

PRAYAAS TIMES

CA CAPSULE
AUGUST THIRD WEEK
UPSC/MPSC 2025-26

UPSC/MPSC

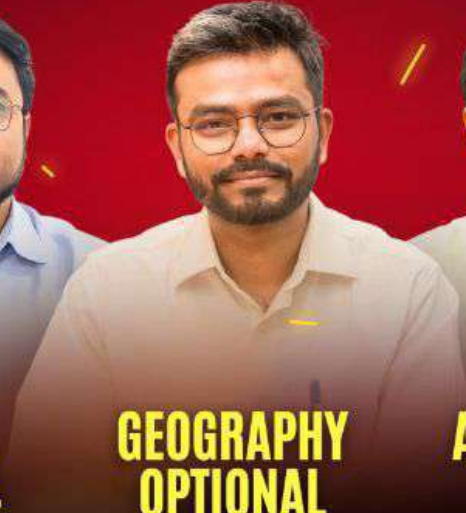
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PRAYAAS

MAINS FOCUS

2.General Studies II**2.1 Reforming Prison Systems****News Context**

- The Supreme Court directed States and UTs to **immediately release prisoners kept in jail beyond their sentence term**, highlighting serious lapses in prison governance.

Syllabus of Mains: GS 2 – Governance Reforms; Important Aspects of Governance

History of Prison Reforms in India

- **Pre-Independence Era**
 - Under British rule, prisons in India were primarily punitive institutions characterized by harsh conditions, overcrowding, and neglect.
 - Imprisonment was seen as a **tool of deterrence rather than rehabilitation**.
 - The Indian National Congress (1920), in its resolutions, highlighted the need for reforms and better prison conditions, linking it with broader demands for justice in governance.
- **Post-Independence Era**
 - **All India Jail Manual Committee (1952):** Recommended scientific classification of prisoners, improved medical care, vocational training, and involvement of social workers and psychologists to aid rehabilitation.
 - Emphasis was placed on transforming prisons from punitive spaces to reformatory institutions.
- **Judicial Interventions**
 - **Sunil Batra v. Delhi Administration (1980):** A landmark Supreme Court ruling that condemned inhuman treatment in prisons.
 - Laid down guidelines for humane treatment, access to legal aid, and medical care.
 - Marked the beginning of judicial activism in prison reforms.

Current State of Prisons Governance in India: -

- **Constitutional Basis:** Prisons fall under the **State List** (Entry 4, Seventh Schedule).
- **Legal Framework:** Governed by the Prisons Act, 1894 along with state-specific prison manuals.
- **Administration:** Managed by State Home Departments—responsible for policy and resources.
- **Oversight Mechanisms:** Inspections by courts and the **NHRC** to safeguard rights.
- **Advisory Role:** BPR&D issues guidelines for uniform prison administration.
- **Legal Aid:** NALSA ensures free legal services and prevents unlawful detention.
- **Special Legislations:** Juvenile Justice Act and Probation of Offenders Act enable non-custodial sentencing.

Major Issues Related to Prisons in India

- **Overcrowding**
 - NCRB data (2022) shows **occupancy at 130% of capacity**.
 - Overcrowding strains infrastructure, increases violence, and deteriorates hygiene and healthcare.
- **High Undertrial Population**
 - **Nearly 77% of inmates are undertrials**, many imprisoned for petty offences.
 - Delays in investigation, shortage of judges, and inability to secure bail worsen the problem.

- **Poor Infrastructure**
 - Most prisons are **old and lack modern facilities**.
 - Inadequate sanitation, ventilation, and medical care create sub-human living conditions.
- **Shortage of Prison Staff**
 - Vacancies in prison staff remain high (often 30–40%).
 - Lack of trained personnel hampers security, rehabilitation, and administration.
- **Human Rights Concerns**
 - Custodial violence, torture, and deaths in prisons are recurring concerns.
 - Prisoners' rights to dignity and legal aid **under Article 21 are often violated**.
- **Lack of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs**
 - Limited access to education, skill-building, and vocational training.
 - Social stigma post-release reduces chances of reintegration into society.
- **Inefficient Use of Technology**
 - Though initiatives **like E-Prisons Project exist**, digitization is uneven across states.
 - Lack of real-time tracking of prisoner records often results in delayed or illegal detention.
- **Gender-Specific Issues**
 - Female prisoners **lack adequate healthcare**, childcare facilities, and counselling support.
 - Infrastructure for women and transgender prisoners remains underdeveloped.
- **State Subject and Lack of Uniformity**
 - Prison is a State List subject, leading to wide disparities in management and reforms across states.
 - Absence of a central policy framework delays standardization of reforms.

Prison Reforms in India – Recommendations, Laws, and Judgements

1. Committees on Prison Reforms

- **Justice Mulla Committee (1983)**
 - Improvement of prison accommodation and infrastructure.
 - Creation of Indian Prisons and Correctional Services as a professional cadre.
 - Transparency: Allow public and media visits to prisons.
 - Reduction of undertrial prisoners through expedited trials.
 - Adoption of a National Policy on Prisons.
 - Promotion of alternatives to imprisonment (e.g., probation, community service).
- **Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer Committee (1987)**
 - Greater induction of women in police and prison services.
 - Separate institutions with only women staff for women offenders.
 - Provisions to restore dignity of convicted women and safeguard against exploitation.
 - Justice Amitava Roy Panel (2018, SC)
 - Establishment of fast-track courts to reduce undertrial population.
 - Improved lawyer-to-prisoner ratio.
 - Wider use of video-conferencing to reduce delays in trial.
 - Emphasis on prison modernization and prisoner welfare.

2. Provisions of the Model Prisons Act, 2023

- **Legal Aid**: Free legal services for prisoners, ensuring access to justice.
- **Parole**: Conditional early release for good behaviour.
- **Furlough**: Periodic leave to maintain family and social ties.
- **Rehabilitation & Welfare**: Vocational training, education, and reintegration programs.
- **Special Facilities**: Provisions for women and transgender prisoners.
- **Technology Use**: For transparent administration, e-prisons, and security systems.

- **High-Security & Open Jails:** Classification for better prison management.

3. Key Judicial Pronouncements

- **Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar (1979):** Recognized the right to a speedy trial as part of Article 21.
- **State of Rajasthan v. Balchand (1978):** Established the principle that “Bail is the rule, Jail the exception.”
- **Sunil Batra v. Delhi Administration (1980):** Condemned torture in prisons and emphasized humane treatment of prisoners.
- **Sheela Barse v. State of Maharashtra (1983):** Highlighted legal aid and protection of women prisoners.

Recent Prison Reform Initiatives by Government

- **Model Prison Manual, 2016**
 - Standardized prison administration across states.
 - Focus on classification of prisoners, healthcare, vocational training, and rehabilitation.
 - Emphasis on reformation over punishment.
- **E-Prisons Project**
 - Part of the Digital India Programme.
 - Maintains a centralized database of prisoners.
 - Enables tracking of prisoner records, sentence details, and parole/furlough status.
- **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) Initiatives**
 - Legal aid clinics inside prisons.
 - Appointment of paralegal volunteers to help undertrial prisoners.
- **Prisons Development Fund (2018)**
 - Established to modernize prison infrastructure.
 - Provides financial support for construction, healthcare, and security upgrades.
- **Smart Prisons Project**
 - Pilot projects in some states (e.g., Tihar Jail).
 - Use of CCTV, biometrics, AI-based monitoring, and digital tracking to enhance security and transparency.

Global Best Practices to Guide Indian Prison Reform

- **Norway:** Rehabilitation-centric prisons like Halden; focus on normalization, education, and low recidivism.
- **United States:** Alternatives to imprisonment such as probation, community service, and electronic monitoring.
- **United Kingdom:** Independent prison inspections (HMIP) and strong accountability mechanisms.
- **Germany:** Emphasis on social reintegration; prisoners retain rights and correctional officers are professionally trained.
- **Japan:** Discipline combined with vocational training, prison industries, and community-based reintegration.
- **United Nations Standards:** Nelson Mandela Rules (2015) for humane treatment, Bangkok Rules (2010) for women prisoners.

Conclusion

- Prisons must evolve from being mere sites of punishment to institutions of reform, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Effective implementation of reforms, coupled with global best practices, can ensure that justice is not just retributive but also restorative. As Mahatma Gandhi

rightly said, "Hate the sin, not the sinner." – a principle that must guide India's prison reforms to uphold the constitutional promise of dignity and justice for all.

Question for Practice: -

- Prisons in India continue to serve as punitive detention centres rather than reformatory institutions." In light of this statement, critically analyse the need for prison reforms in India. (150 words, 10 marks)

2.2 Supreme Court's Success in Increasing Case Disposal Rate

News Context

- Recently Supreme Court **reduced pendency by 4.83%** and achieved a case **clearance ratio of 106.6%**, disposing of more cases than were filed.

Syllabus of Mains - GS 2 - Structure, Organization and Functioning of the Judiciary

Reasons for Supreme Court's Recent Success in Increasing Case Disposal Rate

- Streamlined Case Verification** – Listing department strengthened, more staff added, faster clearance of defects.
- Technology Integration** – Automatic case allocation **through ICMIS** reduced human interference and delays.
- Registrar's Court Reintroduced** – Helped clear defective and procedural matters quickly.
- Efficient Relisting System** – Unheard cases were relisted within 2–3 weeks, raising chances of disposal.
- E-Mentioning of Urgent Cases** – Email requests replaced oral mentioning, saving judicial time and ensuring fairness.
- Focused Disposal of Miscellaneous Cases** – Dedicated court days for admission-stage matters pending for years.
- Data-Driven Planning** – Collaboration with IIM Bangalore for process optimization and empirical study.
- Increased Work Hours and Staff Strength** – Improved verification and listing speed.

The Pendency Problem in India

- Scale of the Problem**
 - Over 5 crore cases pending across all courts (as per National Judicial Data Grid, 2025)
 - Supreme Court:** 80,000+ cases pending.
 - High Courts:** 60+ lakh pending cases.
 - District & Subordinate Courts:** ~4.5 crore cases pending.
- Causes of Pendency**
 - Judicial Vacancies:** 30–40% posts vacant in High Courts and lower courts.
 - High Case Inflow:** Rising litigation due to urbanization, economic growth, and greater legal awareness.
 - Procedural Delays:** Frequent adjournments, lengthy processes, and poor case management.
 - Infrastructure Deficits:** Shortage of judges, courtrooms, and technology adoption.
 - Underutilization of ADR:** Limited use of mediation, arbitration, and Lok Adalats.
 - Government Litigation:** Union and State governments are the largest litigants, contributing ~50% of pending cases.

Impact of Judicial Pendency in India

- On Citizens and Society**

- Denial of Justice: Long delays undermine the principle of “justice delayed is justice denied.”
- Violation of Fundamental Rights: Right to a speedy trial under Article 21 is compromised.
- Erosion of Public Trust: Citizens lose faith in the judiciary, pushing many towards extrajudicial means.
- Social Injustice: Marginalized groups and undertrials suffer disproportionately.
- **On Economy**
 - Investment Delays: Commercial disputes remain unresolved, discouraging both domestic and foreign investors.
 - Contract Enforcement Issues: India ranks poorly on World Bank’s “Enforcing Contracts” index.
 - Increased Litigation Costs: Businesses and individuals bear prolonged legal expenses.
- **On Governance**
 - Government as the Biggest Litigant: Nearly half of pending cases involve the government, draining public resources.
 - Policy Paralysis: Pending legal disputes delay execution of infrastructure and welfare projects.
 - Administrative Overload: Courts spend excessive time on routine or procedural cases instead of critical constitutional matters.
- **On Prisons**
 - Overcrowding: 75% of inmates are undertrials awaiting trial, worsening prison conditions.
 - Human Rights Violations: Prolonged incarceration without conviction undermines dignity and liberty.

Way Forward

- **Institutionalize Data-Driven Reforms:** Establish permanent research and planning wings in High Courts and lower courts to continuously monitor pendency trends.
- **Technology Deepening:** Expand **e-Courts Phase III**, introduce AI-enabled case management, and ensure digital access even in rural courts.
- **Strengthening Grassroots Judiciary:** Fill vacancies, expand infrastructure, and enhance training in subordinate courts where pendency is concentrated.
- **Dedicated Benches & Fast-Track Courts:** Create specialized benches for commercial, family, and criminal cases to expedite resolution.
- **Strengthen ADR Mechanisms:** Make mediation and arbitration mandatory in certain categories of disputes before litigation.
- **Uniform Procedural Reforms:** Implement strict timelines for verification, listing, and relisting across all judicial forums.
- **Government Litigation Reduction:** Develop a litigation management policy to discourage unnecessary appeals by government departments.

Conclusion

- The Supreme Court’s recent success in improving case disposal shows that data-driven planning, technology integration, and procedural efficiency can yield tangible results. Extending these reforms to High Courts and subordinate courts is the way forward. **As Justice P.N. Bhagwati once remarked**, “The right to speedy justice is not only a fundamental right, but also the essence of access to justice.” Strengthening India’s judicial system is thus imperative for ensuring justice that is both accessible and timely.

Question for Practice: -

- The Supreme Court’s recent success in reducing pendency demonstrates that data-driven and technology-based reforms can strengthen judicial efficiency. Discuss. (15 M, 250 Words)

3.General Studies III

3.1 India's path to technological sovereignty

New's Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day address this year felt different. His 103-minute oration, the longest of his tenure, was **anchored in the language of national sovereignty**. At a time when the United States has imposed tariffs on Indian exports, unsettling trade talks, the **PM sought to turn the national conversation from negotiation to assertion, and to the deeper emotion of sovereignty**.

Syllabus of Mains – GS-3- Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

What is technological sovereignty?

- Technological Sovereignty refers to the **ability of a nation, organization, or community to design, develop, control, and govern its own technological systems**, infrastructure, and digital resources without being dependent on external powers or foreign entities. It emphasizes self-reliance, autonomy, and security in areas such as data storage, software, hardware, networks, and digital platforms.

It is often discussed in the context of:

- **Data Sovereignty** – ensuring data is stored and processed within national borders.
- **Digital Infrastructure** – having independent control over critical technologies like cloud computing, 5G, AI, or cybersecurity tools.
- **Geopolitical Independence** – reducing reliance on foreign tech giants or governments that could influence or restrict access.
- **Strategic Security** – protecting sensitive information, national security, and economic interests from external manipulation.

Significance of Technological Sovereignty

- **National Security and Strategic Autonomy:**
 - Modern warfare and intelligence rely heavily on technology – from satellites, drones, and cyber defence to AI-based surveillance.
 - Dependence on foreign technologies can create vulnerabilities, espionage risks, or potential shutdowns in times of conflict.
 - Control over indigenous technology ensures strategic independence in decision-making without fear of external coercion.
- **Data Protection and Privacy:**
 - Data is the **"new oil"** of the digital economy.
 - If stored and processed by foreign firms (e.g., Big Tech), sensitive national and citizens' data can be misused for surveillance, profiling, or manipulation.
 - Technological sovereignty ensures data sovereignty, aligning with national privacy laws and protecting citizen rights.
- **Economic Competitiveness and Innovation:**
 - Nations that control their technological ecosystems can create domestic innovation hubs.
 - Reduces reliance on expensive foreign imports (semiconductors, defence equipment, AI models).
 - Strengthens start-up ecosystems, R&D, and job creation.
 - Ensures long-term competitiveness in the global knowledge economy.
- **Resilience Against Supply Chain Disruptions:**
 - Events like the US-China trade war or the COVID-19 pandemic exposed how global supply chains in critical tech (chips, medical devices, telecom) can be disrupted.

- Indigenous production and control over critical digital infrastructure reduce vulnerability to such shocks.
- **Preservation of Digital Sovereignty and Cultural Identity:**
 - Technology platforms shape narratives, opinions, and cultural values.
 - Over-dependence on foreign digital platforms risks erosion of cultural autonomy and exposes societies to misinformation or external influence.
 - Technological sovereignty helps maintain control over digital discourse, language technologies, and cultural preservation.
- **Geopolitical Leverage:**
 - Countries with technological sovereignty can become rule-makers in international standards (AI ethics, 5G, cybersecurity norms).
 - Enhances bargaining power in multilateral organizations and trade negotiations.
 - Prevents domination by technological superpowers.
- **Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth:**
 - Tailor-made indigenous technology can address local challenges such as digital divide, rural connectivity, smart agriculture, renewable energy, and healthcare innovations.
 - Reduces dependency on imported solutions that may not suit domestic socio-economic realities.

Measures Taken by India for Technological Sovereignty:

- **Policy and Institutional Framework:**
 - **Digital India Mission (2015):** To transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy, focusing on e-governance, e-services, and digital infrastructure.
 - **National Digital Communication Policy (2018):** Roadmap for 5G, broadband connectivity, and indigenous telecom solutions.
 - **National Cyber Security Policy (2013 – under revision):** To secure critical information infrastructure and promote indigenous cyber solutions.
 - **Draft Data Protection Bill (now Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023):** Ensures data sovereignty by regulating storage, processing, and cross-border transfer of data.
- **Indigenous Technological Development:**
 - **Aadhaar & UPI Ecosystem:** Homegrown digital identity and payment platforms, now models for other nations.
 - **India Stack:** Set of APIs for digital infrastructure (e-sign, Digi Locker, UPI, etc.) supporting sovereign digital economy.
 - **C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing):** Indigenous supercomputers under National Supercomputing Mission.
 - **ISRO Achievements:** PSLV, Gaganyaan, NavIC (Indian GPS alternative), and Chandrayaan – ensuring strategic independence in space tech.
 - **DRDO & Defence Indigenisation:** Indigenous missiles, drones, radar, cybersecurity tools.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) Initiative:**
 - Launched in 2020, with strong focus on electronics, semiconductors, defense, AI, 5G, and renewable energy technologies.
 - **PLI Schemes (Production Linked Incentive):** Incentives for domestic production of smartphones, solar modules, semiconductors, IT hardware.
 - **Make in India:** Promoting domestic manufacturing of high-tech products to reduce import dependency.
- **Data Sovereignty and Digital Infrastructure:**
 - **Data Localization Mandates:** RBI rules for financial data storage in India; draft rules for other sectors.
 - **National Knowledge Network (NKN):** High-speed network connecting educational and research institutions.

- **MeitY Cloud (MeghRaj):** Sovereign cloud computing initiative to reduce dependency on foreign cloud giants.
- **C-DOT (Centre for Development of Telematics):** Developing indigenous 4G/5G core technologies.
- **Emerging Technologies & R&D Push:**
 - **National AI Strategy (NITI Aayog, 2018):** "AI for All" with focus on healthcare, agriculture, education, smart cities.
 - **National Quantum Mission (2023):** For indigenous development of quantum computing and secure communication.
 - **Semicon India Programme (2021):** Boosting semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem to cut reliance on Taiwan/China.
 - **INDUS-X (India-US Initiative on Critical & Emerging Tech, 2023):** Collaboration for defence & AI, but with a sovereign capacity-building focus.

Challenges in Achieving Technological Sovereignty:

- **Dependence on Foreign Hardware:**
 - India imports 70–80% of semiconductors, electronic components, and telecom equipment.
 - Over-reliance on global supply chains (Taiwan, South Korea, China) for chips, sensors, and defence electronics undermines autonomy.
- **Insufficient R&D and Innovation Ecosystem:**
 - India spends ~0.7% of GDP on R&D, far below countries like USA (2.7%), China (2.4%), Israel (5%).
 - Weak academia-industry collaboration and limited commercialization of indigenous research.
 - Brain drains of top engineers and scientists.
- **Technological Skill Gap:**
 - Shortage of skilled workforce in AI, quantum computing, semiconductors, cybersecurity, robotics.
 - IT sector strong in services but weak in high-end product innovation.
- **Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities:**
 - Rising cyberattacks on banks, government databases, and critical infrastructure.
 - Dependence on foreign cybersecurity solutions compromises digital sovereignty.
 - Lack of indigenous, large-scale cybersecurity frameworks comparable to global players.
- **Foreign Dominance in Digital Ecosystem:**
 - Indian digital market heavily dependent on Big Tech (Google, Meta, Amazon, Microsoft) for cloud, social media, AI tools.
 - Domestic alternatives are emerging but lack scale and competitiveness.
 - Risk of data colonization and algorithmic bias by foreign platforms.
- **Regulatory and Policy Challenges:**
 - Data protection, AI regulation, and digital governance frameworks are still evolving.
 - Frequent policy uncertainty (e.g., crypto ban debates, data localization rules) discourages foreign and domestic investment.
 - Balancing openness vs. protectionism in tech policies is a constant struggle.
- **Financial and Infrastructure Constraints:**
 - High cost of establishing semiconductor fabs, R&D labs, and 5G/6G infrastructure.
 - Power shortages, inadequate logistics, and weak supply chain integration hamper domestic manufacturing.
- **Global Technology Geopolitics:**
 - Tech sovereignty efforts are shaped by global power rivalry (US–China, EU regulations).
 - India risks getting caught in tech dependency traps if over-aligned with one bloc.

- Technology sanctions (e.g., chip bans on China) highlight vulnerability of countries without self-sufficiency.

Way Forward

- **Boost R&D Investment – Raise spending to at least 2% of GDP**, strengthen academia-industry collaboration, and incentivize indigenous innovation.
- **Build Indigenous Manufacturing** – Fast-track Semicon India, PLI schemes, and Make in India for chips, telecom, defence, and green tech.
- **Skill Development in Emerging Tech** – Expand skilling in AI, quantum, cybersecurity, IoT, robotics, through initiatives like PMKVY and academic reforms.
- **Strengthen Cybersecurity Framework** – Develop indigenous cybersecurity solutions, expand CERT-In & NCIIPC, and push for digital resilience.
- **Promote Domestic Digital Platforms** – Support Indian alternatives to global Big Tech in cloud, e-commerce, AI, fintech, ensuring fair competition.
Robust Policy & Regulation – Implement Digital India Act & Data Protection Act effectively, balancing openness with sovereignty.
- **Global Tech Diplomacy** – Engage in Quad, BRICS, G20 to shape global digital norms while ensuring multipolar tech order.
- **Inclusive Tech Development** – Bridge the digital divide through rural connectivity, affordable devices, and local language technologies.

Conclusion:

- Technological sovereignty is no longer a choice but a necessity for safeguarding national security, data protection, and economic resilience. For India, achieving it requires a balanced strategy of self-reliance, global cooperation, and inclusive innovation.
- As **Mahatma Gandhi said, “The future depends on what you do today.”** India’s investments in indigenous technology today will determine its strategic autonomy and global leadership in the digital age.
- As **Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasized:** “India’s techade is here. We want technology that is open, secure, trusted, and accountable.” Achieving this requires indigenous innovation, resilient digital infrastructure, and global cooperation, ensuring that India not only safeguards its sovereignty but also emerges as a leader in shaping the digital future.

Mains practice question:

- “Technological Sovereignty is emerging as the new dimension of national sovereignty.” Discuss its importance for India in the context of data protection and digital governance.(10 Marks, 150 words)

3.2 Next Generation GST reform:

News context:

- The **Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, in its 56th meeting** which lasted over 10 hours Wednesday, cleared the next-generation reforms under the eight-year-old indirect tax regime.
- This effectively paves the way for a **broad two-slab structure of 5 per cent and 18 per cent** with a demerit rate of 40 per cent rate only for super luxury, sin and demerit goods.

Syllabus of Mains – GS-3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

What is GST 2.0 (Next-Generation GST Reform)?

- “GST 2.0” refers to a **sweeping overhaul of India’s Goods & Services Tax system** announced in 2025, aiming to simplify the tax structure, reduce the burden on common citizens, improve compliance, boost ease of doing business, and rationalize rates across goods and services.

Key timelines:

- Effective date for most reforms (goods and services): 22 September 2025, coinciding with the first day of Navratri.
- Some items (like “sin goods” etc.) have phased implementation due to revenue /compensation cess issues.

Features of Recent GST Reforms:

- **Simplified Rate Structure:**
 - Gone from four slabs (5%, 12%, 18%, 28%) to two main slabs: 5% (for essentials / merit goods) and 18% (standard/goods & services).
 - Introduction of a 40% slab for luxury and sin goods (e.g., high-end cars, tobacco, pan masala).
- **Tax Relief and Exemptions for Essentials:**
 - Exemption of GST on individual life and health insurance policies
 - Nil or reduced GST on essential items such as milk, Indian breads, paneer, and other basic food products.
 - Concessional GST rates on medicines and medical devices; life-saving drugs made GST-free.
- **Reduced Rates for Consumer Goods and Services:**
 - Appliances like TVs, ACs, refrigerators moved down from 28% to 18%.
 - Two-wheelers up to 350 cc and small cars taxed at 18%.
 - Services like salons, gyms, and yoga centres shifted to lower 5% slab.
- **Addressing Inverted Duty Structure:**
 - Correction of tax rate mismatches to reduce working capital blockage.
 - Improved flow of input tax credit (ITC) for manufacturers and exporters.
- **Ease of Compliance and Administrative Reforms:**
 - Simplification of GST returns and integration of digital systems.
 - Faster refunds, especially for exporters and sectors affected by inverted duty structures.
 - Focus on technology-driven compliance for transparency.
- **Support for Middle Class, Farmers, and MSMEs:**
 - Relief measures targeted towards the middle class through lower consumer tax burden.
 - Tax exemptions or lower GST on agricultural machinery and equipment.
 - Greater policy support to MSMEs by reducing compliance load and costs.

Achievements of GST So Far (with Data & Examples)

- **One Nation, One Tax**
 - GST subsumed 17 central and state taxes and 13 cesses, creating a unified tax regime.
 - **Example:** Removal of interstate check-posts cut average truck turnaround time by 20% (Economic Survey 2017-18).
- **Widening of Tax Base:**
 - GST registrations increased from 65 lakh in July 2017 to 1.4 crore+ by 2025.
 - Around 60% of new registrations are small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- **Improved Revenue Collection:**
 - Monthly GST collections consistently cross ₹1.6–1.7 lakh crore in 2023–25, compared to ~₹90,000 crore in 2017.
 - Record collection of ₹2.10 lakh crore in April 2024 shows rising compliance and robust economic activity.
- **Boost to Ease of Doing Business:**
 - India’s Ease of Doing Business ranking improved from 130 in 2016 to 63 in 2020, partly due to GST.
 - Logistics costs dropped by 4–5% of GDP (CRISIL Report), helping sectors like e-commerce and manufacturing.

- **Technology-Driven Tax System:**
 - E-invoicing mandated for businesses above ₹5 crore turnover from 2023, covering 95% of B2B transactions.
 - GSTN processes 8 billion+ invoices annually, ensuring real-time monitoring.
- **Curbing Tax Evasion:**
 - Use of AI/ML by GSTN detected fake ITC claims worth ₹1.3 lakh crore between 2017–2023.
 - **Example:** In 2022, authorities busted a fake invoice racket worth ₹16,000 crore across multiple states.
- **Support to Exports:**
 - GST refunds credited to exporters within 15–30 days in most cases, improving liquidity.
 - **Example:** ITC refund process boosted textile and pharma exports; India's goods exports hit \$451 billion in FY2022-23.
- **Cooperative Federalism:**
 - The GST Council has held 50+ meetings since 2017, with most decisions taken by consensus.
 - **Example:** During COVID-19, GST Council reduced GST on medical oxygen, ventilators, and vaccines to 5%.
- **Reduction in Logistics & Supply Chain Costs:**
 - Abolition of state border check posts saved truckers 4–5 hours per trip.
 - **Example:** FMCG companies like Hindustan Unilever and ITC reorganized warehouses, reducing costs by 15–20%.
- **Rationalization of Tax Rates:**
 - Items under 28% slab reduced from 228 in 2017 to less than 35 in 2025.
 - **Example:** GST on consumer durables like refrigerators, washing machines, and paints cut from 28% to 18% in 2018.

Conclusion:

- The Goods and Services Tax has been a **transformational reform, unifying India's market and strengthening cooperative federalism**. While it has enhanced compliance, boosted revenues, and reduced logistics costs, challenges like rate rationalization, inverted duty structures, and compliance burden on MSMEs remain

Mains practice question:

- "What are the recent reforms introduced under GST 2.0? How will they address issues of compliance and revenue efficiency?" (10 Marks, 150 words)

National Space Day

Why in the News?

- The President of India **graced the Second National Space Day celebration on August 23, 2025.**
- Over the last decade, the space sector **contributed ₹20,000 crore to India's GDP.**

Syllabus of Mains – GS 3- Achievements of Indians in science & technology

About: -

- **Theme:** "Aryabhatta to Gaganyaan: Ancient Wisdom to Infinite Possibilities"
- Chandrayaan-3 mission accomplished safe and soft-landing of Vikram Lander on the lunar surface on August 23, 2023.
- With this, India **became the fourth country to land on the moon** and first to land near the southern polar region of the moon.

- The landing site was named as 'Shiv Shakti' point (Station Shiv Shakti).

How ISRO has achieved remarkable success despite limited resources: -

Visionary Leadership:

- **Vikram Sarabhai's vision laid a strong foundation**, emphasizing a bottom-up approach for larger initiatives.

Cost-Effective Missions:

- Simplifying systems, miniaturizing components, and maintaining strict quality control enabled efficient use of resources.
- More than 30% of the sub-systems that went into Chandrayaan-1 were used in other operations.

Indigenous Technology:

- ISRO focused on developing critical technologies locally, reducing dependence on imports
- **Example**- Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle- PSLV.

Collaborations:

- Strategic partnerships, such as with NASA and Russia, enhanced capabilities.
- Recent examples include NASA-ISRO SAR Mission (NISAR), Astronauts of Gaganyaan are being trained in Russia, etc.

Private Sector Engagement:

- ISRO involved local industries in designing and manufacturing components, as seen in Chandrayaan-3.

Missions: -

Aditya L1 Mission:

- Launched on Sept 2023, it entered orbit around the Earth-Sun Lagrange point (L1) in and completed its first orbit in 2024. It successfully studied a solar storm.

Gaganyaan TV D1 Mission:

- In Oct 2023, the Crew Escape System (CES) was successfully demonstrated in an abort mission as part of India's human spaceflight mission.

XPoSat Mission:

- Launched on Jan 1, 2024, it aims to study polarised radiation from celestial objects using the XSPECT and POLIX instruments

INSAT-3DS Mission:

- Launched on February 17, 2024, using the GSLV, the mission focused on meteorological observations and building credibility for future missions like NISAR.

RLV-TD (Reusable Launch Vehicle) Tests:

- In March and June 2024, ISRO conducted landing experiments (LEX-02 and LEX-03) using a RLV called Pushpak to simulate landing conditions from space.

SSLV (Small Satellite Launch Vehicle):

- Successfully launched EOS-08 and SR-0 Demonstrate on August 16, 2024, marking the completion of SSLV's development.

The SpaDeX (Space Docking Experiment) mission: -

- It is a technology demonstration designed to achieve and validate in-orbit rendezvous, docking, and undocking of two small spacecraft. This capability is crucial for future ISRO endeavours, such as human spaceflight to the Moon, sample return missions, and the construction of an Indian space station

Challenges: -**Limited Access to Technology:**

- International laws and politics have caused difficulties for ISRO in obtaining the newest space technology.
- This has slowed down programs like Chandrayaan-3.

Financial Challenges:

- ISRO still has a **far smaller budget than NASA and ESA.**
- This lowers ISRO's capacity to invest in new technology, restricting large projects.

Talent Shortage:

- ISRO faces challenges in recruiting and retaining highly competent space scientists and engineers due to their high demand in India and beyond.

Bureaucratic Delays:

- The lengthy approval processes and bureaucratic regulations imposed by the government frequently hamper the progress of ISRO's initiatives.

Growing Satellite Traffic:

- Challenges due to the crowded orbital environment, with 11,330 satellites and 36,500 pieces of debris larger than 10 cm orbiting Earth as of June 2023.

Way Forward to Address ISRO's Challenges:**Enhancing Technology Access:**

- **Strengthen international collaborations** to gain access to advanced space technologies.
- Focus on indigenization of critical technologies through research and development.

Increasing Financial Resources:

- **Explore public-private partnerships** and private sector investments to supplement funding.

Addressing Talent Shortage:

- Offer competitive incentives to retain top talent and reduce brain drain.

Expanding Commercialization:

- Increase commercialization of ISRO's space services, like satellite launches and data services, to boost revenue.
- Support the growth of the Indian private space industry through policies and incentives.

Diversifying Revenue Streams:

- Leverage ISRO's achievements to attract foreign contracts for satellite launches and research partnerships.

- Monetize satellite data for industries like agriculture, disaster management, and telecommunications.

Conclusion: -

- The success of ISRO has set up an **example in front other countries as well as well as for different organisations in India** that team effort and planning will yield results in positive way. **Indian Space Policy-2023 will facilitate further integration** of Private sector, paving path for new milestone.

Question for Practice: -

- "Despite achieving significant milestones, ISRO faces several constraints that limit its potential. Discuss the key challenges faced by ISRO in recent times and suggest a comprehensive way forward to overcome these challenges." (250 words)

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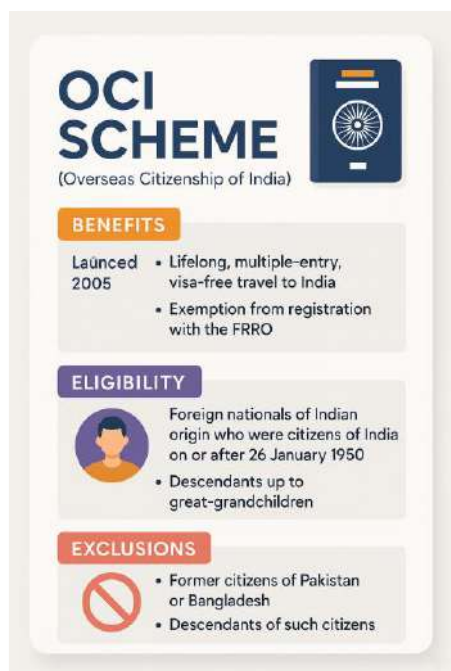
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PRAYAAS Shorts- UPSC & MPSC

1. New rules for overseas citizens of India



Context

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has **amended** rules for Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI), expanding conditions under which OCI registration can be cancelled.

Key Changes to OCI Rules

- OCI registration/card can be **cancelled** if:
 - The cardholder is sentenced to imprisonment ≥ 2 years.
 - The cardholder is charge-sheeted for an offence punishable with ≥ 7 years imprisonment.
- These rules apply to convictions abroad as well, if the offence is recognised under Indian law.

Existing Grounds for Cancellation (Section 7D, Citizenship Act, 1955)

- Registration obtained by fraud, misrepresentation, or concealment.
- Showing disaffection towards the Constitution of India.
- Unlawful trade/communication with the enemy during war.
- Conviction within 5 years of registration with imprisonment ≥ 2 years.

- If deemed necessary in the interest of sovereignty, integrity, security, foreign relations, or public interest.

2. Brown Revolution 2.0

Context

- The proposed **Brown Revolution 2.0** aims to **restore soil fertility through an Amul-style** cooperative model for agricultural waste management.

About Brown Revolution

- First Brown Revolution: Focused on promoting leather and coffee in the tribal areas of Visakhapatnam.
- Brown Revolution 2.0: Seeks to restore India's soil health by processing agricultural residues. Brown Revolution 2.0 seeks to restore soil health of India. This will help in securing the long-term food productivity, creating rural livelihoods, and bolstering India's climate commitments as the most populous nation.

3. Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY)

Context:

- PM Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day 2025 speech, launched the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY) with a ₹1 lakh crore package to generate 3.5 crore jobs.

About PM-VBRY

- A Central Sector Scheme under the Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- Designed as a successor to the Employment-Linked Incentive Scheme.
- Focuses on mass job creation and bringing more workers into the formal sector.
- Implementation route: Incentives are credited directly via EPFO and PAN-linked DBT.
- Duration: Runs for 2 years, with an extended 4-year span for manufacturing.
- Who benefits:**

- New employees joining the formal sector with monthly wages below ₹1 lakh.
- Employers who expand their workforce.
- **Support for employees:**
 - Incentive of ₹15,000, split into two instalments—after 6 months and 12 months, linked with financial literacy training.
- **Support for employers:**
 - Incentive of up to ₹3,000 per month per new hire.

4. Water Hyacinth



Context

- The unchecked spread of water hyacinth during the monsoon season is threatening India's waterways, especially in Kerala, endangering biodiversity and livelihoods.

About Water Hyacinth

- **Scientific name:** Eichhornia crassipes
- **Origin:** Native to South America; introduced in Bengal during colonial times as an ornamental plant.
- **Nicknames:** Popularly called the "Terror of Bengal", "Blue Devil", and "Lilac Devil" because of its aggressive spread.
- **Growth traits:** Known for violet-blue flowers and its ability to double its biomass within two weeks.
- **Preferred habitat:** Warm, nutrient-rich, stagnant freshwater bodies.
- **Impacts of Invasion**
 - **Ecological damage:** Forms thick mats on water surfaces that block sunlight and deplete oxygen, leading to the death of aquatic plants and animals.

- **Loss of livelihoods:** Hampers paddy cultivation in Kerala's Kuttanad, increases farming costs, and reduces fish catch.
- **Navigation barrier:** Obstructs canals and disrupts traditional boat movement, affecting inland transport.

5. Nine solitary bee species discovered in Kerala for the first time

Context:

- Nine new solitary bee species of the Nomiinae subfamily were recently identified in Kerala, highlighting the state's rich biodiversity and the ecological importance of pollinators.

About Solitary Bees

- Make up nearly 75% of all bee species worldwide.
- Each female bee independently builds and provisions her own nest, without forming colonies.
- Do not produce honey but are vital for pollination and ecosystem balance.
- Ground-nesting behaviour enhances soil aeration, fertility, and moisture retention.
- Facing threats from habitat destruction, pesticide use, and climate change.

6. E. coli turned into a Biosensor

Context:

- Scientists have genetically engineered E. coli into a living, self-powered biosensor that can detect chemicals like mercury and give a direct electronic output.

About the Biosensor

- **Purpose:** Designed as a low-cost, real-time, programmable tool to detect harmful compounds, especially heavy metals, in water.
- **Detection ability:**
 - Sugars (like arabinose) detected within ~2 hours.
 - Mercury ions detected within ~3 hours.

- **Sensitivity:** Ultra-sensitive, able to detect 25 nanomoles of mercury, which is below WHO safety limits.
- **Self-powered:** Generates its own output without the need for external power.

6.1 About E. coli

- A type of bacteria belonging to the group of faecal coliforms.
- Commonly found in the intestines of humans and animals.
- Some strains are harmless and useful in biotechnology research, while others can cause illness.

6.2 About Arabinose

- A five-carbon sugar (pentose) present in plant cell walls.
- Acts as a carbon source for bacteria such as E. coli.

7. Lead Poisoning

Context:

- Research reveals that older aluminium pressure cookers, often made from unregulated scrap metals, can leach lead into food, causing lead poisoning.

About Lead

- **Nature:** Soft, malleable, ductile heavy metal with low electrical conductivity.
- **Uses:** Batteries, paints, pipes, alloys, solder, and pigments.
- **WHO status:** Listed among top public health concerns.
- **Toxic threshold:** Blood lead levels above 5 µg/dL are harmful.
- **About Lead Poisoning (Plumbism)**
 - **Cause:** Gradual accumulation of lead in the body.
 - **Major sources:** Cookware, lead-based paint, polluted water/soil, batteries, mining, smelting, toys, cosmetics.
 - **Global burden:** One-third of children worldwide have blood lead ≥ 5 µg/dL.
 - **India's status:** Worst-affected globally.
 - **Economic cost:** Estimated ~5% GDP loss due to productivity decline and health costs.

- **Health effects:** Anaemia, cognitive decline, kidney damage, neurological deficits, cardiovascular harm, and foetal developmental risks.

7.1 Policy Measures for Lead Poisoning in India

- **Leaded Petrol Ban (2000):** Eliminated major exposure route.
- **Lead Paint Rules (2016):** Decorative paints capped at 90 ppm (GAELP standard).
- **FSSAI Regulations (2011):** Banned lead chromate in turmeric; set ≤ 10 ppm limit in packaged food.
- **Insecticides Act (2019 amendment):** Banned lead arsenate in agriculture (weak enforcement).
- **PVC Stabiliser Rules (2021):** Restricted lead-based stabilisers in PVC pipes.
- **Air Standards (2009):** NAAQS prescribed permissible ambient lead levels under CPCB.

8. Agni Ballistic Missiles

Context:

- India has successfully test-fired Agni-5, its long-range ballistic missile, from Chandipur, Odisha.

About Agni Ballistic Missile Series

- **Developer:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Type:** Surface-to-surface ballistic missiles, part of India's nuclear deterrence arsenal.
- **Technology:** Uses solid propellant and road/rail mobile launchers for high mobility.
- **Role:** Integral to India's credible minimum deterrence and No-First Use (NFU) nuclear policy.
- **Variants**
 - **Agni-I:** Short-range; 700–1,200 km.
 - **Agni-II:** Medium-range; 2,000–3,500 km.
 - **Agni-III:** Intermediate-range; 3,500–5,000 km.
 - **Agni-IV:** Intermediate-range; 4,000 km class, advanced navigation and payload systems.

- **Agni-V:** Long-range; >5,000 km, can reach most of Asia and parts of Europe & Africa.
- **Agni-P (Prime):** New-generation, 1,000–2,000 km range, lighter and more accurate.
- **Agni-VI (under development):** Expected 8,000–10,000 km range, with MIRV (Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle) capability.

9. Entangled Atomic Clocks and the Quantum-Gravity Interface

Context:

- Scientists have proposed using entangled atomic clocks to experimentally probe how quantum mechanics and relativity interact in curved spacetime.

About

- **Entangled Atomic Clocks**
 - **Atomic clocks:** Ultra-precise timekeepers that use vibrations of atoms (like cesium or strontium) to measure time.
 - **Entanglement:** A quantum phenomenon where particles' states are linked, allowing clocks to remain synchronised beyond classical limits.
 - **Use in research:** Enhances sensitivity to detect tiny variations in time caused by gravitational effects.
- **Quantum-Gravity Interface**
 - **Relativity:** Predicts that time runs differently under varying gravitational fields (gravitational time dilation).
 - **Quantum mechanics:** Describes matter and energy at atomic/subatomic scales.
 - **Challenge:** These two theories don't yet unify into a single framework.
 - **Proposed role of entangled clocks:** Detect minute spacetime curvature effects on quantum systems.

10. Ionic Liquids

Context:

- New research suggests rocky super-earths with volcanic activity could support life even with little water, thanks to the stability of ionic liquids (ILs).

About Ionic Liquids

- Special salts that stay liquid at or near room temperature because of their unique ion structure.
- Defined as salts with a melting point below 100°C.
- Unlike ordinary liquids made of neutral molecules, ILs are composed only of positively and negatively charged ions.
- Also known by terms such as liquid salts, fused salts, ionic melts, or ionic glasses.
- Common examples include choline acetate and imidazolium-based salts.

Key Characteristics

- **Safe and stable:** Non-volatile, non-flammable, resistant to high heat.
- **Flexible behaviour:** Can be water-loving (hydrophilic) or water-repelling (hydrophobic).
- **Electrical properties:** Work as excellent conductors and stable electrolytes.
- **Customisable:** Their physical and chemical properties vary with the size and type of ions used.

Why They Matter

- **Green alternative:** Reduce reliance on harmful organic solvents.
- **Industry use:** Widely applied in chemical synthesis, catalysis, electrochemistry, and biotechnology.
- **Energy applications:** Useful for next-gen batteries, fuel cells, and supercapacitors.
- **High-temp processes:** Perform well in industries that require materials resistant to heat and oxygen.

11. NAVYA Initiative

Context

- The Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) informed the Lok Sabha about the progress of the NAVYA Initiative.

About NAVYA Initiative

- Full form: Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational training for Young Adolescent Girls.
- Target group: Adolescent girls aged 16–18 years in aspirational districts.
- Joint initiative: Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and Ministry of Women & Child Development (MWCD).
- Purpose: Equip girls with market-relevant vocational skills for socio-economic independence.
- **Key Features**
 - **Skill training:** Demand-driven courses in both traditional and modern sectors.
 - **Holistic modules:** Includes health, nutrition, hygiene, legal awareness, life skills, and financial literacy.
 - **Employment focus:** Encourages employability, self-employment, and links with internships, apprenticeships, and job opportunities.
 - **Inclusivity:** Promotes gender-sensitive skilling in a safe training environment.
 - **Education-livelihood bridge:** Designed to reach underserved and remote areas.
 - **PMKVY 4.0 link:** Plan to train 3,850 girls in non-traditional roles such as digital marketing, cybersecurity, AI-enabled services, green jobs, and emerging sectors.
 - **Future readiness:** Training in life skills, financial literacy, and digital competence for evolving workforce demands.

- The Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare informed the Lok Sabha that India currently has three Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) recognised by the FAO.

About GIAHS Programme

- **Launched by FAO:** At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002).
- **Purpose:** Protect and promote traditional farming systems that face threats from climate change, biodiversity loss, and displacement.
- **Approach:** Balance conservation, sustainable adaptation, and socio-economic development.
- **Support mechanisms:**
 - Technical assistance to farming communities.
 - Promotion of traditional knowledge and agro biodiversity.
 - Stimulation of markets through agrotourism and niche products.
- **Method:** Multi-stakeholder involvement – governments, local communities, NGOs, and research institutions.

India's GIAHS Sites

- **Koraput region, Odisha:**
 - Known for subsistence paddy cultivation on highland slopes.
 - Rich in paddy landraces and farmer-bred varieties.
 - Also a reservoir of medicinal plant diversity closely tied to tribal traditions.
- **Kuttanad, Kerala:**
 - Unique below-sea-level farming system.
 - Mix of wetland paddy farming, coconut gardens, and inland fisheries.
 - Supports both agriculture and livelihoods like fishing and shell collection.
- **Saffron Heritage of Kashmir:**
 - Traditional saffron cultivation system with organic and intercropping practices.
 - Agro-pastoral traditions maintain soil health and biodiversity.

12.GIAHS Programme and India's sites

Context

- Linked to cultural identity and local economy.

13. Huntington's Disease

Context:

- Huntington's Disease (HD) has not yet been included in the rare disease category under India's National Policy for Rare Diseases, despite long-standing demands from patients and caregivers (2024-25).

About Huntington's Disease

- **Nature:** A genetic, inherited brain disorder that causes progressive breakdown of nerve cells (neurons).
- **Inheritance:** If a parent has HD, each child has a 50% chance of inheriting it.
- **Cause:**
 - Mutation in the HTT gene.
 - Produces abnormal huntingtin protein, which damages and kills neurons.
 - Mainly affects the basal ganglia (movement control) and cortex (thinking, memory, decision-making).
- **Prevalence:** Affects 3-7 per 100,000 people, mostly of European ancestry.
- **Symptoms**
 - **Early signs:** Mood swings, irritability, difficulty in planning/decision-making.
 - **Movement-related:** Involuntary jerky movements (chorea), tremors, abnormal postures, unusual eye movements.
 - **Cognitive decline:** Memory issues, poor judgment, reduced concentration.
 - **Behavioural issues:** Personality changes, depression, aggression.
 - **Progression:** Symptoms worsen gradually; most patients require full-time care.
 - **Life expectancy:** 15-20 years after onset of symptoms.

14. Blue Pinkgill and Shuttlecock Mushrooms

Context:

- Rare Blue Pinkgill and Shuttlecock Mushrooms were recently documented in the forests of Telangana, expanding knowledge of India's fungal diversity.

About the Newly Spotted Species

- **Blue Pinkgill Mushroom**
 - **Origin:** Native to New Zealand.
 - **Pigment:** Gets its striking blue shade from azulene, a pigment unusual in fungi but seen in some flowers and plants.
 - **Habitat in India:** Found in Kadamba Reserve Forest and other parts of Kagaznagar forest division, an area rich in monsoon-driven fungal growth.
- **Shuttlecock Mushroom**
 - **Latest record:** Documented in Kawal Tiger Reserve, Telangana.
 - **Significance:** First confirmed sighting in the Eastern Ghats, expanding its range from the Western Ghats and western India.
 - **Structure:** Has a crisscross lattice form, aiding efficient spore dispersal.

15. Sudarshan Chakra Mission

Context

- The Prime Minister recently announced Mission Sudarshan Chakra, aimed at protecting critical civil and defence infrastructure by 2035.

About Sudarshan Chakra Mission

- A comprehensive national security initiative to safeguard India's vital installations and assets.
- Plans to equip key sites with advanced technologies and high-end weapon systems.
- **Mission goal is dual:**
 - Neutralise enemy attacks on critical infrastructure.
 - Enable precise counterstrikes, symbolically linked to the mythological Sudarshan Chakra.
- Designed to ensure rapid, accurate, and powerful defence responses.

- Strengthens India's strategic autonomy in dealing with evolving security threats.

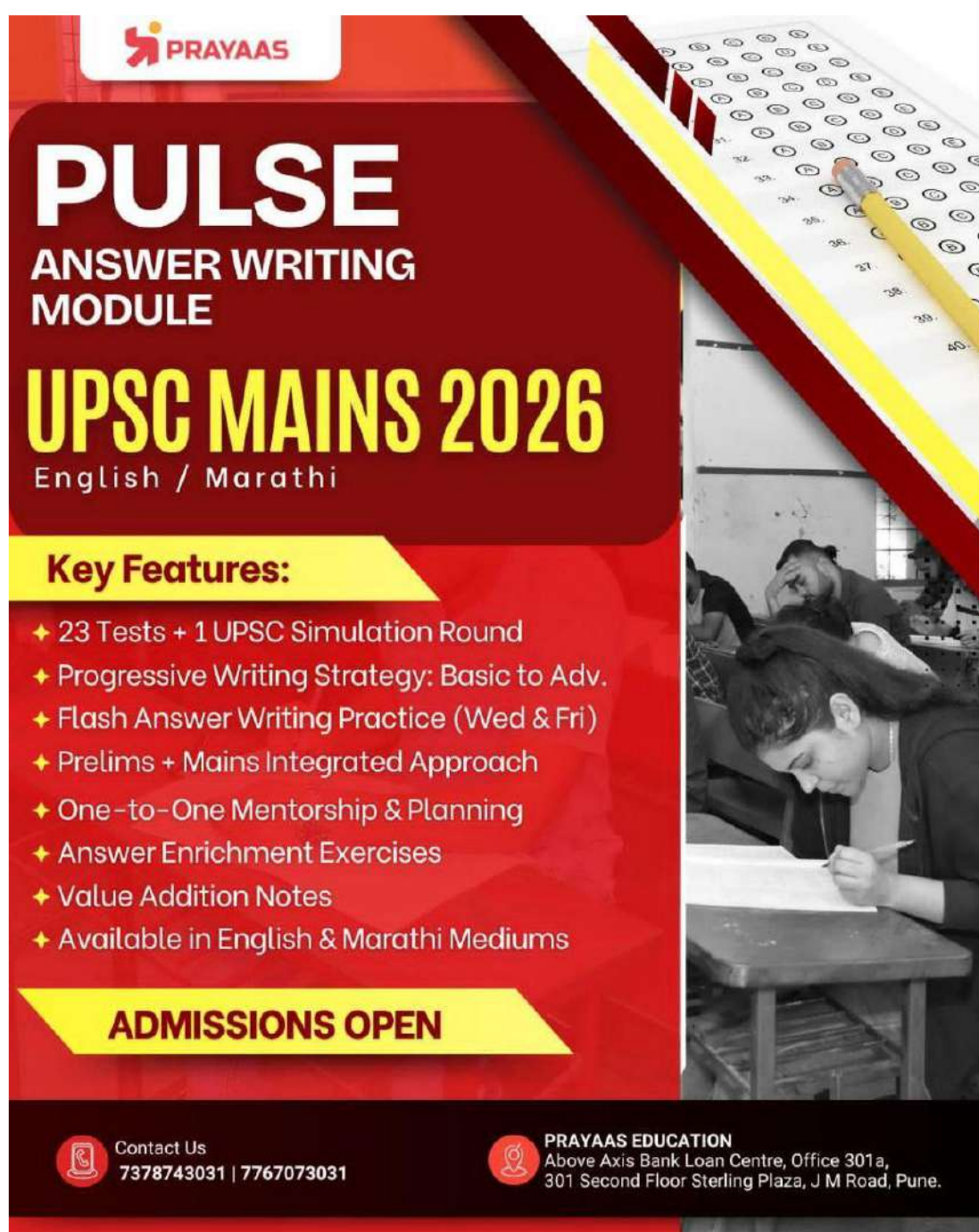
16. Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)

Context

- India has rejected the PCA's award on the interpretation of the Indus Waters Treaty, reaffirming its long-standing position on the matter.

About Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)

- A treaty-based intergovernmental organisation that provides services for arbitration, conciliation, and dispute resolution between states, state entities, intergovernmental organisations, and private parties.
- **Established:** 1899, through the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes at the First Hague Peace Conference.
- **Members:** 125 contracting parties (including India).
- **Headquarters:** Peace Palace, The Hague, Netherlands.



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PRAYAAS Shorts- MPSC Specific

1. International

1.1 India and the Eurasian Economic Union sign Terms of Reference to launch FTA negotiations

- India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), comprising Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Russian Federation, signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) to launch **negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** today in Moscow.

2. National

2.1 AI Powered 'SabhaSaar' Tool

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) is set to launch SabhaSaar, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered meeting summarization tool designed to automatically generate structured Minutes of Meeting (MoM) from Gram Sabha or other Panchayat meetings' audio and video recordings.
- A Gram Sabha is **supposed to meet at least four days** (January 26, May 1, August 15, and October 2) in a year.

2.2 Parliament passes bill to boost critical mineral production

- Parliament approved the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2025, a significant overhaul of the 1957 (Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act) MMDR Act, **aimed at modernizing India's mining sector and enhancing domestic production of critical and strategic minerals.**
- The **National Mineral Exploration Trust is renamed the National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust.**
- Its mandate now includes **funding both exploration and development**, domestically and internationally.
- Royalty contributions to the Trust have **increased from 2% to 3%.**
- Leaseholders may now apply to include critical and strategic minerals, such as lithium, graphite, nickel, cobalt, gold, and

silver, in existing leases without incurring additional fees.

2.3 Parliament passes Bill to establish IIM at Guwahati in Assam

- IIM Guwahati becomes India's 22nd Indian Institute of Management, and the second INI designated IIM in the Northeast after IIM Shillong

2.4 Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)

- India currently hosts three Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS): the Koraput region in Odisha, the Kuttanad farming system in Kerala, and the Saffron Heritage of Kashmir.
- Purpose: Recognizes traditional agricultural systems that combine biodiversity, resilient practices, and cultural heritage.

3. State

3.1 Shramshree Scheme

- Launched by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on 18th August 2025, is **offering Rs. 5000 per month to Bengali migrant workers.**
- The scheme will also **help workers find local employment or start a small business in West Bengal** by providing business loans through Minorities' Development and Finance Corporation.
- The Shramshree scheme will also provide **one-time financial assistance of Rs. 5000** to cover travel allowance of the workers and other related expenses.

3.2 Jalalabad town in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district renamed as 'Parashurampuri'

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah approved the renaming of the town.
- The Jalalabad town was known as the **birthplace of Bhagwan Parashuram, the divine saint.**

3.3 Kerala declared the first fully digitally literate State in the country

- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday said that after achieving full literacy, Kerala has once again set a model by becoming the first state in India to achieve complete digital literacy.

4. Maharashtra

4.1 IBM opens Mumbai client centre to support Maharashtra's quantum push

- As part of the centre's mission to help Indian enterprises adopt AI, hybrid cloud, and quantum computing, this agreement marks a significant step towards collaboration on Maharashtra's quantum vision.

4.2 The name of Velhe taluka in Pune district has been changed to 'Rajgad'

- The taluka is situated at the foothills of Rajgad Fort, the first capital of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

5. Award

5.1 Neeraj Ghaywan's 'Homebound' wins top honours at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2025

- Neeraj Ghaywan's Homebound secured the top honors of Best Film and Best Director, emerging as the biggest winner of the evening."Homebound,
- The film features standout performances by Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jethwa, and Janhvi Kapoor.
- Best Indie Film: Angammal
- Best Actor (Male - Film): Abhishek Bachchan for I Want to Talk
- Best Actor (Female - Film): Geetha Kailasam for Angammal

5.2 Miss Universe India 2025

- Rajasthan's Manika Vishwakarma** crowned Miss Universe India 2025.
- Event: Grand finale held in Jaipur, Rajasthan; she was crowned by Miss Universe India 2024.
- International Representation:** Will represent India at the 74th Miss Universe pageant, to be held in Thailand (Impact

Challenger Hall, Nonthaburi, Pak Kret) on 21 November 2025.

6. Defence

6.1 SLINEX-25

- Indian Naval Ships INS Rana (a Guided Missile Destroyer) and INS Jyoti (Fleet Tanker) arrived at Colombo to participate in the **12th edition of Sri Lanka India Naval Exercise (SLINEX-25) scheduled from 14 to 18 Aug 25.**
- Conceptualised in 2005, **SLINEX is a bilateral naval exercise** that has strengthened maritime cooperation between the two nations over two decades.

7. Space

7.1 Russia Plans Venera-D Venus Mission Launch by 2036

- According to **Oleg Korablev of the Space Research Institute (IKI)**, preliminary design work will start in January 2026 under Russia's new national space programme.
- The mission will include a **lander, a balloon probe, and an orbital spacecraft**, aiming to conduct detailed studies of Venus's atmosphere and surface.

7.2 ISRO launches space lab in Arunachal Pradesh

- A state-of-the-art ISRO Space Laboratory was **inaugurated at the Government Higher Secondary School, Mechuka**, in the remote Shi-Yomi district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is a collaborative initiative with **ISRO and the Muskaan Foundation.**

8. Sport

8.1 Devika Sihag Clinches First International Challenge Title in Malaysia

- Indian shuttler Devika Sihag claimed her first International Challenge title **by winning the women's singles event at the Malaysia International Challenge 2025** in Ipoh on 17 August 2025.
- The 20-year-old defeated fifth-seeded compatriot Isharani Baruah 15-7, 15-12 in the final.

8.2 U20 World Wrestling Championships 2025

- Indian wrestler Tapsya clinched the **nation's first gold medal** at the **U20 World Wrestling Championships 2025 in Bulgaria**.
- Final: Defeated Felicitas Domajeva (Norway) 5-2.

8.3 First Khelo India Water Sports Festival

- Dal Lake**, long celebrated as the soul of **Srinagar** and a symbol of Kashmir's heritage, dons a new identity as a sporting arena from August 21 to 23, as the iconic water body hosts the **inaugural Khelo India Water Sports Festival**, a national event bringing together athletes, culture, and local livelihoods.

9. Important Day

9.1 World Senior Citizen's Day - 21 August 2025

- World Senior Citizen's Day is observed every year on 21st August worldwide to honour and acknowledge the valuable contributions of senior citizens to society.
- 2025 Theme:** 'Empowering Elderly Voices for an Inclusive Future.'

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