance, addressing the issue of discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

Key Highlights of the Judgment

- **Non-Discrimination:**

- ✓ Visually impaired candidates cannot be excluded from judicial service solely based on their disability.
- ✓ Inclusivity and equality must extend to all, including PwDs, as enshrined in the Constitution.
- **Recommendations for Policy:**
 - ✓ The Supreme Court urged Parliament to amend Article 15 to include “disability” as a ground for non-discrimination.
 - ✓ A separate cut-off should be maintained for visually impaired candidates to ensure fair representation.
- **Fair Access:**
 - ✓ Rigid cut-offs and procedural barriers for PwDs must be eliminated to provide equitable access to judicial positions.
 - ✓ If adequate numbers of PwDs do not qualify, assessment criteria should be relaxed.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - ✓ Article 41 (Directive Principles): Mandates the State to provide public assistance to disabled persons.
 - ✓ The judgment underscores the State’s duty to ensure non-discrimination based on mental or physical disability.
- **Global Perspective:**
 - ✓ Approximately 70 countries already recognize “disability” as a ground for anti-discrimination in their laws.
 - ✓ India’s progressive step aligns with global norms.

9. Duplicate Voter ID Numbers: Addressing Electoral Roll Concerns

Context: The Election Commission of India (ECI) has acknowledged issues related to identical Electors Photo Identification Card (EPIC) numbers issued to voters across different states, highlighting challenges in the electoral roll management process.

EPIC Number: Key Facts

- The Electors Photo Identification Card (EPIC) is a unique 10-digit voter ID number issued to registered voters by the ECI.
- It is the primary document for voter identification during elections.

Causes of Duplicate EPIC Numbers

- **Manual Allocation:**
 - ✓ Before the adoption of digital systems like ERONET, voter ID numbers were manually issued by State/UT Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) offices.
 - ✓ This led to errors, including identical alphanumeric EPIC series being issued to voters in different states or Assembly Constituencies.
- **Lack of Centralization:**

- ✓ The absence of a unified system contributed to inconsistencies and duplications in the electoral database.

ERONET: Streamlining Electoral Roll Management

- **What is ERONET?**
 - ✓ A web-based, centralized platform designed to manage electoral rolls digitally.
 - ✓ Integrates voter registration, migration, and deletion across states.
- **Key Features:**
 - ✓ Supports multiple languages and scripts for better accessibility.
 - ✓ Enhances data accuracy and efficiency in electoral roll management.

National Electoral Rolls Purification & Authentication Program (NERPAP), 2015

- **Objective:**
 - ✓ Eliminate duplicate entries by linking EPIC data with Aadhaar.
- **Benefits:**
 - ✓ Ensures the principle of "One Voter, One Vote".
 - ✓ Enhances transparency and integrity in electoral processes.
 - ✓ Results in cleaner and more reliable electoral rolls.
 - ✓ Improves efficiency in election management.
- **Challenges:**
 - ✓ Errors in Aadhaar data can lead to wrongful voter deletions.
 - ✓ Aadhaar is not a proof of citizenship, raising concerns about non-citizens on the electoral rolls.
 - ✓ Linking electoral rolls with Aadhaar poses privacy risks.

10. Swadesh Darshan Scheme

Context: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has raised concerns over the poor implementation of the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, a flagship initiative by the Ministry of Tourism, aimed at promoting theme-based tourism circuits across India.

About

- **Launched:** 2014-15 by the Ministry of Tourism.
- **Objective:** Development of sustainable and responsible tourism destinations using a tourist- and destination-centric approach.
- **Key Features:**
 - ✓ **Theme-Based Circuits:** Focused on specific themes, such as:
 - **Spiritual Circuits:** Char Dham Yatra, Buddhist Circuit.
 - **Cultural Circuits:** North East Circuit, Tribal Circuit.
 - Heritage Circuits, Wildlife Circuits, Coastal Circuits.
 - ✓ **Funding:** Allocated to states and Union Territories for circuit development.
- Revamp (Swadesh Darshan 2.0): Emphasis on sustainability and responsibility in tourism practices.

Public Accounts Committee (PAC)

- **Constitutional Status:**
 - ✓ Not a constitutional body; formed under Rule 308 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.
- **Composition:**
 - ✓ 22 Members: 15 from Lok Sabha, 7 from Rajya Sabha.
 - ✓ Elected annually by Parliament.
 - ✓ Chairperson: Appointed by the Speaker of Lok Sabha, usually from the opposition.
- **Functions:**
 - ✓ Examines CAG audit reports.
 - ✓ Scrutinizes public expenditure for irregularities and extravagance.
 - ✓ Ensures Executive accountability to the Legislature.
 - ✓ Collaborates with CAG to uphold fiscal discipline and transparency.

11. Demand for Grants

Context: The Lok Sabha recently passed the Demands for Grants for various ministries for the fiscal year 2025-26, approving an expenditure of over ₹50 lakh crore. This forms a significant component of the Union Budget process, ensuring the allocation of funds for government functions.

About

- **Definition:**
 - ✓ A formal proposal seeking expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India, presented to the Lok Sabha as part of the Union Budget.
- **Constitutional Basis:**
 - ✓ Governed by Article 113 of the Indian Constitution.

Components of a Demand for Grants

- **Revenue Expenditure:** Day-to-day operational expenses.
- **Capital Expenditure:** Infrastructure development and asset creation.
- **Grants to States/UTs:** Financial assistance to sub-national governments.
- **Loans and Advances:** Disbursed to states, UTs, and public sector undertakings.

Process and Key Features

- **Presentation:**
 - ✓ Every ministry or department submits its own Demand for Grants, often divided by functional areas (e.g., Defence, Railways).
 - ✓ Larger ministries may submit multiple Demands for Grants.
- **Approval:**
 - ✓ The Lok Sabha has the exclusive power to approve, reject, or reduce the proposed amounts.

- ✓ The Rajya Sabha does not vote on Demands for Grants.
- **Presidential Approval:**
 - ✓ A Demand for Grants can only be presented after obtaining prior approval from the President of India.

12. Failure to Inform Grounds of Arrest: Supreme Court Ruling and Constitutional Safeguards

Context: The Supreme Court of India has held that failure to inform an arrested person of the grounds of arrest violates Article 22(1) of the Constitution, rendering the arrest illegal. The judgment reinforces the constitutional protections for liberty and dignity under Article 21.

Constitutional Framework: Article 22

- **Article 22(1):**
 - ✓ Ensures that no person arrested shall be detained without being informed of the grounds for arrest.
 - ✓ Grants the arrested person the right to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner of their choice.
- **Objective:**
 - ✓ Protect against arbitrary arrests and detentions.
 - ✓ Maintain due process of law as a cornerstone of justice.

Key Points from the Judgment

- **Mandatory Communication of Grounds for Arrest:**
 - ✓ Grounds must be clearly communicated in a language the accused understands.
 - ✓ Written communication is recommended for clarity and record-keeping.
 - ✓ Informing only in remand reports does not fulfill constitutional requirements.
- **Informing Relatives or Nominated Persons:**
 - ✓ Under Section 50A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), relatives or nominated persons of the accused must be promptly informed.
 - ✓ This provision ensures timely legal assistance to secure bail or representation.
- **Judicial Scrutiny of Arrests:**
 - ✓ Judicial Magistrates must verify compliance with Article 22(1) during remand proceedings.
 - ✓ Failure to comply invalidates the remand and continued custody of the accused.
- **Burden of Proof on Police:**
 - ✓ The Investigating Officer or Agency must prove adherence to Article 22(1) if challenged.
 - ✓ Filing a charge sheet or cognizance order cannot validate an unconstitutional arrest.
- **Bail and Immediate Release:**

- ✓ Courts must release an accused if a violation of Article 22(1) is established.
- ✓ Constitutional guarantees under Article 21 take precedence even over statutory bail restrictions.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Raisina Dialogue 2025

Context: The Raisina Dialogue 2025, India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics, was held in New Delhi from March 17–19, 2025. The event witnessed participation from global leaders, foreign ministers of 18 nations, senior executives from multinational corporations, and foreign policy experts.

About:

- **What is it?**
 - ✓ A premier multilateral conference hosted annually in New Delhi.
 - ✓ Focused on addressing pressing global issues, it brings together leaders from politics, business, media, and civil society.
- **Objective:**
 - ✓ To explore cooperative opportunities and discuss the state of the world on key contemporary challenges.
- **Hosted by:**
 - ✓ Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India.

Raisina Dialogue 2025

- **Theme:** "Kalachakra" (Wheel of Time)
 - ✓ Represents global political cycles and transformations, emphasizing the dynamic nature of international relations.
- **Participants:**
 - ✓ Leaders from New Zealand, foreign ministers from 18 countries, multinational business executives, and foreign policy experts.

2. Ottawa Convention

Context: Recent developments indicate that NATO members Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are considering withdrawal from the Ottawa Convention, citing military threats from Russia. This raises questions about the balance between disarmament commitments and national security concerns.

About:

- **Official Name:**
 - ✓ Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

- **Objective:**
 - ✓ To eliminate the use, development, stockpiling, and transfer of anti-personnel mines under all circumstances.
 - ✓ Obliges signatories to destroy existing stockpiles of such mines.
- **Adoption and Enforcement:**
 - ✓ Adopted in Oslo (1997) and signed in Ottawa, the convention was open for signatures from 1997 to 1999 and came into force in 1999.
- **Signatories:**
 - ✓ 133 countries are signatories.
 - ✓ India is not a signatory.
- **Depositary:**
 - ✓ The Secretary-General of the United Nations serves as the depositary.

Recent Developments

- NATO members Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia plan to withdraw, citing military threats from Russia.
- This reflects the ongoing debate between fulfilling international disarmament obligations and addressing national security priorities.

3. Five Eyes Intelligence Alliance

Context: Intelligence officials, including representatives from the Five Eyes (FVEY) Intelligence Alliance, recently convened in Delhi, highlighting the alliance's significance in global intelligence cooperation.

About:

- **Foundation:**
 - ✓ Established through the British-U.S. Communication Intelligence Agreement (BRUSA) in 1946, focusing on signals intelligence (SIGINT).
 - ✓ SIGINT involves traffic analysis, decryption, and acquisition of communication documents.
- **Core Members:**
 - ✓ United States (U.S.) and United Kingdom (U.K.) (1946).
 - ✓ Canada (joined in 1948).
 - ✓ Australia and New Zealand (both joined in 1956).
- **Oversight Body:**
 - ✓ Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council (FIORC), established in 2016, provides non-political



oversight and review of intelligence activities.

Scope and Purpose

- **Geopolitical Intelligence:**
 - ✓ Focuses on monitoring emerging threats such as:
 - Terrorism
 - Chinese geopolitical influence
 - Cybersecurity threats
- **Comprehensive Intelligence Sharing:**
 - ✓ Covers areas like:
 - Medical intelligence
 - Counterterrorism
 - Geospatial intelligence
- **Continuous Cooperation:**
 - ✓ Intelligence products are shared continuously through secret databases, ensuring real-time collaboration among members.

4. SQUAD Alliance: A New Front in Maritime Security

Context: India has been invited to join the SQUAD Alliance, a multilateral initiative aimed at countering China's influence in the South China Sea. The alliance represents a significant step in international efforts to ensure maritime security and uphold sovereignty in contested waters.

About:

- **Formation:**
 - ✓ Established in 2024, the alliance currently includes Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States.
 - ✓ Plans are underway to expand membership by inviting India and South Korea.
- **Objective:**
 - ✓ To counterbalance China's growing influence in the South China Sea through joint maritime operations and strategic responses.
- **Activities:**
 - ✓ The alliance has conducted joint maritime exercises in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Philippines.
 - ✓ These operations focus on ensuring freedom of navigation and addressing rising tensions in the region.

Comparison with Quad

- **Quad Alliance:**
 - ✓ Consists of India, the United States, Japan, and Australia.



- ✓ Operates at a higher, more strategic level, encompassing broader Indo-Pacific objectives.
- ✓ Focuses on issues like economic security, infrastructure development, and freedom of navigation across the Indo-Pacific.
- **SQUAD Alliance:**
 - ✓ Primarily focused on South China Sea dynamics, providing tactical and operational responses to maritime challenges.

5. Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

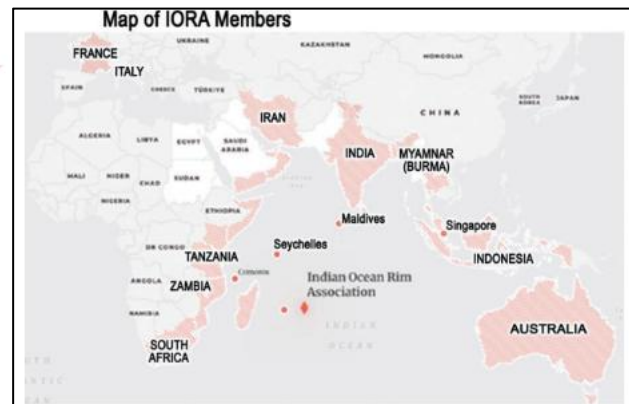
Context: India is set to assume the chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in 2025, marking an important opportunity to steer regional cooperation and development in the Indian Ocean Region.

About

- **Genesis:**
 - ✓ Established in 1997 as an intergovernmental organization.
 - ✓ Vision conceived during Nelson Mandela's visit to India in 1995.
- **Objective:**
 - ✓ To encourage regional cooperation and promote sustainable development across the Indian Ocean region.
- **Secretariat:**
 - ✓ Located in Mauritius.
- **Membership:**
 - ✓ Comprises 23 member states and 12 dialogue partners.

Governance Structure

- **IORA Council of Ministers (COM):**
 - ✓ The highest decision-making body, consisting of Foreign Affairs Ministers (or equivalents) from all member states.
 - ✓ Meets annually to deliberate on key issues.
- **Troika:**
 - ✓ An institutional mechanism that includes:
 - Current Chair
 - Vice-Chair (future Chair)
 - Past Chair
 - ✓ Ensures continuity in IORA's governance.



Flagship Projects

- **Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD):**

- ✓ A Track 1.5 forum launched in 2013.
- ✓ Promotes open dialogue among member states on strategic and security-related issues in the Indian Ocean Region.
- **IORA Sustainable Development Program (ISDP):**
 - ✓ Initiated in 2014 to assist Least Developed Countries (LDCs) within the region.
 - ✓ Focuses on conducting development-oriented projects.

6. Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)

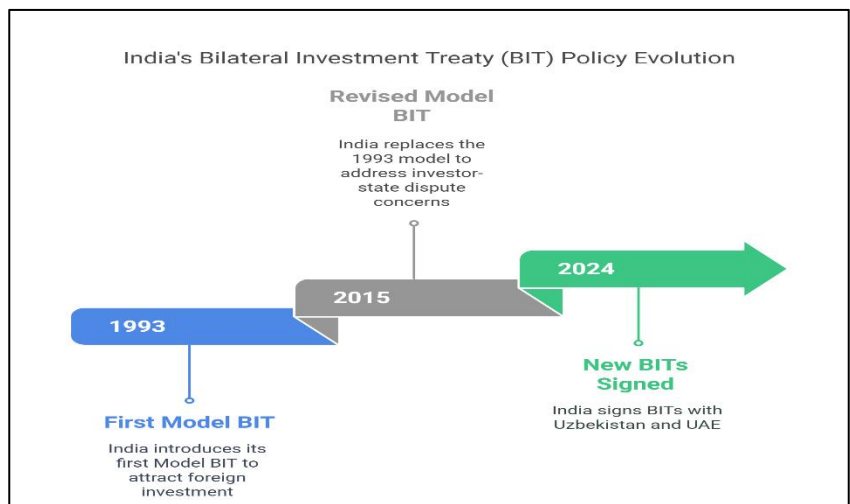
Context: The Union Budget 2025 announced a revision of India's Model Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) text, aimed at making it more investor-friendly while ensuring alignment with India's sovereign regulatory interests.

About:

- **Definition:**
 - ✓ BITs, also known as International Investment Agreements (IIAs), are legal frameworks designed to protect foreign investments while balancing the host state's sovereign regulatory rights.
- **Purpose:**
 - ✓ Provide assurances to foreign investors against adverse measures.
- **Establish mechanisms like:**
 - ✓ **Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS):** Allows investors to bring claims against host states.
 - ✓ **State-State Dispute Settlement (SSDS):** Allows the home state to bring claims against the host state.

India's Evolution in BIT Policy

- **1993 Indian Model BIT:**
 - ✓ The first Model BIT introduced by India to attract foreign investment.
- **2015 Model BIT:**
 - ✓ Replaced the 1993 model to address concerns over investor-state disputes.
 - ✓ Used for renegotiating BITs and investment chapters in agreements like:
 - Comprehensive Economic



- Cooperation Agreements (CECA)
 - Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPA)
 - Free Trade Agreements (FTA)
- **Recent Developments:**
 - ✓ India signed BITs with Uzbekistan and UAE in 2024.

7. "India-Mauritius: Deepening Strategic Ties"

Context: India's Prime Minister recently visited Mauritius from March 11-12, 2025, underscoring the robust and long-standing ties between the two nations. The visit coincided with Mauritius's Independence Day celebrations, where the Indian Prime Minister was the guest of honor.

Key Highlights of the Visit

- **Strengthening Economic Ties:**
 - ✓ An agreement was signed to promote local currencies (INR or MUR) for cross-border transactions.
- **Maritime Cooperation:**
 - ✓ A technical agreement was established for sharing White Shipping Information between the Indian Navy and Mauritius, enhancing maritime domain awareness.
- **Space Collaboration:**
 - ✓ Commitment to the development and launch of an India-Mauritius satellite, with training for Mauritian scientists at ISRO.
- **Disaster Preparedness:**
 - ✓ Support for implementing multi-hazard emergency systems and weather forecasting in Mauritius.
- **Healthcare Expansion:**
 - ✓ Plans to expand Jan Aushadhi Kendras across Mauritius, improving access to affordable medicines.
- **Enhanced Economic Engagement:**
 - ✓ High Power Joint Trade Committee meetings under the CECTA (Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement) to boost trade and economic cooperation.
- **Anti-Crime Agreement:**
 - ✓ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India's Directorate of Enforcement (ED) and Mauritius's Financial Crimes Commission, promoting financial security.

8. Kurd Issue

Context: The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has announced an immediate ceasefire, signaling a significant development in efforts to resolve a conflict that has persisted for four decades.

About

- The Kurds are an ethnic group numbering around 40 million, primarily residing in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.
- They speak Kurdish dialects, which are distinct from both Turkish and Arabic, and are predominantly Sunni Muslims.
- In Syria, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), led by Kurds, control much of the northeastern region.



Historical Background

- After World War I, the Kurds were promised a nation-state, but this pledge was not fulfilled, leaving them stateless.
- Over time, they have experienced state repression, including bans on their language and cultural expression, alongside numerous uprisings.

The PKK Insurgency

- The PKK began an armed rebellion against the Turkish government in the 1980s, initially demanding independence for Kurdish regions.
- The conflict has caused massive loss of life and displacement over the years.
- Kurds constitute about 15% or more of Turkey's population, making the issue central to Turkey's internal politics.

Attempts at Peace

- Several initiatives have been undertaken to resolve the conflict between the PKK and Turkey.
- Despite these efforts, peace talks have repeatedly failed due to a lack of trust and escalating tensions between the two sides.

Recent Developments

- The PKK's decision to declare a ceasefire is viewed as a potential breakthrough in de-escalating the violence. It also opens up opportunities for dialogue and addressing the long-standing grievances of the Kurdish people.

9. Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

Context: The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, a long-standing dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan, has witnessed a major breakthrough as both nations finalized a peace

agreement. This development marks a critical step towards ending decades of hostilities in the region.

Background of the Conflict

- **Soviet Era:** Nagorno-Karabakh, an autonomous region within Azerbaijan with a majority Armenian population, sought unification with Armenia during the Soviet Union's decline.
- **Post-Soviet Tensions:** As the USSR disintegrated, disputes escalated into violent confrontations.



Key Phases of the Conflict

- **First Nagorno-Karabakh War (1988–1994):**
 - ✓ Armenia gained control over Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent Azerbaijani territories.
 - ✓ A ceasefire in 1994 left the region under Armenian-backed control, although it remained internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan.
- **Second Nagorno-Karabakh War (2020):**
 - ✓ Azerbaijan recaptured significant parts of the region in a six-week conflict.
- **Azerbaijani Offensive (2023):**
 - ✓ In a one-day operation, Azerbaijan regained full control of Nagorno-Karabakh.
 - ✓ The region's official dissolution led to the displacement of over 1 lakh Armenians to Armenia.

Current Developments

- The peace agreement signifies a resolution to the territorial dispute.
- Armenia and Azerbaijan's integration into regional frameworks, such as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), is crucial for connectivity and trade, particularly for India.

India's Position

- India maintains a neutral stance, advocating for a diplomatic resolution under the OSCE Minsk Group.
- Stability in the region aligns with India's interest in enhancing connectivity and trade through the INSTC

10. Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Context: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) recently supported the Arab League's alternative proposal opposing Trump's plan to take control of Gaza and forcibly relocate its residents. This highlights the OIC's role in advocating for the rights and interests of the Muslim world.

About

- **Established:** 25 September 1969.
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- **Membership:**
 - ✓ Comprises 57 member states across four continents.
 - ✓ It is the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations.

Objectives of the OIC

- **Promote Islamic Solidarity:**
 - ✓ Foster unity and cooperation among member states in political, economic, social, and cultural domains.
- **Defend Muslim Interests:**
 - ✓ Advocate for the rights and concerns of Muslims globally.
- **Protect Islamic Holy Sites:**
 - ✓ Especially focuses on the preservation of Islamic heritage and holy sites in Palestine.

India's Diplomatic Balancing Act

- **Criticism of OIC**
 - ✓ India's strong criticism of OIC's Kashmir stance as interference.
- **OIC Resolutions**
 - ✓ OIC resolutions frequently reference India, especially on Kashmir.
- **Guest Invitation**
 - ✓ India was invited as a guest to OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in 2019.

11. Operation Brahma

Context: India has launched Operation Brahma to provide humanitarian assistance to Myanmar after a devastating earthquake that claimed over 3,500 lives. This initiative underscores India's role as a first responder in the region.

About

- **Deployment of Naval Ships:**
 - ✓ Two Indian naval ships, INS Satpura and INS Savitri, carrying 40 tonnes of humanitarian aid, have reached Myanmar.
 - ✓ Two additional ships are scheduled to follow.
- **Field Hospital Deployment:**

- ✓ A field hospital with 118 medical personnel from Agra is being airlifted to Myanmar to provide immediate healthcare services.
- **Specialized Medical Assistance:**
 - ✓ The Airborne Angels Task Force, a medical team specializing in advanced medical and surgical care, is deployed to the disaster-affected zones.
- **NDRF Team for Search and Rescue:**
 - ✓ A team from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), equipped for search and rescue operations, is assisting on the ground.

India's Role as a Regional First Responder

- **Commitment to Neighbours:**
 - ✓ Operation Brahma highlights India's proactive approach in extending assistance to its neighbours during natural disasters.
 - ✓ It reflects India's policy of neighbourhood first.
- **Strengthening Regional Cooperation:**
 - ✓ Such operations enhance regional goodwill and strengthen bilateral ties with Myanmar.

12. SIPRI Report 2025

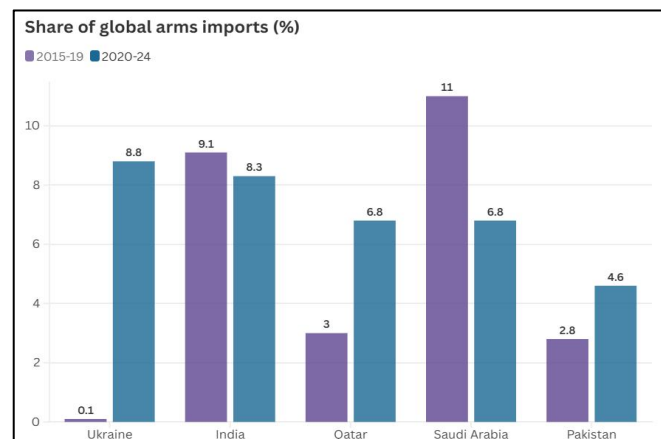
Context: The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report for 2025 highlights significant shifts in the global arms trade landscape, with Ukraine surpassing India to become the world's largest arms importer.

About

- **Establishment:** 1966, as an independent international institute.
- **Focus Areas:** Research on conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament.
- **Notable Publications:** Global arms transfer reports, offering data-driven insights for policymakers in global security.

Major Highlights of the SIPRI Report (2025)

- **Largest Arms Exporters (2020-24):**
 - ✓ United States: 43% of global exports.
 - ✓ France: Ranked second.
 - ✓ Russia: Third-largest exporter.
- **Largest Arms Importers (2020-24):**
 - ✓ **Ukraine:**
 - Became the largest importer due to the ongoing war with Russia.
 - Registered a nearly 100-fold increase in arms imports



compared to 2015-19.

- ✓ **India:**
 - Ranked second, accounting for 8.3% of global arms imports.
 - Arms imports declined by 9.3% compared to 2015-19, driven by a focus on increasing domestic production.
- ✓ Qatar & Saudi Arabia: Other major importers.
- **Regional Trends:**
 - ✓ Four Asian countries—India, Pakistan, Japan, and Australia—ranked among the top 10 global arms importers.

13. Australia: A Partner in India's Growth Trajectory

Context: The bilateral relationship between India and Australia has grown significantly in recent years, marked by the unveiling of the New Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India by the Australian Prime Minister. This roadmap sets the stage for an enhanced partnership focused on economic growth and mutual prosperity.

New Economic Roadmap

- The roadmap focuses on four key "superhighways" of growth, aiming to deepen collaboration across critical sectors:
 - ✓ Clean Energy
 - ✓ Education and Skills
 - ✓ Agribusiness
 - ✓ Tourism
- **Key Features:**
 - ✓ Identification of nearly 50 specific opportunities in defence industries, sports, culture, space, and technology.
 - ✓ Allocation of USD 16 million for the Australia-India Trade and Investment Accelerator Fund, designed to unlock commercial opportunities for Australian businesses in India.

India-Australia Trade Relations

- **Trade Dynamics:**
 - ✓ India is Australia's sixth-largest trading partner and fourth-largest export market.
 - ✓ Bilateral trade exceeded \$24 billion in 2024, reflecting robust economic ties.

Key Agreements:

- **Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA):**
 - ✓ Signed in 2022 to bolster trade between the two nations.
 - ✓ **Benefits for India:**

- Preferential access to 100% of tariff lines in sectors like gems and jewellery, textiles, leather, food, and automobiles.
- ✓ **Benefits for Australia:**
 - Preferential access to over 70% of tariff lines, mainly for raw materials like coal, mineral ores, and wines.
- **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA):**
 - ✓ Currently under negotiation to expand ECTA by covering goods, services, digital trade, government procurement, and Rules of Origin.

Sectoral Collaboration

- **Clean Energy:**
 - ✓ Australia is a key supplier of critical minerals (e.g., lithium, nickel, cobalt) to support India's electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing and renewable energy goals.
 - ✓ Formation of the Critical Minerals Investment Partnership (2023) to build resilient supply chains.
 - ✓ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. and Critical Minerals Facilitation Office, Australia (2022).
- **Education and Skills:**
 - ✓ Strengthened partnerships between educational institutions to develop a skilled workforce.
- **Defence and Technology:**
 - ✓ Collaboration on defence industries and emerging technologies is a priority under the roadmap.

14. India-US Extradition Treaty

Context: The recent decision by the US Supreme Court to reject the plea of 2008 Mumbai Terror Attack accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana against extradition to India has brought the India-US Extradition Treaty into focus. This treaty provides a legal framework for cooperation between the two nations in ensuring justice for serious offences.

What is Extradition?

- Extradition refers to the official transfer of a person from one country to another, transferring the formal authority over the individual to the requesting country. This process facilitates the prosecution or punishment of individuals accused or convicted of crimes in the requesting country.

India-US Extradition Treaty

- **Overview**
 - ✓ **Signed in:** 1997
 - ✓ **Objective:** To establish a robust legal framework for extraditing individuals charged with or convicted of serious offences in either country.

- **Extraditable Offences**

- ✓ **Scope:**

- Offences punishable with a minimum of one year of imprisonment in both countries.
- Includes a range of crimes, from terrorism to financial crimes.

- ✓ **Principle of Dual Criminality:**

- The act must be recognized as a crime in both nations.

- ✓ **Universal Jurisdiction:**

- Extradition is not limited by the location of the offence.

Exceptions

- **Political Offences:**

- ✓ These are not considered extraditable under the treaty.

- ✓ Exceptions to political offences include:

- Wilful crimes against heads of government.
- Aircraft hijacking.
- Crimes against internationally protected persons.

- **Double Jeopardy Protection:**

- ✓ Extradition is prohibited if the individual has been convicted or acquitted for the same offence in the requested state.

15. International Criminal Court (ICC)

Context: The International Criminal Court (ICC), established to address grave international crimes, has recently gained attention with cases involving high-profile leaders such as former Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte and Russian President Vladimir Putin. These actions underline the court's commitment to global justice while also highlighting challenges in enforcement and jurisdiction.

Background

- **Allegations:** Duterte is accused of crimes against humanity related to his "war on drugs" policy during his presidency, which led to the deaths of over 6,000 individuals, primarily young, poor urban males.
- **Global Concern:** The United Nations criticized these actions, leading to international scrutiny and the ICC's involvement.

About

- Establishment and Mandate

- ✓ **Founded Under:** The Rome Statute (1998).

- ✓ **Headquarters:** The Hague, Netherlands.

- ✓ **Objective:** To investigate and prosecute individuals accused of severe international crimes.

- ✓ **Membership:** 125 member states, though several major powers (e.g., US, Russia, China, and India) are non-members.

Core Crimes Under ICC Jurisdiction

- **Genocide:** Intentional destruction of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.
- **Crimes Against Humanity:** Widespread or systematic attacks against civilians.
- **War Crimes:** Serious violations of the Geneva Conventions, including targeting civilians during conflicts.
- **Crimes of Aggression:** Acts violating sovereignty or territorial integrity of a state.

Jurisdiction and Authority

- The ICC can exercise jurisdiction in the following circumstances:
 - ✓ **State Party Involvement:** Crimes committed by nationals of member states or within their territories.
 - ✓ **Voluntary Acceptance:** Non-member states voluntarily accept ICC jurisdiction.
 - ✓ **UN Security Council Referral:** The Security Council, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, refers cases.
 - ✓ **Prosecutor-Initiated Investigations:** Investigations initiated by the ICC Prosecutor or at the request of a State Party.

ECONOMIC SCENARIO

1. Pravaah and Sarthi Initiatives of RBI

Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been recognized for its groundbreaking digital initiatives, Pravaah and Sarthi, by being awarded the Digital Transformation Award 2025 by Central Banking, London. These initiatives exemplify RBI's commitment to enhancing governance through innovation and efficiency in digital processes.

Overview of the Initiatives

- **Sarthi System**
 - ✓ **Purpose:** An internal workflow digitization system aimed at enhancing operational efficiency within RBI.
 - ✓ **Features:**
 - Streamlined Record Management: Simplifies and digitizes record handling.
 - Automation: Eliminates manual paperwork, ensuring faster processing and decision-making.
 - Data Analysis: Enables advanced data insights, aiding informed governance.
 - Collaboration: Fosters improved collaboration across RBI departments through secure digital platforms.
- **Pravaah System**
 - ✓ **Purpose:** A digital regulatory application platform designed for external stakeholders.

- ✓ **Features:**
 - **Seamless Submission:** Allows external users to submit regulatory applications digitally.
 - **Integration:** Directly linked with the Sarthi database for efficient processing.
 - **Transparency and Security:** Reduces paperwork while enhancing cybersecurity and ensuring transparent regulatory processes.

2. Incentive Scheme for BHIM-UPI Transactions

Context: The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved an Incentive Scheme for promoting low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (Person-to-Merchant, P2M) for the financial year 2024-25. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to enhancing digital payment systems and financial inclusion across India.

Key Features of the Incentive Scheme

- **Incentive Structure**
 - ✓ **Rate:** A 0.15% incentive per transaction for small merchant transactions up to ₹2,000.
 - ✓ **Distribution:** Incentives are allocated among the Acquiring Bank, Issuer Bank, Payment Service Provider Bank, and App Providers.
- **Objectives**
 - ✓ **Strengthening the BHIM-UPI Platform:** Boost transaction volumes to ₹20,000 crore in FY 2024-25.
 - ✓ **Promoting Financial Inclusion:** Encouraging UPI adoption in Tier 3 to Tier 6 cities, rural, and remote areas.
 - ✓ **Focus on Emerging Technologies:** Promoting feature phone-based UPI 123PAY and offline UPI Lite/LiteX systems.
- **Key Benefits**
 - ✓ **Zero Cost for Small Merchants:** Ensures free UPI services for small merchants.
 - ✓ **MDR Exemption Continuation:** Extends the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) exemption introduced in 2020 for UPI transactions, supporting merchants in adopting digital payments without additional costs.

About Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

- The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is a real-time payment system developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) that enables users to:
 - ✓ Link multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application.
 - ✓ Facilitate instant money transfers securely and seamlessly.
- **BHIM-UPI**
 - ✓ Launched in 2016 as a government-backed UPI application to promote digital payments.

- ✓ Designed for fast, secure, and reliable transactions.
- **Global Expansion of UPI**
 - ✓ The NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), a subsidiary of NPCI, is expanding UPI and RuPay internationally.
 - ✓ UPI is now accepted in Singapore, UAE, France, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and other countries, showcasing India's leadership in digital payment innovation.

3. National Technical Textiles Mission: A Milestone in India's Textile Growth

Context: Launched in 2020, the National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM) recently completed five years. The mission aims to strengthen India's position in the technical textiles sector, recognized as a "sunrise sector" by the Government of India.

What are Technical Textiles?

- Technical textiles are materials designed for their functional properties like durability, strength, and protection, rather than for decorative purposes. These textiles, often made from advanced fibers like aramids and carbon fiber, are used in various industries such as automotive, healthcare, construction, and safety.

Key Features of the NTTM:

- **Research and Development (R&D):** The mission supports R&D to create new materials and improve textile technologies.
- **Market Development:** It promotes the adoption of technical textiles and facilitates international collaborations.
- **Export Promotion:** The mission aims to boost exports through a dedicated export council.
- **Education and Skill Development:** It focuses on education, training, and internships in the field of technical textiles.

India's Role in the Global Market:

- India is the sixth-largest exporter of textiles globally, contributing 2% to its GDP. The technical textiles sector is expected to grow to US\$350 billion by 2030, creating 35 million jobs and enhancing India's global market presence.

4. 10 Years of Sagarmala Programme: Boosting India's Maritime Sector

Context: Launched in 2015, the Sagarmala Programme aims to modernize India's ports, reduce logistics costs, and enhance trade competitiveness through efficient coastal and waterway networks.

Objectives:

- Streamline logistics and reduce transport costs.
- Focus on port modernization, industrialization, job creation, and sustainable coastal development.

Five Pillars:

- **Coastal Community Development:** Skill development, fisheries, and community projects.
- **Port Modernization:** Development and upgrading of ports and ship repair facilities.
- **Port-led Industrialization:** Industrial clusters, SEZs, and port-based industries.
- **Port Connectivity:** Multimodal links via road, rail, pipelines, and hubs.
- **Coastal Shipping & Inland Water Transport (IWT):** Promoting coastal tourism, Ro-Ro services, and inland waterways.



Achievements:

- Coastal shipping grew by 118%, and Ro-Pax ferries moved 40 lakh passengers.
- Inland waterway cargo traffic increased by 700%.
- Nine Indian ports rank in the world's top 100, with Vizag among the top 20 container ports.

Sagarmala Startup Innovation Initiative (S2I2):

- Launched in 2025, S2I2 fosters innovation in green shipping, smart ports, and maritime logistics through funding, mentorship, and partnerships under RISE—Research, Innovation, Startups, and Entrepreneurship.

5. Public Accounts Committee Recommendations for GST Regime

Context: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC), in its 19th report, has highlighted the need for a simplified Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. GST, introduced through The Constitution (101st Amendment) Act, 2016, has been a significant reform in India's indirect tax system, aiming to create a unified national market and reduce the cascading effect of taxes.

Key Features of GST:

- **Supply-Based Taxation:** GST applies to the supply of goods and services, replacing earlier tax systems based on manufacturing, sale, or services.
- **Destination-Based Taxation:** Tax revenue accrues where goods or services are consumed, unlike the previous origin-based system.

- **Dual GST Structure:** Both the Centre (CGST) and States (SGST) levy taxes on the same transaction, while Integrated GST (IGST) applies to inter-state trade.
- **Mutually Agreed Rates:** Rates (5%, 12%, 18%, 28%) are determined by the GST Council, ensuring coordination between the Centre and States.
- **Unified Market:** GST combines multiple Central and State taxes into one, fostering trade and economic growth while improving compliance.

PAC Recommendations:

- The PAC has suggested significant reforms to simplify the GST framework:
 - ✓ **Compliance Simplification:** Consolidate forms, reduce filing frequency, and introduce tiered compliance for small businesses.
 - ✓ **Portal Improvements:** Enhance user-friendliness and provide clear filing guidance for taxpayers.
 - ✓ **Streamlined Refunds:** Introduce efficient refund systems with clear timelines, regular updates, and grievance mechanisms.
 - ✓ **MSME Support:** Automate return filing and refunds, reduce reporting frequency, and simplify processes for MSMEs.
 - ✓ **Fair Enforcement:** Address harsh penalties for unintentional errors, ensuring fair treatment for honest taxpayers.
 - ✓ **Enhanced Revenue Projections:** Use AI and data analytics to project GST revenue accurately and address declining indirect tax shares.

6. UNCTAD's 'A World of Debt' Report 2024

Context: The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) released its 2024 report, A World of Debt, highlighting the dual role of public debt in funding development and posing significant challenges, especially for developing countries.

Key Findings:

- **Global Debt Surge:**
 - ✓ Public debt reached \$97 trillion globally in 2023.
 - ✓ Developing nations' debt is rising at twice the pace of developed countries.
 - ✓ India's public debt stands at \$2.9 trillion.
- **Debt Servicing Strains:**
 - ✓ 54 developing countries allocate more funds to interest payments than to essential social sectors like education and healthcare.
- **Unequal Financial System:**
 - ✓ Developing nations face disproportionately high borrowing costs, paying 2 to 12 times more in interest compared to developed nations.

Implications:

- Excessive debt burdens hinder economic stability, reduce fiscal space for critical development programs, and exacerbate inequalities in the global financial system.

Recommendations:

- UNCTAD emphasizes the need for:
 - ✓ Global cooperation to restructure unsustainable debts.
 - ✓ Reducing borrowing costs for developing nations.
 - ✓ Reforming international financial institutions to ensure fairer access to credit.

7. Reinsurance in India

Context: Valueattics Re has become the first private company to receive approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) to commence reinsurance business in India. Until now, the public sector General Insurance Corporation (GIC Re) was the only reinsurer operating in the country.

What is Reinsurance?

- Reinsurance is a risk management mechanism where insurance companies transfer a portion of their risks to another insurer (reinsurer). This practice helps insurers manage potential large financial losses, ensuring stability and solvency.

Regulatory Framework:

- **Regulator:** IRDAI oversees the reinsurance sector in India.
- **Legal Provisions:** Governed under the Insurance Act, 1938, and IRDAI (Re-Insurance) Regulations, 2018.

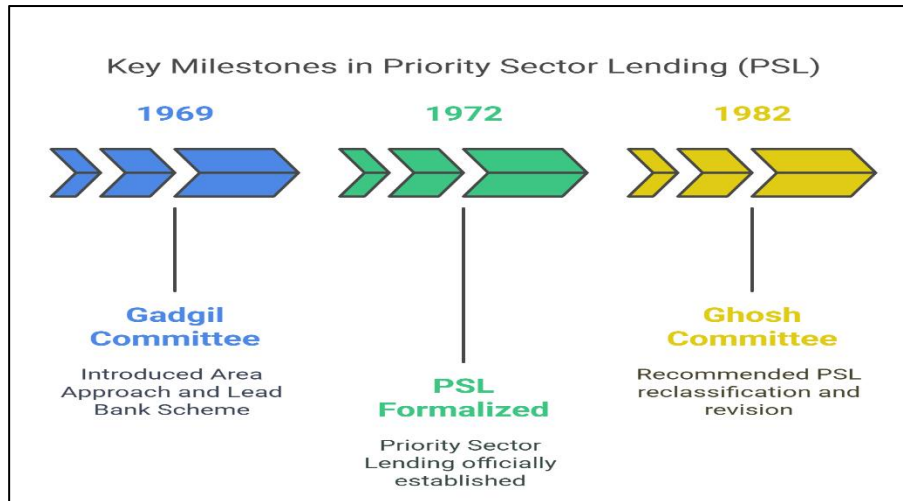
8. Priority Sector Lending: Revised Guidelines by RBI

Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced updated Priority Sector Lending (PSL) guidelines, effective from April 1, 2025. These guidelines aim to ensure increased and targeted credit flow to critical sectors contributing to India's socio-economic development.

What is Priority Sector Lending (PSL)?

- Priority sectors are those areas identified by the government and RBI as vital for national development, requiring focused credit allocation.

Historical Evolution:



- **1969:** Gadgil Committee introduced the Area Approach, leading to the Lead Bank Scheme.
- **1972:** PSL formalized to facilitate institutional finance for creditworthy yet underserved sectors.
- **1982:** Ghosh Committee recommended reclassification and revision of PSL categories.

Key Updates in the Revised Guidelines:

- **Enhanced Loan Limits:**
 - ✓ **Education:** Increased to ₹25 lakh for individuals (including vocational courses).
 - ✓ **Social Infrastructure:** Up to ₹8 crore per borrower for setting up schools, drinking water facilities, etc.
 - ✓ **Renewable Energy:**
 - ₹35 crore for renewable energy projects and public utilities like street lighting and remote village electrification.
 - ₹10 lakh for individual households.
- **Revised Targets for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs):**
 - ✓ Total PSL target raised to 60% (earlier 40%).
 - ✓ **Sub-targets:**
 - Micro Enterprises: 7.5%.
 - Weaker Sections: 12%.
- **Expanded 'Weaker Sections' Definition:**
 - ✓ Now includes transgenders, small and marginal farmers, distressed farmers, artisans, SC/ST individuals, persons with disabilities, and minorities.
 - ✓ Individual women beneficiaries up to ₹2 lakh (excludes UCBs).
- **Category-wise Targets:**

- ✓ **Domestic and Foreign Banks (≥20 branches):** Total PSL target at 40%, with agriculture at 18% and micro enterprises at 7.5%.
- **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Small Finance Banks (SFBs):** Total PSL target at 75%, with sub-targets for agriculture (18%), micro enterprises (7.5%), and weaker sections (15%).

9. Revised Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP)

Context: The Cabinet has approved the revised Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP) for FY 2025 and FY 2026 with a total outlay of ₹3880 crore. A new component, Pashu Aushadhi, has been added with a dedicated allocation of ₹75 crore to improve veterinary healthcare accessibility.

Significance of the Livestock Sector in India:

- **Largest Livestock Population:** India has the world's largest livestock population, with 535 million as per the 20th Livestock Census (2019). The bovine population alone accounts for 302 million.
- **Economic Contribution:** Livestock contributed 30.19% to Agricultural and Allied Sector GVA and 5.73% to total GVA in 2021-22.
- India ranks 1st globally in milk production, contributing 23% of global milk supply.

About LHDCP:

- The LHDCP aims to enhance animal health through disease prevention, veterinary infrastructure strengthening, and promoting affordable healthcare.

Revised Components of LHDCP:

- **National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP):** Focuses on immunizing livestock against major diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis.
- **Livestock Health and Disease Control:**
 - ✓ Critical Animal Disease Control Programme: Targets widespread diseases.
 - ✓ Veterinary Infrastructure Development: Includes Mobile Veterinary Units for doorstep services.
 - ✓ State Support for Disease Control: Financial and technical aid to state governments.
- **Pashu Aushadhi Kendras:**
 - ✓ **Objective:** Provide high-quality, affordable generic veterinary medicines.
 - ✓ **Distribution Points:** PM-Kisan Samridhi Kendras and cooperative societies.
 - ✓ **Ethno-veterinary Medicines:** Incorporates traditional and indigenous practices for animal health.

10. Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission

Context: The Union Cabinet has approved the Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) to strengthen the livestock sector. This revision aims to build on the success of the

original mission launched in 2014 for the development and conservation of indigenous bovine breeds and enhancement of milk production.

About

- **Original Mission (2014):** Focused on the conservation of indigenous bovine breeds and improving milk production.
- **Revised Mission:** Implemented as a Central Sector Scheme with an additional outlay of ₹1,000 crore to further enhance the impact.

Key Components of the Revised Mission:

- **Heifer Rearing Centres:**
 - ✓ **Objective:** Provide infrastructure for proper rearing of heifers to boost productivity.
 - ✓ **Support:** One-time assistance of 35% of capital cost for establishing 30 housing facilities for 15,000 heifers.
- **Support for High Genetic Merit (HGM) Heifers:**
 - ✓ **Incentive for Farmers:** 3% interest subvention on loans for purchasing HGM IVF heifers from milk unions or financial institutions.
 - ✓ **Purpose:** Encourage farmers to adopt genetically superior breeds to enhance milk yield and productivity.

11. Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Bad Loans Surge

Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported a significant increase in non-performing assets (NPAs) under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme, which surged to ₹97,543 crore by December 2024, marking a 42% rise over four years.

Understanding NPAs in the KCC Segment:

- **Definition:** A KCC account is classified as an NPA if the repayment of interest and principal is overdue for more than three years.
- **Repayment Period:**
 - ✓ Determined by crop seasons (short or long duration) and marketing periods, as per the State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC).
 - ✓ Typically, repayment for short-duration crops is 12 months, and for long-duration crops, it is 18 months.

Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme:

- **Objective:** Provides timely and adequate institutional credit to small and marginal farmers for agriculture and allied activities.
- **Key Features:**
 - ✓ **Loan Accessibility:** Collateral-free loans up to ₹2 lakh are provided for cultivation, post-harvest activities, and allied sectors like animal husbandry and fisheries.

- ✓ **Revolving Cash Facility:** Allows multiple withdrawals and deposits within the credit limit.
- ✓ **Priority Sector Lending (PSL):** KCC loans form part of the mandated 18% allocation of PSL funds for agriculture.

Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS):

- **Concessional Rates:** Provides short-term loans up to ₹3 lakh at 7% interest per annum, with an effective rate of 4% for timely repayments.
- **Post-Harvest Support:** Includes loans against Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (NWRs) for small farmers.
- **Recent Budgetary Announcements:** The loan limit under MISS was increased from ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh in the 2025-26 Budget.

12. PLI Scheme for Electronic Components Manufacturing

Context: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has introduced a ₹23,000 crore incentive package to strengthen India's domestic manufacturing of electronic components, aiming to bolster the country's electronics ecosystem and reduce reliance on imports.

About

- **Objective:**
 - ✓ To enhance domestic value addition in the electronics sector, increasing it from the current 15–20% to 30–40%.
 - ✓ To position India as a global hub for electronic component manufacturing.
- **Targeted Components:**
 - ✓ Key electronic components such as display modules, camera sub-assemblies, printed circuit boards, lithium cell enclosures, resistors, and capacitors.

Types of Incentives

- **Operational Incentives:**
 - ✓ Linked to net incremental sales, encouraging sustained production growth.
- **Capital Expenditure Incentives:**
 - ✓ Provided for eligible infrastructure investments to support manufacturing capabilities.

Eligibility Criteria

- Open to both greenfield and brownfield investments, supporting the establishment of new facilities and the expansion of existing ones.
- **Foreign companies are encouraged to participate through:**
 - ✓ **Technology Transfers:** Partnering with Indian firms to share expertise.
 - ✓ **Joint Ventures:** Collaborating with domestic companies to set up operations.

13. Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)

Context: The Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) is a transformative initiative under the National Logistics Policy (NLP), launched in September 2022. It recently achieved a significant milestone of over 100 crore API transactions, highlighting its pivotal role in modernizing India's logistics sector.

About ULIP

- **Purpose:**
 - ✓ ULIP aims to establish a single-window logistics platform to improve efficiency, transparency, and cost-effectiveness in logistics operations across India.
 - ✓ It integrates data from various government and private sector sources to provide real-time visibility and seamless coordination in logistics management.
- **Key Features:**
 - ✓ **Centralized Data Integration:** Unified access to logistics data across sectors.
 - ✓ **Real-Time Monitoring:** Ensures enhanced visibility for better decision-making.
 - ✓ **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Bridges government and private sector entities.
- **Implementation and Operations:**
 - ✓ **Conceptualized by:** NITI Aayog, focusing on innovation and efficiency.
 - ✓ **Operated by:** NICDC Logistics Data Services Ltd. (NLDSL), a collaboration between the Government of India, represented by the National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT), and NEC Corporation, Japan.

14. India Becomes World's Second-Largest Tea Exporter in 2024

Context: India has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the world's second-largest tea exporter in 2024, surpassing Sri Lanka. This development highlights the country's growing prominence in the global tea industry.

Key Highlights

- **Export Performance in 2024:**
 - ✓ **Total exports:** 255 million kg, ranking India second only to Kenya.
 - ✓ **Export value:** ₹7,111 crore, marking a 15% increase from ₹6,161 crore in 2023.
- **Export Composition:**
 - ✓ Predominantly black



tea (96%), with smaller contributions from green, herbal, masala, and lemon tea varieties.

- **Major Export Destinations:**

- ✓ India exports tea to over 25 countries.
- ✓ Key markets: UAE, Iraq, Iran, Russia, US, and UK.
- ✓ West Asia, particularly Iraq, accounted for 20% of India's total tea exports in 2024.

SOCIAL ISSUES

1. World Happiness Index 2025

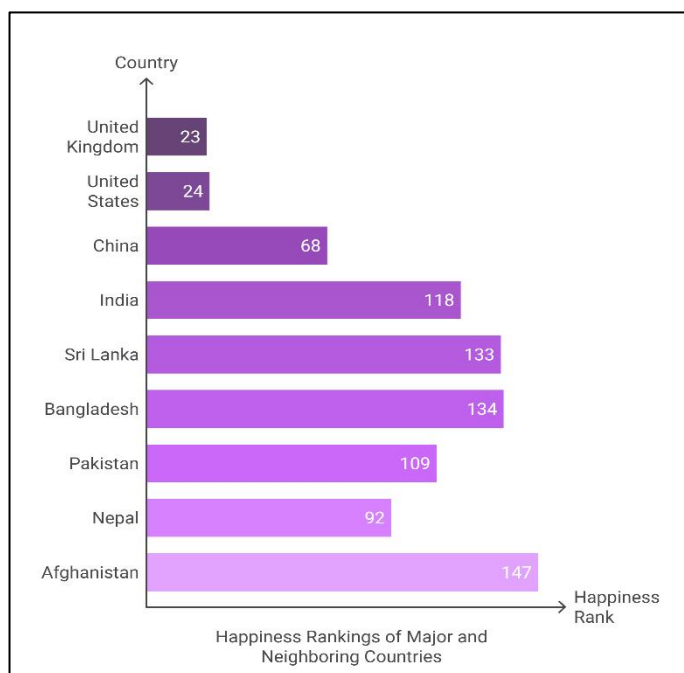
Context: The World Happiness Index 2025, an annual report published by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford in collaboration with Gallup and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, offers significant insights into global happiness trends.

About

- The rankings are based on people's self-assessed life evaluations, focusing on their responses to the Cantril ladder question. Respondents rate their lives on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the best possible life and 0 the worst.
- **The study evaluates happiness using six key factors:**
 - ✓ Social Support
 - ✓ GDP per Capita
 - ✓ Healthy Life Expectancy
 - ✓ Freedom to Make Life Choices
 - ✓ Generosity
 - ✓ Perception of Corruption
- Additionally, the study incorporates the analysis of emotional responses (positive or negative) expressed by individuals about their country.

Highlights of the 2025 Report

- Finland retained its position as the happiest country in the world for the eighth consecutive year.
- Other Nordic countries, including Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden, secured the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th ranks, respectively.



- Costa Rica and Mexico made notable entries into the top 10, ranking 6th and 10th, respectively.

Rankings of Major Countries

- United Kingdom: 23rd
- United States: 24th
- China: 68th

India's Position

- India ranked 118th out of 147 countries, reflecting a modest improvement in the country's overall happiness standing.

Neighboring Countries' Rankings

- Sri Lanka: 133rd
- Bangladesh: 134th
- Pakistan: 109th
- Nepal: 92nd
- China: 68th

Least Happy Countries

- Afghanistan: Ranked last at 147th.

2. Women's Role in India's Inclusive Growth

Context: Recently, NITI Aayog released a report titled "From Borrowers to Builders: Women's Role in India's Financial Growth Story," highlighting the significant strides women have made in India's financial and entrepreneurial landscape.

Key Findings of the Report

- **Rise in Women Borrowers**
 - ✓ The number of women seeking credit tripled between 2019 and 2024, indicating a growing financial inclusion among female borrowers.
 - ✓ Demographics:
 - 60% of women borrowers come from semi-urban or rural areas.
 - Women under 30 years constitute 27% of retail credit uptake, compared to 40% for men.
- **Credit Supply Trends**
 - ✓ Women's participation in credit origination has seen substantial growth:
 - Business loans availed by women increased by 14%.
 - Gold loans availed by women grew by 6% since 2019.
 - ✓ 42% of loans availed by women in 2024 were for personal finance, up from 39% in 2019.
 - ✓ Gold loans continue to dominate:
 - 36% of loans availed by women in 2024 were against gold, compared to 19% in 2019.

- **Credit Monitoring Awareness**
 - ✓ By December 2024, 27 million women borrowers in India actively monitored their credit reports and scores with CIBIL, reflecting greater financial awareness.

Significance of Women's Financial Participation

- **Economic Growth**
 - ✓ Women make up nearly 50% of India's population but contribute only 18% to GDP.
 - ✓ According to IMF estimates, encouraging women entrepreneurs could increase India's GDP by 27%.
- **Employment Generation**
 - ✓ Women-owned MSMEs play a vital role in creating jobs and fostering skill development, especially at local levels.

3. Swavalambini Programme

Context: The Swavalambini Programme was launched by the Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, in collaboration with NITI Aayog, to provide structured entrepreneurial support to female students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across India.

- Additionally, the WEF 2025 Report on India's progress in skill development and innovation was unveiled, highlighting initiatives like the introduction of AI curricula in schools and colleges.

About:

- **Objective:**
 - ✓ Swavalambini aims to equip young women with entrepreneurial skills, financial support, and mentorship to establish and scale their ventures.
- **Nodal Ministry:**
 - ✓ Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)
 - ✓ NITI Aayog
- **Implementing Agency:**
 - ✓ National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD)

4. UNICEF's Kinship and Community-Based Care Programme (KCBCP)

Context: India is transitioning from institutional child care to family-based solutions such as kinship care, foster care, and community support. UNICEF's Kinship and Community-Based Care Programme (KCBCP) is at the forefront of this shift, emphasizing the importance of nurturing children in a familial environment.

- The need for family-based care has gained prominence due to the challenges posed by seasonal migration, which often compels families to leave their children behind or take them to work. This disrupts the children's education and increases their vulnerability to child labor and exploitation.

About

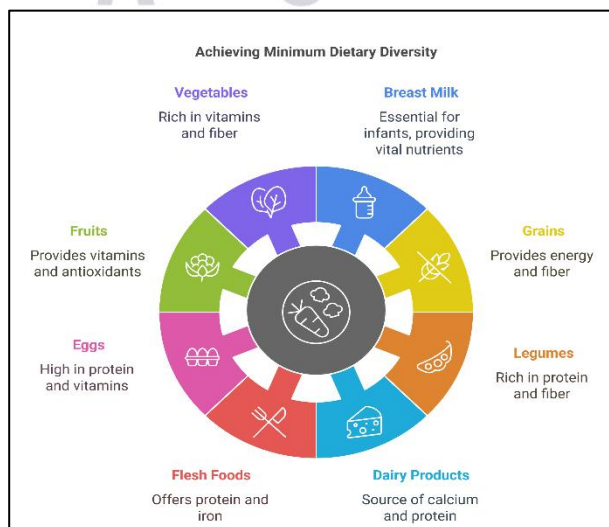
- KCBCP is part of UNICEF's efforts to promote non-institutional care solutions.
- Key initiatives, such as Mission Vatsalya, have increased non-institutional care fourfold since 2021-22.
- **The program focuses on:**
 - ✓ Preventing family separation.
 - ✓ Strengthening care systems to support vulnerable children.
 - ✓ Providing mental health support for both children and caregivers.

5. New SDG Indicator on Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD): A Milestone in Global Nutrition Goals

Context: The United Nations Statistical Commission recently adopted a new Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD) indicator, expanding the tracking framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This indicator fills a critical gap in measuring progress toward SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and the broader 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

What is MDD?

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), MDD is achieved when a diet includes at least five out of eight food groups, which are:
 - ✓ Breast milk
 - ✓ Grains
 - ✓ Legumes
 - ✓ Dairy products
 - ✓ Flesh foods
 - ✓ Eggs
 - ✓ Fruits
 - ✓ Vegetables
- This diversity ensures that individuals receive adequate nutrition to support healthy growth and development.



Significance of the MDD Indicator

- **Improved Nutritional Assessment**

- ✓ The MDD indicator specifically tracks the nutritional needs of women (MDD-W) and children (MDD-C), the most vulnerable groups to malnutrition.
- **Tracking Global Health Targets**
 - ✓ It directly supports SDG 2, which aims to eliminate hunger, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- **Policy Development Tool**
 - ✓ The indicator provides critical insights for policymakers to devise targeted strategies for combating malnutrition and addressing health risks associated with poor dietary habits.
- **Program Evaluation**
 - ✓ The MDD indicator aids in evaluating the impact and effectiveness of nutrition-related programs globally.

Status of Minimum Dietary Diversity Failure (MDDF) in India

- **Regional Disparities**
 - ✓ States such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh report over 80% of children with MDDF, indicating significant regional disparities in nutritional outcomes.
- **Age-Specific Impact**
 - ✓ 77% of children aged 6-23 months in India lack minimum dietary diversity, reflecting inadequate nutrition during critical growth periods.
- **Vulnerable Sections**
 - ✓ The Other Backward Classes (OBC) report the highest MDDF rate at 79%, followed by Scheduled Castes (77.2%) and Scheduled Tribes (76%), highlighting the socioeconomic dimensions of malnutrition.

6. India's Social Security Coverage Doubles

Context: According to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) World Social Protection Report (WSPR) 2024-26, India has made remarkable progress in expanding social security coverage. The coverage has doubled from 24.4% in 2021 to 48.8% in 2024, marking a significant step toward inclusive growth and welfare.

Major Highlights

- **Social Protection Coverage**
 - ✓ India's social protection coverage doubled from 24.4% in 2021 to 48.8% in 2024.
 - ✓ Nearly 92 crore people (65% of the population) are covered under at least one form of social protection through central government schemes.
 - ✓ However, ILO's figure of 48.8% is considered an underestimation as it excludes in-kind benefits such as food security, housing, and health benefits provided by

schemes like the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana and state-administered welfare programs.

- **World Social Protection Report**

- ✓ The WSPR is a comprehensive global assessment published by the ILO, evaluating the coverage, effectiveness, and progress of social protection systems worldwide.
- ✓ It serves as a critical resource for governments and policymakers to design more inclusive welfare systems.

Expanding Social Security: Key Government Initiatives

- **Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**

- ✓ World's largest health assurance scheme, providing health insurance of ₹5 lakh per family annually.
- ✓ Covers hospitalisation, pre- and post-hospitalisation, and medication costs.
- ✓ 39 crore Ayushman Cards have been issued as of March 2025, ensuring interstate portability.

- **Maternity Benefit Act (2017 Amendment)**

- ✓ Extends paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks.
- ✓ Includes provisions for adoptive and commissioning mothers and crèche facilities.

- **PM Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana**

- ✓ A voluntary pension scheme for unorganised workers, guaranteeing a monthly pension of ₹3,000 after the age of 60.
- ✓ Jointly funded on a 50:50 basis between the worker and the government.

- **Atal Pension Yojana (APY)**

- ✓ Aims to create a universal social security system for the poor and unorganised sector workers.
- ✓ Offers a guaranteed pension ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹5,000, depending on contributions.

- **eShram Portal (2021)**

- ✓ A national database for unorganised workers, assigning a Universal Account Number (UAN) to enhance social security.
- ✓ Over 30 crore unorganised workers (53% women) registered as of March 2025.

7. Implementation Gaps in Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)

Context: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development has raised concerns about the implementation gaps in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G). The scheme, launched to achieve "Housing for All" in rural areas by March 2029, faces challenges in identifying genuine beneficiaries and addressing rising construction costs.

About

- **Objective:**
 - ✓ To provide pucca houses with basic amenities to the rural poor.
- **Key Features:**
 - ✓ Beneficiary Identification: Based on Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011.
 - ✓ Women Empowerment: Mandates joint ownership or ownership in the name of women.
 - ✓ **Funding Pattern:**
 - 90:10 ratio for Northeastern and Himalayan states.
 - 60:40 ratio for other states.
- **Implementing Agency:**
 - ✓ Ministry of Rural Development.

Challenges Highlighted by the Standing Committee

- **Outdated Beneficiary Data**
 - ✓ Reliance on SECC 2011 data excludes many genuine beneficiaries while including ineligible ones.
- **Insufficient Financial Assistance**
 - ✓ Current financial support does not account for rising construction costs, leaving beneficiaries with unmet housing needs.
- **Backlogs in Implementation**
 - ✓ The scheme's extension primarily addresses previous backlogs, leaving little scope for accommodating new applicants.

Recommendations by the Standing Committee

- **Update Beneficiary Data**
 - ✓ Conduct a comprehensive review to include newly emerging needy households and ensure equitable coverage.
- **Expand Eligibility Criteria**
 - ✓ Include owners of semi-permanent structures, enabling them to transition to pucca houses.
- **Increase Financial Assistance**
 - ✓ Raise the per-unit financial assistance to ₹4 lakh, reflecting current construction costs and inflation trends.
- **Address Backlogs and New Allocations**
 - ✓ Increase the target to 3.46 crore houses:
 - 1.46 crore for clearing the backlog.
 - 2 crore for fresh allocations under the extended scheme.

8. India's Achievements in Advancing Women's Rights: Milestones Toward Gender Equality

Context: As India progresses on its journey toward gender equality, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) remains a critical guiding framework. This comprehensive roadmap, adopted by the United Nations, identified 12 critical areas of concern to overcome barriers to women's empowerment.

The Beijing Platform for Action

- Adopted during the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995).
- Aims to establish gender equality by addressing obstacles in health, education, economic empowerment, and political representation.

India's Achievements in Advancing Women's Rights

- **Maternal and Reproductive Health**
 - ✓ **Institutional Deliveries:** Increased to 95%, supported by initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan and PM Matru Vandana Yojana.
 - ✓ **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR):** Reduced significantly from 130 in 2014 to 97 in 2020 per 100,000 births.
- **Access to Healthcare**
 - ✓ **Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY):** Provided free medical treatment to millions of women, improving health outcomes.
- **Education and Skill Development**
 - ✓ **Child Sex Ratio Improvement:** Enhanced through the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative.
 - ✓ **STEM Opportunities:** Increased participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields.
 - ✓ **Menstrual Hygiene Initiatives:** Improved sanitation facilities and hygiene awareness have reduced school absenteeism among adolescent girls.
- **Economic Empowerment**
 - ✓ **Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** Through National Livelihood Missions, 100 million women are now part of financial networks.
 - ✓ **Digital Financial Inclusion:**
 - UPI adoption has empowered women in savings and investments.
 - 35 million rural women have been trained under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan.
- **Gender-Responsive Budgeting**
 - ✓ **Increased allocation:** 8.8% of the national budget (2025-26) is dedicated to gender-responsive initiatives.

- **Political Representation**
 - ✓ **Women's Reservation Act:** Guarantees 33% reservation for women in legislatures, fostering leadership opportunities.
- **Actions Against Gender-Based Violence**
 - ✓ **One Stop Centres (OSCs):** 770 centers provide comprehensive support to survivors, including medical, legal, and psychological aid.
 - ✓ **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023:** Strengthens legal frameworks to protect women.

9. Achievements of National Health Mission: Progress Towards Universal Healthcare

Context: The National Health Mission (NHM), launched in 2013, is a flagship initiative aimed at ensuring universal access to affordable and quality healthcare services in India. With significant milestones achieved under NHM, the Union Cabinet has approved its extension for an additional five years, from 2025 to 2030, reinforcing its role in advancing public health.

About

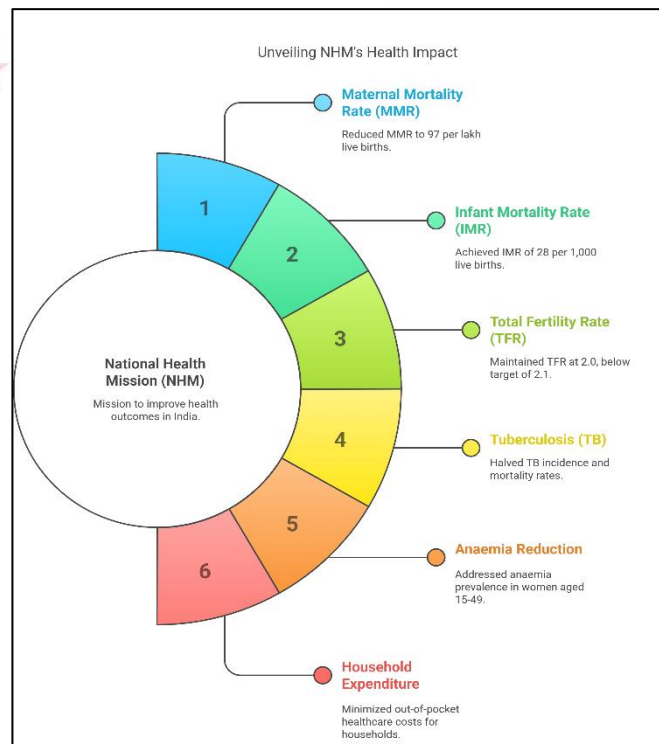
- The NHM integrates the National Rural Health Mission and National Urban Health Mission to address healthcare disparities and challenges.
- **Objectives:**
 - ✓ **Equity:** Bridge the urban-rural healthcare gap.
 - ✓ **Quality:** Provide efficient and standardized healthcare.
 - ✓ **Affordability:** Reduce out-of-pocket expenditure.

Key Components:

- **Health System Strengthening:** Improve infrastructure and human resources.
- **RMNCH+A:** Focus on Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child, and Adolescent Health.
- **Disease Control:** Address communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Targets Under NHM

- **Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR):** Reduce to 100 per lakh live births.



- **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR):** Achieve 25 per 1,000 live births.
- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR):** Maintain at 2.1.
- **Tuberculosis (TB):** Halve the annual incidence and mortality rate.
- **Anaemia Reduction:** Address prevalence in women aged 15-49 years.
- **Household Expenditure:** Minimize out-of-pocket healthcare costs.

Achievements Under NHM

- **Maternal and Child Health**
 - ✓ **MMR** reduced from 130 per lakh (2014-16) to 97 per lakh (2018-20), meeting the National Health Policy target.
 - ✓ **Under-5 Mortality Rate:** Declined from 45 (2014) to 32 per 1,000 live births (2020).
 - ✓ **IMR:** Reduced to 28 per 1,000 live births (2020).
 - ✓ **TFR:** Lowered to 2.0 (2020), as per NFHS-5.
- **Disease Elimination**
 - ✓ **Tuberculosis:** Incidence reduced to 195 per lakh (2023); mortality rate down to 22.
 - ✓ **Kala-azar:** Achieved elimination in all endemic blocks, with less than 1 case per 10,000 population (2023).
 - ✓ **Measles-Rubella Elimination Campaign:** Vaccinated 34 crore children, achieving 97.98% coverage.
- **Innovative Initiatives**
 - ✓ **U-WIN Platform:** Real-time vaccination tracking for pregnant women and children.
 - ✓ **Mobile Medical Units:** Ensuring healthcare access in underserved areas.
 - ✓ **BHISHM (Bharat Health Initiative):** Modular kits for rapid medical care during emergencies.
 - ✓ **Quality Assurance:** Certification of health facilities under National Quality Assurance Standards.

ENVIRONMENT

1. National Board for Wildlife: Milestones in Wildlife Conservation

Context: The Prime Minister recently chaired the 7th meeting of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) at Gir National Park, Gujarat. This landmark meeting focused on enhancing wildlife conservation efforts across India.

- The NBWL serves as India's apex advisory body on wildlife conservation, emphasizing the protection of protected areas (PAs) and species threatened by habitat loss and human encroachment.

Key Announcements

- **Riverine Dolphin Survey:**
 - ✓ India's first dolphin census recorded 6,327 dolphins across 28 rivers in 8 states.
 - ✓ Uttar Pradesh emerged with the highest count, followed by Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam.
- **Asiatic Lion Conservation:**
 - ✓ The 16th Lion Population Estimation (2025) will monitor conservation progress.
 - ✓ Habitat enhancements at Barda Wildlife Sanctuary aim to facilitate lion dispersal.
- **Cheetah Reintroduction Project:**
 - ✓ Expansion to Gandhisagar Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh) and Banni Grasslands (Gujarat) to boost biodiversity and stabilize cheetah populations.
- **National Referral Centre:**
 - ✓ A dedicated centre in Junagadh will focus on wildlife disease management.
- **Technology Integration:**
 - ✓ Deployment of geospatial mapping and AI for forest fire prevention and mitigating human-wildlife conflicts.
- **Endangered Species Conservation:**
 - ✓ Gharial Conservation: Targeting habitat restoration for improved population recovery.
 - ✓ Great Indian Bustard Conservation Plan: Focused measures to protect this critically endangered species.
- **Tiger Conservation Beyond Reserves:**
 - ✓ Efforts to expand conservation areas beyond designated tiger reserves to ensure species safety.

About the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

- **Statutory Body:** Constituted under Section 5A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- **Role:**
 - ✓ Advisory body on wildlife conservation and management of PAs.
 - ✓ Approves or rejects projects impacting wildlife habitats.
- **Restrictions Without NBWL Approval:**
 - ✓ Construction of tourist lodges, PA boundary alteration, habitat destruction, or tiger reserve de-notification is prohibited.
- **Structure:**
 - ✓ Chairperson: The Prime Minister.
 - ✓ Vice Chairperson: The Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.
 - ✓ A 47-member committee advises on wildlife policy, while a Standing Committee evaluates project clearances.

Gir National Park: The Conservation Epicentre

- **Location:** Saurashtra region, Gujarat.
- **Established:** Declared a sanctuary in 1965 and upgraded to a national park in 1975.
- **Unique Feature:** The only habitat outside Africa where lions can be seen in the wild.
- Asiatic lion numbers increased from <200 (1960s) to 674 (2020 Census).
- **Biodiversity:** Home to 40 mammal species and 425 bird species, showcasing the rich ecological heritage of India.

2. MADHAV NATIONAL PARK: INDIA'S 58TH TIGER RESERVE

Context: Madhav National Park, located in the Shivpuri district of Madhya Pradesh, has recently been designated as India's 58th tiger reserve. This milestone highlights the continued emphasis on tiger conservation under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Notification Process

- Tiger reserves in India are declared by state governments based on the recommendations of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). The process follows these steps:
 - ✓ **Proposal Submission:** The state government submits a proposal to NTCA.
 - ✓ **In-principle Approval:** NTCA grants preliminary approval and requests a detailed proposal.
 - ✓ **Recommendation:** NTCA reviews and recommends the reserve for notification.
 - ✓ **Notification:** The state government officially designates the area as a tiger reserve.
- Madhav National Park now joins eight other tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh, making the state home to the highest number of such reserves in the country.

Geographical Features

- **Location:** Situated on the northern fringe of the Central Highlands in Madhya Pradesh, it is part of the Upper Vindhyan Hills, with diverse plateaus and valleys.
- **Lakes:** The park includes Sakhya Sagar, a RAMSAR site, and Madhav Sagar, which support rich aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity.
- **Rivers:** The Manier and Sind rivers flow through the park, adding to its ecological diversity.

Wildlife and Biodiversity

- **Flora**
 - ✓ The vegetation includes northern tropical dry deciduous forests and dry thorn forests. Key species include:
 - Trees: Kardhai, Salai, Dhaora, and Khair.
 - Understory Plants: Ber, Makor, and Karonda.
 - Riparian Vegetation: Jamun and Mahua grow along the nullahs.
- **Fauna**
 - ✓ The park hosts a variety of herbivores and carnivores:

- Herbivores: Nilgai, Chinkara, Chowsinga, Chital, Sambar, and Barking Deer.
- Carnivores: Leopard, Wolf, Jackal, Fox, and Wild Dog.

3. Iucn Green List

Context: The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has announced the inclusion of four new sites into the prestigious Green List, a global benchmark for effective and equitable conservation.

Newly Added Sites

- The following sites have joined the IUCN Green List:
 - ✓ Sharaan Nature Reserve (Saudi Arabia)
 - ✓ King Abdulaziz Royal Nature Reserve (Saudi Arabia)
 - ✓ Aqaba Marine Reserve (Jordan)
 - ✓ Sir Bu Nair Protected Area (United Arab Emirates)
- These additions highlight the growing recognition of Middle Eastern efforts in advancing conservation management and biodiversity protection.

About the IUCN Green List

- The IUCN Green List is a global certification programme that acknowledges protected and conserved areas meeting high standards of conservation effectiveness and equity.
- **Key Features**
 - ✓ **Focus:** Encourages best practices in conservation and sets benchmarks for improvement.
 - ✓ **Global Standards:** Recognizes areas that meet stringent criteria for biodiversity management, ecological health, and social inclusion.
- **Objectives**
 - ✓ **Increase Protected Areas:** Encourage the effective and equitable management of protected and conserved areas globally.
 - ✓ **Deliver Conservation Outcomes:** Contribute to global biodiversity goals, including:
 - **Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on Land):** Protect and restore terrestrial ecosystems.
 - **Aichi Target 11:** Enhance global terrestrial and marine biodiversity coverage under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

4. United Nations World Water Development Report

Context: The UNESCO-published United Nations World Water Development Report emphasizes the indispensable role of mountains and alpine glaciers, often referred to as “water towers,” in supporting ecosystems, economies, and human societies globally.

Mountain Ecosystems and Their Significance

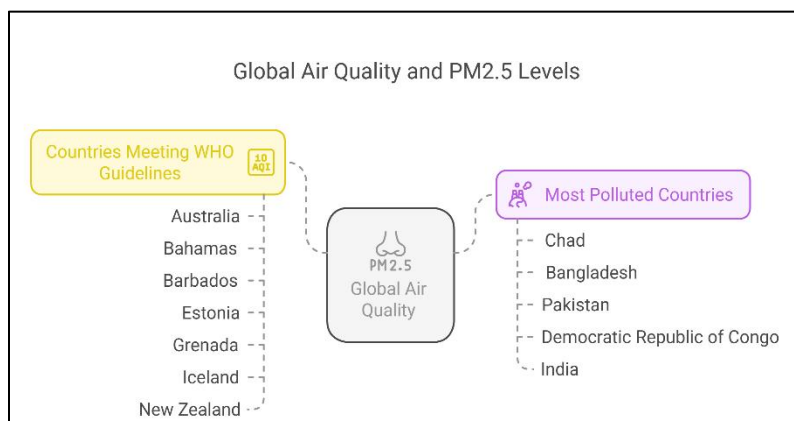
- Mountains, covering about 25% of the Earth's surface, play a vital role in regulating water cycles, storing carbon, and preserving biodiversity.
- **Key Contributions**
 - ✓ **Ecosystem Services**
 - **Forests:** Approximately 40% of mountain areas are forested, transitioning to grasslands and alpine tundra at higher altitudes.
 - **Grasslands and Alpine Tundra:** These habitats support endemic biodiversity and are critical for ecological balance.
 - ✓ **Water Regulation**
 - Mountain runoff supplies about two-thirds of the water needed for irrigated agriculture worldwide, making them vital for global food security.
 - ✓ **Carbon Storage**
 - Mountain soils, particularly those with permafrost, store approximately 66 petagrams (Pg) of organic carbon, accounting for 4.5% of the global carbon pool.
 - ✓ **Biodiversity Hotspots**
 - Mountains host 25 out of 34 global biodiversity hotspots, preserving gene pools crucial for agricultural and medicinal plants.

5. World Air Quality Report 2024

Context: The 7th annual World Air Quality Report, released by IQAir, provides a comprehensive assessment of the global state of air quality for 2024. It highlights stark disparities in pollution levels across countries and regions, emphasizing the urgency of addressing air pollution as a public health and environmental crisis.

Key Findings

- **Countries Meeting WHO PM2.5 Guidelines**
 - ✓ Seven countries achieved the WHO annual average PM2.5 guideline of $5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$:
 - Australia
 - Bahamas
 - Barbados
 - Estonia
 - Grenada
 - Iceland
 - New Zealand
 - ✓ These nations demonstrate the feasibility of maintaining air quality standards



through effective policy and natural advantages such as low industrial activity and vast green cover.

- **Most Polluted Countries**

- ✓ The five most polluted countries globally in 2024 were:
 - Chad
 - Bangladesh
 - Pakistan
 - Democratic Republic of Congo
 - India
- ✓ India remains a critical focus, as it grapples with a high population density, industrial emissions, and vehicular pollution.

India's Air Quality Insights

- **Most Polluted Capital:** Delhi retained its position as the most polluted capital city globally.
- **Byrnihat (Assam):** Emerged as the most polluted metropolitan area of 2024 in India, highlighting the impact of industrial and vehicular emissions.

Regional Highlights

- **Oceania:** Identified as the cleanest region, benefiting from low industrial activity, sparse population, and effective environmental policies.

6. Africa's Giant Goliath Beetle

Context: Recent research has raised concerns over the declining population of two Goliath beetle species, *Goliathus regius* and *Goliathus cacicus*, which now face the threat of extinction.

About:

- **Taxonomy:** Goliath beetles belong to the genus *Goliathus* and are among the largest insects globally, with five recognized species.
- **Physical Characteristics:** They can grow up to 110 mm in length. Males possess Y-shaped horns, while females lack these structures.
- **Habitat:** Native to the rainforests of West and Central Africa, these beetles thrive in tropical ecosystems.
- **Role in Ecosystem:**
 - ✓ Their larvae (grubs) are omnivorous, feeding on both plant debris and animal matter.
 - ✓ They contribute to nutrient recycling, playing a vital role in forest health and ecosystem balance.

7. Geological Survey of India (GSI)

Context: The Geological Survey of India (GSI), one of the country's oldest scientific institutions, commemorates its 175th Foundation Day.

About

- **Origins:** GSI was conceptualized in 1846 by John McClelland, who recommended the appointment of David Hiram Williams as Geological Surveyor under the East India Company.
- **Formation:** The institution formally began functioning in 1851 with the appointment of Thomas Oldham as the Geological Surveyor.
- **Indian Leadership:** Dr. M.S. Krishnan was the first Indian to head the GSI.
- **Legacy:** It is the second-oldest survey body in India, following the Survey of India (1767).

Objectives and Evolution

- Initially established to locate coal deposits for railway development, the GSI has since evolved into a globally recognized institution for geoscience data and research.

Institutional Framework

- **Headquarters:** Located in Kolkata.
- **Regional Presence:** Offices in Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong, and Kolkata.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Functions as an attached office under the Ministry of Mines.

Contributions to India

- Pioneered studies in geological mapping, mineral exploration, and seismology.
- Provides essential geoscientific data to support infrastructure development, natural resource management, and disaster mitigation.

8. First Comprehensive Estimate of River Dolphins in India

Context: India's first-ever comprehensive survey of river dolphins under Project Dolphin (launched in 2020) has estimated a population of 6,327 dolphins, primarily in the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Indus river basins.

Key Findings

- **Species in India:**
 - ✓ **Ganges River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*):** 6,324 individuals.
 - ✓ **Indus River Dolphin (*Platanista minor*):** 3 individuals.
- **Population Distribution:**
 - ✓ **Highest populations:** Uttar Pradesh, followed by Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam.

Feature	Ganges River Dolphin (<i>Platanista gangetica</i>)	Indus River Dolphin (<i>Platanista minor</i>)
Common	Susu	Bhulan

Feature	Ganges River Dolphin (Platanista gangetica)	Indus River Dolphin (Platanista minor)
Name		
Habitat	Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh	Indus River system (Pakistan); small population in Beas River, India
Vision	Functionally blind; uses echolocation	Functionally blind; uses echolocation
Key Threats	Habitat destruction, pollution, hunting	Habitat fragmentation, restricted range, population isolation
Wildlife Protection Act	Schedule I	Schedule I
CITES Status	Appendix I	Appendix I
IUCN Red List Status	Endangered	Endangered
National Recognition (India)	National Aquatic Animal (2009)	–

9. Biofuels

Context: India has become the world's third-largest producer of biofuels, highlighting its growing emphasis on renewable energy and sustainable practices.

About

- Biofuels are renewable energy sources derived from organic materials such as plant biomass, algae, and animal waste. They serve as alternatives or additives to conventional fossil fuels like petrol and diesel.
- **Types of Biofuels**
 - ✓ Biofuels are categorized into four generations:
 - **First Generation:** Derived from food crops like sugarcane (ethanol) and soybean (biodiesel).
 - **Second Generation:** Produced from non-food biomass such as agricultural residue and waste.
 - **Third Generation:** Derived from algae, offering higher energy yield per unit area.
 - **Fourth Generation:** Involve advanced technologies like genetically engineered microbes for carbon capture and fuel production.

Applications of Biofuels

- **Ethanol and Biodiesel Blending:** Reduces dependence on traditional fossil fuels.
- **Compressed Biogas (CBG):** Used as a cleaner energy source for transportation and cooking.
- **Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF):** Promising for reducing carbon emissions in the aviation sector.

India's Journey in Biofuel Production

- India's rapid industrialization and commitment to energy security have spurred its biofuel sector.
- Notable programs include ethanol blending in petrol, which reached a 10% blend milestone in 2022, targeting 20% by 2025.
- CBG production under the Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) scheme has gained traction.

Global Context

- The United States is the largest producer of biofuels, followed by Brazil. India ranks third globally, showcasing significant strides in renewable energy.

SECURITY

1. Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)

Context: Lithuania recently withdrew from the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), citing security concerns over Russia.

What Are Cluster Munitions?

- Cluster munitions are weapons that disperse smaller bomblets over a wide area. Unexploded bomblets pose long-term risks to civilians.

About CCM

- **Purpose:** Prohibits the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions.
- **Adoption:** Adopted in 2008, effective from 2010.
- **Legal Status:** A binding international humanitarian law treaty.

Global Status

- **Parties:** 110 countries, 13 signatories pending ratification.
- **Non-Signatories:** India, Russia, China, the US, citing security concerns.

India's Position

- India views cluster munitions as legitimate weapons under strict controls, emphasizing balanced approaches for security and humanitarian needs.

2. Ashwini Radar System

Context: The Ministry of Defence signed a capital acquisition contract with Bharat Electronics Limited for the Low-Level Transportable Radar (LLTR) system 'Ashwini,' boosting the Indian Air Force's operational capabilities.

About Ashwini Radar

- **Type:** Active electronically scanned phased array radar.
- **Technology:** Based on advanced solid-state technology.
- **Development:** Designed and developed indigenously by the Electronics & Radar Development Establishment (LRDE), DRDO.

Key Features

- **Target Tracking:** Tracks a range of aerial targets, including:
 - ✓ High-speed fighter jets.
 - ✓ Slow-moving Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).
 - ✓ Helicopters.
- **Range:** Instrumented range of up to 200 km.
- **Mobility:** Transportable and suitable for deployment in diverse terrains.

3. C-DOT TRINETRA

Context: Kerala Police has launched an Advanced Cybersecurity Operations Centre (SOC) based on the C-DOT TRINETRA platform to enhance digital security.

About

- **Full Form:** Centre for Development of Telematics.
- **Status:** Autonomous Telecom R&D centre under the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications.

About TRINETRA Platform

- **Nature:** AI-powered, indigenous, integrated cybersecurity platform.
- **Purpose:** Designed to safeguard enterprises and critical sectors against cyber threats.

Key Capabilities:

- **Endpoint Monitoring:** Tracks activities on connected devices.
- **Network Traffic Analysis:** Examines data flow to detect unusual patterns.
- **User Behavior Tracking:** Identifies suspicious user activities.
- **Proactive Vulnerability Identification:** Detects and addresses potential security gaps.
- **Anomaly Detection:** Flags irregularities in systems.
- **Risk Mitigation:** Responds to identified cyber threats effectively.

4. Exercise Desert Hunt 2025

Context: The Indian Air Force (IAF) recently conducted Exercise Desert Hunt 2025 at Air Force Station Jodhpur, Rajasthan. The exercise aimed at enhancing the coordination and operational synergy among India's elite Special Forces from the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

About Exercise Desert Hunt 2025

- **Participants:**

- ✓ Para (Special Forces) of the Indian Army
- ✓ Marine Commandos (MARCOS) of the Indian Navy
- ✓ Garud Commandos of the Indian Air Force
- **Objective:**
 - ✓ The exercise focused on improving interoperability, coordination, and synergy among the three Special Forces units to ensure quick and effective responses to security challenges.

Key Operations

- **Airborne Insertion:** Deploying forces by air for rapid action.
- **Precision Strikes:** Targeted attacks on strategic positions or threats.
- **Hostage Rescue:** Operations aimed at rescuing individuals from hostile environments.
- **Counter-Terrorism Operations:** Combating terrorist threats in urban and wilderness settings.
- **Combat Free Falls:** High-altitude jumps to insert troops into mission areas.
- **Urban Warfare Scenarios:** Engaging in combat within urban settings to simulate real-world urban conflict environments.

5. INS Tavasya

Context: Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) launched INS Tavasya, the second frigate under Project 1135.6 Additional Follow-on Ships, marking a milestone in India's naval advancements.

About INS Tavasya

- **Project Background:**
 - ✓ In 2016, India and Russia signed a deal for four Krivak-class frigates, with two built in India. INS Triput, launched in 2024, and INS Tavasya will be delivered by 2026 and 2027.
- **Name and Design:**
 - ✓ Named after Bhima's mace, INS Tavasya symbolizes naval strength and is designed for surface, sub-surface, and air combat operations.
- **Indigenous Contributions:**
 - ✓ The ship features indigenous weapons, sensors, and equipment, reflecting India's growing defense self-reliance.
- **End of License-Built Ships:**
 - ✓ Tavasya marks the end of license-built warships in India, signaling a shift toward fully indigenous warship design and construction.

6. Golden Dome

Context: The Golden Dome is an advanced missile defense system announced by U.S. President Donald Trump, inspired by Israel's Iron Dome. It aims to protect the U.S. from a wide range of missile threats.

About Golden Dome

- **Inspiration:**
 - ✓ The system is modeled on Israel's Iron Dome, which is effective in countering short-range rocket threats.
- **Objective:**
 - ✓ The primary goal of Golden Dome is to offer nationwide defense against various missile types, including:
 - Ballistic Missiles
 - Hypersonic Missiles
 - Cruise Missiles
- **Key Components:**
 - ✓ Space-based sensors for early detection of missile threats.
 - ✓ Advanced interceptors designed to neutralize missiles mid-flight.
 - ✓ A multi-layered defense system integrating ground, naval, and space-based assets.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1. Obesity

Context: In 2022, the Prime Minister highlighted the alarming rise in obesity, with one in eight people globally affected, including a dramatic increase in cases among children and adolescents. The Prime Minister also advocated for a 10% reduction in edible oil consumption to combat obesity.

What is Obesity?

- **Definition:**
 - ✓ Obesity is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the abnormal or excessive accumulation of fat that poses a risk to health.
- It is classified using the Body Mass Index (BMI):
 - ✓ **Overweight:** BMI of 25 or more
 - ✓ **Obese:** BMI of 30 or more
 - ✓ BMI is calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by height in meters squared (kg/m^2).

Health Consequences of Obesity

- Obesity increases the risk of several serious health conditions, including:
 - ✓ Cardiovascular diseases
 - ✓ Diabetes

- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Neurological disorders
- ✓ Chronic respiratory diseases

Obesity in India (NFHS-5, 2019-2021)

- **Prevalence:**
 - ✓ 24% of women and 23% of men in India are overweight or obese.
- **Childhood Obesity:**
 - ✓ The rate of overweight children under 5 years has increased from 2.1% in 2015-16 to 3.4% in 2019-21.

2. NASA Astronauts Return After 9-Month Space Stay

Context: NASA astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore returned to Earth after a nine-month mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Their return was facilitated by SpaceX's Crew Dragon spacecraft, following delays caused by propulsion issues with Boeing's Starliner spacecraft.

Key Details

- **Starliner Spacecraft:**
 - ✓ Developed by Boeing in collaboration with NASA's Commercial Crew Program (CCP) for astronaut transport to and from low Earth orbit (LEO).
 - ✓ It carried Williams and Wilmore to the ISS in 2024.
 - ✓ Their return was delayed due to propulsion problems.
- **SpaceX's Crew Dragon:**
 - ✓ A reusable spacecraft launched atop a Falcon 9 rocket, developed under NASA's CCP.
 - ✓ It has two variants:
 - **Crew Dragon:** Designed for astronaut transport.
 - **Cargo Dragon:** Used for cargo deliveries to the ISS.
 - ✓ The Crew Dragon Freedom was deployed during NASA's SpaceX Crew-9 mission to safely bring back the astronauts.

3. Microprocessors Vikram and Kalpana

Context: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL) in Chandigarh have jointly developed Vikram 3201 and Kalpana 3201, India's advanced 32-bit microprocessors, tailored for space applications.

Key Highlights

- **Vikram 3201:**
 - ✓ India's first fully indigenous 32-bit microprocessor.
 - ✓ Qualified for use in harsh conditions of launch vehicles.

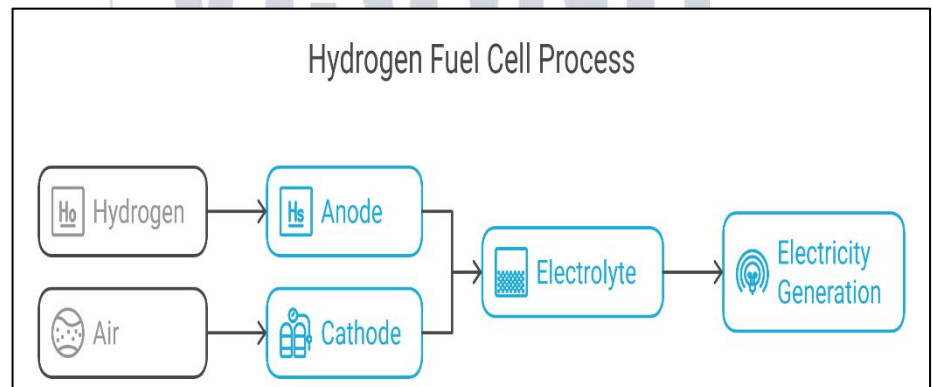
- ✓ Supports floating-point computations and is compatible with high-level programming languages.
- **Kalpana 3201:**
 - ✓ A 32-bit SPARC V8 RISC microprocessor, based on the IEEE 1754 Instruction Set Architecture.
 - ✓ Compatible with open-source software toolsets.
 - ✓ Tested with flight software, making it versatile for multiple applications.

4. Hydrogen-Powered Fuel Cells

Context: Hydrogen-powered fuel cells have been successfully demonstrated as a dependable backup power solution for telecom towers, showcasing a sustainable alternative to conventional energy sources.

About Hydrogen Fuel Cells

- **Mechanism:**
 - ✓ Hydrogen fuel cells generate electricity by combining hydrogen and oxygen through an electrochemical process.
 - **Components:** An anode (negative electrode), a cathode (positive electrode), and an electrolyte.
 - **Input:** Hydrogen at the anode and air at the cathode.
- **Working:**
 - ✓ At the anode, a catalyst splits hydrogen into protons and electrons.
 - ✓ Electrons travel through an external circuit, generating electricity.
 - ✓ Protons move through the electrolyte to the cathode, where they combine with oxygen and electrons to form water and heat.



5. AIKosha: Empowering India's AI Ecosystem

Context: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched AIKosha, an AI-driven platform under the IndiaAI Mission, as part of its efforts to bolster the nation's artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities.

About AIKosha

- **AI Repository:**

- ✓ Provides 300+ datasets and 80+ AI models for diverse applications, fostering AI innovation.
- ✓ Features an AI sandbox environment with integrated development tools and tutorials.
- **Dataset Sources:**
 - ✓ Includes 2011 Census data, Indian satellite imagery, Open Governance Data, health, meteorological, and pollution data.

IndiaAI Mission

- **Launch:** Initiated in March 2024 to promote AI research, development, and innovation.
- **Funding:** Operates on a 5-year public-private partnership model.
- **Implementing Agency:** Managed by IndiaAI Independent Business Division under Digital India Corporation.

Key Objectives

- Strengthen public-private partnerships for advancing AI research.
- Deploy over 10,000 GPUs to support high-performance computing.
- Develop AI supercomputing facilities like AIRAWAT at C-DAC, Pune.
- Promote ethical AI practices, data transparency, and accessibility.

6. National Innovation Challenge for Drone Application and Research (NIDAR)

Context: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with the Drone Federation of India (DFI), launched the NIDAR initiative under the SwaYaan program to foster innovation in drone technology.

About NIDAR

- **Objective:**
 - ✓ Encourage students and researchers to develop autonomous drones for Disaster Management and Precision Agriculture applications.
- **Scope:**
 - ✓ Focuses on collaborative, real-world problem-solving using drone technology.

About SwaYaan

- **Launch Year:** Approved by MeitY in 2022.
- **Purpose:**
 - ✓ Capacity building in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), including drones and related technologies.
 - ✓ Supports human resource development for advancing India's drone ecosystem.

7. AI Washing

Context: Venture capitalists highlight concerns over AI washing, where startups exaggerate AI use to secure funding.

What is AI Washing?

- **Definition:** Misrepresenting AI's role in products or services to appear innovative.
- **Origin:** Inspired by greenwashing, where companies falsely claim environmental contributions.

Examples

- **Mislabelling:** Automation branded as AI.
- **Superficial Claims:** Highlighting minimal AI features.
- **Buzzwords:** Frequent use of "AI-driven" without substance.

8. National Gene Bank

Context: The Union Government announced the establishment of a second National Gene Bank (NGB) to conserve 10 lakh crop germplasm, ensuring food and nutritional security.

About National Gene Bank

- **First NGB:** Established in 1996 at ICAR-NBPGR, New Delhi.
- **Purpose:** Preserve biodiversity by storing genetic material of crops.

Types of Gene Banks

- **Seed Banks:** Store seeds under controlled conditions (e.g., Svalbard Global Seed Vault, Norway).
- **Field Gene Banks:** Conserve live plants in natural conditions.
- **Cryo-preservation Banks:** Preserve tissues, embryos, and cells.
- **Pollen and DNA Banks:** Store pollen grains and genetic material.

Other Gene Banks in India

- **Animal Gene Bank:** ICAR-NBAGR, Haryana.
- **Microbial Gene Bank:** ICAR-NBAIM, Uttar Pradesh.

9. Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) Drugs

Context: The Supreme Court has sought responses from States regarding systemic issues in the procurement and supply of ART drugs for People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV).

About Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART)

- **Definition:** Treatment using anti-HIV drugs to manage HIV infection.
- **Goal:** Reduce viral load to undetectable levels, significantly lowering HIV transmission risk (U=U: Undetectable = Untransmittable).
- **Composition:** Combination of 2-4 drugs for enhanced effectiveness (Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART)).
 - ✓ **Example:** TLD Tablet (Tenofovir, Lamivudine, Dolutegravir).

Key Facts:

- ART is not a cure but enables long, healthy lives for PLHIV.

- Managed by NACO under the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) in India.

About HIV/AIDS

- HIV: Virus attacking the immune system, specifically CD4 cells (T cells).
- AIDS: Advanced stage of HIV when the immune system is severely compromised.
- Transmission: Unprotected sexual contact, blood, and mother-to-child transmission.

India's Status:

- Over 2.5 million living with HIV (2023).
- High prevalence in Northeast (Mizoram: 2.7%, Nagaland: 1.36%) and Southern States (55% of all cases).

Measures Taken

- **Global Efforts:**
 - ✓ UNAIDS 95-95-95 Goal (2030):
 - 95% of PLHIV know their status.
 - 95% of diagnosed individuals on ART.
 - 95% on ART achieving viral suppression.
 - ✓ Global Fund: Financial support for HIV programs.
- **India's Initiatives:**
 - ✓ NACP: Launched in 1992, now in Phase V (2021-2026).
 - ✓ Free ART treatment via 700+ ART centres.
 - ✓ HIV/AIDS Act, 2017: Mandates free ART for all PLHIV.

10. Light Supersolid

Context: For the first time, scientists from Italy's National Research Council have successfully created a supersolid from light.

About Supersolid

- **Definition:**
 - ✓ A rare state of matter combining solid-like structure with frictionless flow.
 - ✓ Governed by quantum mechanics, particles form a crystalline structure yet move like a liquid without viscosity (zero friction).
- **Initial Research:**
 - ✓ First predicted in the 1960s and demonstrated in 2017 using ultracold Bose-Einstein Condensates (BECs).
 - ✓ Formation occurs near absolute zero (0 Kelvin or -273.15°C), where quantum effects dominate.
 - ✓ At such low temperatures, matter transitions to its fifth state, showing unique behaviors.
 - ✓ Laboratories can approximate but not reach absolute zero.
- **Current Research:**
 - ✓ Utilizes a novel mechanism involving polariton systems.

- **Polaritons:** Hybrid particles formed by coupling light with quasiparticles like excitons via strong electromagnetic interactions.
- **Quasiparticles:** Conceptual constructs treating elementary excitations in solids, such as spin waves, as particles.
- As they lack matter, they are termed "quasiparticles."

CULTURE

1. Megalithic Menhir in Telangana: A Step Towards UNESCO World Heritage Status

Context: Telangana's Mudumal Megalithic Menhirs have been included in India's tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage status, highlighting ancient megalithic culture in India.

About Menhirs

- Menhirs are upright, large stones, typically tapered at the top. The term "menhir" comes from the Brittonic words "maen" (stone) and "hîr" (long). They have ceremonial, astronomical, or grave-marker purposes.

Megalithic Culture and Age

- Megalithic structures in Europe date back 4,800-3,800 years ago. The Mudumal menhirs are about 3,500 to 4,000 years old, making them the oldest in India.

Purpose of Menhirs

- The Mudumal menhirs are aligned with the sun during solstices, suggesting their use as ancient observatories.

Cultural Significance

- The menhirs are associated with local legends like the worship of Goddess Yellamma. They reflect ancient societies' understanding of physics and astronomy.

Other Notable Megalithic Sites in India

- Hire Benekallu (Karnataka): Features menhirs and dolmens, added to the UNESCO Tentative List in 2021.
- Vibhutihalli (Karnataka): Known for boulders arranged in solar alignments.
- Nilgiri Dolmens (Tamil Nadu): Includes dolmens and petroglyphs.

2. Project PARI: Revitalizing Public Art in India

Context: The Ministry of Culture has undertaken initiatives to preserve and promote public art under the Public Art of India (PARI) project.

About Project PARI

- **Launch and Purpose:** Initiated by the Ministry of Culture, Project PARI aims to celebrate India's cultural diversity and enhance public art by merging traditional art forms with contemporary themes.
- **Implementing Agencies:** Lalit Kala Akademi and National Gallery of Modern Art oversee the project's implementation.
- **Scope:**
 - ✓ Features over 200 artists showcasing regional art forms such as Phad, Thangka, Gond, and Warli.
 - ✓ Currently, the project is operational only in Delhi.

- **Objective:** To foster dialogue and reflection through public art while preserving India's cultural legacy.

3. Gomira Dance: A Cultural Gem of North Bengal

Context: The Gomira dance was recently performed during the Chanchala Kali Mata Puja in West Bengal, showcasing its cultural and spiritual significance.

About Gomira Dance

- **Origin and Practice:**
 - ✓ A traditional folk dance of the Rajbongshi and Polia communities of North Bengal.
 - ✓ Deeply rooted in Mahayana Buddhism, Tantric Buddhism, and Shaivite-Shakta traditions.
- **Masks:**
 - ✓ Unique masks made from materials such as papier-mâché, sholapith, bamboo, wood, and clay are central to the performance.
- **Performance Style:**
 - ✓ Accompanied by rhythmic beats of traditional instruments like Dhak and Kansar.

4. Kaliyattam Festival: A Divine Celebration in Kerala

Context: The Kaliyattam festival, celebrated during the Malayalam month of Kumbham (February-March), is a vibrant display of Kerala's cultural and spiritual heritage.

About Kaliyattam Festival

- **Also Known As:**
 - ✓ Popularly called Theyyam, the festival is a ritual dance performance dedicated to Goddess Kali.
- **Cultural Significance:**
 - ✓ Held in Kavus (sacred groves) and tharavadus (ancestral households), it forms a key part of Kerala's intangible heritage.
- **Spiritual Connection:**
 - ✓ Performers are considered to embody deities during the dance, earning it the title "dance of gods" or "dance of the divine."

MISCELLANEOUS

1. 59th Jnanpith Award: Celebrating Literary Excellence

Context: Vinod Kumar Shukla, an eminent Hindi writer from Raipur, has been honored with the prestigious 59th Jnanpith Award for 2024.

About Vinod Kumar Shukla

- An 88-year-old acclaimed poet, writer, and essayist, known for his profound emotional depth and unique linguistic style.
- **Significance:**
 - ✓ He is the 12th Hindi writer to receive the Jnanpith Award and the first from Chhattisgarh.
- **Notable Works:**
 - ✓ "Deewar Mein Ek Khirkee Rahati Thi" – Sahitya Akademi Award winner (1999).
 - ✓ "Naukar Ki Kameez" (1979) – adapted into a film by Mani Kaul.

- ✓ "Sab Kuch Hona Bacha Rahega" (1992) – celebrated poetry collection.

About the Jnanpith Award

- **Overview:**
 - ✓ Instituted in 1961 by Bharatiya Jnanpith, it is India's highest literary honor.
- **Eligibility:**
 - ✓ Conferred annually to authors for outstanding contributions to literature in languages from the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution or English.
- **Details:**
 - ✓ First awarded in 1965 to G. Sankara Kurup for "Odakkuzhal".
 - ✓ Includes ₹11 lakh cash prize, a bronze Saraswati statue, and a citation.

2. Mission 300: Electrification Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa

Context: The World Bank Group and African Development Bank jointly launched Mission 300 in 2024 to address energy poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa.

About Mission 300

- **Objective:**
 - ✓ Provide electricity access to 300 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.
- **Foundation:**
 - ✓ Built on efforts led by the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP).
- **Current Challenges:**
 - ✓ Sub-Saharan Africa is home to nearly 600 million people without electricity, accounting for 83% of the global unelectrified population.
- **Goals:**
 - ✓ Accelerate electrification with cleaner energy sources.
 - ✓ Promote economic growth and job creation.
- **Key Focus Areas**
 - ✓ Investment in infrastructure, including generation, transmission, distribution, and regional interconnections.
 - ✓ Sectoral reforms to ensure reliable, affordable, and high-quality electricity.

3. Oscars 2025

Context: The 97th Academy Awards, popularly known as the Oscars, celebrated excellence in global cinema, recognizing achievements in various categories.

About the Oscars

- **Established:** In 1929 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).
- **Significance:** Recognizes excellence in cinematic achievements worldwide.
- **Key Categories:**
 - ✓ Best Picture (most prestigious award).
 - ✓ Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Original Screenplay.

Highlights of the 97th Academy Awards (2025)

- Best Picture: Anora.
- Best Director: Sean Baker (Anora).
- Best Actor: Adrien Brody (The Brutalist).
- Best Actress: Mikey Madison (Anora).

- Best International Feature Film: I'm Still Here.
- Best Animated Feature Film: Flow.
- Most Nominations: Emilia Pérez (13 nominations).
- Biggest Winner: Anora (5 Oscars).

4. Vikramshila University: A Historical Legacy

Context: Following the successful revival of Nalanda University, efforts are underway to restore Vikramshila University, another iconic seat of Buddhist learning in medieval India.

About Vikramshila University

- **Foundation:** Established by King Dharmapala of the Pala Dynasty in the late 8th to early 9th century AD.
- **Location:** Situated in Bhagalpur district, Bihar, India.
- **Significance:**
 - ✓ Second only to Nalanda University in prominence during medieval India.
 - ✓ Renowned for its focus on Tantric studies, a key feature of the Pala period blending Buddhist and Hindu traditions.
- **Key Scholar:** Atisa Dipankara, a prominent Buddhist master and scholar associated with the university, significantly contributed to the revival of Buddhism in Tibet during the 11th century.
- **Destruction:** The university was destroyed in the late 12th century by Bakhtiyar Khalji, a military commander under Qutb-ud-din Aibak.

Telangana Current Affairs :

➤ Telangana's Health Tourism Policy

Context: The Telangana government, under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, has announced plans to introduce a Health Tourism Policy.

- The policy aims to position Hyderabad as a premier destination for medical tourism, catering to both domestic and international patients.

About the Policy

- **Health Tourism Hub**
 - A 1,000-acre dedicated health campus will be established near Hyderabad airport.
 - **Objective:** To offer comprehensive medical care to international patients and boost medical tourism.
- **Digital Health Cards**
 - **What:** Digital health cards to be introduced for every resident of Telangana.
 - **Purpose:** Securely store medical records and ensure seamless healthcare access.
 - **Data Privacy:** Developed in alignment with data protection policies.
- **Enhanced Aarogyasri Scheme**
 - **Revised Coverage:** Financial assistance under Aarogyasri increased from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh per person.
 - Provides critical healthcare financial support to citizens.
- **Hyderabad's Healthcare Ecosystem**
 - Hyderabad contributes one-third of India's bulk drug production, strengthening its reputation as a pharmaceutical and healthcare hub.
 - Attracts international patients due to world-class healthcare services.

➤ Telangana's SCCL to Establish 3,100 MW Power Plants in Rajasthan

Context: Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) and Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (RRVUNL) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish 3,100 MW power plants in Rajasthan.

- This initiative represents a significant collaboration between Telangana and Rajasthan in the energy sector.

Key Features of the Agreement

- **Power Generation Capacity**
 - Total Capacity: 3,100 MW.
 - Thermal Power: 1,600 MW.
 - Solar Power: 1,500 MW.
 - A joint venture company will be formed for project implementation.
- **Financial and Resource Contributions**
 - **Shareholding Ratio:** SCCL will hold 74%, and RRVUNL will hold 26%.
 - **SCCL's Role:** Will fund its 74% share in cash.
 - **Rajasthan's Role:**

- Provide land and basic infrastructure for the power plants.
- Rajasthan Energy Department will handle Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs).
- **Strategic Importance**
 - **Historic First for Rajasthan:**
 - This is Rajasthan's first partnership with SCCL, having collaborated only with Coal India Limited in the past.
 - **Energy Security:**
 - Combines Telangana's coal reserves and Rajasthan's solar energy potential to address India's power crisis.

SCCL's Expansion Highlights

- SCCL is venturing beyond Telangana into other states, focusing on both thermal and solar power generation:
 - **Existing Solar Power Production:** 245.5 MW; Target: 450 MW by 2026.
 - **Upcoming Thermal Plant:** 1,600 MW in Naini, Odisha, with coal production expected to start soon.

➤ **Hyderabad Annual Tree Survey 2024**

Context: The Hyderabad Annual Tree Survey 2024, conducted by WWF-India Hyderabad, highlights the role of urban trees in sustaining biodiversity and the impact of pollution on faunal populations.

Key Findings

- **Tree Diversity in Hyderabad**
 - **Total Tree Species:** 120 across 753 unique trees.
 - **Common Species:**
 - Neem (*Azadirachta Indica*): Most common.
 - Copper Pod (*Peltophorum pterocarpum*): Second most common.
 - Other frequently found species: Pongamia and Rain Tree.
 - **Survey Area:** Covered 23 locations across six zones of Hyderabad.
- **Faunal Dependency on Trees**
 - **Native Trees:**
 - Supported 3,215 animals (average of 20 animals per tree).
 - **Introduced Trees:**
 - Supported only 6 animals per tree.
 - **Total Faunal Count:** 6,065 faunal species, emphasizing the ecological importance of native tree species.
- **Biodiversity Observations**
 - Bird Species: 85.
 - Spiders: 40 species.
 - Rodents and Reptiles: 10 species each.
 - Butterflies and Moths: Only 7 species, indicating a decline.

➤ **Telangana and Centre's Initiative to Empower SHGs Through Drone Technology**

Context: The government is distributing subsidized drones to Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Telangana's Adilabad district. This initiative aims to empower women, enhance agricultural productivity, and address labour shortages through drone technology.

Key Highlights of the Initiative

- **Programme Overview**
 - **Objective:** To empower SHGs and improve agricultural efficiency using drone technology.
 - **Focus Area:** Adilabad district, with one mandal from each Assembly constituency selected for implementation.
 - **Government Involvement:** The initiative is part of a national scheme promoting drone technology in agriculture.
- **Subsidy and Financial Assistance**
 - Cost of a Drone: ₹10 lakh.
 - Government Subsidy: 80% (₹8 lakh).
 - SHG Contribution: Remaining ₹2 lakh, funded by mandal samikyas (federations of SHGs).
- **Training and Drone Utilisation**
 - SHG members have been trained in drone operation and maintenance.
 - Drones will be used for:
 - Spraying pesticides and fertilizers.
 - Targeted crops: Paddy, mango, and cotton.
 - Two individuals will be appointed per drone for its operation.
- **Employment and Productivity Benefits**
 - Reduces dependency on manual labour.
 - Provides direct employment opportunities for SHG members.
 - Enhances crop management and productivity.

➤ **Telangana's SC Sub-Categorisation:**

Context: On April 14, 2025, Telangana became the first state in India to implement the Scheduled Castes (SC) sub-categorisation through the Telangana Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservations) Act 2025. The Act divides 59 SC communities into three groups, aiming to target reservations more effectively in education and employment.

Legislative and Constitutional Framework

This move follows the Supreme Court's August 2024 ruling, which upheld the legality of sub-categorising SCs and Scheduled Tribes (STs) for more equitable distribution of reservation benefits. The Act received the Governor's assent on April 8, 2025, and was formalised on Dr B.R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary, April 14, 2025.

Sub-Categorization Details

The Act divides the SC communities into three groups:

- **Group I:** 15 sub-castes, receiving 1% reservation (most backward).
- **Group II:** 18 sub-castes, receiving 9% reservation (marginally better off).
- **Group III:** 26 sub-castes, receiving 5% reservation (comparatively better off).

This aims to ensure that the benefits of reservations reach the most disadvantaged sections.

Social and Historical Context

Historically, reservations have not always reached the most deprived sections within the SC community. This sub-categorisation addresses these disparities by directing assistance to the most underserved groups. It also reflects efforts to rectify centuries of social and economic exclusion.

Political and Electoral Implications

Politically, the decision is aimed at consolidating support from SCs and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), key voter groups in Telangana. The move to increase OBC reservations to 42% further complicates the political landscape, challenging the Supreme Court's 50% cap on total reservations.

Implications for Recruitment and Education

The sub-categorisation will immediately affect government job recruitment and educational opportunities. The Telangana government has stated that adjustments will be made if the SC population increases based on the 2026 census, ensuring the reservation system remains responsive to demographic changes.

➤ **Telangana Proposes 42% Reservation for Backward Classes**

Context: The Telangana government has introduced two significant bills to enhance reservations for Backward Classes (BCs) to 42% in education, employment, and political representation in local bodies. This move follows extensive surveys, expert recommendations, and adherence to legal requirements to address social and economic inequalities among marginalized communities.

Legislative Efforts

On March 17, 2025, the Telangana State Assembly passed:

- The Telangana Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of Appointments or Posts in Services Under the State) Bill, 2025.
- The Telangana Backward Classes (Reservation of Seats in Rural and Urban Local Bodies) Bill, 2025.

These bills aim to increase reservations for BCs to 42%, Scheduled Castes (SCs) to 15%, and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to 10%. Central government approval is required to implement these legislations.

Census and Commission Findings

To ensure compliance with the Supreme Court's mandate for exceeding the 50% reservation cap, the state conducted a Socio-Economic, Education, Employment, Political, and Caste Census. Additionally, a dedicated commission led by former bureaucrat Busani Venkateshwara Rao carried out an empirical inquiry into BC representation.

The commission's findings highlighted:

- **Underrepresentation:** Significant gaps in education, employment, and political participation for BC communities.
- **Recommendation:** A minimum of 42% reservation for BCs to address backwardness and ensure fair representation.

Government Actions

The State Council of Ministers reviewed the commission's recommendations and approved the enhanced reservation levels. The government also withdrew the previous 2017 Bill, which proposed raising BC reservations to 37% and ST reservations to 10%, but was pending Presidential assent.

Significance of the Move

- **Legal Compliance:** The decision adheres to the Supreme Court's guidelines for evidence-based reservations.
- **Social Justice:** Aims to rectify historical inequities faced by marginalized communities.
- **Inclusive Development:** Aligns with Telangana's long-standing commitment to uplift backward communities.

Challenges Ahead

- **Central Approval:** The implementation of the bills depends on the assent of the President of India.
- **Legal Scrutiny:** Exceeding the 50% reservation cap may face challenges in courts.

This initiative underscores Telangana's progressive approach to ensuring equity and inclusion, setting a potential precedent for other states in addressing the needs of backward communities.

➤ Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport Wins 'Best Airport' Award in Asia-Pacific

Context: Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) has been recognized as the Best Airport in the 15 to 25 Million Passengers Per Annum (MPPA) category in the Asia-Pacific region for 2024 by Airports Council International (ACI) under the Airport Service Quality (ASQ) survey.

Why in News

The award was conferred based on ACI's 2024 ASQ survey, which assesses airports worldwide on various parameters to measure passenger satisfaction and service quality. RGIA's recognition highlights its operational excellence and focus on passenger experience.

About Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Programme

- The ASQ programme is a globally recognized benchmark for evaluating airport service quality.
- Coverage: More than 400 airports globally participate in this survey.
- Performance Indicators Assessed:
 - Check-in efficiency.
 - Security screening process.
 - Ease of navigation within the airport.
 - Overall airport ambiance and cleanliness.
 - Retail and dining experience.
- The rankings are based on real-time passenger feedback, making it a direct reflection of the airport's ability to provide seamless travel experiences.

RGIA's Achievements and Features

- **Technological Innovations:**
 - Smart Passenger Processing Systems: Contactless services and self-check-in kiosks.
 - Biometric Authentication: Enhanced security and efficiency.
 - Digital Transformation: Adoption of advanced technologies to improve the travel experience.
- **Operational Excellence:**
 - GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd., the operator of RGIA, has focused on transforming the airport into a world-class facility.
 - Continuous investments in sustainable infrastructure and innovative service models.
- **Commitment to Sustainability:**
 - Initiatives to enhance passenger experience while adhering to environmentally sustainable practices.
 - Infrastructure designed to reduce the airport's carbon footprint.

➤ **Rajiv Yuva Vikasam Scheme: Empowering Backward Classes Youth in Telangana**

Context: The Telangana Government has launched the Rajiv Yuva Vikasam Scheme, an initiative to provide financial assistance of ₹3 lakh to eligible Backward Classes (BC) youth for self-employment opportunities.

Why in News

The scheme aims to empower BC youth through entrepreneurship opportunities, helping them improve their socio-economic status and contribute to economic development in Telangana.

Key Features of the Scheme

- **Objective:**
 - To provide financial assistance to unemployed youth from BC communities for self-employment ventures.
 - Promote entrepreneurship to enable BC youth to establish sustainable livelihoods.
- **Financial Assistance:**
 - Each eligible candidate will receive ₹3 lakh to start and sustain self-employment initiatives.
 - The scheme covers entrepreneurial activities across various sectors.
- **Eligibility and Registration:**
 - Applicants must belong to Backward Classes (BC).
 - Registration is facilitated through the OBMMS portal between March 17, 2025, and April 5, 2025.
 - Detailed eligibility criteria are available on the official portal.
- **Implementation:**
 - The scheme will be managed by the TG BC Cooperative Finance Corporation Ltd., which will ensure effective disbursement of funds.
 - District BC Welfare Officers and Ex Officio ED BC Corporations will assist applicants in resolving queries.

➤ **Mudumal Menhirs: On UNESCO's Tentative List**

Context: The Mudumal Menhirs in Narayanpet, Telangana, are now on UNESCO's tentative list of World Heritage Sites, highlighting their archaeological and cultural significance.

Why in News

Mudumal Menhirs, along with other Indian sites like Ashokan Edicts and Kanger Valley National Park, have been included in the UNESCO list, recognizing their historical importance.

Key Features

- **Astronomical Importance**
 - Over 1,200 menhirs at the site align with constellations such as Leo and Ursa Major, reflecting ancient astronomical knowledge.
 - Solar alignments suggest use as a solar observatory over 3,000 years ago.
- **Historical Insights**
 - Dating back to 1500–500 BCE, the site includes stone circles, inscriptions, and shrines, showcasing megalithic culture.
 - The revered menhir Thimmappa holds deep cultural significance.
- **Preservation**
 - Conservation efforts, led by the Department of Archaeology and Museums (DAM), Telangana, include fencing and documentation.

➤ **Telangana Tourism Policy 2025–2030**

Context: The Telangana Tourism Policy 2025–2030, launched on March 17, 2025, aims to position Telangana among the top five tourist destinations in India by promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism development.

Key Features

- **Vision and Objectives**
 - Attract investments worth ₹15,000 crore.
 - Create 3 lakh employment opportunities.
 - Increase tourism's contribution to 10% of State GDP.
 - Establish Telangana as a top destination for domestic and international tourists.
- **Focus Areas**
 - Spiritual and Heritage Tourism: Enhance cultural and historical attractions.
 - Adventure and Eco-Tourism: Promote community-based eco-tourism initiatives.
 - Medical and Wellness Tourism: Develop Telangana as a hub for health and wellness.
 - MICE Tourism: Expand infrastructure for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions.

Core Pillars

- **Safe Tourism**
 - Establish Dedicated Tourist Police Units and CCTV surveillance.

- Implement women-friendly measures and a Tourism Friendly Index (TFI) for safety standards.
- **Special Tourism Areas (STAs)**
 - Develop 27 STAs across categories:
 - Waterfall Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Spiritual Tourism (8 STAs).
 - Heritage Tourism (6 STAs), Eco and Wellness Tourism (8 STAs).
- **Infrastructure Development**
 - Invest in world-class tourism facilities and connectivity to enhance tourist experiences.

➤ **Telangana Budget 2025-26**

Context: The Telangana Government presented its ₹3.04 lakh crore budget for FY 2025-26, the largest in the state's history, emphasizing welfare, infrastructure development, and industrial growth.

Key Budget Figures

- Total Outlay: ₹3.04 lakh crore (5% increase from FY 2024-25).
- Revenue Expenditure: ₹2.26 lakh crore.
- Capital Expenditure: ₹36,504 crore.
- Revenue Receipts: ₹2.29 lakh crore.
- Fiscal Deficit: ₹54,009 crore.
- Borrowings: ₹70,000 crore, including ₹64,539 crore from open market loans.

Major Allocations

- **Social Welfare**
 - Backward Classes (BC) Welfare: ₹11,405 crore.
 - Scheduled Castes (SC) Welfare: ₹40,232 crore.
 - Scheduled Tribes (ST) Welfare: ₹17,169 crore.
 - Total Welfare Spending: ₹69,000 crore.
- **Agriculture and Rural Development**
 - Agriculture: ₹24,439 crore.
 - Panchayat Raj and Rural Development: ₹31,605 crore.
- **Education and Scholarships**
 - Education: ₹23,108 crore.
 - Scholarships/Stipends: ₹4,452 crore.
- **Energy and Infrastructure**
 - Energy: ₹21,221 crore (focus on Yadadri Thermal Power Plant and electricity ambulance services).
- **Flagship Welfare Schemes**

The six guarantees of the Congress-led government received ₹56,084 crore, including:

- Rythu Bharosa (Farmers' Support): ₹18,000 crore.
- Cheyutha (Social Security & Welfare): ₹14,861 crore.
- Indiramma Housing: ₹12,571 crore.
- Mahalakshmi Scheme (Free Bus Travel for Women): ₹4,305 crore.
- Rajiv Yuva Vikasam (Youth Development): ₹6,000 crore.

- Power Subsidy: ₹11,500 crore.

Industrial Development Initiatives

- **Budget Allocation for Industries**
 - ₹3,527 crore allocated for industrial development.
 - ₹1,730 crore for industrial promotion incentives.
- **Key Projects**
 - Hyderabad-Warangal Industrial Corridor: To drive regional industrialization along NH 163.
 - Mega Master Plan-2050: Focus on balanced regional growth with sector-specific industrial clusters.
- **Support for MSMEs**
 - 5% of plots in industrial parks reserved for women entrepreneurs.
 - 15% of plots for SC/ST entrepreneurs.
- **Pharma Clusters**
 - Establishment of greenfield pharma clusters in Ranga Reddy and Mahbubnagar districts.

State's Economic Performance

- Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP): ₹16.12 lakh crore (10.1% growth rate).
- Per Capita Income: ₹3.79 lakh (1.8 times the national average).
- **Sectoral Contribution:**
 - Services: 66.3%,
 - Agriculture: 17.3%,
 - Industry: 16.4%.

ANDHRA PRADESH CURRENT AFFAIRS

➤ Adavi Thalli Baata Programme:

Adavi Thalli Baata programme was launched by AP Dy. CM Pawan Kalyan on in Pedapadu village of Alluri Sita Rama Raju district.

This scheme is aimed to to transfer tribal villages by improving their infrastructure and enhancing the eco- tourism.

Key features:

- As the name suggests it facilitates the interior hamlets of tribal villages through the construction of roads thereby opening the doors of connectivity to the outside world.
- Also under this scheme roads, drains, schools, drinking water health centres and anganwadi centres will be constructed in tribal villages.
- This is mostly meant to save the tribals from the hassle of carrying pregnant women and sick persons in DOLIS.
- AP government sanctioned Rs 49 crore for the construction of roads in tribal hamlets while central government has allotted Rs. 1000 crore for the provision of basic facilities to remote tribal villages under Gram Sadak Yojana.

➤ Zero Poverty – P4 Initiative:

AP CM N. Chandra babu Naidu has introduced the “Zero Poverty- P4” initiative aiming to wipe out poverty in the state by 2029.

This initiative was launched on March 30, 2025.

Significant features:

- This initiative promotes public- private- people partnership approach to work collectively and fight the poverty which is why it is named as P4 Initiative.
- In this initiative the top 10% earners are encouraged to support the bottom 20% to help reduce inequality named as wealth sharing.
- Adoption of Bangaru Kutumbam (Golden families)- under these 20 lakh under privileged families named Golden families are to be supported and guided by the prosperous Margadharshi mentors to boost productivity and self- reliance.
- Beneficiary families will receive housing, gas connections, internet access apart from supporting them to start small businesses.

➤ Sub-Categorization of Scheduled Castes:

AP appointed panel has proposed for the subcategorisation of the scheduled castes into three distinct groups for the sake of more equitable distribution of reservation benefits as well as targeted welfare delivery.

Noteworthy features:

- To ensure inclusive and equitable progress among various sub-castes within the Scheduled castes, AP government implemented the ordinance put forth by welfare department.
- As a part of the initiative, the 59 SCs in the AP state are classified into 3 categories on the basis of their population, backwardness, and social integration.

The categorization is as follows:

- Group-1: It includes 12 sub-castes having 1% reservations.
- Group-2: Comprises of 18 sub-castes having 6.5% reservations.
- Group-3: It has 29 sub-castes having 7.5% reservations.
- This ordinance will ensure fair and equal access to educational and employment opportunities for all groups within the scheduled castes.
- The sub- categorisation of AP's Scheduled castes has been first suggested by a one-man commission headed by retired IAS officer RAJIV RANJAN MISHRA.

➤ AP's Rank in Per Capita Income Growth in 2025:

According to PCI growth in 2024-25 by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), among 18 States and UTs, Andhra Pradesh stands third in per capita income growth.

Per capita Income:

Per capita Income (PCI) is a measure of average income earned per person in a given area (City, region, country, etc.) in a specified time period, generally a year.

It is calculated by dividing the total income by its total population.

PCI = Total Income / Population

Notable points:

- AP's PCI reached Rs. 2,66,240 which is an increase of 11.89% growth rate over the previous year at current prices.
- The two states which stood ahead of AP in PCI growth rate are
 1. Tamil Nadu (3,58,027, 13.58%)
 2. Karnataka (3,80,906, 12.09%).
- This time AP's PCI outpaced several states including
 1. Maharashtra (Rs.3,09,340- 11%)
 2. Haryana (Rs.3,53,182-10.59%)
 3. Telangana (Rs. 3,79,751- 9.61%)
- The state's economic performance is underscored by its gross state domestic product which is Rs. 15,93,062 crore at current prices. This represents a growth rate of 12.02% placing AP in the 5th place nationwide.

➤ **Vanajeevi Ramaiah**

Padmashree awardee, most popular environmentalist VANAJEEVI RAMAIAH passed away at the age of 87.

Daripalli Ramaiah fondly known as Vanajeevi Ramaiah passed away at the age of 87 at Khammam district hospital followed by a heart attack.

He hailed from Redipalli village, Khammam rural mandal Telangana.

He was born on July 1, 1937.

Contributions:

- He devoted his life to afforestation planting nearly 1 crore trees in 60 years.
- He is well known for his profound knowledge about more than 120 plant species.
- He himself set a personal goal to plant 30 million trees and he used to regularly sow seeds especially during monsoon season.
- Known as the "TREE MAN OF INDIA" and affectionately referred as Chetla Ramaiah inspired many individuals and even Telugu states governments to promote greenery.
- He was so deeply inspired that AP government has included a lesson on him in 6th class social textbook and Maharashtra in its 9th standard social book.

Awards:

- He had been awarded with Padmashree in 2017 for environment conservation.
- Vanaseva award in 1995 by the union government
- Has been felicitated with Vanamitra award in 2005 by P.V. Narasimha Rao.
- Has been awarded with an Honorary doctorate by the Academy of Universal Global Peace.

PRACTICE MCQS

1. Consider the following statements:

Statement-I:

The in-house inquiry process for judges in India was created to address allegations of misconduct that do not warrant impeachment under Articles 124(4) and 218 of the Constitution.

Statement-II:

The impeachment process for judges requires a motion to be passed in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha with at least two-thirds of members present and voting.

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

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II explains Statement-I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, but Statement-II does **not** explain Statement-I
- (c) Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect
- (d) Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct –
 - An internal mechanism has been established within the judiciary to probe allegations of misconduct against judges. This in-house inquiry process is specially designed to address issues that fall short of the severity required for parliamentary impeachment. It allows for a confidential and systematic review by a committee of peers, safeguarding judicial independence while ensuring that accountability measures can be applied for less severe cases.
- Statement 2 is correct–
 - The impeachment process for judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts is detailed in Articles 124(4) and 218 of the Constitution, read with the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968. This process requires a motion for impeachment to be introduced in either

the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. If the motion is admitted, it is followed by an investigation of the charges. Subsequently, the motion needs to be passed by a special majority in both Houses of Parliament, specifically by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting.

- Statement-II does not explain Statement-I.
 - While both statements are factually correct, the impeachment process is a constitutional mechanism for removing a judge on grounds of proved misbehaviour or incapacity, whereas the in-house inquiry is a procedural tool developed by the judiciary to examine allegations of misconduct, which may or may not reach the threshold for impeachment. Therefore, Statement-II does not explain Statement-I; they describe different but related aspects of judicial accountability.

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The anti-defection law mandates that disqualification petitions must be decided within a fixed timeframe.
2. Judicial review of the Speaker's decision is permissible under certain circumstances.

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect–
 - Disqualification petitions are not required to be decided within a fixed timeframe. Constitutional practice has dictated that while the Speaker should decide on these petitions within a "reasonable time," no specific period is prescribed by the law. This means that a fixed timeframe is not mandated.
- Statement 2 is correct–

- Judicial review of the Speaker's decision is indeed permissible under certain circumstances. Since the Speaker acts as a quasi-judicial authority, the courts have the power to review his actions. For example, if the Speaker delays decisions or acts in a partisan manner, the courts can intervene by directing him to exercise his constitutional mandate.

3. Which of the following statements best describes the geopolitical significance of the Zagros Mountain range in the Middle East?

- (a) It serves as a natural boundary between Turkiye and Iraq, limiting cross-border ethnic interactions.
- (b) It is the historical heartland of diverse Kurdish identities, contributing to their fragmented political aspirations.
- (c) It is primarily significant for its oil reserves, which have fuelled regional conflicts.
- (d) It is a region dominated by Sunni Arabs, with limited influence from other ethnic groups.

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- The Zagros Mountain range is historically significant as the heartland of the Kurds, encompassing various Kurdish communities with differing identities — including Sunni Muslims, Shia Kurds, and Alevi tribes. This diversity has historically contributed to fragmented political aspirations and the inability to unite under a single Kurdish identity, which has been a central challenge in the quest for an independent Kurdish state.

4. Consider the following statements regarding the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA):

- 1. The IORA Secretariat is located in Mauritius and is responsible for coordinating the organization's activities.

- 2. The organization's membership is limited to countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct-
 - The IORA Secretariat is indeed located in Mauritius and plays a crucial role in coordinating the activities of the organization. It serves as the administrative body that facilitates communication and cooperation among member states.
- Statement 2 is incorrect-
 - IORA's membership is not limited to countries in the Asia-Pacific region; it includes a diverse group of countries from both Africa and Asia, along with Australia. The association consists of 23 member states that span across these regions, thus emphasizing its broader geographical representation beyond just the Asia-Pacific.

5. Which of the following statements about the Sansad Bhashini Initiative is/are correct?

- 1. It is an AI-driven platform aimed at real-time translation and transcription of parliamentary records in multiple Indian languages.
- 2. The initiative is implemented solely by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
- 3. One of its objectives is to enhance linguistic diversity and digital inclusivity in parliamentary governance.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Correct Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct: Sansad Bhashini uses AI for real-time translation and transcription of parliamentary records.
- Statement 2 is incorrect: It is a collaborative effort between the Lok Sabha Secretariat and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), not solely by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
- Statement 3 is correct: The initiative aims to promote linguistic diversity and digital inclusivity.

6. Which of the following statements about the challenges and measures related to duplicate voter ID numbers in India is/are correct?

1. The Electors Photo Identification Card (EPIC) is a unique 10-digit voter ID number issued to registered voters by the Election Commission of India.
2. ERONET is a centralized platform aimed at managing electoral rolls digitally, integrating voter registration and migration processes.
3. Linking EPIC data with Aadhaar under the National Electoral Rolls Purification & Authentication Program (NERPAP) raises concerns about potential errors and privacy risks.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Correct Answer: (d) 1, 2, and 3

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct: EPIC is a 10-digit unique voter ID number issued by the Election Commission of India.
- Statement 2 is correct: ERONET is a centralized and digital platform for managing electoral rolls efficiently.
- Statement 3 is correct: While linking EPIC data with Aadhaar can enhance

transparency, it also introduces risks of errors and privacy concerns.

7. The Raisina Dialogue 2025, held in New Delhi, had the theme "Kalachakra." What does "Kalachakra" signify in the context of the event?

- (a) The cycle of economic crises and recovery
- (b) The dynamic nature of international relations and global political cycles
- (c) The interdependence of global trade systems
- (d) The historical evolution of multilateral diplomacy

Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

The theme "Kalachakra" (Wheel of Time) represents global political cycles and transformations, emphasizing the changing dynamics of international relations.

8. Consider the following statements regarding the SQUAD Alliance:

1. It was established in 2024 with founding members including Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States.
2. The alliance primarily focuses on maritime security and countering China's influence in the South China Sea.
3. Unlike the Quad, the SQUAD Alliance addresses broader Indo-Pacific objectives such as economic security and infrastructure development.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct: The SQUAD Alliance was established in 2024 with founding members Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States.

- Statement 2 is correct: Its primary focus is maritime security in the South China Sea and countering China's influence in the region.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: Unlike the Quad, which addresses broader Indo-Pacific objectives, the SQUAD Alliance is focused on tactical and operational responses specific to the South China Sea.

9. Consider the following statements regarding the SIPRI Report 2025:

1. The United States was the largest global arms exporter, accounting for 43% of total exports between 2020 and 2024.
2. Ukraine became the largest global arms importer during 2020–2024, surpassing India.
3. India's arms imports increased significantly between 2015–2019 and 2020–2024 due to its focus on modernizing its defense forces.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct: The United States was the largest global arms exporter, with 43% of global exports.
- Statement 2 is correct: Ukraine became the largest arms importer due to the ongoing conflict with Russia.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: India's arms imports **declined** by 9.3% compared to 2015–2019 due to its focus on increasing domestic defense production.

10. Which of the following statements correctly describes the Pravaah and Sarthi initiatives of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?

- (a) Pravaah is an internal workflow digitization system, while Sarthi is a digital platform for regulatory applications by external stakeholders.
- (b) Both Pravaah and Sarthi are focused solely on external stakeholder interactions to streamline RBI's regulatory processes.
- (c) Sarthi is an internal workflow digitization system aimed at enhancing operational efficiency within RBI, while Pravaah is a digital platform for external regulatory applications.
- (d) Both initiatives are exclusively designed for enhancing cybersecurity in RBI's operations.

Correct Answer: (c)

Explanation:

- Sarthi is an internal workflow digitization system that focuses on operational efficiency, record management, automation, and collaboration within RBI.
- Pravaah is a digital regulatory application platform designed for external stakeholders, enabling seamless application submissions with enhanced transparency and security.

11. Which of the following statements is/are correct according to UNCTAD's report, *A World of Debt* (2024)?

1. The global public debt reached \$97 trillion in 2023, with developing nations' debt rising faster than that of developed nations.
2. Over 50 developing countries spend more on interest payments than on essential social sectors like education and healthcare.
3. The report highlights that developing nations pay lower borrowing costs compared to developed nations due to special financial assistance programs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Correct Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct: The report notes that global public debt reached \$97 trillion in 2023, with developing nations' debt rising at twice the pace of developed nations.
- Statement 2 is correct: It highlights that 54 developing countries allocate more funds to interest payments than to social sectors like education and healthcare.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: Developing nations face disproportionately **higher** borrowing costs, paying 2 to 12 times more in interest than developed nations, not lower costs.

12. Which of the following statements regarding the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme is/are correct?

1. A KCC account is classified as a non-performing asset (NPA) if the repayment of interest and principal is overdue for more than three years.
2. Loans under the KCC scheme are collateral-free up to ₹5 lakh for agriculture and allied activities.
3. The Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) increased the short-term loan limit from ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh in the 2025-26 Budget.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Correct Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1:** Correct. A KCC account becomes an NPA if repayment of interest and principal remains overdue for more than three years.
- **Statement 2:** Incorrect. Loans under the KCC scheme are collateral-free only up to ₹2 lakh, not ₹5 lakh.

- **Statement 3:** Correct. The 2025-26 Budget increased the short-term loan limit under MISS from ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh.

13. Which of the following statements are correct regarding the World Happiness Index 2025?

1. Finland retained its position as the happiest country in the world for the eighth consecutive year.
2. India ranked 118th out of 147 countries, showing a decline in its overall happiness standing.
3. The rankings are based on people's self-assessed life evaluations and include factors such as GDP per capita, social support, and perception of corruption.
4. Afghanistan ranked last at 147th in the World Happiness Index 2025.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Correct Answer: (a) 1, 3, and 4 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1:** Correct. Finland retained its position as the happiest country in the world for the eighth consecutive year.
- **Statement 2:** Incorrect. India ranked 118th, showing a modest improvement, not a decline.
- **Statement 3:** Correct. The rankings are based on self-assessed life evaluations and key factors like GDP per capita, social support, and corruption perception.
- **Statement 4:** Correct. Afghanistan ranked last at 147th in the World Happiness Index 2025.

14. Which of the following statements are correct regarding the Swavalambini Programme?

1. The programme aims to provide structured entrepreneurial support to male students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across India.
2. The Swavalambini Programme was launched in collaboration with NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
3. The programme focuses on equipping young women with entrepreneurial skills, financial support, and mentorship to establish and scale their ventures.
4. The National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) is the implementing agency for the Swavalambini Programme.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Correct Answer: (a) 2, 3, and 4 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1:** Incorrect. The Swavalambini Programme is focused on female students, not male students.
- **Statement 2:** Correct. The programme was launched in collaboration with NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- **Statement 3:** Correct. The programme is designed to equip young women with entrepreneurial skills, financial support, and mentorship.
- **Statement 4:** Correct. The National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) is the implementing agency.

15. Consider the following statements regarding the recent developments discussed at the 7th meeting of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL):

1. The 7th meeting of the NBWL was chaired by the Prime Minister at Gir National Park in Gujarat.
2. The first dolphin census in India recorded 6,327 river dolphins across 28 rivers in 8 states, with Uttar Pradesh having the highest number.
3. The Cheetah Reintroduction Project has been extended to Gandhisagar Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh and Banni Grasslands in Gujarat.
4. The National Referral Centre for wildlife disease management has been established in Barda Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat.
5. The Asiatic Lion Conservation Programme aims to maintain a population of 674 lions by 2025.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Correct Answer: (a) 1, 2, and 3 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1:** Correct. The 7th meeting of the NBWL was indeed chaired by the Prime Minister at Gir National Park, Gujarat.
- **Statement 2:** Correct. The dolphin census recorded 6,327 dolphins in 28 rivers across 8 states, with Uttar Pradesh having the highest count.
- **Statement 3:** Correct. The Cheetah Reintroduction Project has been expanded to Gandhisagar Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh and Banni Grasslands in Gujarat.
- **Statement 4:** Incorrect. The National Referral Centre for wildlife disease management is located in Junagadh, not Barda Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Statement 5:** Incorrect. The Asiatic Lion Conservation Programme tracks lion population growth, but it does not specifically aim for a population of 674 lions by 2025. The 2020 census

recorded 674 lions, which is the latest figure available.

16. Madhav National Park, recently designated as India's 58th Tiger Reserve, is located in which of the following states?

1. Madhya Pradesh
2. Maharashtra
3. Uttar Pradesh
4. Rajasthan

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Correct Answer: (a) 1 only

Explanation:

Madhav National Park, recently designated as India's 58th Tiger Reserve, is located in the state of Madhya Pradesh.

- **Madhya Pradesh** is known for having a significant number of tiger reserves, and Madhav National Park has now been added to this list as the 58th tiger reserve of India.
- The park is located in the **Shivpuri district** of Madhya Pradesh, in the **Upper Vindhyan Hills**, with rich biodiversity, including herbivores like Nilgai and Sambar, and carnivores like Leopard and Wild Dog.

17. Which of the following countries were identified in the 2024 World Air Quality Report as having achieved the WHO annual average PM_{2.5} guideline of 5 µg/m³?

1. Australia
2. Bangladesh
3. Iceland
4. Pakistan

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Correct Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

Australia and Iceland were among the seven countries meeting the WHO PM_{2.5} guideline. Bangladesh and Pakistan were part of the most polluted countries.

18. Consider the following statements regarding the Ashwini Radar System:

1. The Ashwini Radar System is developed by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).
2. It is an active electronically scanned phased array radar.
3. The radar has an instrumented range of up to 200 km.
4. It is designed for tracking only high-speed fighter jets.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation:

The Ashwini Radar System is developed by the Electronics & Radar Development Establishment (LRDE) of DRDO, not BEL. It is an active electronically scanned phased array radar with a range of up to 200 km, and it can track a variety of aerial targets, including high-speed fighter jets, UAVs, and helicopters, not just high-speed fighter jets.

19. Consider the following statements regarding the C-DOT TRINETRA platform:

1. TRINETRA is an AI-powered cybersecurity platform developed by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).
2. The platform is designed primarily for use by the Kerala Police to enhance digital security.
3. TRINETRA can monitor user behavior, identify security gaps, and mitigate risks by analyzing network traffic and endpoint activities.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer: (c) 1, 2, and 3

Explanation:

The C-DOT TRINETRA platform is indeed an AI-powered, indigenous cybersecurity platform. It was launched by the Kerala Police to enhance digital security. TRINETRA has a wide array of capabilities, including monitoring user behavior, analyzing network traffic, detecting vulnerabilities, and mitigating risks.

20. Consider the following statements regarding the Golden Dome missile defense system:

1. The Golden Dome is inspired by Israel's Iron Dome and is designed to counter short-range rocket threats.
2. It aims to provide nationwide defense against various missile threats, including ballistic, hypersonic, and cruise missiles.
3. The system incorporates space-based sensors for early missile detection and advanced interceptors for mid-flight neutralization.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

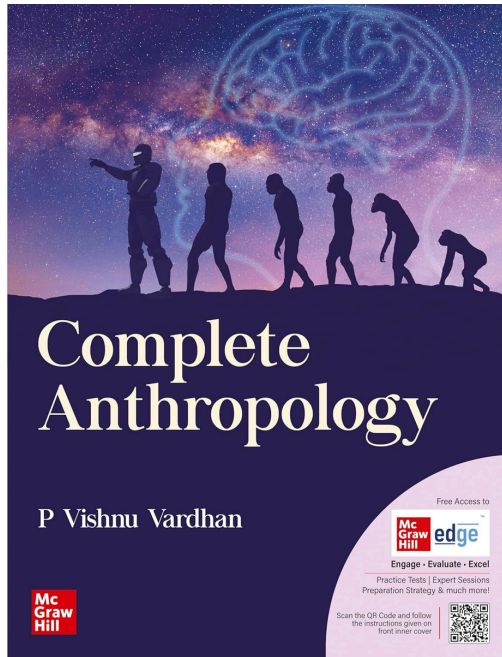
Correct Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation:

The Golden Dome is indeed modeled after Israel's Iron Dome, but its main goal is to provide a broader defense capability, specifically targeting ballistic, hypersonic, and cruise missiles, rather than just short-range rocket threats. It includes advanced technologies such as space-based sensors for early detection and advanced interceptors to neutralize missiles mid-flight.

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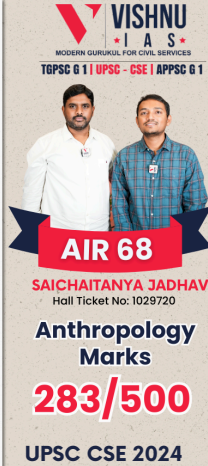
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OUR RANKER Reviews

02/05/25
Hyderabad

I am Saichaitanya Jadhav. I secured AIR 68 in Civil Service Examination 2024. I would like to thank Vishnu SIR who had made to secure this Rank. Sir's Contribution in my Success stems from giving me personal guidance & evaluating my test series. Sir even provided me personal support in other tests like Essay & Ethics by relevant inputs whenever required. Sir even given me guidance during Interview for all my questions with regards to my IAF. I would like to show my gratitude to Vishnu SIR personally for enabling me to get Rank of 68.

Saichaitanya Jadhav
AIR 68 2024 IAS



Ranker's Testimonial



I've been associated with Vishnu Sir's Anthropology Guidance Program since 2021. Coming from an electrical engineering background, his teaching made the transition to Anthropology smooth and effective. His mentorship and test series played a key role in my UPSC journey, and I'm truly grateful for his support in helping me secure a rank.



After two failed attempts with Medical Science, I was ready to quit UPSC. Joining Vishnu IAS and receiving personal guidance from Vishnu Sir changed everything. His constant support, paper evaluations, and mentorship helped me stay on track—and ultimately secure a rank.



Vishnu Sir's guidance helped me immensely in refining my answers and mastering key Anthropology topics. With his support, I was able to complete my preparation well before the exam. His mentorship played a crucial role in helping me secure a good rank. I'm truly thankful to him.



Mental strength is crucial for UPSC preparation. Vishnu Sir's mentorship helped me refine my answers and gain clarity in Anthropology. With his support, I finished my preparation well in time and secured a good rank. Truly grateful to him.



Vishnu Sir Helped me in guiding Anthropology Optional, Sir guided me in Interview-2020 & 2022. My Rank is mainly because of marks i secured in Anthropology Optional.



I got Anthropology Optional & Interview mentorship from Vishnu Sir. Last year I got 226 marks and this year I got 325. This 100 marks jump in Anthropology is responsible for my AIR 110. I am Very much thankful to Vishnu Sir for helping me in Anthropology.



Vishnu sir played a phenomenal role in my preparation through his guidance for anthropology and general studies. Vishnu sir is accessible 24*7 throughout my preparation. Surely, Vishnu sir has a special role in making me a civil servant. I thank sir and the whole Vishnu IAS team for playing a pivotal role in my success.



Vishnu Sir is known for his accessibility. Sir motivated me a lot with one-to-one mentorship session helped me to clear UPSC CSE with an AIR 196 couldn't have been done without Sir, Vishnu Vardhan Sir is supportive and always motivated. Thank you sir



I am a student of the Anthropology 2023 batch. I have got almost every question covered through the material that sir had provided. Actually I missed 20 marks questions in this year's Mains anthropology paper. When I came back home I searched for the answers to those questions and they are present in sir's material. Don't take that material lightly, Please have confidence in Vishnu sir's material use it, revise it multiple times. You will definitely see the difference in your marks. Thank you Vishnu IAS Academy



My Association with Vishnu IAS Academy started in 2021. I took GS prelims classes in 2021. After that by seeing the quality of classes and Vishnu Sir's anthropology positive feedback from students, I took Anthropology foundation course (AFC) from Vishnu Sir and his guidance and mentorship have helped me to clear civil services. Thank you Vishnu IAS Academy



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