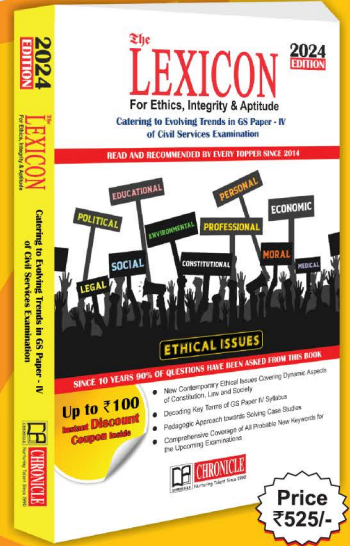


Civil Services

CHRONICLE

THE NO. 1 MAGAZINE FOR IAS ASPIRANTS SINCE 1990



UPSC & State PSCs Prelims 2024

200 Important Current Affairs Topics with General Studies Input and Model MCQs

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- India's Patent Regime
- Sustainable Land Management
- Parliamentary Privileges and Bribery: SC Pronouncement
- High-Level Committee Report on One Nation, One Election
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Important Current Affairs Topics

with General Studies Input
and Model MCQs

In this special section, we are presenting 200 important current affairs topics with GS input and model questions.

The content as well as the questions have been developed keeping in mind the nature and changing pattern of questions in the Civil Services Examinations.

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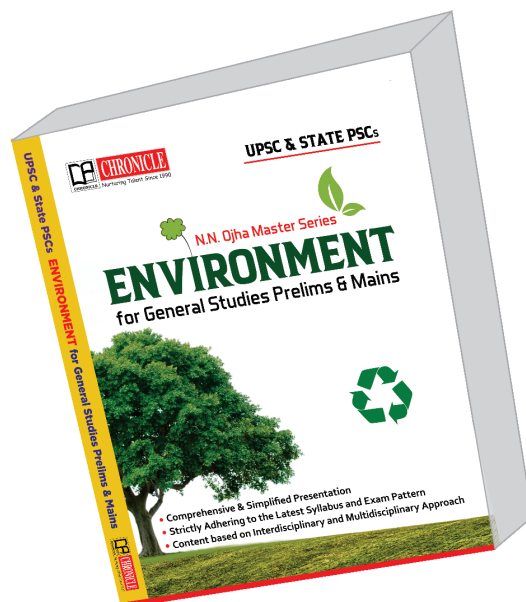
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India-Bhutan Relations

Together for Progress and Development

India and Bhutan share a deep-rooted and multifaceted relationship characterized by close historical, cultural, and economic ties. This partnership encompasses cooperation in developmental projects, particularly in hydropower, education, and healthcare. Both countries collaborate closely on issues of mutual interest, including regional security, trade, and border management. Overall, India-Bhutan relations are marked by mutual respect, trust, and a shared vision for peace and prosperity in the region.

■ Alok Singh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bhutan on 21-22 March, 2024 marked a significant step in strengthening India's unique relations with the Himalayan nation under the 'Neighbourhood First' Policy. The discussions between PM Modi and Bhutan's Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay in Thimphu emphasized their commitment to enhancing the exceptional bilateral partnership. This visit resulted in several notable achievements, including the signing of various memoranda of understanding (MoUs) across key sectors like energy, trade, sports, and healthcare. These agreements not only showcase the depth of cooperation but also highlight the alignment of shared goals between India and Bhutan. They signify a robust bond and collaborative spirit driving both nations towards mutual prosperity and sustainable growth, reflecting the strong commitment to mutual development and regional stability in South Asia.

Key Outcomes of the Visit

- **Bhutan's Highest Civilian Honour:** Prime Minister Modi was conferred with 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo', which is Bhutan's highest civilian honour. He became the first foreign dignitary and the fourth person to receive this award. The Order of the Druk Gyalpo was instituted as the decoration for lifetime achievement and is the pinnacle of the honour system in Bhutan, taking precedence over all orders, decorations and medals.
- **Financial Assistance Package:** Prime Minister Modi announced an assistance package of 10,000 crores for Bhutan's 13th five-year plan over five years. He described the India-Bhutan relationship as both ancient and contemporary, emphasising the multifaceted nature of their connection, termed as 'B2B' (Bharat to Bhutan) and 'P2P' (people to people).
- **Bilateral Talks and Agreement:** The two leaders also reviewed all aspects of bilateral energy cooperation and welcomed the expert-level discussions on the 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-I Hydro-electric Project, adding that they look forward to the commissioning of the 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II Hydro-electric Project later this year.

Agreements and MoUs

PM Modi and Bhutan PM Tobgay finalised the MoU on the establishment of rail links between the two nations and various other MoUs were signed in different fields.

1. **MoU on general supply of Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants (POL) and related products from India to Bhutan**
 - ♦ Facilitates supply of POL items to Bhutan through agreed entry/exit points.
2. **Agreement for recognition of official control exercised by Bhutan Food And Drug Authority (BFDA) by Food Safety and Standards Authority Of India (FSSAI)**
 - ♦ Promotes trade by accepting BFDA's export inspection certificate for compliance with FSSAI requirements.
3. **MoU on cooperation in the field of Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation measures**
 - ♦ Enhances energy efficiency in Bhutan's household sector through star labeling and energy auditor training.
4. **MoU on Cooperation in Sports and Youth**
 - ♦ Strengthens people-to-people linkages via sports agency collaboration and activities.
5. **MoU on Cooperation concerning sharing reference standard, pharmacopoeia, vigilance and testing of medicinal products**
 - ♦ Enhances cooperation in medicine regulation, accepting Indian Pharmacopoeia, and supplying affordable generic medicines.
6. **Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) on Space Cooperation**
 - ♦ Maps out space cooperation through exchange programs and training.
7. **Renewal of MoU on Peering Arrangement between National Knowledge Network of India and Druk Research And Education Network of Bhutan**
 - ♦ Enhances digital connectivity between India and Bhutan, benefiting scholars and research institutions.

These agreements and understandings signify the depth of cooperation and shared objectives between India and Bhutan. They pave the way for continued collaboration and mutual benefit in various sectors, contributing to the overall growth and development of both nations.

India's Patent Regime

Fostering Innovation and Economic Development

The patent system of any country plays an important role in its intellectual property framework, promoting innovation and technological progress. The primary objective of the patent laws implemented in India is to encourage innovation and technological progress by granting inventors exclusive rights over their inventions for a specific period. India should focus on strengthening its 'Intellectual Property Rights Regime' to align the patent system with the innovation and development

■ **Dr. Amarjeet Bhargava**

On 15th March, 2024, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry notified the Patents (Amendment) Rules, 2024. The Patent Rules, 2024 is being considered an important milestone towards promoting innovation and economic growth. These rules introduce several provisions to simplify the process of obtaining and managing patents.

A patent is a type of intellectual property that gives its owner the legal right to exclude others from making, using, or selling the invention for a limited period of time in exchange for publishing a competent disclosure of the invention. Studies have shown that as the country progresses in its ability to grant patents efficiently, there are concerns that challenges related to quality may emerge in this field. Thus, it is necessary to analyze the Indian patent system, its functioning and challenges.

Why Amendments?

Patent laws and regulations change from time to time. The Patents (Amendment) Rules, 2024 have been issued to make rules in accordance with the emerging technologies and global trends.

- ◆ These rules aim to facilitate a conducive environment for inventors and creators. Also, the aim is to accelerate the economic development of the country through science and technology to fulfill the vision of a developed India.
- ◆ As a result of earlier reforms in the patent regime, India recorded 82,805 patent applications and 34,153 grants in 2022-23, a massive increase from 45,444 patent applications and 9,847 grants in 2016-17. Current changes to patent rules will bolster such efforts.

Patents (Amendment) Rules, 2024: Key Changes

Some salient features of the revamped Rules are as follows:

- ◆ Unique provision for New 'Certificate of Inventorship' has been introduced to acknowledge the contribution of inventors in the patented invention. Since the Indian Patent Certificate does not identify inventors, this provision will allow inventors to be recognized for their inventions.
- ◆ Provision for claiming benefits of Grace period under section 31 has been streamlined by incorporating new form, i.e., Form 31.

- ◆ Time limit to furnish foreign application filing details in Form 8 has been changed from six months from the date of filing of application to three months from the date of issuance of first examination report. This will speed up the patent examination process.
- ◆ Considering the fast pace of technology, time limit for filing request for examination has been reduced from 48 months to 31 months from the date of priority of application or from the date of filing of application, whichever is earlier.
- ◆ Provision to extend time limit and condone delay in filing has been further simplified and made more explicit to ease in practice. Now, the time for doing any act/proceeding may be extended any number of times up to six months by a request in prescribed manner.
- ◆ Renewal fee has been reduced by 10% if paid in advance through electronic mode for a period of at least 4 years.
- ◆ Frequency to file the statements of working of patents in Form 27 has been reduced from once in a financial year to once in every three financial years. Further, the provision to condone delay in filing of such statement for a period up to three months upon a request in prescribed manner has been incorporated.
- ◆ The procedure to file and dispose the Pre-grant representation by way of opposition under section 25(1) has been further streamlined and made more explicit by providing ways to dispose of the representation and fixing fees to file such representation in order to curb benami and fraudulent pre-grant oppositions and simultaneously encouraging the genuine oppositions.

Patent Governance in India: Development of Policy and Institutional Framework

- ◆ **Act VI, 1856:** This Act was based on the British Patent Law of 1852, was the first patent law in India to provide protection for inventions.
- ◆ **Act XV, 1859:** 'Exclusive privileges' were granted to the inventor under this Act. The inventor could sell and use his invention in India; and may also allow others to do so for a period of fourteen years from the date of submission of the specification.

Sustainable Land Management

Crucial for Mitigating Land Degradation & Preserving Ecosystem Services

Worldwide, land degradation and desertification due to deforestation, over-grazing, soil erosion, urbanization and unsustainable agricultural practices has accelerated. These conditions reduce productivity and increase food insecurity, malnutrition, poverty, and conflict. Therefore, to meet human and ecological needs, competing demands for land and resources must be reconciled.

■ Ranjeet Shah

The sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) was held from 26th February to 1st March, 2024, at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme ‘Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.’

The session adopted 15 resolutions, including a resolution on land degradation to strengthen international efforts to combat desertification and land degradation, restore degraded land, promote land conservation and sustainable land management, contribute to land degradation neutrality and enhance drought resilience.

Sustainable land management assumes great significance in view of the pressing need to minimize land degradation, rehabilitate degraded areas and ensure the optimal use of land resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

Status of Land Degradation

- ◆ As per Global Environment Facility (GEF), about 25 per cent of the total land area has been degraded worldwide. When land is degraded, soil carbon and nitrous oxide is released into the atmosphere, making land degradation one of the most important contributors to climate change.
- ◆ Scientists recently warned that 24 billion tons of fertile soil was being lost per year, largely due to unsustainable agricultural practices. If this trend continues, 95 per cent of the Earth’s land area could become degraded by 2050.
- ◆ Moreover, Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India, published by Space Applications Centre, Indian Space Research Organisation, Ahmedabad, states that land degradation and desertification in the country has been estimated to be 97.84 million hectares in 2018-19.

Sustainable Land Management: Key Aspects

Concept

- ◆ The United Nations defines sustainable land management (SLM) as “the use of land resources, including soils, water, animals and plants, for the production of goods to meet changing human needs, while simultaneously ensuring the long-term productive potential of these resources and the maintenance of their environmental functions”.

SLM is based on four common principles:

- ◆ Land-user-driven and participatory approaches;
- ◆ Integrated use of natural resources at ecosystem and farming systems levels;
- ◆ Multi-level and multi stakeholder involvement; and
- ◆ Targeted policy and institutional support, including development of incentive mechanisms for SLM adoption and income generation at the local level.

Need

Sustainable land management is crucial for several reasons:

- ◆ **Resource Conservation:** Land is a finite resource. Sustainable land management ensures the conservation of land resources for future generations. This includes protecting soil fertility, water resources, and biodiversity.
- ◆ **Food Security:** The world’s population is continually growing and projected to increase by about 35 per cent to 9.8 billion in 2050, placing increasing pressure on agricultural land. Sustainable land management practices, such as soil conservation and organic farming, can help maintain agricultural productivity and ensure food security for current and future generations.
- ◆ **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:** Land management plays a significant role in both mitigating climate change and adapting to its impacts. Sustainable land management practices, such as afforestation, reforestation, and agroforestry, can sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, helping to mitigate climate change.
- ◆ **Biodiversity Conservation:** Land degradation and habitat loss are major threats to biodiversity. Sustainable land management practices, such as habitat restoration and protected area management, can help conserve and restore biodiversity by preserving natural habitats and reducing fragmentation.
- ◆ **Social and Economic Benefits:** Sustainable land management can generate multiple social and economic benefits, including poverty reduction, job creation, and improved livelihoods for rural communities.
- ◆ **Global Stability:** Land degradation and environmental degradation more broadly can exacerbate social tensions, contribute to conflicts over resources, and undermine political stability. By promoting sustainable land management, countries can help foster peace, stability, and resilience at both local and global levels.

- Parliamentary Privileges and Bribery: SC Pronouncement
- High-Level Committee Report on One Nation, One Election
- Plastic Waste Management: New Rules

Parliamentary Privileges and Bribery: SC Pronouncement

Recently, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court (SC) ruled that Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) cannot claim any immunity from prosecution for accepting bribes to cast a vote or make a speech in the House in a particular fashion.

- The Supreme Court in *Sita Soren Vs Union of India* held that bribery is not immune under Article 105 (2) and the corresponding provision of Article 194.
- The Bench overruled the 3:2 Constitution Bench decision (1998) held in *P.V Narasimha Rao v State (CBI/SPE)*.

What was the Case?

- In 2012, Sita Soren, a member of the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) was accused of accepting a bribe.
- An independent candidate had allegedly asked her to cast a vote in his favour in the Rajya Sabha Elections.
- However, as there was an open ballot system, she ultimately cast her vote for a candidate of JMM.
- Soren approached the High Court of Jharkhand seeking to quash the criminal charges filed against her under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. She argued that as an MLA, she enjoyed the protection under Article 194(2) of the Constitution.
- She relied on the 1988 decision of the Supreme Court, *P.V. Narasimha Rao v State (CBI/SPE)*, which had held that lawmakers enjoy immunity for their speech and votes in the House as part of the parliamentary privileges under Article 105(2).

Court's Observation and Analysis

Rajya Sabha is an Integral Component of Constitution

- The Rajya Sabha or the Council of States performs an integral function in our democracy, and the role played by the Rajya Sabha constitutes part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- Therefore, the role played by elected members of the state legislative assemblies in electing members of the Rajya

Sabha under Article 80 is significant and requires utmost protection to ensure that the vote is exercised freely and without fear of legal persecution.

Bribery is Independent of the Performance

- The Court ruled that the offence of bribery is independent of the performance of the agreed action and solidifies on the exchange of illegal gratification.
- Hence, the offence of bribery is complete at the point in time when the legislator accepts the bribe.
- The Bench addressing the paradoxical outcomes in *P.V. Narasimha Rao* case noted that such decision erroneously links the offence of bribery to the performance of the act. Hence, the court held that such interpretation is contrary to the text and purpose of Articles 105 and 194.

Legislative Privileges have to Conform with Constitutional Parameters

- Tracing the history of parliamentary privileges in India, the Court said that unlike the House of Commons in the United Kingdom, India does not have 'ancient and undoubted' rights vested after a struggle between the Parliament and the King.
- Instead, such rights in India have always flown from a statute, which after independence transitioned to a constitutional privilege.
- Thus, whether a claim to privilege in a particular case conforms to the parameters of the Constitution is amenable to judicial review.

Doctrine of Stare Decisis is not an Inflexible Rule of Law

- The Court pointed out that the doctrine of stare decisis is not an inflexible rule of law.
- A larger bench of this Court may reconsider a previous decision in appropriate cases, bearing in mind the tests which have been formulated in the precedents of this Court.
- The doctrine of stare decisis means that courts refer to the previous, similar legal issues to guide their decisions. Such previous decisions that courts refer to are known as "precedents".



Polity & Governance

- District Election Management Plan
- Ladakh's Demand for Inclusion in Sixth Schedule

- Electoral Trusts
- Offences under Section 153A of the IPC
- ECI extends Vote-from-Home to PwDs & Senior Citizens
- Appeals against the Contempt Orders of Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)
- 'Passing off' under Trademark Rules

Judiciary

- Ex-parte Injunction against Media Platforms

Polity & Governance

District Election Management Plan

The conduct of elections has become increasingly complex and multifaceted, requiring meticulous planning and execution to ensure a free, fair, and inclusive electoral process.

- Central to this effort is the development and implementation of the District Election Management Plan (DEMP).

DEMP and its Preparation Timeline

- District Election Management Plan is a comprehensive strategic document developed to oversee the management of elections within a district.
- As mandated by the Election Commission of India, it is prepared at least six months prior to the anticipated polling day.
- This timeline allows for sufficient planning and preparation to address logistical and operational requirements.
- The DEMP is subject to periodic revisions and updates to accommodate evolving circumstances and emerging challenges.

Elements of DEMP

- **District Profile:** The DEMP begins with an analysis of the district's demographic, infrastructural, and socio-economic characteristics. This foundational information informs electoral strategies and resource allocation.
- **Polling Station Accessibility:** Strategies are outlined to enhance the availability and accessibility of polling stations. Measures such as provision of necessary facilities and accommodations for voters with disabilities and senior citizens are incorporated.
- **SVEEP Plan:** The DEMP includes a Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) plan aimed at increasing voter awareness and participation. This plan encompasses targeted outreach activities and engagement initiatives.
- **Personnel Training and Deployment:** Detailed plans are devised for the recruitment, training, and deployment of election personnel.

- Training of district-level teams to enforce the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). This ensures their readiness to enforce electoral regulations and maintain the integrity of the electoral process.

- **Material and EVMs Management:** The DEMP includes procurement and management plans for essential election materials and Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). These plans are crucial for the efficient functioning and security of the electoral process.

Ladakh's Demand for Inclusion in Sixth Schedule

Recently, a noted environmentalist and education reformer raised demand for full statehood & inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Why Ladakh needs Inclusion in the Sixth Schedule?

- J&K and Ladakh were declared two separate UTs following the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, which left it without a legislature, depriving them of autonomy in governance.
- There are also concerns of adequate representation in govt. jobs and land rights.
- A deeper panic has set in at the blistering pace of 'development' projects that have been announced in the last two years.
- The Centre has cleared seven hydro-electric projects in the Indus basin and its tributaries have raised concerns among locals of large-scale clearance of forest land.
- Ladakhis believe their interests will only be protected if they have full statehood. They have also demanded tribal area status under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

About Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution

- It provides autonomous powers in terms of administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.
- Its provisions are present in Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the Indian Constitution.

Public Policy



Government Approves E-Vehicle Policy

On 15th March, 2024, the Union Government approved a scheme to promote India as a manufacturing destination so that e-vehicles (EV) with the latest technology can be manufactured in the country.

- The policy is designed to attract investments in the e-vehicle space by reputed global EV manufacturers.

What does the Policy Entail?

- **Minimum Investment Required:** Rs 4150 Cr.
- **Maximum Investment:** No limit on maximum Investment.
- **Timeline for Manufacturing:** Manufacturers will be required to establish manufacturing facilities in India within a three-year timeline and commence commercial production of EVs.
- **Domestic Value Addition (DVA) during Manufacturing:** A localization level of 25% by the 3rd year and 50% by the 5th year will have to be achieved.
- **Customs Duty:** The customs duty of 15% (as applicable to CKD units) would be applicable on vehicle of minimum CIF value of USD 35,000 and above for a total period of 5 years subject to the manufacturer setting up manufacturing facilities in India within a 3-year period.
- **Duty Foregone:** The duty foregone on the total number of EV allowed for import would be limited to the investment made or Rs. 6484 Cr (equal to incentive under PLI scheme) whichever is lower.
- **Maximum of Number of EVs:** A maximum of 40,000 EVs at the rate of not more than 8,000 per year would be permissible if the investment is of USD 800 Mn or more. The carryover of unutilized annual import limits would be permitted.
- **Bank Guarantee:** The Investment commitment made by the company will have to be backed up by a bank guarantee in lieu of the custom duty forgone.
- The Bank guarantee will be invoked in case of non-achievement of DVA and minimum investment criteria defined under the scheme guidelines

Analysis

- The move is expected to provide access to latest technology and enhance the EV ecosystem and support the Make in India initiative.

- Further, it will promote healthy competition among EV players leading to high volume of production, economies of scale, lower cost of production, reduce imports of crude oil, lower trade deficit, reduce air pollution, particularly in cities, and will have a positive impact on health and environment.

Centre Notifies Rules to Enforce CAA, 2019

On 11th March, 2024, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) officially notified the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024 in order to enforce the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019.

- The Rules will enable the persons eligible under CAA-2019 to apply for the grant of Indian citizenship.

What are the New Rules?

Process of Seeking Citizenship

- Eligible refugees seeking citizenship through registration or naturalization must submit an application along with an affidavit confirming the accuracy of the statements made in it.
- Additionally, they need an affidavit from an Indian citizen vouching for their character and a declaration stating their familiarity with one of the languages listed in the eighth schedule to the Constitution of India.

Empowered Committee and District Level Committee

- The new rules provide for an empowered committee and a district level committee to be instituted by the Centre for receiving and processing the applications.
- These applications are to be submitted electronically.
- The empowered committee would be headed by a Director (Census Operations).

Documents Needed

Applicants must provide supporting documents such as:

- passport issued by the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan, or Bangladesh,
- a birth certificate,
- any form of identity document, land or tenancy records, or
- any document proving that the applicant's parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents were citizens of one of the three countries.

Reports & Indices



National

NITI Aayog Report on Crop Husbandry, Agriculture Inputs, Demand & Supply

Recently, NITI Aayog released a report under the title- 'Crop Husbandry, Agriculture Inputs, Demand and Supply'.

Major Findings

Changes in Food Preferences and Demand

- There is an increasing trend in the total household expenditure, but the share of food expenditure in it has declined considerably, from 69% in 1972-73 to 44% in 2011-12, and the decline is observed across all expenditure classes and in rural as well as urban areas.
- Household demand has the largest share (61%) in the total demand for food commodities.
- Demand for cereals has declined due to changing consumer preferences for nutritious foods, and also due to reduced energy requirements.

Projections of Food Demand and Supply

- In a business-as-usual (BAU) scenario, that is the continuance of the recent economic growth (6.34%) in the future as well, the overall food demand is expected to grow at an annual rate of 2.44% by 2047-48.
- It will accelerate up to 3.07% if the economic growth accelerates.
- Growth in demand for maize, pulses and nutri-cereals will be higher as compared to rice and wheat. Demand for pulses is expected to be 49-57 million tonnes by 2047-48 under different income growth scenarios.
- By 2047-48, the demand for vegetables is expected to increase to 365 million tonnes, and of fruits to 233 million tonnes in the BAU, and 385-417 million tonnes and 252-283 million tonnes in HIG scenarios, respectively.

Status of Agricultural Exports

- Agricultural exports have been rising steadily, and the export basket is also changing. India, with a share of 40% in global rice (Semi-milled) exports, is the largest exporter, and is highly competitive in the global market.
- India is also a significant exporter of sugar and its derivative products. Its exports of bovine meat and fish and

fish products are competitive in the international market, offering an opportunity to enhance their exports.

- India is not a major exporter of wheat, dairy products and eggs because of lack of competitiveness. Importantly, their exports are volatile.
- Feasible Level of Exports of Selected Commodities
- The projected rice exports (based on historical data) portray a gradual increase, culminating at 30.07 million tonnes by the year 2047.
- Moreover, the potential for export expansion appears promising, as the surplus available for export is expected to surge significantly, starting at 26 million tonnes in 2025 and reaching an impressive 40 million tonnes by 2047.
- Given India's historical position as a relatively intermittent participant in the global wheat export market, the extent of its wheat export potential remains largely underestimated.
- Thus, the projected exports for wheat indicate a gradual rise from 3.27 million tons in 2030 to 4.5 million tons in 2047.

Recommendations

Land Use Planning

- Given the disproportionate increase in the demand for fruits, vegetables, pulses, edible oils, nutri-cereals and maize compared to rice and wheat, it is important to evolve economically feasible cropping patterns suited to the resource endowments of different agro-ecological zones.

Invest In Infrastructure and Value Chains for Perishable Commodities

- The existing infrastructure for storage, transportation, and processing of perishable commodities is grossly inadequate given their levels of production.
- It is, therefore, recommended to aggressively invest in infrastructure required for perishable commodities to avoid post-harvest losses and reduce high price volatility. Private investment in value chains can address some of the infrastructural bottlenecks.

Promote Millet Consumption and Production

- Consumption of millets has declined considerably. There is a need to keep the momentum of promotion of millets to create awareness about their nutritional benefits among the masses.



Indian Society

- India's declining Fertility Rate & its Impact

Social Issues

- Khula under Islamic Law

Health

- WHO launches CoViNet
- India receives 'Measles and Rubella Champion' Award
- India's First Indigenous Drug for Sickle Cell Disease
- Lyme Disease Reported in Kerala
- Statins

Indian Society

India's declining Fertility Rate & its Impact

A recent global research study published in The Lancet journal has shed light on India's remarkable decline in fertility rates over the past seven decades.

Key Points

- India's fertility rate has dropped from nearly 6.2 in 1950 to just under 2 in 2021.
- It is projected to dip further to 1.29 in 2050 and 1.04 in 2100.
- The findings align with global trends, which have seen the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) drop from over 4.8 children per woman in 1950 to 2.2 in 2021.
- Within India, the number of live births stood at over 16 million and 22 million in 1950 and 2021, respectively, with a projected decline to 13 million by 2050.

Impact on India

Negative

- In light of this demographic shift, the researchers underscore the profound implications of the findings for India, including challenges such as an ageing population, labour force shortages, and potential social imbalances due to gender preferences.
- Without interventions such as unforeseen innovations or dedicated funding to address the challenges posed by an ageing population, this demographic transition will increasingly strain national health insurance, social security programs, and healthcare infrastructure.
- Furthermore, while a sustained decline in the global population could present opportunities for environmental

improvements by alleviating pressure on resources and reducing carbon emissions, this advantage might be counteracted by increasing consumption per capita resulting from economic development.

Positive

- The demographic transition will have a positive impact on several states in the coming years through an increase in labour productivity.
- First, the decline in population growth would increase the amount of capital resources and infrastructure available in per capita terms.
- Second, the reduction in fertility would permit the relocation of resources for the education and skill development of children rather than expanding the coverage for achieving universalisation.
- Third, it would affect the age distribution of the population, increasing the fraction of the labour force in the population, although for a limited period, which would accelerate the growth of the overall economy.

Strategies to Counteract the Negative Impacts of Declining Fertility Rates

- **Promoting Gender Equality:** Ensuring women have equal opportunities in education and the workforce can impact fertility rates positively.
- **Supporting Families:** Policies that support child-rearing, such as parental leave and childcare services can help balance work and family life.
- **Encouraging Migration:** Skilled immigration can supplement the working-age population and contribute to economic vitality.
- **Investing in Healthcare:** Investing in healthcare and retirement planning can help manage the costs associated with a larger proportion of elderly citizens.

Welfare Schemes



Centre Revises MGNREGA Wage Rate

On 27th March, 2024, the Union government notified the revised wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), with several States reporting a hike in wages by 8 to 10%.

What are the Revised Wage Rates?

- Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Goa recorded notable hikes ranging from 8% to 10.5%.
- Haryana offers the highest wages at Rs 374 per day, whereas Uttar Pradesh has one of the lowest at Rs 237.
- The revised rates will come into effect from 1st April, 2024.
- Despite the revision, the nation-wide average days of employment provided per household in the financial year 2023-24 remained at 51 days, falling short of the promised 100 days.

Need

- In a report tabled in Parliament earlier this year, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj had pointed out that the high range of variation in MGNREGS wages across states.
- It had also said that the wages were inadequate and not in consonance with the rising cost of living.

About Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

- Introduced in 2005, it is a demand driven wage employment programme and fund release to States/UTs is a continuous process and Central Government is making funds available keeping in view the demand for work.
- The Ministry release funds to the States/UTs based on the basis of agreed to Labour Budget (LB), opening balance, pending liabilities of the previous year, if any, and overall performance.
- The Ministry seeks additional fund for MGNREGS as and when required for meeting the demand for work on the ground.

Wage Rates for MGNREGS Workers

- The Ministry of Rural Development establishes state-specific salary rates for MGNREGS workers under sub-section (1) of Section 6 of the MGNREGA, 2005.
- Currently, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme wages are decided based on changes

in the CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index- Agricultural Labourers), which reflects inflation in rural areas.

Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme, 2024

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme, 2024 (UNNATI-2024).

- It is a Central Sector Scheme for the development of Industries and generation of employment in the states of North East Region (NER).
- The scheme's main objective is to generate gainful employment, which will lead to the area's overall socio-economic development.

Why did the government introduce the Scheme?

- Industrial development in the NER needs to be given a fresh thrust with emphasis on job creation, skill development, and sustainable development by attracting new investments and nurturing existing ones.
- So, to maintain a proper balance between the industrial growth and pristine environment of the NER, UNNATI 2024 scheme has been approved.

Key Features

- **Expenditure:** The financial outlay of the scheme is Rs.10,037 crore.
- **Two Parts:** The scheme is proposed to be divided into two parts. Part, A caters to the incentives to the eligible units (Rs. 9737 crores), and Part B, is for implementation and institutional arrangements for the scheme. (Rs. 300 Crore).
- **Scheme Period:** The scheme will be effective from the date of notification and up to 31.03.2034 along with 8 years of committed liabilities.
- **Commencement of Production:** All eligible Industrial Units to commence their production or operation within 4 years from the grant of registration.
- **Earmarking of Funds:** 60% of the outlay of Part A has been earmarked to 8 NE states and 40% on First-In-First-Out (FIFO) basis.
- **Implementation Strategy:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will implement the scheme in cooperation with the states.



Heritage Art & Culture

Art & Culture

- Hyderabad's Lac Bangles Awarded GI Tag

Art & Culture

Hyderabad's Lac Bangles Awarded GI Tag

The lac bangles of Hyderabad known for their unique craftsmanship and historical significance have received Geographical Indication (GI) Tag.

- After Haleem (a meat product), Lac Bangles is the 2nd product to receive GI Tag from Hyderabad.
- It is the 17th product from Telangana to receive the recognition.

Lac Bangles

- Lac Bangles are a traditional form of jewellery made from natural resin and adorned with colourful stones and beads.

Origin of Lac Bangles

- Though the exact origin is not clear, historians say that the 1st bangle was manufactured during the late Qutub Shahi period, about 300 to 350 years ago.
- Laad Bazaar, where they are sold, may have emerged during the reign of Nizam VI - Mir Mahbub Ali Khan; its history predates the Asaf Jahi rule.
- **Artisans:** Some say they were Unani Hakeems of Iran who came to the city during Qutub Shahi period and took this as a secondary source of income.
- Other sources say that it belong to artisans from Vijaynagara Empire, who settled down in the city.

Materials Used

- It may have been studded with pure diamonds when they were 1st made as Golconda kingdom was known for its diamond mines and bazars.
- Over time, diamonds gave way to decorative stones.
- **Making:** It is crafted from lacquer derived from resin and undergoes a meticulous process like melting in furnaces before embellished with crystals, beads or mirrors.

Significance

- The granting of a Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Hyderabad lac bangles could positively impact the lives

- Monuments of National Importance
- Mohiniyattam
- Three Traditional Products of Tripura Awarded GI Tag
- Six Indian Heritage Sites Included in Tentative UNESCO List
- Two Indian Sites recognised as Geo-heritage Sites

of the women and men who produce these accessories.

- While the GI tag alone may not transform the lives of bangle makers overnight, it gets them recognition and appreciation of their craft.

Monuments of National Importance

Recently, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) decided to delist 18 protected monuments as they have ceased to be of "national importance".

- These monuments, including landmarks like the medieval highway milestone Kos Minar No.13 in Haryana, Barakhamba Cemetery in Delhi, and Telia Nala Buddhist ruins in Varanasi, are considered 'untraceable' as their precise locations or current conditions are unknown.
- The decision follows the criteria outlined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958

So what does the "Delisting" of Monuments Mean?

- The ASI, which works under the Union Ministry of Culture, is responsible for protecting and maintaining certain specific monuments and archaeological sites that have been declared to be of national importance under the relevant provisions of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (AMASR Act).
- Delisting of a monument effectively means it will no longer be conserved, protected, and maintained by the ASI.
- Under the AMASR Act, any kind of construction-related activity is not allowed around a protected site.
- Once the monument is delisted, activities related to construction and urbanization in the area can be carried out in a regular manner.
- The list of protected monuments can grow longer or shorter with new listings and delisting.
- ASI currently has 3,693 monuments under its purview, which will fall to 3,675 once the current delisting exercise is completed.

Section 35 of the AMASR Act

ECONOMY WATCH

Agriculture

- Golden Jubilee of Krishi Vigyan Kendras
- National Cooperative Database

Banking & Finance

- SCORES 2.0

Agriculture

Golden Jubilee of Krishi Vigyan Kendras

Recently, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in 2024.

More on KVKs

- Based on the recommendation of the Education Commission (1964-66), discussion by the Planning Commission and Inter-Ministerial Committee, and further recommendation by the committee headed by Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta appointed by ICAR in 1973 the idea of establishment of Farm Science Centre (Krishi Vigyan Kendra) was developed.
- The first KVK, on a pilot basis, was established in 1974 at Pondicherry under the administrative control of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore.
- It is 100% financed by the Government of India and the KVKs are sanctioned to Agricultural Universities, ICAR institutes, related Government Departments and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) working in Agriculture.
- At present India has a network of 731 KVKs, where each KVK serves more than 5000 farmers.
- KVK is an integral part of the National Agricultural Research System (NARS).

Mandates of KVKs

- On-farm testing to assess the location specificity of agricultural technologies under various farming systems.
- Frontline demonstrations to establish production potential of technologies on the farmers' fields.
- Capacity development of farmers and extension personnel to update their knowledge and skills on modern agricultural technologies.
- To work as Knowledge and Resource Centre of agricultural technologies for supporting initiatives of public,

- RBI Guidelines on Penal Charges on Loan Accounts
- T+0 Trading Settlement Cycle
- Revenue-based Financing for Startups
- RBI Modifies Norms for Investment in AIFs
- Digital India Trust Agency (DIGITA)
- SEBI's Regulatory Framework for Index Providers

Industry

- Government Expands RoDTEP Scheme

Infrastructure

- India's First Small-Scale Liquefied Natural Gas Unit

private and voluntary sectors in improving the agricultural economy of the district.

- Provide farm advisories using ICT and other media means on varied subjects of interest to farmers.

National Cooperative Database

Recently, Ministry of Cooperation launched the National Cooperative Database (NCD) which will help in the expansion and development of cooperatives in the country.

What is NCD?

- National Cooperative Database is a web-based digital dashboard wherein data of cooperative societies, including national/state federations, have been captured. It has collected or mapped information about 8 lakh cooperatives.
- The objective of developing NCD is to provide a single point access to authentic and updated information on about 8 lakh cooperatives of various sectors across the country.
- The Database capture data on several parameters related to cooperatives i.e. location details, no. of members, economic activities, their upward & downward linkages, level of operations, use of ICT, employment, inputs & output, financial & non-financial transactions, assets & liabilities, etc.

Phases of NCD

The work on the NCD will be carried out in three phases:

- (i) In the first phase, mapping of approximately 2.64 lakh societies in three sectors, namely Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, Dairy, and Fisheries, was completed.
- (ii) In the second phase, data from various National Federations, State Federations, State Cooperative Banks (StCB), District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCB), Urban Cooperative Banks (UCB), State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (SCARDB), Primary Agricultural and Rural Development Banks (PCARDB), cooperative sugar



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Space Science

- PSLV-C58/XPoSat Mission Ensures Zero Debris

Space Science

PSLV-C58/XPoSat Mission Ensures Zero Debris

On 25th March, 2024, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) informed that PSLV-C58/XPoSat mission achieved a remarkable feat by leaving practically zero debris in orbit, underscoring the space agency's commitment to responsible space practices.

Key Points

- **Innovative Deorbiting Strategy:** The final stage of the PSLV was transformed into the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3), which was then deorbited from 650 km to 350 km altitude, employing innovative measures to mitigate risks associated with accidental break-ups.
- **Successful Mission Objectives:** Equipped with nine experimental payloads, including six delivered by Non-Government Entities (NGEs) through the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), POEM-3 accomplished its mission objectives within a month.
- **Cost-Effective Experimentation Platform:** Through POEM, ISRO provided an affordable platform for academia, startups, and NGEs to conduct short-duration space experiments, fostering innovation in electric thrusters, satellite dispensers, and more.
- **Effective Conduct of Experiments:** Stabilization of body rates and controlled dumping of residual propellant ensured smooth experimentation onboard POEM-3.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) led the realization of POEM, with support from various ISRO centres and ground stations.

ISRO reiterated its commitment to mitigating space debris risks by advancing debris tracking systems, developing deorbiting technologies, and promoting responsible satellite deployment practices.

- ISRO Achieves Breakthrough in Reusable Launch Vehicle Technology
- India's Atmospheric Research Testbed (ART) Inaugurated

Defence Technology

- Successful Test of Agni-5 Missile with MIRV Technology

New Technology & Innovations

- India Advances in Nuclear Program with FBR Core Loading Initiation
- India Launches First Indigenous Hydrogen Fuel Cell Ferry

ISRO Achieves Breakthrough in Reusable Launch Vehicle Technology

On 22nd March, 2024, ISRO achieved a significant breakthrough in reusable launch vehicle (RLV) technology with the successful completion of the Pushpak Reusable Landing Vehicle (RLV) LEX-02 landing experiment at the Aeronautical Test Range in Chitradurga, Karnataka.

Successful RLV LEX-02 Landing Experiment

- ISRO conducted the RLV LEX-02 landing experiment, the second in a series, showcasing the autonomous landing capability of an RLV under off-nominal initial conditions upon release from a helicopter.
- The winged vehicle, Pushpak, autonomously navigated towards the runway, executing precise landing manoeuvres with cross-range corrections, and came to a halt using its brake parachute, landing gear brakes, and nose wheel steering system.
- ISRO re-validated indigenous technologies in navigation, control systems, landing gear, and deceleration systems essential for high-speed autonomous landing of a space-returning vehicle.

Analysis

- **Technological Validation:** ISRO reaffirms the efficacy of indigenous technologies developed for space missions, showcasing India's competence in space exploration.
- **Cost Efficiency:** ISRO demonstrated cost-efficient approaches in space exploration, potentially reducing the financial burden associated with developing new spacecraft for each mission.
- **Future Prospects:** The successful execution of the RLV LEX-02 mission not only advances India's space capabilities but also opens doors for future endeavours in space exploration, including orbital re-entry missions and beyond, positioning ISRO as a key player in the global space community.



ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable Development

- First Nuclear Energy Summit
- India's Deteriorating Air Quality
- Global E-Waste Monitor (GEM)

Climate Change

- Climate Crisis: WMO Shares Insights
- GBR Faces Devastating Coral Bleaching Crisis

Biodiversity

- Expert Panel Formed for Great Indian Bustard Protection
- Leopard Population 2022 Survey Results

Sustainable Development

First Nuclear Energy Summit

On 21st March, 2024, world leaders from over 30 nations and the European Union convened at the first-ever Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels, highlighting the increasing global momentum for nuclear power.

Key Points

- High-level representatives emphasized the importance of nuclear power for achieving energy security, climate goals, and sustainable development.
- Calls were made for increased financing, workforce development, and support for newcomer countries in the nuclear sector.
- The Summit witnessed discussions on accelerating the development and deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and other advanced nuclear technologies.
- Industry representatives pledged support for governmental efforts to expand nuclear power and infrastructure globally.
- China outlined ambitious plans to significantly increase its nuclear power capacity by 2060, emphasizing the unique advantages of nuclear energy in addressing climate change and ensuring energy security.
- The IAEA hailed the Summit as a “landmark” and a “turning point” in expanding the use of nuclear energy for clean electricity generation.

Advantages of Nuclear Energy

- Nuclear energy offers clean electricity with minimal carbon footprint, making it a potential substitute for fossil fuels.
- Studies show that nuclear power has significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions compared to coal-fired electricity and is competitive with solar and wind energy in terms of lifecycle emissions.
- It plays a crucial role in decarbonization pathways outlined by organizations like the Intergovernmental Panel

on Climate Change (IPCC), contributing to substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Challenges and Concerns

- Despite efforts to promote nuclear energy, apprehensions persist, partly fuelled by events like the Fukushima accident and the crisis at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in Ukraine.
- Safety concerns, high costs, and technological challenges hinder the widespread adoption of nuclear power.
- Despite its advantages, nuclear energy faces slow growth and limited uptake globally, with only a few countries actively pursuing nuclear power projects.
- Factors such as high costs, long construction times, and regulatory constraints contribute to the sluggish expansion of nuclear energy.

Global Efforts and Goals

- Initiatives like the ‘Atoms4Climate’ campaign and participation in climate conferences aim to raise awareness about nuclear energy’s potential contribution to clean energy transitions.
- The goal of tripling global nuclear energy installed capacity by 2050 was endorsed by representatives from 22 countries at COP28 in Dubai, marking a significant milestone for nuclear energy advocacy.

India’s Position and Future Plans

- India recognizes the role of nuclear energy in its decarbonization strategy but faces challenges in significantly increasing its nuclear power capacity.
- Efforts are underway to expand nuclear energy capacity, aiming for a significant share in India’s electricity mix by 2047.

India’s Deteriorating Air Quality

The latest World Air Quality Report 2023 reveals alarming trends in air pollution, with Bihar’s Begusarai emerging as the world’s most polluted metropolitan area and Delhi retaining its title as the capital city with the poorest air quality.



WORLD WATCH

International Relations

- India-Malaysia Bilateral Talks
- India Launches Operation Indravati

International Relations

India-Malaysia Bilateral Talks

On 27th March, 2024, India's External Affairs Minister discussed bilateral ties with his Malaysian counterpart in Kuala Lumpur.

Key Points

- **Aim of the Visit:** Visit aimed to bolster cooperation and understanding between India and Malaysia on shared challenges and opportunities.
- **Productive Discussion on Bilateral Ties:** Both leaders exchanged views on multifaceted dimensions of Malaysia-India relations and regional issues.
- **Focus on High-Level Visits:** Ministers discussed plans for exchange of high-level visits and convening 7th Joint Commission Meeting.

INDIA-MALAYSIA RELATIONS: KEY FACTS

- **Bilateral Trade:** Bilateral trade reached \$19.4 billion (RM85.60 billion) in the financial year 2021-2022.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Both countries conducted bilateral joint exercises involving all three branches of the Indian armed forces in 2022, showcasing deepening defence cooperation.
- **Strategic Significance:** Malaysia's role as the fifth-largest economy in Southeast Asia and the ASEAN chair for 2025 adds strategic significance to India-Malaysia ties.
- **Educational and Technical Cooperation:** Efforts to enhance technical cooperation and educational exchanges are underway, aimed at mutual capacity-building and knowledge exchange.
- **Indian Diaspora:** India and Malaysia share a long-standing relationship, with approximately 2.5 million Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) residing in Malaysia, making it the second-largest PIO community globally.

- India Bolsters Strategic Presence in Indian Ocean

World Issues

- ICJ Orders Israel to Ensure Gaza's Food Supply
- Finland Boosts Defence Innovation through NATO's DIANA
- US Army Initiates Gaza Aid Pier Project
- Sweden Joins NATO: A Shift in Security Policy

International Treaties

- India-EFTA Trade Deal

- **Strong Economic Partnership:** India and Malaysia share robust economic partnership, with India being Malaysia's 12th largest global trading partner in 2023. India is among Malaysia's top ten trading partners.

India Launches Operation Indravati

On 21st March, 2024, India initiated Operation Indravati to evacuate citizens from Haiti to the Dominican Republic amid escalating violence.

Key Points

- **Challenges in Haiti:** Haitians face dwindling hope in the interim government amidst escalating violence orchestrated by gangs.
- **Gangs' Coordinated Attacks:** Gangs launch synchronized assaults on crucial installations in Haiti, aiming to oust Prime Minister Ariel Henry.
- **Indian Embassy Situation:** India monitors the situation in Haiti through its mission in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
- **Citizens' Evacuation Preparedness:** Between 75 to 90 Indians are in Haiti, with 60 registered for potential evacuation, ensuring readiness for all.
- **Commitment to Nationals' Safety:** External Affairs Ministry reiterated its commitment to ensuring the security and well-being of Indian citizens abroad.

India Bolsters Strategic Presence in Indian Ocean

Recently, Indian Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Mauritius jointly inaugurated an airstrip and a jetty on Agaléga island, underscoring India's commitment to enhancing regional connectivity and security.

- **Infrastructure Development in Mauritius:** The joint inauguration of an airstrip and jetty on Agaléga island reflects India's commitment to bolstering maritime infrastructure in Mauritius.
- **China's Growing Presence:** China's expanding presence in the Indian Ocean, marked by diplomatic, economic, and

200

Important Current Affairs Topics

with General Studies Input and Model MCQs

National Affairs

Rights of Non-Tribals in Scheduled Areas

On 10th May, 2023, the Supreme Court (SC) dismissed a plea contending that no one, except the members of the Scheduled Tribes, has the right to settle down in the Scheduled Areas.

- The Scheduled Areas cover ten states with tribal majority populations.
- Here there are special governance and development provisions for tribal communities.
- The Fifth Schedule mandates the appointment of a Governor's representative for administering Scheduled Areas.
- Articles 330 and 332 reserve seats for Scheduled Tribes in the national and state legislative bodies, respectively.
- Additionally, Article 243D ensures reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in Panchayats.

Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to Scheduled and Tribal communities:

1. To protect the interests of tribal communities, Scheduled Areas have been given special provisions under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution.
2. The Sixth Schedule empowers the Governor of any State to make rules for the peace and good governance of the Scheduled Area.
3. Article 244 relating to the administration of Scheduled and Tribal Areas is the most important constitutional provision for STs.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

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

Judicial Recusal

On 10th May, 2023, the Supreme Court of India rejected a plea by a former Indian Police Service (IPS) officer seeking recusal of Justice Shah from hearing the matter against his conviction in a 1990 custodial death case.

- Recusal is the act of a Judge or policymaker stepping aside from a case due to a conflict of interest.
- It upholds the Principle of Natural Justice mentioned implicitly in Article 21.
- In *Advocates-on-Record Association vs. Union of India*

(2015), the SC ruled that if a judge has a financial interest, no further inquiry into the 'real danger' or 'reasonable suspicion' of bias is needed.

Q2. What is meant by 'Due process of law'?

- (a) Principle of Natural Justice
(b) Procedure established by law
(c) Fair application of law
(d) Equality before law

Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI)

Recently, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) was ranked second among 66 ministries in the Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) assessment.

- The DGQI assessment is conducted by the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog.
- It aims to assess different Ministries/Departments' performance on the implementation of Central Sector Schemes (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).
- The DGQI assessment encompasses six pivotal themes, including Data Generation, Data Quality, Use of Technology, Data Analysis, Use and Dissemination, Data Security and HR Capacity, and Case Studies.

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding DGQI:

1. DGQI is a comprehensive framework that evaluates the data governance practices of various ministries and departments of the Government of India.
2. The ministries/departments were classified into six categories - administrative, strategic, infrastructure, social, economic, and scientific.

Which of the above option(s) is/are correct?

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

Article 355

With respect to the ethnic unrest in Manipur, Article 355 of Indian Constitution came in to light.

- Article 355, found in Part XVIII of the Constitution, mandates the Union to safeguard every state against external aggression and internal disturbance, ensuring governance aligns with constitutional provisions.

STATE WATCH



In this section, we have briefly presented the schemes and programs started by various states, meetings and conferences organized at the state level, latest reports released by the state governments and other major developments from which questions are often asked in state-specific competitive examinations.

Uttar Pradesh

Trinetra App 2.0

- The Uttar Pradesh police force is set to adopt the advanced Trinetra app 2.0, a cutting-edge digital platform that promises to revolutionize crime prevention and investigation in the state.
- With over 9.32 lakh criminal records digitized within the Trinetra database, frontline officers will now have the capability to swiftly identify suspects during security checks.
- Leveraging audio-based search functionality, Trinetra 2.0 can also identify criminals based on voice samples, which will be particularly beneficial in cybercrime cases where only the criminal's voice is available.
- Trinetra 2.0 also facilitates the inclusion of seizure details and related documentation, allowing for in-depth analysis through the Crime GPT feature.

Odisha

India's First Indoor Athletics and Aquatic Centres

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated India's first indoor athletics stadium and indoor aquatic centre at the Kalinga stadium in Bhubaneswar.
- The new indoor facilities will help athletes train throughout the year without fear of weather-related disturbances.
- It also has a classroom for studies, medical facilities, and a dedicated pantry for athletes.
- The stadium has facilities for long jump, triple jump, 100m and 200m race tracks, pole vault, and shot put events.

Kerala

India's 1st FutureLABS at C-DAC

- It was inaugurated at C-DAC Thiruvananthapuram.
- Named the "Centre for Semiconductor Chips & Systems for Strategic Electronics," this pioneering initiative aims to catalyze an ecosystem for next-generation chip design, manufacturing, and research.
- Collaborating with the Ministry of Railways, C-DAC (T) is developing electric locomotives, contributing to modernizing transportation infrastructure.
- FutureLABS envisions transforming Thiruvananthapuram into India's next innovation hub, leveraging its rich talent pool and conducive ecosystem for technological advancements.

Tamil Nadu

'Neengal Nalama' Scheme

- Tamil Nadu government has launched the 'Neengal Nalama' (Are you fine?) scheme, a beneficiary outreach program aimed at reviewing the implementation of flagship schemes.
- Under the 'Neengal Nalama' scheme, people will be directly contacted by the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, Department Heads, Department Secretaries, and District Collectors to inquire about their level of benefit and to identify any bottlenecks related to various government schemes.
- As part of the scheme, the Chief Minister launched a web portal where beneficiaries can express their opinions and provide feedback on the welfare projects of the Tamil Nadu government.
- This initiative aims to improve government services by eliciting views from beneficiaries through direct interaction with Ministers, senior officials, and District Collectors.

News Snippets

Here we have presented those contemporary developments which do not require detailed study; rather it is sufficient to read them in brief while preparing for the examination. Instead of including such developments in the initial regular columns of the magazine, we have presented them separately in this section.



India in Brief

c-VIGIL App

- Since the announcement of General Elections 2024, over 79,000 complaints have been received on c-VIGIL app.
- It is a mobile application developed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to enable citizens to report violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during elections.
- By using this app, the citizens can immediately report on incidents of political misconduct within minutes and without having to rush to the office of the returning officer.
- As soon as the complaint is sent on the app, the complainant will receive a unique ID through which the person will be able to track the complaint on their mobile.
- Users capture audios, photos or videos in real-time, and a “100-minute” countdown for time-bound response to complaints is ensured.
- The app automatically enables a geo-tagging feature as soon as the user switches on their camera in the app to report a violation.

e-shram Portal

- Recently, the Supreme Court of India has directed all states and Union territories to issue ration cards to migrant labourers registered on the e-shram portal within two months.
- The decision comes after authorities failed to comply with previous directive given in April 2023, which granted a three-month window for providing ration cards to labourers.
- The e-Shram portal is a centralized database that helps to implement social security services for unorganized workers.
- It also helps to share information with stakeholders and provide a comprehensive database for national crises.
- The portal uses Aadhaar to deliver social security benefits and ensure that the benefits are portable to migrant and construction workers at their workplaces.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

- Recently, NAAC has decided to introduce a binary categorisation of “accredited” or “not accredited” for Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs).
- NAAC is an autonomous body of the University Grants Commission (UGC), under the Ministry of Education. It was established in 1994 in pursuance of the recommendations made by the National Policy of Education, 1986.
- It's headquarter is in Bengaluru.
- Functions: Evaluation, assessment, and accreditation of HEIs in the country.
- NAAC has identified seven criteria: i. Curricular aspects, ii. Teaching-learning and evaluation, iii. Research, consultancy and extension, iv. Infrastructure and learning resources, v. Student support and progression, vi. Governance and leadership and vii. Innovative practices as the basis for its assessment procedure.

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)

- Recently, the Union Home Minister said the Central Government will consider revoking the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in Jammu and Kashmir.
- AFSPA is a law enacted by the Parliament in 1958 which gives the armed forces special powers and immunity to maintain public order in “disturbed areas”.
- It can be applied only after an area has been declared “disturbed” under section 2 of the Act.

News Notes

In general competitive examinations, a large number of questions are asked from appointments, awards, military exercises, summits & conferences, important days, etc. for which coverage of current events in a concise form is sufficient. Keeping this in mind, we have presented these contemporary developments in a brief form in this section.



| Persons in News | |
|------------------|--|
| Person | Why in News |
| Ms. Sheetal Devi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced Para Archer and Arjuna Awardee, Sheetal Devi as its National PwD Icon. |
| Suman Kumari | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub Inspector Suman Kumari from Himachal Pradesh became the Border Security Force's first woman sniper after completing an 8-week course at its Indore-based Central School of Armament and Warfare Skills (CSWT). |

| Appointments | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Person | Brief Description |
| Sadanand Vasant Date | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as the new Director General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA). |
| Piyush Anand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as the Director General of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). |
| Rajeev Kumar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as the Director General of the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D). |
| Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi has taken oath as the new judicial member of the Lokpal (ombudsman). |
| Hansha Mishra | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as Director in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Delhi. |
| Luis Montenegro | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of the Portugal. |
| Govind Dholakia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB) has appointed Govind Dholakia, a Rajya Sabha MP from Gujarat, as its new chairman. |
| Mariam Mammen Mathew | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mariam Mammen Mathew, CEO of Manorama Online, has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA) for a two-year term starting April 1, 2024. |
| Ashwani Kumar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been elected as the President of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO). |
| Rahul Singh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as the chairperson of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). |
| Navneet Kumar Sehgal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as the new chairperson of the Prasar Bharati Board. |
| Kishor Makwana | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has assumed the charge of Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) in New Delhi. |
| Gyanesh Kumar & Sukhbir Singh Sandhu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They have been appointed as new Election Commissioners to the three member body of Election Commission of India headed by CEC Rajiv Kumar. |

| Obituary | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Person | Brief Description |
| Admiral Laxmi-narayan Ramdas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was the former Chief of Naval Staff of the Indian Navy (1990-1993). |

GS PT Pointers

Subject-wise Content based on
Haryana Civil Services Prelims Exam 2023



In the GS PT Pointers section, instead of solved paper, we have provided important facts related to the topics of the questions asked in Haryana Civil Services (HCS) and Other Allied Services Preliminary Exam-2023 conducted by Haryana Public Service Commission on 11th February, 2024. We have categorized the information subject-wise and topic-wise. We will publish content related to similar examinations in future. We hope you find the content useful in your preparation for upcoming examinations.

Geography

- **Saptarshi:** It is a constellation visible at night in the sky of the Northern Hemisphere of the Earth.
- It can be seen as a group of seven stars in the sky from Phalgun-Chait month to Shraavan-Bhadra month.
- Its English name is Great Bear. This constellation forms the shape of a big bear in the sky that is why it was given this name in ancient civilizations.
- The Big Dipper completes one revolution around the pole star in 24 hours. The first two stars of this circle are always visible in line with the pole star.
- **Mountain Breeze:** It is a cold, heavy wind blowing from mountain peaks to valleys.
- Higher mountain areas become relatively cooler at night, especially when the sky is clear, by radiating heat.
- Due to this, the air cools down and starts flowing towards the valleys.
- **Chinook Wind:** It is a hot and dry wind blowing along mountain slopes.
- This wind blows across the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains from Colorado north to British Columbia, Canada.
- **Sirocco:** This is a hot wind blowing in the Sahara Desert towards the Mediterranean Sea.
- The headwinds flowing from the Sahara Desert to Italy are filled with sand particles, and after absorbing moisture from the ocean, when they rain in Italy, these sand particles cause the raindrops to turn red.
- This type of rain is called rain of blood in Italy.
- **Angel Falls:** It is the tallest waterfall in the world with a height of 979 m (3,212 ft) and depth of 807 m (2,648 ft).
- The waterfall falls from the Auyantepui Mountains in Canaima National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Gran Sabana region of Bolivar state in Venezuela.
- Victoria Falls is called Mosi-oa-Tunya in the local language. It is a waterfall located on the Zambezi River in Africa. It is considered as one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

- **Regur Soil:** Its colour is black and it is deficient in nitrogen and humus. It is formed due to weathering of basaltic rocks.
- The parent material for most of the black soils is volcanic rocks that were formed in the Deccan Plateau.
- This soil is rich in magnesium, lime, iron and organic matter. The black colour of this soil is due to the presence of titaniferous magnetite and humus.
- **Grasslands:** Veld or veldt refers to the open areas of Southern Africa which are plains largely covered with grass and small bushes.
- The veld is especially widespread in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and many parts of South Africa.
- The Pampas grasslands are located in Argentina, mostly found in the interior areas of the continent.
- In this region, temperatures vary greatly in winter and summer.
- The land generally referred to as “prairie” is found in North America. It covers the area referred to as the interior lowlands of Canada, the United States, and Mexico, including all of the Great Plains as well as the wetter, mountainous lands to the east.
- **Jet Streams:** They are high-speed, narrow air currents of the atmosphere usually found at the tropopause.
- Some jet streams are also located in the lower levels of the atmosphere. These are found all over the world.
- Each large wave or ripple in the jet stream is known as a Rossby wave.
- The tropical easterly jet stream influences the emergence and duration of the Indian summer monsoon.

History

- **Rani Durgavati:** She ruled Gondwana from 1548 to 1564.
- The Mughal emperor Akbar invaded and conquered Gondwana in 1564.
- Chand Bibi was also known as Chand Khatoon or Chand Sultana.

Exam Pointers

Based on March 2024 issues of Yojana,
Kurukshetra and Science Reporter



In this section, we are presenting a compilation of exam-oriented study material sourced from various magazines published by the Government of India in March 2024. It has been prepared keeping in mind the exam-specific needs of the candidates

Art and Culture in the Digital Age

Traditional Art Forms in Digital Age

- Digitization of art provides **immense variety and spontaneity** to the artist.
- The process of digitalization offers **greater scope for creating and popularizing** masterpieces of art with the help of **modern methods such** as interactive multimedia installations, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) with 2D, 3D and 4D dimensions.
- **Digital enhancement technology** has been instrumental in continuously changing artistic traditions and keeping it in sync with the journey of mankind.
- Many defunct art forms have seen a **revival through dedicated digital media campaigns**.

Popular Music in India

- **Popular music** is a genre that has recently **emerged from traditional music**.
- The **rules** followed in popular music **are less strict** than those in classical music.
- The **‘Freshness’ or ‘Newness’** of music is an important element of popular music, as it aims to satisfy the masses.
- A major form of popular music is **‘Natyasangeet’**. The music of theater is called **‘Natyasangeet’**, the songs are called **‘Natyageet’**, and the theater form accompanying these songs is called **‘Sangeet Natak’**.
- **‘Natyageet’** were songs based on ragas with Marathi text. **Natyageet’** were embellished with **‘Alap’ and short, fast taunts**.
- A new taal **‘Gandharva Theka’** was invented during the Sangeet Natak era, which was especially used for the accompaniment of **‘Naty Sangeet’**.
- **Vishnudas Bhave’s play ‘Sangeet Swayamvar’** was the first musical play to be staged in Sangli in 1843.
- **Film music** developed after **recording technology** came to India from the West in the **1920s**.

- **Advances in sound technology** in the 1980s allowed extensive experimentation and variation in film music by **RD Burman and later AR Rahman** as music directors.
- **‘Indian Ocean’** was one of the leading and very popular bands of India.
- **Bhavasangeet or Bhaavgeet** are sung in all the regional languages of India, they are also called Sugam Sangeet.
- **‘Abhanga’** is a popular type of accessible classical music; its texts are written by saints, often containing a timeless message.
- Devotional light classical songs sung in praise of God are called **‘Bhajans’**.
- **‘Bandish’** is an Indian classical musical composition with tune, rhythm and words.

Folk Art Reimagined using Modern Techniques and Contexts

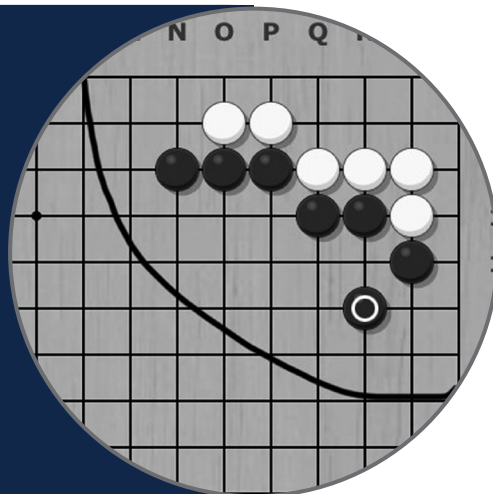
- Unlike classical art forms, folk arts tend to be **dynamic and adaptable**, often influenced by contemporary influences and trends.
- Art is not just a means of entertaining the audience, it is also a **powerful medium to instill a sense of awe** in them and take their consciousness to new heights.
- There are some risks to the use of technology in arts forms. This is **limiting art to mere computational algorithms or the limited digital platforms** of the non-human electronic music sphere.

The Power of Art for Healing and Self Expression

- Emphasis on healing through **art and self-expression** is given in Art Therapy.
- An art therapist tries to understand **the root cause of stress or distress**.
- According to his findings, the doctor inspires the patient to **create an art** in which the cause of his problem can be clarified.

Terms in Vogue

In the last few years, the trend of asking questions from popular terminologies has increased in competitive examinations. Accordingly, there is a need for special study of the terms discussed in the contemporary context. Keeping this in mind, we are presenting relevant content in this section.



IRIS

- Recently, a groundbreaking development in education has emerged from Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram, where a school has introduced India's first AI teacher robot, IRIS.
- IRIS AI Robot is powered by Robotics and Generative AI technologies. It has a dedicated Intel processor and co-processor for seamless performance.
- Its android app interface allows users to control and interact with the robot, ensuring a personalized learning experience.
- It engages users in interactive learning experiences through personalized content generation, quizzes and interactive activities.

Hyodol

- Recently, the South Korean government is reported to have deployed around 7,000 Hyodol dolls to keep senior citizens 'company' and remind them to take medications. Loneliness among senior citizens is a growing social issue in South Korea.
- Hyodol is an AI care robot that offers customised care for seniors. The robot does this by relying on data collected by living and having conversations with them.
- It can hold full conversations and it comes with a companion app and web monitoring platform for caretakers to monitor remotely.
- Besides, it comes with safety features that can raise an alert when no movement has been detected for a certain period of time.

Ecocide

- Belgium became the first European country to recognize 'ecocide' as a national and international crime.
- Ecocide is defined as "unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts."
- The definition of ecocide was provided by the Independent Expert Panel for the Legal Definition of Ecocide in June 2021.
- The new crime of ecocide in Belgium applies to individuals in positions of decision-making power and to corporations.
- Punishments for individuals may include up to 20 years in prison, while corporations could face fines of up to 1.6 million euros.
- The scope of the new law is limited to areas within the jurisdiction of the federal authority, including the North Sea and nuclear waste management.
- Belgium's recognition of ecocide is aligned with the EU's agreement to incorporate a new dedicated offense into its environmental crimes directive.

Ghost Particles

- IceCube Neutrino Observatory scientists claim to have discovered evidence for astrophysical tau neutrinos.
- Neutrinos are subatomic particles with minimal interaction with matter, allowing them to travel long distances without disturbance.
- Tau neutrinos are especially elusive and difficult to detect, earning them the nickname "ghost particle."
- Seven candidate tau neutrino events were detected in the data with very low expected background, indicating a strong likelihood of their authenticity.
- Astrophysical neutrinos, including tau neutrinos, originate from the farthest reaches beyond our galaxy.
- IceCube Observatory uses strings of digital optical modules (DOMs) embedded deep within Antarctic ice to detect neutrinos.

Parliament Q & A

In almost all the examinations, direct questions are being asked on the subjects on which facts are presented in the Parliament. Moreover, this information presented in the Parliament is also factually accurate. In this section we have presented a useful compilation of such facts.



Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar (MGMD) Programme

- Initiative by the Government of India to map and document all villages.
- Launched a web portal on July 27, 2023, to compile comprehensive information about Indian villages.
- Aims to detail the life, history, and ethos of villages for virtual and real-time visitors.
- Information collected under seven broad categories:
 - ✓ Arts and Crafts Village
 - ✓ Ecologically Oriented Village
 - ✓ Scholastic Village linked with Textual and Scriptural Traditions of India
 - ✓ Epic Village linked with Ramayana, Mahabharata, and/or Puranic legends
 - ✓ Historical Village linked with Local and National History
 - ✓ Architectural Heritage Village
 - ✓ Other characteristics such as fishing, horticulture, shepherding villages.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme

- Launched for the development of theme-based tourist circuits.
- Revamped as Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0) for sustainable tourism development.
- State/UTs prepare State Perspective Plans for destination selection.
- 57 destinations notified for development under SD2.0.

National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) Scheme

- Launched for integrated development of pilgrimage destinations.
- Aimed at creating tourism infrastructure at identified pilgrimage sites.
- 46 projects sanctioned under the scheme.

MPLADS e-SAKSHI Mobile Application

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) regularly receives and evaluates sug-

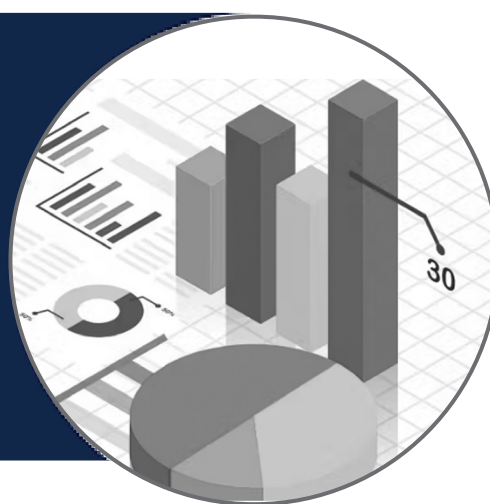
gestions from Hon'ble Members of Parliament and other stakeholders to enhance the MPLAD Scheme guidelines.

- The MPLAD Scheme empowers each Member of Parliament to recommend developmental projects focusing on creating durable community assets that address local needs.
- The MPLADS e-SAKSHI Mobile Application facilitates MPs to propose, monitor, and supervise projects in real-time, improving decision-making processes.
- MPs can use the mobile application to track the progress of their proposed projects, enhancing transparency in project implementation.
- The mobile application streamlines communication between MPs and relevant authorities, promoting efficient exchange of information.

Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

- Implemented by the Ministry of MSME through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- Aims to assist entrepreneurs in setting up new units in the non-farm sector.
- Goal is to provide self-employment opportunities to traditional artisans, rural and urban unemployed youth.
- Provides Margin Money (MM) subsidy:
 - ✓ General Category: 25% of project cost in rural areas, 15% in urban areas.
 - ✓ Special Categories: 35% in rural areas, 25% in urban areas.
- Special Categories include SCs, STs, OBCs, Minorities, Women, Ex-servicemen, Physically Handicapped, Transgenders, beneficiaries from Northeastern Region, Hill and Border areas, Aspirational Districts, etc.
- Maximum project cost: Rs. 50 lakhs (Manufacturing sector), Rs. 20 lakhs (Service sector).
- Own contribution: 5% for Special Category, 10% for General Category beneficiaries.
- Supports existing enterprises since 2018-19 with a 2nd loan for upgradation and expansion.
- Maximum project cost for 2nd Loan: Rs. 1.00 crore (Manufacturing sector), Rs. 25 lakh (Service sector).
- Eligible subsidy on 2nd loan: 15% of project cost (20% for NER & Hill States). ■■

India Update Fact Sheet



In this section, we have presented a compilation of useful information on those topics which are important for general competitive examinations and from which facts and figures related questions are repeatedly asked.

Logistics Sector in India

Current Scenario

- **Value:** The Indian logistics sector was valued at USD 250 Bn in 2021 and is expected to grow at CAGR 10-12% to reach USD 380 Bn by 2025. India is on track to be among top 25 countries by 2030 in the Logistics Performance Index ranking.
- **Warehousing Stock:** Demand for Grade A&B warehousing stock to increase from 287 mn sq ft (2021) to 500 mn sq ft (2025) in the top 8 Tier-1 cities.
- **Cold Storage:** The cold storage capacity is expected to rise to 41 Mn sq. ft. (2023).
- **Reducing Logistics Cost:** The government aims to trim the cost of logistics to 8-9% of the GDP by 2030.
- **Omni-Channel Retail:** The omni-channel retail has witnessed a CAGR of 17% between 2019 and 2024 with the market size increasing from USD 231 Mn (2019) to USD 488 Mn (2024 projected).

Infrastructure Investments in Logistics Value Chain

Bharatmala Pariyojana

- About 65,000 km of National Highways are to be constructed in two phases under the program, with an estimated cost of ~USD 84 Bn.
- Nearly 50,000 kms of National Highways (NH) have been added in the last 9 years (since 2014) with the pace of NH construction increasing from 12 to 29 km/day.
- As a part of Bharatmala Pariyojana, India's largest expressway, i.e., 1,386 km long Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, is being developed.

Multimodal Logistics Parks

- Government has planned 35 MMLPs with an investment outlay of ~USD 6.2 Bn.
- These parks will lease space to private companies to run central operations and save on warehousing costs.

Sagarmala and Inland Waterways

- It aims to promote port-led development in the country through harnessing India's 7,500 km long coastline and 14,500 km of potentially navigable waterways.

- 800+ projects worth more than USD 67 Bn have been identified for implementation between 2015-35.
- 111 inland waterway channels have been declared as National Waterway.

India's Chemicals Sector

India's Global Standing

- **World Exports of Chemicals:** India ranks 11th (Excluding pharmaceutical products)
- **World Imports of Chemicals:** India ranks 6th (Excluding pharmaceutical products)
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Sector: Chemicals (Excluding fertilizers); Amount: \$21.71 Bn (Apr 2000 to Sept 2023)
- **Market Size in 2023:** USD 220 Bn
- **Expected Market Size by 2030:** USD 383 Bn
- **FDI Allowed under Automatic Route:** 100%
- **Global Chemical Sales:** India ranks 6th
- **Polymers Consumption:** India third largest consumer globally
- **Agrochemicals Production:** India fourth largest producer worldwide

Export Trends

- **Contribution to Total Exports:** Year 2021-22: Chemicals and Chemical products (excluding pharmaceutical products and fertilizers) contributed 11.7% to total exports. Year 2022-23: Contribution reduced to 10.8%.
- **Export Growth Rate:** CAGR (2017-18 to 2021-22): 13.86% for Chemicals and Chemical products, compared to 12.62% for total national exports.

Production Trends

- **Major Chemicals Production:** Decreased to 53.54 Lakh Tonnes during 2023-24 (up to Aug 2023) from 54.32 Lakh Tonnes in the previous year.
- **Organic Chemicals Production:** Recorded an increase of 4.52% (up to Aug 2023) compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.
- **Major Petrochemicals Production:** Increased by 6.08% (up to Aug 2023) compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

Current Affairs based

Prelims 2024 Model MCQs

1. Which of the following organisations has introduced the “From Farm to Fork” strategy in order to overhaul the agriculture sector?

- (a) European Union
- (b) African Union
- (c) Food Corporation of India
- (d) Food and Agriculture Organization

2. The place Port Louis was recently in the news. The place is located in:

- (a) Australia
- (b) Maldives
- (c) Mauritius
- (d) Madagascar

3. With reference to office of Lokpal, consider the following statements:

1. The Lokpal is the first institution of its kind in independent India, established under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 to inquire and investigate into allegations of corruption against public functionaries who fall within the scope and ambit of the above Act.
2. The Lokpal is vested with the power of search and seizure and also powers under the Civil Procedure Code for the purpose of conducting preliminary inquiry & investigation and power of attachment of assets and taking other steps for eradication of corruption.
3. The Administrative branch of Lokpal is headed by an officer of the rank of Secretary to Government of India

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

4. Consider the following statements:

1. These handmade masks are traditionally used to depict characters in bhaonas, or theatrical performances with devotional messages under the neo-Vaishnavite tradition.
2. They were introduced by the 15th-16th century reformer saint Srimanta Sankardeva.
3. These masks are made of bamboo, clay, dung, cloth, cotton and wood.

The above mentioned statements refer to:

- (a) Chamoli Wooden Ramman Mask
- (b) Purulia Chau Mask
- (c) Monpa Wooden Mask
- (d) Majuli Mask of Assam

5. With reference to the Smooth-coated Otters, consider the following statements:

1. They are listed under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
2. There are six species of otters in Asia, and only smooth-coated otters are found in India.
3. They are classified as ‘Vulnerable’ by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are incorrect?

- (a) 1 and 3
- (b) Only 2
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) Only 3

6. Recently, which of the following has become the first city in the country to get a processed steel slag (industrial waste) road built as part of a joint-venture project by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Central Road Research Institute (CRRI)?

- (a) Surat
- (b) Lucknow
- (c) Bengaluru
- (d) Pune

7. Consider the following statement:

It is a major natural fibre crop in India. The raw crop was originally thought to be a raw material source for the packaging industry. However, it has developed as a versatile raw material for a wide range of uses, including textiles, paper, construction, and automotive industries, as well as ornamental and furnishing products.

The above given statement is true for which of the following fibres?

- (a) Cotton
- (b) Flax
- (c) Coir
- (d) Jute

8. Recently, Southern border was in the news. It separates:

- (a) United States-Mexico
- (b) Iran-Turkiye
- (c) Thailand- Cambodia
- (d) Egypt- Sudan

9. Which species does *Melanochlamys droupadi*, recently featured in the news, belong to?

- (a) Turtle
- (b) Fish
- (c) Dolphin
- (d) Sea Slug

10. What name has been sanctioned by the IAU Working Group for Planetary System Nomenclature for the landing site of Chandrayaan’s Vikram lander?

- (a) Shiv Shakti
- (b) Ajay
- (c) Rohini
- (d) Sashakt

Answers

1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (d) 4. (d) 5. (b) 6. (a)
7. (d) 8. (a) 9. (d) 10. (a) ■■

Info Bytes

From Govt. News Services like PIB, AIR, etc.



- With which South American country, India recently conducted the inaugural '2+2' defence and foreign ministerial dialogue? **-Brazil**
- Who secured the Men's Singles Title at the World Table Tennis Feeder Beirut tournament? **-Sathiyam Gnanasekaran**
- Which Indian naval vessels participated in the India-Mozambique-Tanzania trilateral maritime exercise? **-INS Tir and INS Sujatha**
- Who was elected as Co-Chair of ITU's Digital Innovation Board? **-Neeraj Mittal**
- Who resigned from the presidency of Vietnam? **-Vo Van Thuong**
- What was the theme of World Water Day observed on March 22? **-'Water for Prosperity and Peace'**
- Which state is hosting a Strawberry Festival from April 5 to 13? **-Meghalaya**
- In which report did India rank 126th out of 143 countries in 2024? **-World Happiness Report**
- What forum was hosted in New Delhi by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation? **-Startup Forum**
- Who assumed the role of President of the Indian Steel Association, succeeding Dilip Oommen? **-Naveen Jindal**
- Which organization successfully concluded its second crucial landing experiment for the reusable launch vehicle? **-ISRO**
- Which state's Police department has introduced Trinetra app 2.0, empowering officers with advanced tools like facial recognition, audio search, and QR codes? **-Uttar Pradesh**
- According to a UN agency, which country is facing the biggest challenge of the hunger crisis? **-Sudan**
- Where was India's inaugural battery storage gigafactory launched? **-Jammu and Kashmir**
- Which Indian cueist has been inducted into the Billiards Hall of Fame at the World Billiards Museum in Shangrao City in China? **-Pankaj Advani**
- Who has been elected as the first minister of Wales, making him the first Black leader of a government in the United Kingdom. **-Vaughan Gething**
- Who has been appointed as India's Ambassador to Russia? **-Vinay Kumar**
- What status was granted to GRID-INDIA by the Power Ministry? **-Minitatna Category-I**
- Where was India's first ayurvedic café opened? **-Delhi**
- Who has been appointed as the new Director General (News) of All India Radio (AIR)? **-Moushumi Chakraborty**
- Who was given additional charge of Telangana to oversee gubernatorial duties? **-CP Radhakrishnan**
- Who was selected for the Sangita Kalanidhi Award 2024? **-TM Krishna**
- What does NASA plan to transport to Europa, one of Jupiter's moons? **-Message in a bottle**
- Who is India's flagbearer for the Paris Olympics? **-Achanta Sharath Kamal**
- Who is the new chief of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA)? **-MV Rao**
- What newly discovered species that was named after ISRO? **-Isopod**
- What operation did India initiate to evacuate its citizens from Haiti? **-Indravati**
- Which team secured the Ranji Trophy 2024 title? **-Mumbai**
- With which country did India organize the military exercise 'Tiger Triumph - 24'? **-United States**
- Who was appointed as the new Chairman of CBSE in March 2024? **-Rahul Singh**
- Who was awarded the PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award for exceptional philanthropic contributions? **-Ratan Tata**
- Who has been selected for the prestigious Saraswati Samman award for the year 2023? **-Prabha Varma**
- Which day was celebrated on March 20th to promote global happiness and well-being? **-International Day of Happiness**
- According to a recent report by Swiss group IQ Air, which city has been declared the most polluted capital city in the world? **-Delhi**
- How many phases are scheduled for the Lok Sabha elections 2024? **-7**