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UPSC/MPSC 2025-26

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By Dhananjay Khade

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Mains Focus

GS-1

State of World Population Report

News Context (TH):

- The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**'s **2025 State of World Population (SOWP) Report**, titled '**The Real Fertility Crisis**', was released.

Syllabus of Mains – GS-1- Role of women and women's organization, **population and associated issues**, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Key Findings of the Report: -

Population:

- The **world has 8.2 billion people**. There are big differences between rich and poor countries.
- India's population is expected to reach 1.46 billion in 2025**, becoming the **most populated country**.

Reproductive Rights:

- The real problem is not having too many or too few people, but that **people cannot meet their fertility goals**.
- Many women and girls still **struggle to control when to have children**. About half of all pregnancies are not planned.

Barriers to Reproductive Freedom:

- These include **poverty, gender discrimination, lack of partner and community support, poor-quality healthcare**, and no access to affordable childcare or education.

Marginalized Groups:

- Even though sexual and reproductive rights have improved, the **most disadvantaged people** have gained the least.

Recommendations:

- Ensure everyone has **access to reproductive health and rights**, including correct fertility information.
- Support **equal roles for men and women in parenting**, so women are not the only ones caring for children, and men also enjoy being caretakers.
- Use immigration to help fix problems** like low economic growth and worker shortages.

Findings about India: -

Fertility Rate & Demographic Information: -

Total Fertility Rate (TFR):

- It has **dropped to 1.9 births per woman**, down from nearly 5 in 1970. This is now **below the replacement level of 2.1**.

Fertility Differences Between States:

- There is a **divide between states with high and low fertility**. This is due to differences in jobs, healthcare, education, and social or gender norms.

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- Fertility is **below 2.1 in 31 States/UTs**, but **still high in Bihar (3.0), Meghalaya (2.9), and Uttar Pradesh (2.7)**.

Adolescent Fertility:

- **Teen birth rate is high at 14.1 per 1,000 women aged 15–19**. In comparison: China (6.6), Sri Lanka (7.3), and Thailand (8.3).

Age Distribution:

- 68% of people are of working age (15–64 years). 7% are elderly (65 and older).

Life Expectancy:

- At birth, **men are expected to live 71 years** and **women 74 years**.

Do you know?

- TFR refers to the **average number of children a woman is expected to have during her reproductive years (15–49 years)** in a given population.
- Replacement level fertility (TFR of 2.1) is defined as the **rate at which a population size remains the same from one generation to the next**.

Modern Challenges for Reproductive Freedom: -**Health Barriers:**

- **Poor health, infertility, and limited access** to care during pregnancy affect reproductive choices.

Future Anxiety:

- Worries about **climate change, political and social instability** also impact decisions about parenthood.

Financial Limitations:

- **Job insecurity, housing problems, and lack of reliable childcare** make it hard for people to consider having children.

Other Issues:

- **Increasing loneliness, changing relationship trends, trouble finding supportive partners**, social stigma around reproductive choices, and strong gender norms all create challenges.

Recommendations: Five Key Pillars for a Rights-Based Approach(Solution)**1. Rights-Based Demographic Resilience:**

- Build a society that can **handle population changes** while protecting human rights.

2. Expand Reproductive Health Services:

- Ensure **everyone has access to contraception, safe abortion, maternal care**, and infertility treatment.

3. Remove Structural Barriers:

- **Invest in childcare, education, housing**, and flexible work options to support reproductive choices.

4. Promote Inclusive Policies:

- Provide **services to all, including unmarried people, LGBTQIA+ individuals**, and other marginalized groups.

5. Improve Data & Accountability:

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- Go beyond just tracking birth rates—**measure unmet needs and autonomy**. Encourage social change through **community action**.

Conclusion: -

- "Population is not just about numbers, it's about people and their rights." – UNFPA
- The UNFPA's 2025 report highlights that the **real fertility crisis lies in unmet reproductive goals, not overpopulation**. India's demographic shift below replacement level **presents both challenges and opportunities**. Ensuring reproductive rights, addressing structural barriers, and promoting inclusive policies are key to achieving demographic resilience. **A rights-based, people-centric approach is essential for turning population trends into sustainable development outcomes.**

UNFPA

- UNFPA is the **United Nations agency focused on sexual and reproductive health**. It started its operations in 1969 as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).
- In **1987, it was renamed the United Nations Population Fund**, but continued to **use the acronym UNFPA**.
- Its **headquarters** are located in **New York**.
- UNFPA functions as a **subsidiary body under the United Nations General Assembly**.
- The **agency's main aim is to** guarantee sexual and reproductive rights and choices for everyone, particularly women and youth, by providing access to quality sexual and reproductive healthcare.
- Its responsibilities are defined by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- UNFPA **directly contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 on health, SDG 4 on education, and SDG 5 on gender equality.**

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GS 2**4th India-Central Asia Dialogue****News Context (HT): -**

- The fourth edition of the India-Central Asia Dialogue **took place in New Delhi**, chaired by India's External Affairs Minister. Foreign Ministers **from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan** attended the meeting.

Syllabus of Mains – GS-2- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Key Highlights: -**Boosting Economic Ties:**

- The countries **agreed to unlock untapped trade potential**, particularly in pharmaceuticals, IT, textiles, energy, and agriculture.

Science, Technology & Digital Infrastructure:

- They **committed to cooperation in innovation, research, and digital public infrastructure**, with plans to launch an India-Central Asia Digital Partnership Forum.

Exploration of Critical Minerals:

- Building on the **success of the 2024 India-Central Asia Rare Earth Forum**, ministers showed interest in jointly exploring rare earth elements and other critical minerals.

India's Global Initiatives:

- India **encouraged Central Asian nations to join global initiatives** like the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA), International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

Support for UN Reforms & Global South:

- Central Asian countries **reaffirmed their backing for India's permanent membership** in the UN Security Council and expressed interest in working through India's Global South Centre "DAKSHIN."

Condemnation of Terrorism:

- All participants **strongly condemned the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir**. They called for urgent global cooperation against terrorism and stressed the need for **early adoption** of the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)**, proposed by India in 1996.

Afghanistan Stability:

- The dialogue reaffirmed **shared commitment to promote peace, and a terrorism- and drug-free Afghanistan** through regional cooperation.

Health Cooperation:

- The countries agreed to expand healthcare collaboration, including medical tourism, in **line with India's "One Earth, One Health"** approach.

Connectivity Projects:

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- Emphasis was placed on **enhancing regional connectivity via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** and development of the Chabahar Port.

Other Notable Outcomes:

- The ministers welcomed the **declaration of 2025 as the "International Year of Peace and Trust."**

Central Asia Region

- **Location:** Located at the heart of the Eurasian landmass, bounded by Russia (north), China (east), Iran and Afghanistan (south), and the Caspian Sea (west).
- **Members:** Comprises 5 landlocked countries: **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.**

**Key Pillars of the Relationship: -****Strategic and Security Cooperation: -**

- India and Central Asian states face common challenges: terrorism, drug trafficking, extremism, and regional instability (especially post-Taliban Afghanistan).
- India has conducted joint military training and counterterrorism exercises, especially with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.
- Central Asia supports India's membership in Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which enhances regional security cooperation.

Energy and Natural Resources: -

- Central Asia is rich in hydrocarbons, uranium, and rare earths.
- India signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with Kazakhstan, which supplies uranium to India.
- Interest in TAPI Pipeline (Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India) for gas imports, although progress is slow due to security issues.

Connectivity and Trade: -

- Lack of direct land connectivity (due to Pakistan) is a key challenge.
- India invested in the Chabahar Port (Iran) and International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) to access Central Asia via Iran and the Caspian Sea.
- Central Asia is included in India's Extended Neighbourhood Policy and Connect Central Asia Policy (2012).

Economic and Commercial Relations

- Bilateral trade remains below potential (~\$2 billion annually).
- India offers Lines of Credit, grants, and training under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program.
- India–Central Asia Business Councils set up to promote private sector engagement.

Cultural and People-to-People Ties

- Cultural diplomacy rooted in Buddhism, Sufism, Hindi films, and educational scholarships.
- Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) supports cultural exchanges.
- Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are major recipients of Indian medical and IT education services.

Multilateral and Regional Engagement

- **India is a member of:**
 - Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO): Engages on security, economic, and cultural platforms.
 - India–Central Asia Dialogue: Institutionalized since 2019, involving regular ministerial-level talks and working groups.
- India supports Afghanistan's stability and has worked with Central Asia to ensure a non-extremist regional environment.

Key Challenges: -

- **Geographical disconnection:** Pakistan's denial of transit blocks direct land access.
- **Low economic volume:** Trade and investment remain modest despite potential.
- **Security volatility:** Instability in Afghanistan and parts of Tajikistan affects regional plans.
- **Lack of Direct Land Access:** India does not share a direct land border with Central Asia, making trade routes dependent on third countries like Iran, Afghanistan, or Pakistan.
- **Geopolitical Competition:** Central Asia is a region of strategic interest for major powers like China (through its Belt and Road Initiative), Russia, Turkey, and the EU.
- **Low Trade Volume:** Trade between India and Central Asia lies at a measly US \$2 billion compared to China's US \$100 billion trade.
- **Regional Security Concerns:** Terrorism, radicalization, drug trafficking and instability in neighboring Afghanistan.
- **Drug and Arms Trafficking:** The proximity to the "Golden Crescent" (Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan) makes Central Asia susceptible to drug and arms trafficking, which can fuel instability and corruption.
- **Bureaucratic and Regulatory Hurdles:** Difficulties in visa issuance, customs clearances, and investment regulations.

Way Forward: -

- Strengthen **INSTC and Chabahar** to reduce dependency on unstable routes.
- **Increase bilateral trade and private investment** in sectors like pharma, IT, textiles, and agriculture.
- **Promote digital and green partnerships**, including solar energy cooperation under the International Solar Alliance.
- **Enhance people-to-people exchanges**, especially in education, health, and culture.
- Collaborate with Central Asia in **countering radicalization and terrorism**, leveraging shared concerns post-Afghanistan.

Conclusion: -

- The 4th India-Central Asia Dialogue underscores India's growing strategic and normative engagement in Eurasia.
- **C. Raja Mohan, a prominent realist scholar**, argues that India's outreach to Central Asia is part of its effort to achieve strategic depth and balance China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- **G. John Ikenberry, a leading liberal institutionalist**, would interpret India's emphasis on **multilateral cooperation (ISA, CDRI, GBA) as a move toward rules-based regionalism**. Collectively, the dialogue enhances India's strategic autonomy and reinforces its leadership role in the Global South.

GS 2**Mental Healthcare in India****News Context (TH):**

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), untreated mental health issues lead to over \$1 trillion in lost global productivity every year.

Syllabus of Mains – GS-2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to **Health**, Education, Human Resources.

What is Mental Health?

- The **WHO defines mental health as a state** where individuals can **realize their abilities, manage normal life stress, work efficiently, and contribute** to their communities.
- The scope of mental health covers **conditions such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia**.

Mental Health in India: Key Statistics

- WHO estimates** India's mental health **burden at 2,443(disability-adjusted life years) DALYs** per 10,000 people.
- Around 15% of Indian adults suffer** from mental health issues, with urban areas (13.5%) showing a higher prevalence than rural areas (6.9%).
- The **lifetime prevalence of mental disorders** in India is 13.7%.
- Note:** Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY) measures the overall disease burden by adding years lost to premature death and years lived with disability. One DALY equals one lost year of healthy life.

Impact of Poor Mental Health: -**Productivity Loss:**

- Decreased **workplace performance, higher absenteeism, and lower efficiency**.

Social and Emotional Impact:

- Affects relationships, confidence, and overall social well-being.

Economic Consequences:

- The economic cost of mental illness in India is projected at \$1.03 trillion (2012–2030).

Challenges in Mental Healthcare: -**Treatment Gap:**

- As per the National Mental Health Survey (2015–16), 70–92% of those affected do not receive care due to stigma, poor awareness, and inaccessible services.

Shortage of Professionals:

- India has only 0.75 psychiatrists per 1 lakh population, far below the WHO benchmark of 3 per lakh, limiting access to proper care.

Stigma and Misconceptions:

- Social taboos discourage people from seeking help early.

Insurance Limitations:

- Many are unaware that mental health services are covered under insurance, especially OPD and cashless services.

Urban-Centric Access:

- Infrastructure like clinics and specialists is mostly concentrated in urban centers.

Government Initiatives: -**Mental Healthcare Act, 2017:**

- **Grants equal status to mental and physical health**, mandates insurance coverage, and protects the rights of those with mental illness.

National Mental Health Programme (1982) and District Mental Health Programme (1996):

- Focus on **accessible and affordable community-based** mental health services.

Tele MANAS:

- A **national 24x7 tele-mental health service** offering counselling, especially targeting remote and underserved regions.

National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2022):

- Aims to **reduce suicides through awareness**, early detection, and intervention.

Global Initiatives: -**Mental Health Action Plan (2013–2030):**

- Offers a **global framework to enhance governance, expand care access**, and integrate mental health into basic healthcare systems.

World Mental Health Report 2025:

- **Urges policy reform, stigma reduction**, and a shift toward community and rights-based care.

Mental Health in Global Development:

- Recognized as **key to achieving several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, including those related to education, poverty, and gender equity.

Way Forward: -**Improve Insurance Access:**

- Ensure full implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act and offer affordable, inclusive plans.

Increase Public Awareness:

- Launch mass campaigns to destigmatize mental health issues.

Enhance Digital Outreach:

- Use platforms like Tele MANAS and mobile apps to reach more people.

Strengthen Policy Oversight:

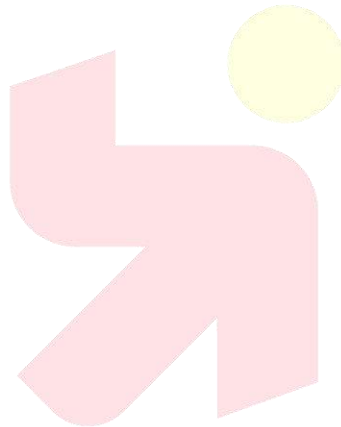
- The IRDAI must monitor insurers for transparency and service delivery.

Promote Workplace Support:

- Require employers to provide mental health support through group insurance schemes.

Conclusion: -

- Mental health is an **integral part of overall well-being and a key determinant of a productive and equitable society**. Despite growing awareness, India continues to face a significant treatment gap, shortage of professionals, and persistent social stigma.
- Government initiatives like the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, Tele-MANAS, and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy mark important progress. However, as **highlighted by the National Mental Health Survey (2015-16), sustained efforts are needed to decentralize services**, ensure insurance coverage, and integrate mental health into primary care. A rights-based, inclusive, and community-driven approach is essential to bridge the urban-rural divide and **fulfil India's commitment to universal health coverage and SDG 3**.



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GS 3**GDP Base Revision****News Context: -**

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** is in the process of revising the base year for calculating Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Syllabus of Mains – GS-3- Indian Economy and issues relating to **planning**, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

About: -

- The base year will be **updated from 2011-12 to 2022-23**.
- Along with GDP, **key economic indicators like the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) will also be revised** with a new base starting next year.
- A **26-member advisory committee, headed by economist Biswanath Goldar**, has been set up to explore new data sources and suggest methodological improvements for the revised series.
- The committee will **also work on aligning GDP calculations with other indices** such as WPI, CPI, and IIP, particularly for assessing industrial growth.
- The updated GDP series is expected to be **officially released on February 27, 2026**.

What is a Base Year?

- A base year is a **reference year used to compare economic indicators** like GDP, inflation, IIP, and CPI.
- It acts as a **point of comparison**, where the index value is fixed at 100 to measure changes in subsequent years.
- For example, if the GDP in the base year 2011-12 is ₹100 lakh crore and rises to ₹150 lakh crore in 2021-22, it indicates a 50% growth over the base year.
- Using a base year **helps adjust for inflation and allows for an accurate assessment** of economic growth across different time periods.

Need for Revision:

- To **reflect structural changes** in the economy.
 - Example- Emerging of New Sectors of Services like Fintech
- **Update data sources and** incorporate new economic activities (like digital economy, gig sector).
 - Example- Data in digital form
- Ensure **relevance and accuracy** of national accounts.
 - Example- 2011-12 Base, has different product base
- Incorporate **emerging sectors such as** fintech, e-commerce, and renewable energy.
- **Reflect changes in consumption patterns**, production techniques, and technological advancements.
- Provide a **more accurate picture of income**, savings, and investment trends.

Challenges in Base Revision:

- Delays in **data collection and standardisation**.
 - Example- Lack informal sector data
- **Capturing informal sector** and emerging sectors accurately.
- **Harmonising multiple indices** for coherent analysis.
 - Recent mismatch in WPI and CPI

Significance:

- **Ensures data reliability for policymaking** and international comparisons.
- Reflects **contemporary economic realities**.

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- **Essential for better forecasting**, planning, and investment decisions.
- **Helps in monitoring SDG targets**, government schemes, and **macroeconomic health**.
- Builds **confidence among investors**, researchers, and global rating agencies.
- Strengthens **India's position in global data reporting** systems like IMF and World Bank.

Way Forward:

- Strengthen data infrastructure and **timely surveys** (NSSO, CSO).
- **Include digital economy, start-ups, platform workers** in estimates.
- **Enhance transparency in methodology** and public awareness.
- **Ensure regular and periodic revisions** to avoid outdated estimates.
- **Promote use of big data and AI tools** for real-time economic monitoring.
- **Foster coordination among central and state statistical** agencies for consistent data.

Conclusion:

- The revision of the GDP base year is a **crucial step toward making India's economic data more reflective of current realities**. It ensures better accuracy, transparency, and comparability in economic assessments.
- **According to MoSPI**, this update will improve data alignment with newer sectors and digital tools, ensuring stronger foundations for evidence-based policymaking. As India **moves toward becoming a \$5 trillion economy**, a **robust and updated statistical system will be essential for credible planning, investment attraction, and international trust** in India's economic indicators.

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GS 4**Case Study- Misuse of Investigative Agencies for Political Ends****News Context (ToI): -**

- The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) accused the BJP-led government in Delhi of politically motivated misuse of the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB), pointing to a secret FIR against former AAP ministers while omitting mention of officials who sanctioned projects in 2016–17—well before their tenure

Ethical Issues: -

- Abuse of Power: Using investigative bodies for partisan objectives damages the impartiality of institutions.
- Transparency & Accountability: Withholding the full FIR undermines public oversight and due process.

Case Study 2: Forged Medical Documents by a Constable**News Context (ToI):**

- A Junagadh head **constable forged medical papers to skip duty during Kumbh Mela**, claiming his wife was ill—document forgery later exposed by hospital records and travel data

Ethical Issues: -

- Integrity Violation: Document forgery contradicts basic ethical conduct for public servants.
- Breach of Trust: Deception betrayed institutional trust and public resource misuse.

Mains Question for Practice: -**Question 1**

- “The real fertility crisis lies not in overpopulation but in unmet reproductive goals.” In light of the UNFPA’s 2025 report, examine the need for a rights-based approach to reproductive health and population policies in India. (10 marks)

Question 2

- “India’s engagement with Central Asia reflects a blend of strategic interests and civilizational outreach.” Critically analyse this statement in the context of the 4th India–Central Asia Dialogue. (10 marks)

Question 3

- Explain the importance of updating the GDP base year for economic policymaking. What challenges are involved in ensuring an accurate revision in the context of India’s informal and digital economy? (15 marks)

Question 4

- “Mental health is a critical yet neglected component of public health policy in India.” Discuss in light of recent government initiatives and WHO findings.

Prelims Focus- UPSC & MPSC

UMEED Portal

Context (PIB):

- The **Ministry for Minority Affairs** launched the UMEED Central Portal.

About: -

- UMEED stands for **Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency & Development**. It is a centralized digital platform for real-time uploading, verification, & monitoring of Waqf properties.
- Launched **under the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025**, with legal mandate for digitization.
- State Waqf Boards will oversee the registration drive.
- Features:** Creation of a digital inventory with geo-tagging of all Waqf properties, online grievance redressal system, GIS Mapping.

Extreme Poverty in India

Context (PIB):

- India's extreme poverty rate fell sharply from 27.1% in 2011-12 to 5.3% in 2022-23, under the World Bank's updated global poverty line to \$3/day (2021 PPP).

Revised Global Poverty Thresholds: -

- In 2022, the World Bank raised the global extreme poverty line from \$2.15 to \$3 per day (2021 PPP) to reflect rising living costs and changing consumption patterns.
- For Lower Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), the poverty line increased from \$3.65 to \$4.20 per day. For Upper-Middle-Income Countries, it is \$8.30.
- Rural Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) rose from ₹1,430 (2011-12) to ₹2,079 (2023-24); urban MPCE from ₹2,630 to ₹3,632.

Kerala's demand for Amendment in Wildlife Act

Context: -

- Kerala's Assembly passed a resolution seeking amendments to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, citing rising human-animal conflicts.

Vermin: -

- Vermin are animals considered harmful or nuisance-causing due to damage to crops, threats to livestock, or risks to human life and property.
- Common Examples:** Rats, mice, common crows, fruit bats.
- Legal Impact: Classified vermin lose legal protection and are exempt from wildlife conservation laws.

Process of Declaring Vermin:

- The **respective state government submits a formal request** to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- Central Declaration:** Upon verification, the Centre issues a notification declaring the species as vermin for a specified region and duration.
- The vermin **status is temporary and limited** to the stated area and time period.
- Current Provision:** Section 11(1)(A) **allows the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW)** to permit the hunting/killing of wild animals that pose a threat to human life or are diseased/disabled.
- Kerala's Proposal:** Transfer these powers to the Chief Conservators of Forests (CCFs) to ensure faster, region-specific decision-making. Kerala has five CCFs, each responsible for a different region.

EnviStats India 2025

- Context (PIB | DTE):** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) **released** the 8th edition of "EnviStats India 2025: Environment Statistics".
- EnviStats is **published by the National Statistics Office (NSO)** annually since 2018.
- Aligns with the UN's Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) 2013, ensuring global comparability and structured reporting.

Arnala

Context (PIB):

- Indian Navy is all set to commission the **1st Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)**, Arnala, on 18 Jun 2025.

Contact-7378743031 / 7767073031

About: -

- Arnala's commissioning will mark the **formal induction of 1st of 16 ASW-SWC ships** into the Indian Navy.

Key Features: -

- Arnala is the **largest Indian naval warship to be propelled by a diesel-engine-waterjet combination**. Its length is about 77.6 m.
- Named **after the historic Arnala Fort in Vasai, Maharashtra**, it is equipped for a range of anti-submarine warfare operations like underwater surveillance, search & rescue operations. It is capable of undertaking ASW operations in coastal waters, along with advanced mine-laying capabilities.
- **Designed and Constructed:** By Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, under a Public-Private Partnership with L&T Shipbuilders.
- **Indigenous Content:** It **incorporates more than 80% indigenous content** and integrates advanced systems from leading Indian defence firms, including Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), L&T, etc.

INS Tamal

- It is the **2nd Talwar-class stealth frigate** set to be commissioned by the end of June 2025.
- It is **one of four frigates acquired in a \$2.5 billion deal with Russia**: two were constructed in Russia, and two at Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) with Russian technology transfer.
- Its sister ship, INS Tushil, was commissioned in December 2024 and reached India in February 2025.

Ayush Nivesh Saarthi Portal

Context: -

- Ayush Nivesh Saarthi Portal was launched to boost investments in traditional medicine.

About: -

- It is a **one-stop, investor-centric digital portal** for the Ayush sector (Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy).
- **Developed by:** Ministry of Ayush in collaboration with Invest India.

- **Objective:** To promote FDI and private participation in Ayush-based ventures.

Key Features:

- Combines policy frameworks, incentives, investment-ready projects, and approvals in one place.
- Enables direct coordination with government departments to resolve queries efficiently.
- Targets international investors and promotes India's Ayush systems globally.

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan

Context (PIB):

- The Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) completes 9 years.

About: -

- Launched: 2016
- **Nodal Ministry:** Flagship initiative of **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW)**.
- **Aligned Strategy:** Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health plus Nutrition (RMNCAH+N) under the National Health Mission (NHM).
- **Objective:** To provide assured, comprehensive, and quality antenatal care (ANC) free of cost, especially during the 2nd & 3rd trimesters, to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality.
- **Eligibility:** All pregnant women, especially unregistered, adolescent, early, and high-risk pregnancies.

Key Features:

- **Fixed Day ANC Services:** On the **9th of every month** at government facilities.
- **Free Services:** Physical examination, 1 ultrasound, lab tests, Iron & Folic Acid & calcium supplements.
- **Specialist-led Care:** By Obstetrics and Gynecology specialists, radiologists, physicians (including private doctors).
- **Risk Identification:** Green sticker: No risk; Red sticker: High-risk pregnancy.
- **Integration with other existing programmes:** Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, Janani Suraksha Yojana, PM Matru

Heeng

Context: -

- The **1st flowering and seed set of heengat Palampur was reported by CSIR**, showing heeng can indeed be successfully cultivated in India.

About Heeng

- Also known as **asafoetida**, **Heeng is a pungent spice used in Indian cuisine** and traditional medicine for its digestive and other health benefits.
- There are **mentions of heeng in ancient Indian texts such as Mahabharata**, Ayurveda, Charaka Samhita, Pippalada Samhita and the works of Panini.
- Heeng is a **perennial plant that typically takes 5 years to mature** and start flowering. It's extracted from the resin of the Ferula plant.
- Climate:** Thrive in **cold, arid environments** suited to native regions in **Iran, Afghanistan, & Central Asia**.
- Known for its **therapeutic properties, carminative, anti-viral, anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory**, sedative and diuretic properties. Apart from healing digestive disorders, Heeng also helps in lowering blood pressure, heals menstrual pain, reduces headaches, relieves asthma, and can also cure insect bites.

Heeng Production in India

- India is the **world's largest importer, consumer and exporter (reexports imported Heeng)** of asafoetida. India **imports heeng from Afghanistan, Iran, and Uzbekistan**, among others.
- During 2022-23, heeng imports constituted 15.6% of the total spice imports in value terms.
- Recent efforts have focused on domestic cultivation** in India, particularly in the cold desert regions of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.
- Organizations like CSIR-IHBT (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - Institute of Himalayan Bio-Technology) are involved in

Shangri-La Dialogue

Context: -

- 22nd edition of the Shangri-La Dialogue 2025 was held recently.

About: -

- Shangri-La Dialogue is **Asia's premier annual summit on defence and security**. Established in 2002.
- Held **every June at the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore**.
- Organised by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London**, in collaboration with Singapore's Ministry of Defence.
- Functions as a Track 1.5 dialogue** — blending official diplomacy (Track 1) with informal, strategic discussions involving think tanks and defence experts (Track 2).
- Attended by defence ministers, military chiefs, policymakers, and strategic analysts from around 40 countries, including the U.S., China, India, Japan, Australia, and ASEAN nations.
- Provides a high-level platform for both bilateral and multilateral engagements on traditional (territorial disputes, regional conflicts) & non-traditional (terrorism, cybersecurity, climate change) challenges.
- Discussions are held in two formats: open plenary sessions for public speeches and broader dialogue and closed-door meetings for in-depth, focused, and confidential exchanges.

Himalayan Long-Tailed Myotis

Context: -

- Himalayan **long-tailed Myotis**, belonging to the **genus Myotis** (mouse-eared bats), has been **discovered from Uttarakhand's Chamoli district**, raising India's bat species count to 135.

About: -

- Myotis frater species **complex is known for morphologically similar species** across East and Central Asia.

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- Habitat: Found in southern Himalayan coniferous forests (pine, deodar, cedar).
- Distribution likely restricted to southern Himalayan slopes, with sightings in India and Pakistan.
- **Features:** Characterised by a distinctively long tail, distinguishing it from closely related species.
- Shows subtle anatomical variations that set it apart within its genus.
- Coverage: 63 countries + European Union, accounting for over 90% of global GHG emissions.
- Objective: Enhance transparency and evaluate progress toward Paris Agreement goals.
- **Assessment Criteria:** Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions (40% of overall ranking), Renewable Energy (20%), Energy Use (20%), and Climate Policy (20%).

Key Highlights of CCPI 2025

- **No country ranks in the top 3**, showing that none is on track to meet 1.5°C targets.
- **Top Performers:** Denmark tops the list at 4th place, followed by the Netherlands, UK (a notable climber due to coal phase-out and halting fossil fuel licenses), Philippines, Morocco, and Norway.
- G20 countries emit ~75% of global GHGs; only India & UK are high performers.
- Bottom Performers (Rank 58–67): Japan, Argentina, Taiwan, Kazakhstan, Canada, South Korea, Russia, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran.
- **India's Performance:** India ranks 10th with a score of 67.99, slipping two spots but remaining in the top 10 performers.
- Rated high in GHG emissions & energy use, medium in climate policy, & low in renewable energy.

Women in agriculture for food security

Context: -

- **2026, declared the International Year of the Woman Farmer**, highlights women's crucial role in food security and calls for gender-equal, climate-resilient agricultural development.

Feminisation of Agriculture: Trends

- **Rising Female Participation:** As per Periodic labour force survey (PLFS) 2023-24, **76.95% of rural women are engaged in agriculture.**
- 33% of agricultural workers and ~50% of self-employed farmers are women.
- **Agriculture Census 2015-16:** 73% of rural women are involved in farming and allied sectors.
- **Low Land Ownership:** Only **12.8% of operational land** holdings are owned by women, which constitutes 10.34% of the area of holdings.
- Rural Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLPR): FLPR rose from 41.5% in 2022-23 to 47.6% in 2023-24, largely due to male out-migration.
- **Shift in Women's Roles:** In Andhra Pradesh, women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are engaging in organic farming and direct marketing, indicating a move from labourers to farm managers.

Axiom-4 Mission

Context (PIB):

- **India returns to human spaceflight** with Axiom Mission 4, its first since 1984.

About: -

- **4th private astronaut mission to the ISS**, is being operated by private US space company **Axiom Space**, in partnership with NASA and SpaceX.
- It will be **launched aboard SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft** from Kennedy Space Centre, Florida.
- **Mission Duration:** Crew will stay 14 days on ISS, conducting 60 scientific experiments across 31 nations.
- The mission will send the **first Indian astronaut to the station as part of a joint effort between NASA and the Indian space**

Climate Change Performance Index 2025

- **Published by:** Germanwatch, Climate Action Network (CAN) International, and New Climate Institute (since 2005). Published annually since 2005.

agency. Also carries first astronauts from Poland & Hungary to stay aboard the ISS.

- Marks India's return to crewed space missions after Rakesh Sharma's 1984 flight.

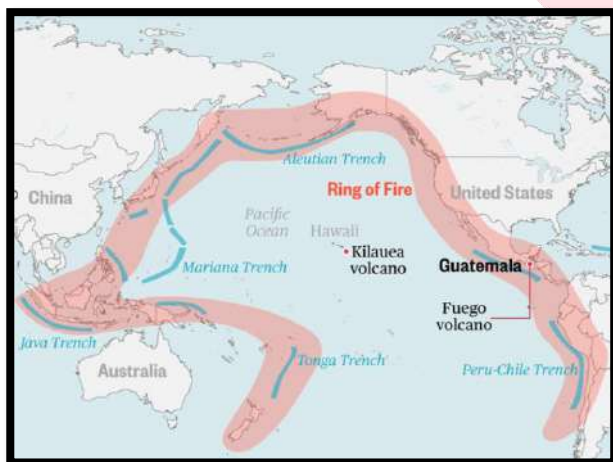
Do you know?

- **International Space Station (ISS):** Orbiting around 400 km above Earth is a joint venture between NASA, Roscosmos, ESA, JAXA, and CSA.
- **Bhartiya Antariksh Station:** India plans to establish its own indigenous space station by 2035 to enhance long-duration human spaceflight capabilities and scientific research in low-Earth orbit.
- **Space Vision 2047:** A long-term roadmap aiming to make India a global leader in space technology by 2047, focusing on space exploration, commercialisation, private participation & global partnerships.

Fuego Volcano

Context: -

- **Guatemala's Fuego volcano erupted**, spewing ash high into the atmosphere before subsiding after approximately 30 hours of intense volcanic activity.



- **Location:** Southern Guatemala, about 18 km from **Antigua city**.
- **Type:** Stratovolcano; one of Central America's most active volcanoes.
- **Elevation:** Around 3,763 meters above sea level.
- **Tectonic Setting:** Part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, a seismically active zone.
- Formed by the subduction of the Cocos Plate beneath the Caribbean Plate.
- Part of the Central American Volcanic Arc.

- **Geology:** Part of a complex with Acatenango volcano to the north. Built over the collapsed Meseta volcano (~8,500 years ago), which produced the Escuintla debris-avalanche deposit.
- **Eruption History:** Recorded 60+ eruptions since 1524.

Raja Bhabhut Singh

Context: -

- Madhya Pradesh government renamed the **Pachmarhi Wildlife Sanctuary** after 19th century tribal leader **Raja Bhabhut Singh**.

About: -

- Raja Bhabhut belonged to **Gond tribal community in present-day Narmadapuram** (formerly Hoshangabad), Madhya Pradesh.
- He was born into the Jagirdar family of the Harrakot Raikheri branch, descended from Thakur Ajit Singh of the Pachmarhi Jagir.
- His father, Thakur Mohan Singh, fought against the British alongside Peshwa Appa Saheb Bhonsle in 1819–20.

Emperor Penguin

Context: -

- A new study has found a **22% population decline in Emperor Penguin colonies**.

About: -

- **Largest and heaviest of all penguin species** and the world's deepest-diving bird.
- **Distribution:** Found exclusively in Antarctica.
- **Habitat:** Lives on pack ice and surrounding Southern Ocean waters.
- Highly ice-dependent, entire lifecycle tied to stable sea ice platforms for nesting & chick rearing.
- **Physical Features:** Black-and-white body with orange-yellow markings on the head, neck, and chest. Two layers of feathers, thick fat reserves, small beak and flippers to retain heat.
- **Lifespan:** 15–20 years.
- **Diet:** Feeds mainly on fish, krill, and squid beneath sea ice.
- **Conservation Status:** IUCN: Near Threatened
- **Significance:** A vital indicator species for climate change, showing the direct impact of

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global warming on polar ecosystems. Survival depends on the preservation of Antarctic Sea ice.



DIGIPIN

Context (PIB): -

- **Department of Posts unveiled** a new digital addressing system called **DIGIPIN**, India's new geo-coded digital addressing system.

What is DIGIPIN?

- A geo-coded digital addressing system is a **method of assigning unique digital addresses to locations based on their latitude and longitude coordinates**. Instead of relying on traditional postal addresses, this system uses **precise geographic data** to identify locations.
- DIGIPIN is an **open-source nationwide geo-coded addressing system** developed by the **Department of Posts** in **collaboration with IIT Hyderabad and National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), ISRO**.
- It divides India into **approx. 4m x 4m grids** and **assigns each grid a unique 10-character alphanumeric code based on latitude and longitude coordinates**. It can be used offline.
- **Objective:** It seeks to provide standardised, geo-coded addresses for seamless delivery of public and private services and to **enable "Address as a Service" (AaaS)**.
- It is **part of DHRUVA (Digital Hub for Reference & Unique Virtual Address)**, which aims to create a standardised, interoperable, and geocoded digital addressing system.
- It applies to **all geographical areas, including rural regions, forests, and maritime zones**, also helps in areas where no clear address exists, making it universally applicable.

CROPIC Initiative

Context (PIB):

- **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare plans to launch Collection of Real-Time Observations & Photo of Crops (CROPIC)**, a digital initiative **under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana**.

About: -

- **Objective:** Monitoring crop health, automated estimation of crop losses using AI-driven computer vision models and facilitating faster, transparent, and evidence-based insurance compensation.
- **Data Collection:** Farmers and officials upload geo-tagged, time-stamped photographs four to five times during the crop cycle using the CROPIC mobile app.
- **AI-based Cloud Platform:** Analyses images for crop type, growth stage, stress symptoms, and damage extent using computer vision.
- **Web Dashboard:** Offers real-time visualisation for monitoring and decision-making by authorities at various levels.
- **Pilot Phase (2025-26):** Conducted during Kharif 2025 and Rabi 2025-26.
- Initially, in 50 districts per season, covering three major notified crops per district.
- **Funding:** Financed under the Fund for Innovation and Technology (FIAT), with an overall allocation of ₹825 crore for tech innovations.

Maternity Benefits

Context: -

- Recent Supreme Court ruling (**K. Umadevi v. Government of Tamil Nadu**) affirming **maternity leave as a constitutional right** has **reignited debate** on reproductive justice and social inclusion.

SC Judgment: -

- Upheld maternity leave as a **reproductive right protected under Article 21**.
- Held that **state rules cannot override central laws** (Maternity Benefit Act, 1961) under Art 254 of IC.

Maternity Leave Policy in India: -

- **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961:** Provides **paid maternity leave for 12 weeks**.

- **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017:** Provides for paid maternity leave to all women (incl. adoptive & commissioning mothers) **for 26 weeks for 1st and 2nd child and 12 weeks for 3rd child.**
- **Creche Facility:** Mandatory for establishments with 50+ employees, allowing 4 daily visits by mother.

FDI Inflows in India

Context (PIB): -

- Net foreign direct investment inflow in India has **sharply declined, as per RBI data.**

RBI Data on FDI Inflows

- **Increase in Gross FDI:** India attracted **\$75.1 billion in gross FDI inflows** during April–February 2024–25, an increase from \$65.2 billion the previous year.
- **Fall in Net FDI:** Crashed by more than 96% to just \$353 million in 2024–25 as compared to previous year.
- **India's Net Outward FDI (OFDI):** Reached \$29.2 billion in 2024–25, marking a growth of more than 75 % over the previous year.

Net FDI: -

- **Net FDI is basically** gross FDI, which is the total money coming in, minus the money being repatriated out by foreign companies doing business in India and the outward FDI by Indian companies.
- **Net FDI =** Gross FDI Inflows – (Repatriation by Foreign Companies + Outward FDI by Indian Companies).

Do you know?

- Total FDI Inflows: **Stood at \$81 billion** in FY 2024–25 (\$36.05 billion in FY 2013–14), a 14% increase from FY 2023–24.
- **Sector share in total FDI:** Services sector (19% of total inflows), followed by computer software and hardware (16%) & trading (8%).
- **Maharashtra accounted for the highest share** (39%) of total FDI equity inflows, followed by Karnataka (13%) and Delhi (12%).
- **Maximum FDI from Singapore** (30% share), followed by Mauritius (17%) & United States (11%).

Global Economic Prospects Report 2025

- **World Bank has released** its mid-year Global Economic Prospects (GEP) Report, 2025.

Key Highlights: -

- Global GDP is **projected to slow to 2.3% in 2025**, the **lowest since 2008** (excluding global recessions).
- Emerging markets and developing economies are expected to grow by 3.8% in 2025.
- **Global trade would grow by 1.8% in 2025** (down from 3.4% in 2024) due to tariff effects. US-China trade frictions continue to disrupt supply chains and dampen global demand.
- **India's GDP is expected to grow at 6.3% in FY26** (is 0.4 percentage points lower than the January 2025 forecast), maintaining its status as the **world's fastest-growing large economy.**

Extended Trajectory-Long Duration Hypersonic Cruise Missile (ET-LDHCM)

Context: -

- **India is set to test** the Extended Trajectory-Long Duration Hypersonic Cruise Missile.

Key Features: -

- **Developed indigenously under the Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) **classified initiative Project Vishnu.****
- The missile is **powered by an advanced scramjet engine.** Unlike traditional jet engines, a scramjet uses atmospheric oxygen for combustion, enabling sustained high speeds for extended durations.
- Hypersonic Speed: **Maximum speed of Mach 8**, which is about 11,000 km/h, or eight times the speed of sound.
- With the ET-LDHCM, **India joins a select group of nations**, including the United States, Russia, and China, that have mastered hypersonic weapon systems.
- **Range:** About 1,500 kilometres.
- **Payload:** It can target & destroy enemy sites using conventional or nuclear warheads weighing 1,000–2,000 kg.
- It can be **launched from land, air, or sea.**

Project Vishnu

- Project Vishnu, **initiated by India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, is a program focused on **developing hypersonic cruise missiles**.
- The project aims to revolutionize India's strike capabilities with high-speed, maneuverable weapons.

Exercise Khaan Quest

- 22nd edition of Exercise Khaan Quest took place in **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**.
- It is an **UN-mandated multinational peacekeeping exercise** with participation from several countries.
- **Began in 2003 as a U.S.-Mongolia bilateral drill** and evolved into a multinational exercise in 2006.
- **Objectives:** Enhance interoperability in multinational settings & strengthen **military readiness for UN peace support operations**.

Fishing Cat

Context: -

- Wildlife Institute of India has successfully **radio-collared three fishing cats in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary** under the Fishing Cat Collaring Project.

About: -

- Medium-sized wild cat, commonly **known as Kla Trey or Tiger Fish**.
- **Solitary, nocturnal**, and an excellent **swimmer**; primarily active at night.
- **Habitat:** Wetlands, swamps, marshes, riverbanks, reed beds, and mangrove forests.
- **Distribution:** Found in Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, China, Java, Sumatra.
- **India:** **Sundarbans, Ganga-Brahmaputra plains, Western Ghats, AP mangroves**.
- **Diet:** Primarily fishes, frogs, crustaceans, and small rodents.
- **Threats:** Wetland degradation, pollution, habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict.
- **Conservation Status:** **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable** | CITES: Appendix II | WPA, 1972: Schedule I.

Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary

- Situated in **Godavari estuary, where Coringa River meets Bay of Bengal**, in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.
- Spread over 235 sq km, with **~40% covered by sea backwaters**, & remaining crisscrossed by tidal creeks.
- **Vegetation:** Mangrove forests (**India's 2nd largest after Sundarbans**) & dry deciduous tropical forests.
- Important nesting **site for Olive Ridley Turtles** along the sanctuary's coast.

Exercise Shakti 2025

- The 8th edition of Exercise Shakti is to be **held at La Cavalerie, France**.
- A biennial joint military exercise **between India and France** which is **held alternately in both countries**.
- **Focus:** Strengthening interoperability and tactical coordination in joint operations.
- **Other India-France Exercises:** Exercise Garuda (Air Force), Exercise Varuna (Navy), and Exercise Desert Knight (Air Forces).

Montreal Convention 1999 (MC99)

Context:

- The **insurance payout for passengers of Air India Boeing 787 Dreamliner** (Air India's crashed plane) should be **governed by the Montreal Convention, 1999 (MC99)**.

About: -

- The MC99 **establishes a modern compensatory regime** in respect of passengers who suffer death or injury caused by an accident during international carriage by air.
- It was **designed to replace the Warsaw Convention system** that had developed haphazardly since 1929 with a single, modern and universal liability regime.
- MC99 also **establishes the legal framework that allows airlines to make use of electronic documentation** for shipments, thereby reducing costs and increasing efficiency.
- **Signatories:** MC99 entered into force in 2003 and now has 132 Parties. This is equivalent to

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68% of all International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) States.

- **India became a signatory in 2009.**
- **MC99 Liability Limits:** Expressed in Special Drawing Rights (SDR). The value of the SDR is determined by the value of a basket of currencies important to the world's trading and financial systems.
- Under MC99 Carrier Liability is Limited to: **SDR 113,100 for death or injury of passengers.**
- To defend claims in excess of that amount, the carrier must show that the damage was not due to the negligence/wrongful act of the carrier or solely due to the negligence/wrongful act of another person.

Black Box

Context: -

- Air India flight crashed in Ahmedabad shortly after takeoff; the **retrieval of black boxes is crucial to determine the cause of the crash.**

About: -

- A black box is an **electronic flight recording device installed in aircraft** to help investigators determine the cause of a crash or technical failure. Painted bright orange or yellow.
- It **reconstructs the sequence of events** leading to an accident, enhancing safety and accountability.
- **Mandatory in all commercial aircraft** since 1967 to improve air safety standards.



Components of Black Boxes:

- **Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR):** Records cockpit audio, including pilot conversations, engine sounds, alarms, and radio transmissions.
- **Flight Data Recorder (FDR):** Captures over 80 parameters such as altitude, airspeed, flight heading, vertical acceleration, pitch, roll, autopilot settings, and engine performance.
- **Features:** Constructed using titanium or steel and insulated to withstand extreme heat, fire, high-speed impact, and deep-sea pressure.

- Located **near the tail section of the aircraft**, where the chance of survival during crashes is higher.
- Equipped with an **ultrasonic beacon** that emits signals for up to 30 days to aid underwater recovery.

Do you know?

- Black boxes were **invented in the early 1950s by Dr. David Warren**, inspired by early jetliner crashes, such as the de Havilland Comet. Australia was the first country to make black boxes mandatory in 1963; today, they are required on all commercial aircraft worldwide.

Hortoki-Sairang line

- The **Commission of Railway Safety (CRS)** has cleared the final Hortoki-Sairang section, enabling rail connectivity to Aizawl, Mizoram's capital, for the first time.
- Mizoram indeed becomes the fourth northeastern state—after Assam (Guwahati), Tripura (Agartala), and Arunachal Pradesh (Itanagar/Naharlagun)—to have its capital directly connected to the national railway network.



The Commission of Railway Safety (CRS)

- It is a **statutory body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation**. It is governed by the Railways Act of 1989 and headed by the Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety.
- It **inspects and approves new railway lines, investigates serious train accidents, and conducts safety audits.**
- Final clearance from the CRS is mandatory before opening any new railway section to the public.

Global Gender Gap Index 2025

Context (TH):

- **World Economic Forum (WEF) released the 19th edition of the Global Gender Gap Index 2025** covering 148 economies.

About: -

- It is an **annual report (since 2016) produced by the WEF** that measures gender-based gaps in access to resources and opportunities in countries around the world.
- It measures **gender parity across four key dimensions:**
 - 1) Economic participation and opportunity
 - 2) Educational attainment
 - 3) Health and survival
 - 4) Political empowerment
- It **ranks countries on a scale from 0 to 1**, with a score of 1 indicating that a country has achieved complete gender equality, while a score of 0 indicates a complete lack of equality.

Key Findings

- The global gender gap has **closed to 68.8%, marking the strongest annual advancement** since the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet full parity remains 123 years away at current rates.
- Ranking: **Iceland leads the rankings for the 16th year running, followed by Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.**
- **South Asia: Bangladesh emerged as the best performer** in South Asia, jumping 75 ranks to rank 24 globally. Nepal ranked 125, Sri Lanka 130, Bhutan 119, Maldives 138 and Pakistan 148.
- **India has ranked 131 out of 148 countries, slipping two places** from its position last year.
- With a parity score of just 64.1%, India is among the lowest-ranked countries in South Asia.

ReArm Europe (Readiness 2030)

- The EU's "ReArm Europe" plan, **rebranded as "Readiness 2030"**, proposes investment in defence to reduce US dependency, deter Russia & build strategic autonomy.
- **Initiated in March 2025 by the European Union**, the plan was initially named "ReArm

Europe" & later rebranded as "Readiness 2030" to reflect a broader strategic focus on long-term defence preparedness.

- **Objectives:** Aims to mobilize €800 billion by 2030 to build **a self-reliant European defence industry and enhance EU defence preparedness** for swift response to external threats like Russia's aggression.

UN Ocean Conference 2025

Context (DTE):

- As the 3rd UN Ocean Conference concluded, a look at the growing threat to oceans.

About: -

- Held in **Nice, France. Host Countries: France and Costa Rica.**
- **Theme:** "Accelerating action and mobilising all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean."
- **Objectives:** Address governance, financing, scientific knowledge, and climate adaptation.
- Reinforce SDG 14: Life Below Water—focus on sustainable fisheries, pollution control, and marine conservation.

Outcomes of UNOC3: -

Blue NDC Challenge: -

- Launched by: Brazil and France
- It urges countries to incorporate ocean-focused climate measures into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) ahead of the COP30 to the UNFCCC in Belem, Brazil.

Nice Wake-up Call for an Ambitious Plastics Treaty:

- The "Nice Wake-Up Call" comes **ahead of the next round of UN plastics treaty negotiations**, INC-5.2, scheduled for August 5-14, 2025, in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It is a **powerful push for a strong, legally binding global plastics treaty**, especially as negotiations have been challenging and have missed previous deadlines.
- India is **not among the signatories of the 'Nice Wake-Up Call'**

Prelims Focus- MPSC Specific

National News

India's First E-Waste Recycling Park*

- To Rise in Delhi's Holambi Kalan
- Delhi to host **India's first e-waste recycling park in Holambi Kalan**, aiming to **process 51,000 tonnes of e-waste annually**. The eco park will promote green jobs, circular economy, and formalize the recycling sector.
- The e-waste eco park will span **11.4 acres and is part of a broader national plan**, being one of four such facilities proposed across India. It will be developed **under the Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT) model** through a public-private partnership (PPP) framework.

Leopard Capital

- Bengaluru has **officially become the 'Leopard Capital' of India**, surpassing Mumbai in terms of the highest number of free-ranging wild leopards living on the fringes of a major metropolis.
- According to a year-long survey **conducted by the Holématthi Nature Foundation (HNF)** and led by conservationist Dr. Sanjay Gubbi.
- **Bannerghatta National Park (BNP)** has seen **a steady rise** in leopard numbers, and several key forest areas have been proposed for conservation reserve status.

Aadhaar OTP Must for Tatkal Bookings

- In a **major move to curb malpractices and ensure fair access to Tatkal tickets**, the **Ministry of Railways** has announced that **Aadhaar-based OTP authentication** will be mandatory for booking Tatkal tickets on the IRCTC website and mobile app **starting July 15, 2025**.
- Similar OTP-based authentication will apply at Passenger Reservation System (PRS) counters.

India's First Underwater Museum*

- India is set to develop its **first underwater museum and artificial coral reef around the decommissioned warship INS Guldar near Nivati Rocks**, located off the coast of Vengurla in Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra.

- The project, **supported by the Union Tourism Ministry with an outlay of ₹46.91 crore**, aims to promote marine biodiversity conservation, eco-tourism, and underwater adventure tourism like scuba diving and submarine tours.
- On June 11, 2025, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis virtually attended the launch of India's first underwater museum project.
- The **decommissioned INS Guldar, which served the Indian Navy until January 2024**, has been handed over to the **Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC)** to transform it into a submerged attraction.

International News

Poson Poya

- **Sri Lanka is observing the sacred Poson Poya festival**, which commemorates the arrival of Buddhism on the island nation over 2,000 years ago.
- Celebrated on the full moon day in June, this festival marks the **momentous occasion when Arahata Mahinda, son of Emperor Ashoka of India**, preached the first sermon to King Devanampiyatissa at Mihintal.

Operation Rising Lion*

- In a major escalation of regional conflict, **Israel has launched the second wave of strikes under its ongoing Operation Rising Lion**, with Iranian state media confirming a **blast at the Natanz uranium enrichment site**.

Appointments News

TCL India Renews Rohit Sharma as Brand Ambassador

- TCL India, a leading consumer electronics brand, **officially announced the renewal of its partnership with Indian cricket icon Rohit Sharma** as its brand ambassador for the second consecutive year.

T Rabi Sankar

- **President of India has appointed T Rabi Sankar, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as a part-time member of the 16th Finance Commission.**

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- His appointment fills the vacancy left by Ajay Narayan Jha, who stepped down due to personal reasons. Sankar's tenure will continue until the submission of the commission's report or until October 31, 2025,
- Commission prepares its **fiscal recommendations for the 2026-2031 period**

Finance Commission: -

- Constitutional Body: Formed under **Article 280** of the Constitution of India
- Mandate: To recommend how revenues should be shared between the Centre and States
- 16th Finance Commission Head: **Arvind Panagariya**, former Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog
- Date of Constitution: December 31, 2023
- Report Submission Deadline: October 31, 2025
- Applicable Period: April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2031

Sat Pal Bhanoo

- The Government of India has appointed Sat Pal Bhanoo, currently Managing Director **at Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), as the interim CEO** and Managing Director of the corporation.
- This decision **follows the completion of the tenure of Siddhartha Mohanty**, who served as the previous CEO & MD. Bhanoo will assume this key leadership role for a period of three months beginning June 08, 2025, or until a permanent successor is appointed, whichever occurs earlier.

Sports News**Portugal Crowned Nations League Champions**

- Final at Munich's Allianz Arena on June 8, 2025, **Portugal secured their second UEFA Nations League title after edging out Spain 5-3 in a penalty shootout**, following a dramatic 2-2 draw in regulation and extra time.
- Ruben Neves sealed the win with a decisive spot-kick after Alvaro Morata's miss.
- It marks **Portugal's second Nations League title**, making them the first team to win the tournament twice since its inception in 2018.

UEFA Nations League: -

- Launched: 2018 by UEFA to replace international friendlies with competitive matches.
- Previous Winners - 2019 – Portugal, 2021 – France, 2023 – Spain

Carlos Alcaraz

- In an extraordinary display of resilience and skill, Carlos Alcaraz **triumphed over Italy's Jannik Sinner in the longest-ever French Open final, lasting five hours and 29 minutes.**
- Trailing by two sets and facing three match points, the Spanish star staged one of the greatest comebacks in tennis history to win 4-6, 6-7(4), 6-4, 7-6(3), 7-6(10-2).
- This victory marks Alcaraz's **second consecutive French Open title and his fifth Grand Slam win overall, solidifying his status as one of the sport's brightest young talents.**
- Carlos Alcaraz, aged 22, had **previously won the French Open in 2024 and the Wimbledon 2023 final after trailing in sets**, proving his mettle in high-pressure situations.

Winners At Roland Garros 2025 (French Open): -

Sr. No	Category	Winner	Runners-Up
1	Men's singles	Carlos Alcaraz (Spain)	Jannik Sinner (Italy)
2	Women's Singles	Coco Gauff (USA)	Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)
3	Women Doubles Title	Paolini and Sara Errani (Italy)	Anna Danilina and Aleksandra Krunic
4	Men Doubles Final	Marcel Granollers and Horacio Zeballos (Spain & Argentina)	Joe Salisbury and Neal Skupski (Britain)

Aravindh Chithambaram

- Indian Grandmaster Aravindh Chithambaram has **won the 6th Stepan Avagyan Memorial chess tournament held in Jermuk, Armenia.**
- He scored 6.5 points in 9 rounds. Although he **tied with fellow Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa**, Aravindh was declared the winner based on the **tiebreak system.**

MS Dhoni

- Mahendra Singh Dhoni, **former India captain and one of the most iconic cricketers of his generation**, was officially inducted into the **ICC Hall of Fame** during a prestigious event held in London.
- With this honour, **Dhoni becomes the 11th Indian cricketer, and the ninth Indian male player**, to be recognised by the International

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Cricket Council (ICC) for his **extraordinary contributions** to the game.

Hall of Fame 2025: A Star-Studded Class

- Matthew Hayden (Australia)
- Daniel Vettori (New Zealand)
- Hashim Amla (South Africa)
- Graeme Smith (South Africa)
- Sana Mir (Pakistan)
- Sarah Taylor (England)

World Test Championship

- South Africa Clinches Maiden ICC World Test Championship 2025 Title at Lord's.
- Proteas claimed their first-ever **ICC trophy by defeating defending champions Australia by five wickets** in the World Test Championship (WTC) Final.
- **Aiden Markram has been awarded with the player** of the match for his 4th inning century

Cycle	Winner	Runner-Up	Result	Venue
2019–2021	New Zealand	India	Won by 8 wickets	Rose Bowl, Southampton
2021–2023	Australia	India	Won by 209 runs	The Oval, London
2023–2025	South Africa	Australia	Won by 5 Wickets	Lord's, London

Awards

National e-Governance Awards 2025*

- Rohini Gram Panchayat in **Shirpur taluka, Dhule district, Maharashtra, has won the Gold Award in the National e-Governance Awards 2025.**
- Despite being a 100% tribal village, Rohini has emerged as a national model for technology-driven rural governance.
- The Gram Panchayat was selected from over 1.45 lakh entries across India in the Grassroots Level Initiatives category and will receive the award at the 28th National e-Governance Conference in Visakhapatnam on June 9, 2025.

- The award is **presented by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.**

IMP Day

World Day Against Child Labour 2025

- **June 12, 2025, marks the 21st anniversary of World Day Against Child Labour**, first initiated by the **International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2002.**
- The 2025 theme emphasizes that while progress has been made, intensified global action is essential to end child labour.
- **Theme for 2025** - "Progress is clear, but there's more to do: let's speed up our efforts!"

125th Death Anniversary of Birsa Munda

- Birsa Munda Punyatithi is observed **every year on June 9 to remember** and honour Birsa Munda, one of India's greatest tribal freedom fighters and social reformers.
- Birsa Munda **was born on November 15, 1875, in a small village called Ulihatu**, in present-day Jharkhand. He belonged to the Munda tribe, one of the many tribal communities in India.

Ulgulan (Rebellion) Movement

- Birsa Munda is best known for **leading the Ulgulan, which means "The Great Tumult" or rebellion**, in the late 1800s. Through this movement, he demanded tribal autonomy – meaning that tribal people should govern themselves and keep control over their land and forests.
- Birsa Munda **died at a very young age**. He was only 25 years old when he passed away on June 9, 1900, while in Ranchi Jail.

Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With reference to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, consider the following statements:

- 1) Once an animal is declared vermin, it loses all legal protection under the Act.
- 2) The declaration of vermin status can be made by a State Government without any approval from the Central Government.
- 3) The status of vermin is permanent and applies nationwide.

Which of the statements given above is/are **correct**?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) None of the above

Q2) Consider the following statements about the National e-Governance Awards 2025:

- 1) The awards are jointly presented by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- 2) Rohini Gram Panchayat in Maharashtra received the Gold Award under the Grassroots Level Initiatives category.
- 3) The award aims to promote innovation and excellence in digital governance at all levels of administration.

Which of the above statements is/are **correct**?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

Q3) Consider the following statements about the Commission of Railway Safety (CRS):

- 1) It functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Railways.
- 2) It is responsible for granting final clearance before any new railway line is opened to the public.
- 3) The CRS is governed by the provisions of the Railways Act, 1989.

Which of the statements given above is/are **correct**?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

Q4) With reference to DIGIPIN, recently launched in India, consider the following statements:

- 1) It assigns a unique 10-character alphanumeric code to every 10m x 10m grid across India.
- 2) It is developed jointly by the Department of Posts, IIT Hyderabad, and National Remote Sensing Centre (ISRO).
- 3) DIGIPIN operates only with active internet access.

Which of the statements given above is/are **correct**?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

Q5) Consider the following statements regarding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) trends in India for 2024-25:

- 1) India witnessed a rise in gross FDI inflows but a significant fall in net FDI inflows.
- 2) The services sector attracted the highest share of total FDI inflows.
- 3) India's net outward FDI showed a declining trend over the previous year.

Which of the above statements is/are **correct**?

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