



PRAYAAS TIMES

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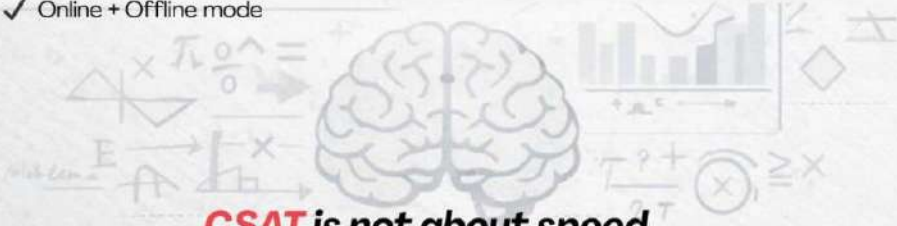
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MAINS FOCUS

2.General Studies II

2.1 NCRB Releases Key Annual Reports

Context: -

- The **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** has released its annual statistical reports for 2023: **Prison Statistics India (PSI)**, **Crime in India**, and **Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI)**, providing key insights into nationwide trends in crime, prison populations, accidental deaths, and suicides.

Syllabus of Mains – GS-2- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance

Crime in India 2023

- Overall Crime:** India registered 6.24 million cases in 2023 (↑7.2% from 2022), with a crime rate of 448.3 per lakh and one crime every 5 seconds.
- Changing Crime Pattern:** Traditional violent crimes declined (murder ↓2.8%, rape ↓5.9%, dowry deaths ↓4.6%, attempt to rape ↓15%), while cyber and urban offences like rash driving (↑7.5%) and obstruction on public ways (↑62%) surged.
- Cybercrimes:** Cybercrime rose 31.2%, largely fraud-related, with Karnataka leading (21,889 cases) followed by Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.
- Metropolitan Cities:** Metro cities recorded 9.44 lakh crimes (↑10.6%), dominated by theft (44.8%), rash driving (9.2%), and public obstruction (8.1%), with Delhi recording the highest cases.
- Crime Against Women:** Crimes against women rose slightly (0.7%), with domestic cruelty forming the largest share (29.8%).
- Crimes Against SCs/STs:** Crimes against SCs rose marginally, while crimes against STs surged 28.8%, driven by Manipur's rise to 3,399 cases (from just 1 in 2022) due to ethnic violence; Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan followed.
- Crimes Against Children:** Crimes against children rose 9.2%, with a significant portion under POCSO, showing higher vulnerability and improved reporting.
- Community & Preventive Interventions:** Implement grassroots violence-prevention programs, encourage NGO participation, and invest in education, jobs, and de-addiction to reduce youth crime

Prisons and Prison Administration in India

- Constitutional Status:** Prisons/Persons detained: State Subject (Entry 4, List II, Schedule VII)
- Responsibility: States/UTs:** manage prison administration & prisoners
- Role of MHA:** Provides **guidance, advisories & support** on prison reforms
- Old Legal Framework:** **Prisons Act 1894**, State Prison Manuals, **Prisoners Act 1900**, **Transfer of Prisoners Act 1950**
- New Model Act 2023:** **Model Prisons & Correctional Services Act 2023** as a **guiding document** for States
- Key Upgrades in Model Act:** Integrates provisions of 1900 & 1950 Acts; shifts focus to **correction, rehabilitation, security modernization & humane treatment**

Key Judgements Related to Prisons

- ✓ **Sunil Batra v. Delhi Administration (1978):** Held solitary confinement without judicial sanction unconstitutional and affirmed prisoners' **Article 21 rights**.
- ✓ **Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar (1979):** Declared speedy trial a fundamental right, leading to release of thousands of undertrials.
- ✓ **Francis Coralie Mullin v. Administrator, Delhi (1981):** Recognised prisoners' right to communicate with family and lawyers as part of life and dignity under Article 21.
- ✓ **Ramamurthy v. State of Karnataka (1997):** Identified 9 systemic prison issues (overcrowding, torture, health, etc.) and ordered urgent prison reforms.
- ✓ **Prabha Dutt v. Union of India (1982):** Upheld the press's right to interview prisoners, promoting transparency in prison administration.
- ✓ **Suhas Chakma v. Union of India (2024):** SC endorsed open prisons as a solution to overcrowding and urged states to expand open prison systems.

drivers.

Prison Statistics India (PSI) 2023

- **Overall Prison Population:** Prison population declined by 4.4% in 2023, with 1,332 prisons functioning nationwide.
- **Inequality & Discrimination in Prisons:** Affluent/upper-caste inmates get preferential treatment; SC (2024) struck down caste-based work allocation as violating Articles 14, 17, 21, 23.
- **Staff Shortages:** 30% staff vacancies; 1:7 staff-inmate ratio (vs UK 2:3) and 775 inmates per doctor against the recommended 1:300.
- **Low Budget Allocation:** IJR 2025 shows 18 states spend < ₹100/day per inmate, limiting welfare measures.
- **Challenge of Uniform Prison Management:** As prisons are a **state subject**, ensuring uniform standards across India remains difficult.
- **Occupancy Rate:** National occupancy reduced to 120.8% (from 131.4% in 2022), still 21% above capacity.
- **Overcrowding:** Delhi at 200% occupancy is worst; Telangana lowest at 72.8%; overcrowding harms hygiene, ventilation, diet, and clean water.
- **Undertrials vs Convicts:** Undertrials form 73.5% of inmates, reflecting judicial delays; Uttar Pradesh has the highest number.
- **Female Inmates:** Women (4.1%) face poor gender-sensitive facilities, hygiene challenges, and inadequate medical support.
- **Foreign Prisoners:** Foreign inmates increased 10.7%, with 74% undertrials, mainly from Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Nigeria.
- **Deaths in Prisons:** 1,972 deaths (150 unnatural, including 96 suicides), highlighting mental-health neglect; Punjab, Haryana, UP reported most unnatural deaths.

Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI) 2023

- **Suicides & Accidents:** India saw 1.71 lakh suicides and 1.73 lakh road-accident deaths, showing a dual crisis of mental health and road safety.
- **Road Accidents:** Total 4.64 lakh accidents, mainly due to overspeeding (58.6%) and affecting two-wheelers (45.8%) the most.
- **High-Risk States:** UP, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and MP reported the highest highway fatalities.
- **Timing of Accidents:** Most accidents occurred during 6–9 PM, the peak danger window.
- **Farmer Suicides:** 10,786 farming-sector suicides, highest in Maharashtra (38.5%) and Karnataka (22.5%).
- **Drug Overdose Deaths:** 654 overdose deaths, led by Punjab, MP, and Rajasthan.
- **Illicit Liquor Deaths:** Highest fatalities reported in Jharkhand, Karnataka, Bihar, and Punjab.

Prison Reform Initiatives

- **Amendments to Model Prison Manual & Model Act 2023:** MHA revised rules to eliminate caste-based discrimination, as directed in Sukanya Santha vs UoI.
- **Model Prison Manual 2016:** Provides uniform standards for prison administration and prisoner management across all States/UTs.
- **Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme:** Offers financial assistance to help indigent inmates secure bail or release when unable to pay fines.
- **E-Prison Project:** Digitises inmate data through NIC's Prisoner Information Management System, enabling centralized monitoring.
- **Modernization of Prisons Project:** Upgrades jails with modern security infrastructure and advanced technological equipment.
- **FASTER System (Supreme Court):** Ensures instant electronic transmission of bail orders to prisons, reducing delays in prisoner release.

Way Forward / Recommendations

- **Supreme Court's Principles on Imprisonment:** Prisoners remain persons with human rights intact, and their suffering must not be aggravated beyond lawful incarceration.
- **Parliamentary Committee Recommendations:** Use trackable bracelets, renovate colonial prisons for heritage tourism revenue, and create Prison Development Funds for inmate welfare.

- **Justice A.N. Mulla Committee:** Create Indian Prisons & Correctional Service, integrate after-care/rehabilitation/probation, allow press & public access, and keep undertrials separate from convicts.
- **Justice Amitava Roy Committee:** Set up fast-track courts for petty & long-pending cases, use video conferencing for elderly/sick inmates, create exclusive women's prisons, and ensure mandatory segregation of undertrials, convicts, and first-time offenders.

Conclusion:

- India's crime and prison data highlight the urgent need for **evidence-based reforms, faster justice, and humane correctional systems**. With the **Model Prisons Act 2023** and supportive judicial directions, the focus is shifting from punishment to **dignity, rehabilitation, and reintegration**, enabling prisons to become true reformative institutions.

Question for Practice:

- India's crime and prison statistics underscore the need to move from a punitive to a rehabilitative criminal justice approach. Discuss the key reforms proposed by committees (Mulla, Amitava Roy) and evaluate the progress made so far. (250W-15M)

2.2 Gaza Peace Summit 2025

Context: -

- Recently, the USA and Egypt jointly hosted the Gaza Peace Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, aimed at promoting peace in Gaza and strengthening stability in the broader Middle East region.

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

Gaza Peace Summit: -

- **Summit Purpose:** To endorse a Gaza ceasefire and launch the U.S. 20-point Trump Peace Declaration.
- **Ceasefire Guarantors:** The U.S., Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey signed the declaration and will act as guarantors of ceasefire implementation.
- **Trump 20-Point Peace Plan:** Focuses on resolving disputes through diplomacy, disarming Hamas, and internationally supervised reconstruction of Gaza.
- **No Forced Displacement:** Ensures Palestinians will not be militarily removed from Gaza.
- **No Israeli Annexation:** Israel commits not to occupy or annex the Gaza Strip.
- **Absence of Two-State Commitment:** The plan does not guarantee creation of a Palestinian state or a two-state solution.
- **Hostage-Prisoner Exchange:** Hamas freed the last 20 surviving Israeli hostages; Israel released about 1,968 Palestinian prisoners.
- **Implementation Framework:** The declaration lays out rules and mechanisms for enforcing the ceasefire and monitoring compliance.
- **Non-Signatories:** Israel and Hamas did not sign the declaration; the pact is upheld by mediator states.
- **India's Participation:** Kirti Vardhan Singh (MoS External Affairs) attended as PM Modi's representative, supporting efforts toward lasting peace.

Significance of Peace in the Region

- **Regional Prosperity:** Peace can support the expansion of the Abraham Accords, enabling broader regional peace and prosperity. The Accords are part of U.S. Middle Eastern diplomacy involving Israel, UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, etc.
- **Strategic Location:** The region is rich in oil and gas and lies at the junction of key global communication lines such as the Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz, and Suez Canal.
- **Contemporary Geopolitics:** Great power competition risks regional fragmentation without peace; Russia shows security interest while China maintains strong economic interests.
- **Global Trade:** The region has one of the youngest and fastest-growing populations, expected to reach ~580 million by 2030, creating a major market for goods and services in peaceful times.

- **Importance for India:** Energy and remittances from the region are strategically vital; India imports nearly 70% of its oil from here and gains relevance through initiatives like IMEC and I2U2.

Implications

- **Ceasefire Milestone:** The simultaneous releases and declarations mark the first significant peace development after two years of conflict.
- **Diplomatic Pivot:** The presence of guarantors reflects a shift toward multilateral mediation in the Israel–Gaza conflict.
- **Psychological Impact:** The mass release has strong symbolic value in Israel, restoring hope and encouraging both sides to sustain the truce.
- **Geopolitical Rebalancing:** The event strengthens the mediating influence of regional powers such as Egypt and Qatar.

India's Stance on the Palestinian Issue

1. 1947–1991: Period of Moral–Political Support for Palestine

- Strong backing for the Palestinian cause, rooted in India's anticolonial worldview, sympathy for Arab nations, and commitment to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).
- Consistent advocacy of the Two-State Solution — supporting an independent and sovereign State of Palestine coexisting peacefully with Israel.

Early diplomatic alignment with Palestine:

- India opposed the 1947 UN Partition Plan, calling it unjust.
- India recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1974 as the sole representative of Palestinians.

- India recognized the State of Palestine in 1988, strengthening political solidarity.

2. 1991–2014: Strategic Recalibration & Balanced Engagement

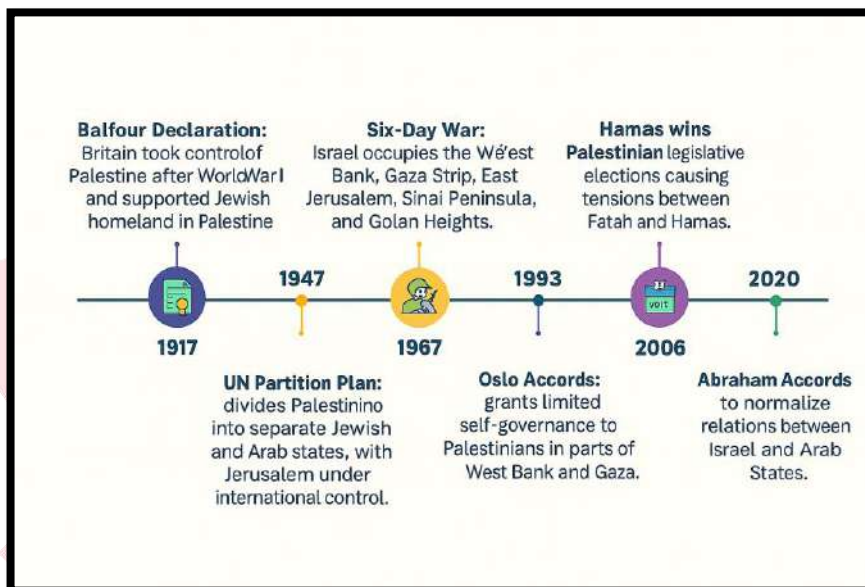
- Shift towards pragmatic foreign policy after the Cold War and economic reforms.
- Full diplomatic relations established with Israel in 1992, marking a major foreign-policy transformation.
- Rise of strategic cooperation with Israel in defence, agriculture, water management, and intelligence.
- India became one of the largest buyers of Israeli defence technology.
- Balanced approach maintained: Continued political and humanitarian support to Palestine while expanding ties with Israel.

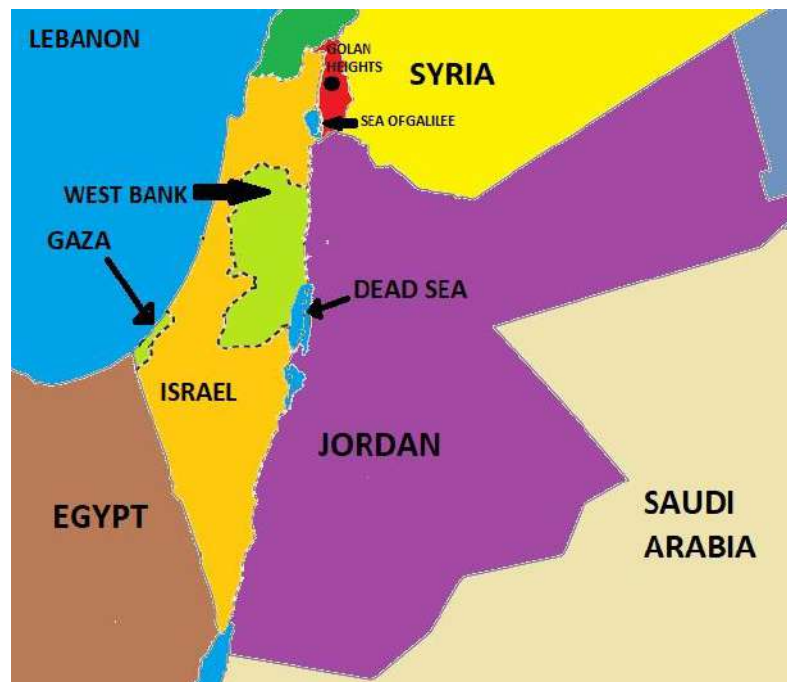
3. 2014–Present: De-Hyphenation & Parallel Engagement

- Adoption of the "De-hyphenation policy" — India engages with Israel and Palestine as separate bilateral relationships, not through a zero-sum lens.

Historic high-level visits highlight balanced diplomacy:

- Prime Minister's standalone visit to Israel (2017) — first by an Indian PM.
- Followed by visit to Palestine in 2018, reaffirming India's commitment to Palestinian statehood.
- Continued support for the Two-State Solution in all UN forums, while deepening strategic ties with Israel in technology, defence, cyber security, and innovation.
- Humanitarian and developmental assistance to Palestine sustained through budgetary support, capacity-building, and UNRWA contributions



Key Strategic Locations: -

Location	Geographical Position	Strategic Importance
Gaza Strip	Narrow coastal belt along the Mediterranean Sea ; borders Israel (east/north) and Egypt (south)	Access to Mediterranean; key corridor between Africa-Asia; population-dense enclave influencing regional security dynamics
West Bank	Landlocked; between Israel (west) and Jordan (east)	Controls highlands overlooking Israel; houses major Palestinian population centres; critical for a two-state solution
Golan Heights	Plateau between Israel and Syria ; bounded by Jordan River & Sea of Galilee (west)	Strategic elevation giving military surveillance advantage; key freshwater source for Israel
Sinai Peninsula	Triangular desert peninsula between Mediterranean Sea (north) and Red Sea (south) ; links Africa and Asia	Controls Suez approach; buffer between Israel & Egypt; hosts vital maritime chokepoints (Gulf of Aqaba, Suez Canal)
Jerusalem	Hill city between Mediterranean & Dead Sea ; lies east of Israel's central highlands	Holy city for Judaism, Christianity, Islam ; emotional and political core of the Israel-Palestine conflict
Suez Canal	Connects Mediterranean Sea to Red Sea	Shortest maritime route between Europe & Asia; vital for global energy flows
Sea of Galilee (Lake Kinneret)	Northeast Israel, fed by Jordan River	Israel's largest freshwater reservoir; key for agriculture & domestic water supply
Rafah Crossing	Border point between Gaza & Egypt	Only non-Israeli exit for Gaza; critical for humanitarian aid and movement

Conclusion:

- India maintains a calibrated approach, deepening strategic engagement with Israel while upholding its long-standing commitment to Palestine, reflecting prudent and value-driven diplomacy in West Asia.

Question for Practice: -

- The recent Gaza Peace Summit marks a renewed global attempt to negotiate a humanitarian ceasefire and long-term political settlement. Discuss the key obstacles to achieving sustainable peace between Israel and Palestine. (150W-10M)

2.3 AI Regulation under the IT Amendment Rules 2025

Context

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has notified the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2025** to amend the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("IT Rules, 2021"): **PIB**

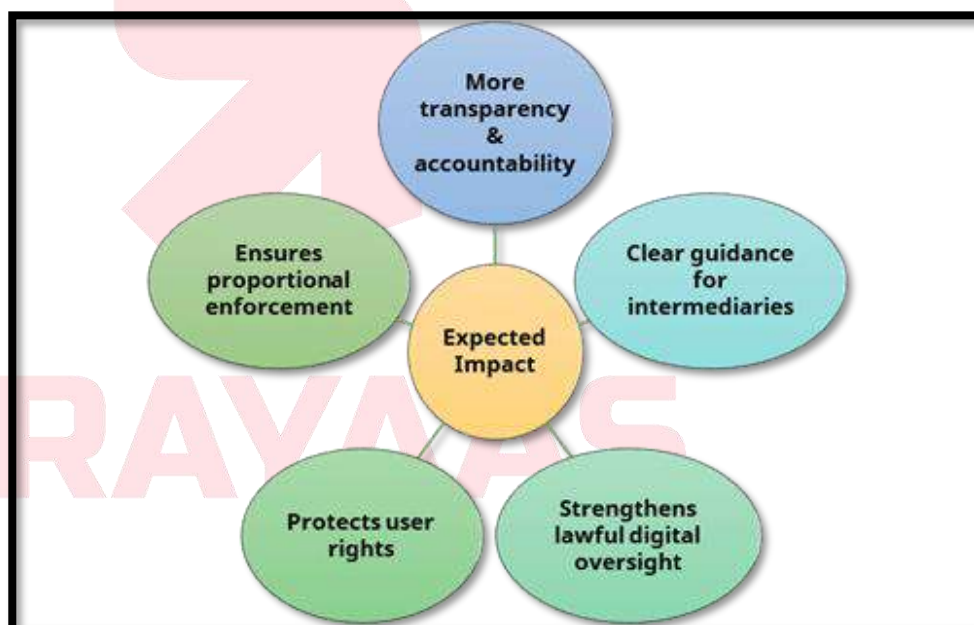
Syllabus of Mains – GS-2- Governance (Government policies and interventions) and **GS-3- Science & Technology** (Awareness in the fields of IT, computers, AI, robotics, and related technologies.)

About

- These amendments strengthen the framework of due diligence obligations of intermediaries under the Information Technology Act, 2000 ("IT Act").
- The **2025 amendments, effective from 15 November 2025**, strengthen the **procedural safeguards for removing unlawful online content**.
- Under Rule 3(1)(d) of the IT Rules, 2021**, intermediaries must take down unlawful material when they receive a valid government order.
- This operates along with:**
 - Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act, 2000**, which removes an **intermediary's safe-harbour protection** if it does not act after getting "actual knowledge," and
 - Section 69A**, which allows the **Central Government to block online content in the interest of national security, sovereignty, or public order**.

Expected Impact:

- Transparency & Accountability:** Clear guidelines on **who can issue directions** and how, with periodic review, ensures checks and balances.
- Clarity for Intermediaries:** By mandating detailed and reasoned intimations, intermediaries will have better guidance to act in compliance with law.
- Safeguards and Proportionality:** The reforms **ensure proportionality and uphold the principles of natural justice** while reinforcing lawful restrictions under the IT Act, 2000.



Key Features of the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2025

1. Senior-level Authorization:

- Any direction issued to intermediaries for removal of unlawful content must now come only from a senior officer **not below the rank of Joint Secretary or equivalent**.
- Where such rank does not exist, **an officer of Director-level or equivalent** may issue the intimation through the authorised agency.
- For police organisations**, only a specially authorised DIG or above can issue such directions.
- This ensures greater accountability and reduces the risk of misuse.

2. Reasoned Intimation with Specific Details:

- **Takedown requests must clearly mention:**
- The statutory basis and legal provision invoked,
- The nature of the unlawful act, and
- The exact URL/identifier of the content to be removed.
- **The earlier broad term “notification” has been replaced by “reasoned intimation” to align with the “actual knowledge” standard under Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act.**
- This enhances clarity, precision, and transparency.

3. Periodic Review Mechanism:

- All directions issued under Rule 3(1)(d) will **undergo a monthly review by an officer not below the rank of Secretary** of the appropriate government.
- This ensures the **action remains lawful**, proportionate, and necessary.

4. Balancing Rights and Responsibilities:

- The **amendments aim to balance citizens’ constitutional rights with the State’s regulatory powers.**
- Transparency in enforcement is strengthened to prevent arbitrary restrictions.

5. Monthly Review:

- **All takedown directions will be reviewed every month by a secretary-level officer** to ensure they remain necessary, proportionate, and lawful

Regulation of Synthetic & AI-Generated Content

- **Definition:** “Synthetic information” includes **content created or algorithmically** altered using computer resources to appear authentic.
- **Labelling Requirement:** Intermediaries **must label all AI-generated** or modified content, enhancing user awareness and digital literacy.
- **User Declaration & Verification:** Users must declare if their uploaded content is AI-generated or altered.
- **Significant Social Media Intermediaries (SSMIs)**—with over 5 million users—must deploy tools to verify such declarations and detect synthetic content.
- **Safe Harbour Protection:** Intermediaries **retain safe harbour immunity** under Section 79 of the IT Act if they act in good faith to detect and remove synthetic or manipulated content.
- This encourages proactive compliance while protecting genuine platforms.

Significance

- The amendment maintains **a balance between citizens’ constitutional rights and the State’s regulatory powers**, ensuring that enforcement actions are transparent and free from arbitrary restrictions.
- It offers intermediaries clearer guidelines by requiring detailed and reasoned orders, **making compliance easier and more structured.**
- The reforms encourage proportional action, uphold principles of natural justice, and strengthen **lawful restrictions under the IT Act, 2000.**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RULES, 2021**1. About the Rules**

- Notified by MeitY in 2021; amended in 2022 & 2023.
- **Aim:** Strengthen digital governance and platform accountability.

2. Key Purpose

- Regulate intermediaries and digital media.
- Protect user rights, safety, and privacy.
- Ensure responsible digital and AI use.

3. Obligations on Intermediaries

- Must not host/share: misinformation, false content, impersonation, deepfakes, or unlawful material.
- Must follow due diligence, appoint compliance officers (for SSMIs), ensure traceability (in specific cases), and remove flagged content promptly.

4. User Grievance Mechanism

- Users can complain to the Grievance Officer.
- Intermediaries must act within set timelines.

5. Grievance Appellate Committee (GAC)

- Hears user appeals against platform decisions.
- Can overturn decisions and direct corrective action.

6. MeitY Advisories

- Guidelines for safe use of AI, LLMs, and generative AI.
- Prevent misuse like deepfakes and misinformation.

7. Coverage

- Applies to intermediaries, SSMIs (5+ million users), online gaming platforms, and digital news publishers.

8. Overall Goal

- Create a safe, transparent, accountable digital ecosystem under Digital India.

- **The IT Amendment Rules 2025 represent an important step in responsible digital governance by:**
 1. Curbing AI misuse and disinformation,
 2. Promoting accountable online regulation, and
 3. Protecting citizens' access to authentic information.
- **These changes support India's broader goal of creating a secure, transparent, and ethical AI ecosystem within the Digital India framework.**

Conclusion:

- **The IT Amendment Rules 2025 strengthen India's digital governance** by making online regulation more transparent, accountable, and balanced. By tackling issues like AI-driven misinformation while protecting citizens' rights, they advance a safer and **more trustworthy digital ecosystem under the Digital India vision.**

Mains Question for Practice-

- **Evaluate the effectiveness of the IT Amendment Rules 2025 in addressing challenges posed by deepfakes, misinformation, and generative AI.**

2.4 PRAGATI

Context (PIB):

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi earlier today chaired the meeting of the PRAGATI, the ICT-based multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation, **involving Centre and State governments.** (22 October)
- The **PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) Platform was launched in 2015** to introduce e-transparency and e-accountability in welfare schemes.



Syllabus of Mains – GS 2- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential

About-

- The platform addresses **public grievances and monitors** essential government programs.
- It operates on three technologies.
 - 1) Digital Data Management
 - 2) Video-Conferencing
 - 3) Geospatial Technology

Working Structure of PRAGATI

- It is a **3-tier system** involving the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States (promotes cooperative federalism).
- The PM holds a **monthly program generally on the Fourth Wednesday** (PRAGATI Day).
- Union Government and Chief Secretaries **provide comments and updates on the flagged issues and grievances within three days.**

India's governance framework – Historical Context

Bureaucratic Hierarchy:

- Historically, India's governance was characterised by a bureaucratic and hierarchical system, leading to administrative delays and inefficiencies.

Slow Decision-Making:

- Decision-making processes within the government were notoriously slow, hindering progress and responsiveness to citizen's needs.

Red Tape Challenges:

- Excessive red tape and administrative complexity were prevalent, resulting in a lack of transparency and accountability.

Top-Down Approach:

- A top-down approach to governance was dominant, with centralised decision making that often failed to address local and immediate concerns.

Ineffective Governance:

- The historical governance framework was criticised for inefficiency and lack of responsiveness, contributing to public frustration and regulatory bottlenecks.

How the PRAGATI platform brought a paradigm shift in a traditional governance model: -

Traditional Governance	PRAGATI Platform
Bureaucratic Hierarchy	Collaborative Structure
Top-Down Decision Making	Decentralised Decision Making
Limited Transparency	Enhanced Transparency
Limited Citizen Participation	Increased Citizen Participation
low Project Implementation	Timely Project Implementation

Collaborative Structure:

- Pragati has helped reduce bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies by providing a platform for government officials to interact directly with the Prime Minister and key decision-makers.
- This has streamlined communication and expedited decision-making, reducing the bureaucratic hierarchy's negative impact.

Timely Decision making:

- Pragati aims to ensure timely decision-making and implementation of projects and policies.
- Through regular video conferences and discussions on the platform, issues and projects are tracked and monitored closely, allowing for quicker resolutions and implementation.

Red Tape Challenges:

- Pragati has reduced excessive red tape and complexity through transparency and accountability.
- It allows officials to discuss challenges openly, simplifying bureaucratic procedures.

Top-Down Approach:

- Pragati challenges the traditional top-down approach by facilitating discussions and interactions between central government officials and state-level authorities.
- This approach ensures that local and immediate concerns are addressed more effectively, moving away from the strictly centralised decision-making model.

Pro-active Governance:

- Pragati's focus on proactive governance and timely implementation directly addresses the criticism of historical inefficiency and lack of responsiveness in the governance framework.

Conclusion

- The Pragati platform has shifted the paradigm in India's governance framework by promoting transparency, accountability, and faster decision-making.
- However, Corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and socioeconomic disparities are persistent issues in the Governance system, which still needs further reforms to address these challenges.
- As Prime Minister Narendra Modi aptly stated, "Pragati is a culture of pro-active governance, which ensures that 'progress' and 'transparency' become the driving forces of decision-making."**

3. General Studies III

3.1 India's SDG Decade

Context: -

- The Sustainable Development Goals (also known as the Global Goals) were **adopted by the United Nations in September 2015**, and we have now reached the ten-year milestone since their launch.

Syllabus of Mains – GS-3- Inclusive growth and issues arising from it

Global Progress Towards Achieving the SDGs :-

- The 2025 Sustainable Development Report (SDR) shows that no country is on track to achieve all 17 SDGs by 2030, and only 17% of targets are currently progressing as planned.
- Finland ranks 1st in the SDG Index (score: 87), followed by Sweden and Denmark**, reflecting strong performance in education, health, and clean energy.
- East and South Asia have recorded the fastest progress since 2015, driven by rapid improvements in economic growth, infrastructure, and access to basic services.
- Despite overall progress, global challenges remain significant, particularly in climate action (SDG 13), biodiversity (SDG 15), and reducing inequalities (SDG 10).

Notable areas of improvement include:

- Increased **access to electricity and clean energy (SDG 7)**.
- Expansion of **internet connectivity and mobile broadband use (SDG 9)**.
- Decline in under-five and neonatal mortality rates (SDG 3).
- However, global crises such as climate change, conflicts, rising debt, and the COVID-19 pandemic's lasting impacts continue to slow down SDG progress worldwide. **The UN stresses that accelerated action, stronger partnerships, and investment in data and innovation are essential to get the world back on track before 2030.**

About the SDGs:

- ✓ **"Sustainable development"** was first defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in its 1987 ***Brundtland Report*** as **"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."**
- ✓ In 2015, all UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes **17 Sustainable Development Goals** and **169 targets**.
- ✓ The SDGs serve as a global roadmap to end poverty and reduce inequality, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy health, justice and prosperity — with the central principle that **no one is left behind**.



SDG Achievements (India)

- SDG-1 (No Poverty):** 135+ million people exited multidimensional poverty (2015–21) — *NITI Aayog SDG India Index 2023–24*.
- SDG-2 (Zero Hunger):** Undernourishment at **13.7%** (2021–23)
- SDG-3 (Good Health):** MMR reduced to **80.5** (2023) — *SDR 2025*
- SDG-4 (Quality Education):** Net primary enrolment at **99.9%** (2024) — *SDR 2025*.
- SDG-5 (Gender Equality):** **77.5%** family-planning demand met by modern methods (2024) — *SDR 2025*.
- SDG-7 (Clean Energy):** **99.2%** population has electricity access (2022) — *SDR 2025*.
- SDG-9 (Industry & Innovation):** **886 million** active internet users (2024)

Challenges in Budgeting and Expenditure for SDGs in India

1. Inadequate Fiscal Space

- India faces a major SDG financing gap; developing countries need USD 4 trillion annually, but India's public spending is insufficient.
- India's SDG gap is over USD 500 billion a year.
- Fiscal pressures from health, education, infrastructure, and defence limit resources, and states like Odisha, Haryana, and Meghalaya show limited outcome gains despite higher spending.

2. Lack of Robust Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks

- Data and monitoring systems are fragmented and outdated, making it difficult to track SDG progress accurately. SDG India Index 2023-24 could not measure Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) due to data unavailability at the state level.

3. Fragmented Implementation Across States

- States show wide variation in SDG integration and budgeting; some embed SDGs in plans, while others lag due to institutional and financial constraints.
- Odisha, Haryana, and Meghalaya use SDG-based budgeting, but implementation depth varies, and many Panchayats lack capacity to plan, track, and report SDG outcomes.

4. Lack of Long-Term Planning and Resource Allocation

- Budgets often favor short-term deliverables over the sustained investments needed for long-term SDG progress. SDG outcomes (e.g., education, gender equality) show time-lag effects.

Challenges Beyond Financing in Achieving SDGs in India

1. Ineffective Implementation of Policies

- Even well-designed policies face challenges in on-ground execution, especially in low-capacity regions.
- For instance, Haryana's limited progress in Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) despite adequate funding highlights implementation gaps.

2. Measurement and Data Limitations

- India's data systems remain uneven and outdated, hindering real-time assessment of SDG indicators.
- The **National Indicator Framework** lacks detailed district-level data and fails to capture SDG interlinkages.

3. Neglect of Trade-offs and Synergies Between Goals

- Policies often overlook how SDGs are interconnected, leading to trade-offs between goals.
- For example, rapid industrial growth (Goal 8) can increase emissions, undermining Goal 13 (Climate Action). Recognizing such linkages could improve policy coherence and optimize resource use.

4. Governance and Institutional Challenges

- Weak inter-ministerial coordination results in fragmented decisions and inconsistent SDG implementation.
- Many states lack dedicated SDG units and trained staff, limiting planning and monitoring. Strengthening institutional capacity at state and district levels is essential for effective SDG localization.

5. Short-Term Focus Over Long-Term Sustainability

- Budgeting cycles and political timelines often emphasize quick, visible outcomes, ignoring the need for long-term sustainability.

6. Exclusion and Inequality

- Despite progress, marginalized and vulnerable communities continue to face social and economic exclusion.
- Groups such as women, Dalits, Adivasis, and rural poor often have lower access to education, healthcare, and livelihoods. The urban-rural divide remains evident — India's rural poverty rate (19%) is nearly double that of urban areas (10%), according to MPI 2023.

Way Forward for Achieving SDGs in India

1. Strengthen Data Systems and Monitoring

- Reliable and timely data are crucial for tracking SDG progress. Strengthening statistical capacity at the national, state, and district levels will improve accuracy and accountability.
- Developing a real-time SDG Data Dashboard and ensure periodic, disaggregated data updates.

2. Mobilize Financial Resources

- Increasing domestic revenue generation, attract private investments, and expand international development partnerships through instruments like green bonds, social impact funds, and SDG-linked loans.

3. Enhance Governance and Institutional Coordination

- Effective SDG implementation requires **strong intergovernmental coordination** and clear institutional roles.
- Better Centre-State-Local cooperation and embedding SDGs in sectoral plans, along with **SDG Coordination and Acceleration Centres (SDG-CACs)** in all states, can improve policy coherence.

4. Align Budgeting with Local Priorities:

- A bottom-up financial planning approach:** Encouraging participatory and decentralized budgeting, allowing Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies to align spending with community-specific SDG goals.

5. Promote Capacity Building and Public Awareness

- Training officials at all administrative levels in SDG planning, data management, and impact assessment, while increasing citizen awareness through campaigns and education.

6. Integrate Environmental Sustainability into Development Policies

- Prioritizing clean energy, efficient water management, waste reduction, and biodiversity conservation across all development programmes.

Key Initiatives Contributing to India's Improved SDG Performance

SDG	Goal	Key Government Initiatives / Schemes
SDG 1	No Poverty	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) – Affordable housing; MGNREGA – Rural employment guarantee; PM Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) – Financial inclusion.
SDG 2	Zero Hunger	Poshan Abhiyaan – Tackling malnutrition; National Food Security Act (NFSA) – Subsidized food grains; PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) – Free food support during COVID-19.
SDG 3	Good Health and Well-being	Mission Indradhanush – Universal immunization; Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY) – ₹5 lakh health cover; National Health Mission (NHM) – Strengthened healthcare delivery.
SDG 4	Quality Education	Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan – Holistic school education; National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 – Digital and skill-based learning; DIKSHA Platform – Online education access.
SDG 6	Clean Water and Sanitation	Swachh Bharat Mission – ODF achievement; Jal Jeevan Mission – Piped water supply; Namami Gange – River rejuvenation.
SDG 7	Affordable and Clean Energy	UJALA Scheme – LED distribution; Saubhagya Yojana – Universal electricity access.
SDG 8	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Make in India – Manufacturing boost; Startup India – Entrepreneurship; Skill India Mission – Vocational training; PM Internship Scheme – Student training initiative.
SDG 11	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Smart Cities Mission – 100 sustainable cities; AMRUT – Urban infrastructure and housing improvements.
SDG 13	Climate Action	National Action Plan on Climate Change – Renewable and forest missions; International Solar Alliance (ISA) – Global solar cooperation.
SDG 15	Life on Land	Project Tiger & Project Elephant – Wildlife conservation; CAMPA – Afforestation fund; Soil Health Card & National Afforestation Programme – Land restoration.
SDG 16	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	Digital India – Governance transparency; Police Modernisation Scheme – Strengthening justice institutions.
SDG 17	Partnerships for the Goals	International Big Cat Alliance – Wildlife protection; Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) – Global infrastructure cooperation; Quad Cancer Moonshot – Health partnership.

Conclusion:

- India's SDG decade **shows strong gains but uneven progress and assessments stress that deeper localisation, reliable data, and sustained financing** are now essential. With strengthened institutions

and inclusive planning, India can convert its remaining SDG window into a pathway for equitable and sustainable development for all.

Question for Practice: -

- India has achieved great progress in SDG in last 10 years, still there are lot of areas need to improve. Critically examined (250W-15M)

3.2 AI and the Future of Work

Context: -

- Recently, **NITI Aayog released two significant reports examining India's readiness for AI-driven transformations and their implications** on employment, productivity, and workforce transitions.

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

Roadmap for Job Creation in the AI Economy

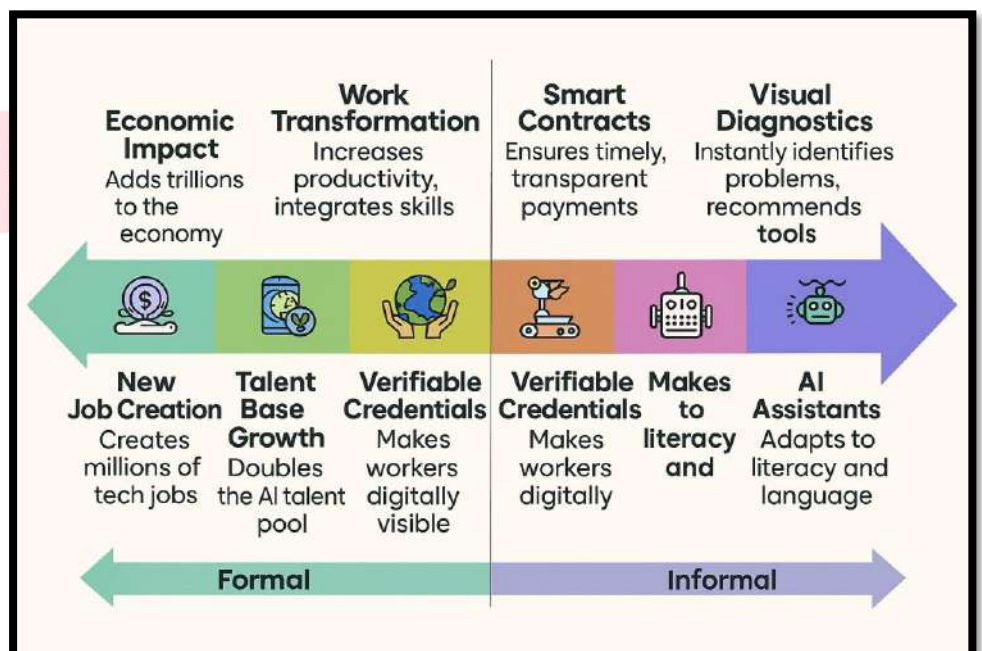
- This report analyses how India can harness Artificial Intelligence to generate large-scale employment. It outlines sector-specific opportunities, skill requirements, and strategies to build a future-ready workforce. **It also highlights how AI can augment—not replace—human labour, especially in the formal sector.**
- ✓ India can add **\$450-500 billion** to GDP by 2030 through strategic AI adoption.
- ✓ AI will create **20-25 million new jobs** in areas like data annotation, AI operations, robotics maintenance, cybersecurity, and digital public infrastructure (DPI).
- ✓ Productivity gains may increase worker wages by **6-8%**, especially in manufacturing and services.

Challenges Identified

- Skill mismatch** between existing workforce and AI-driven job roles.
- Fragmented skilling ecosystem and limited coordination between industry, academia, and government.
- Lack of verifiable digital credentials for informal-sector workers.
- Risk of job displacement in low-skilled repetitive tasks.

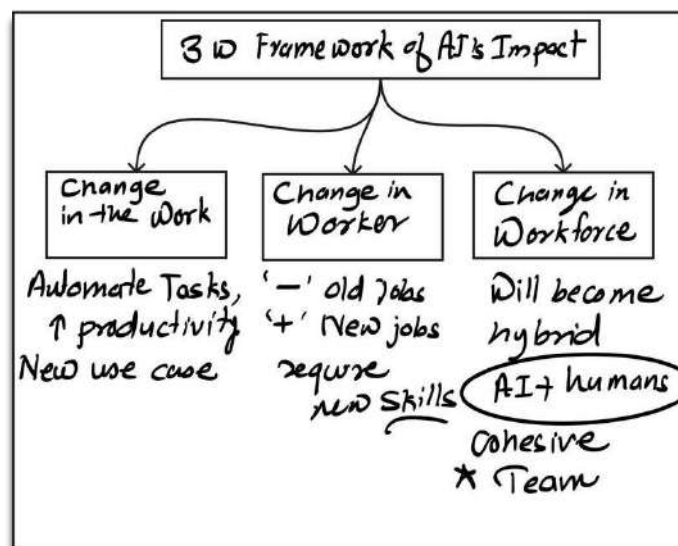
Policy Recommendations

- Set up a **National AI Workforce Mission** to align academia with future skill needs.
- Build a nationwide framework for micro-credentials to enable rapid reskilling.
- Incorporate AI readiness modules in ITIs, polytechnics, higher education, and vocational programs.
- Promote AI-enabled smart contracts to ensure transparent wage payments.
- Develop AI clusters in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities to create localised employment hubs.



Roadmap on AI for Inclusive Societal Development: -

- This report focuses on how AI can improve socio-economic outcomes for underserved communities. It examines applications in healthcare, agriculture, education, social protection, and informal labour markets. The emphasis is on ethical AI adoption that reduces inequality.
- ✓ AI can improve welfare delivery efficiency by **30-40%** through automated identification of beneficiaries, demand forecasting, and fraud reduction.
- ✓ AI-based diagnostics can reduce rural diagnostic gaps by **up to 70%**.
- ✓ Informal workers benefit from AI-driven language translation, visual tools, and mobile assistants.



Challenges Identified

- Significant algorithmic bias affecting women, rural communities, and linguistic minorities.
- Limited AI infrastructure in public-sector institutions.
- Digital divide: only **52%** of Indian households have internet access.
- Need for clear ethical and regulatory frameworks

Policy Recommendations

- Develop **AI for Bharat Stack** — a public digital platform integrating AI tools for health, agriculture, and social protection.
- Establish **AI Ethics Guidelines** ensuring transparency, explainability, and fairness.
- Promote AI datasets in Indian languages under the **National Language Translation Mission (NLTM)**.
- Enhance AI use in public services like PM-Kisan, Ayushman Bharat, and digital education missions.
- Build community-based **AI literacy programs** for informal-sector workers.

Key Challenges: -

High Automation Risk

- Over **60% of formal sector jobs**—especially in IT and BPO—are vulnerable to automation by 2030, indicating large-scale displacement pressures.

Competitiveness & Disruption Concerns

- The report warns that a business-as-usual approach could trigger irreversible job losses, reduced competitiveness, and wider societal disruption.

Talent Migration

- India has a net negative AI-talent migration rate of -1.55 per 10,000, signalling outflow of highly skilled professionals to other countries.

Outdated Education Curriculum:

- Indian curricula lack adequate specialised and research-intensive AI courses, trailing global peers who integrate such training early.

Uneven Computer Science Access

- Computer science is not mandatory in most Indian schools, unlike in China and Russia, creating early skill gaps.

Nobel Prize 2025 & Creative Destruction

- **On similar lines to NITI Aayog's findings**, the 2025 Nobel Prize went to **Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt** for explaining *innovation-driven growth and creative destruction*.
- Shows how **new technologies generate fresh jobs and sectors**.
- Highlights that **older firms, technologies and skills naturally decline**.
- Emphasises that **productivity gains come with temporary adjustment pressures**.
- Calls for **rapid reskilling and upskilling** to absorb workers into new roles.
- Underlines the need for **flexible, future-ready labour markets**.
- Points to **strong safety nets and transition policies** during technological shifts.
- Positions **AI as the latest major driver of long-term economic transformation**.

Weak Research & Patent Output

- India's share of granted AI patents has fallen from 8-10% (2010) to under 5% (2023), reflecting declining research competitiveness.

AI Talent Supply-Demand Gap

Current AI talent supply meets only 50% of industry demand, with the gap expected to widen as AI adoption accelerates.

Informal Sector Exclusion

- Absence of verifiable identities, contracts, and work histories prevents informal workers from accessing secure jobs and financial services.

Low Digital Literacy

- Limited digital skills restrict effective use of Digital Public Infrastructure, especially among lower-income and rural populations.

Language & Interface Barriers

- Complex interfaces and lack of multilingual support create systemic usability gaps, reducing adoption of AI-enabled platforms.

Policy Recommendations: -**National AI Talent Mission**

- A dedicated mission to make AI literacy a foundational skill across schools, universities, and professional training systems.

Key Features:

- **AI Talent Magnet Strategy:** Position India as a global AI hub by retaining domestic talent and attracting global experts through an AI Talent Visa with fast-track residency.
- **National Reskilling Engine:** A large-scale system to upskill and reskill millions for higher-value, AI-augmented roles across sectors.

2. Mission Digital ShramSetu

- A national initiative to empower **informal sector workers** by giving them digital access, identity, and skills using advanced technologies.

Key Features:

- Utilises **AI, blockchain, and immersive learning** to bridge identity, skill and access gaps.
- Aims to enable **inclusion at unprecedented scale**, especially for workers lacking verifiable credentials, contracts, or work histories.

Other Important Policies

- **National Programme on AI (NPAI):** Launched under MeitY to develop India as a global AI hub, focusing on research, datasets, skilling and responsible AI frameworks.
- **IndiaAI Mission:** A ₹10,000+ crore mission to build compute capacity, AI innovation centres, datasets platforms, and skilling programmes, enabling nationwide AI readiness.
- **National Centre for AI (NCAI):** Set up as the apex body for AI policy, standards, research agendas, and coordination across ministries.
- **Responsible AI for Youth (RAIY):** Introduced by MeitY to train school students in AI fundamentals, ethics, and problem-solving through hands-on learning.
- **National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR):** Strengthens digital learning infrastructure with AI-enabled adaptive learning, teacher tools, and multilingual content.
- **PM-KVY (Skill India):** Provides AI, data analytics, and emerging tech modules to reskill youth for industry 4.0 jobs.

Conclusion:

- With India **prioritising responsible AI, skilling, and inclusive digital infrastructure through its national missions and policy frameworks**, the country is well placed to convert technological disruption into broad-based opportunity. **A balanced, human-centric approach** will ensure that AI strengthens productivity, equity, and long-term economic resilience.

3.3 WTO's Agreement on Regulating Fisheries Subsidies

Context: -

- With **Two-thirds of WTO members submitting their acceptance** documents, the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies has now entered into force.

Syllabus of Mains – GS-3- Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies

Key Provisions of the Agreement:

- **Ban on Harmful Subsidies:**
Prohibits subsidies for IUU fishing, overfished stocks, and unregulated high-seas fishing.
Major Subsidizers: China, EU, U.S., South Korea, and Japan together account for 58% of global fisheries subsidies.
Special & Differential Treatment: Developing countries and LDCs get a two-year transition period from the date of entry into force.
- **WTO Fish Fund:** Establishes a voluntary fund to provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to developing countries and LDCs.
Fund Status: The WTO Fish Fund is fully operational.
• **Transparency Rules:** Members must notify the WTO about their fisheries subsidies, stock status, and management measures.
High-Seas Subsidy Ban: Disallows subsidies for fishing on high seas outside national or RFMO/A jurisdiction.
Implementation Oversight: A Committee on Fisheries Subsidies monitors implementation, ensures transparency, and facilitates member consultations.

Why Has India Not Ratified the Agreement?

- **Low Subsidies:**
 - India is among the world's lowest fisheries subsidizers despite a large coastal population.
 - Indian fisheries are largely small-scale, sustainable, and livelihood oriented.
- **PPP & CBDR Principles:**
 - India demands that WTO rules follow Polluter Pays Principle (PPP) and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).
 - Argues that nations responsible for historic overfishing must bear greater obligations.
- **Moratorium Demand:**
 - India proposed a 25-year moratorium on all subsidies by Distant-Water Fishing Nations beyond their EEZs.
- **Concerns with OCOF Rules:**
 - India opposes Overcapacity and Overfishing (OCOF) disciplines that ignore subsidy intensity and historical responsibility.
 - Highlights neglect of factors like EEZ size, coastline length, number of small fishers, and per-capita subsidy levels.

About:

- A binding WTO agreement promoting sustainable and fair global fisheries.

- First WTO pact focused on ocean governance and marine resource protection.

- **Adopted at MC12 (Geneva, 2022) under the Geneva Package.**

- **Entered into force in September 2025** after two-thirds member acceptance.

Key Objectives:

- Curb subsidies causing overfishing and overcapacity.
- Protect livelihoods dependent on fisheries.
- Ensure fair competition by disciplining trade-distorting subsidies.

Alignment with SDG 14:

- Seeks to safeguard marine ecosystems by disciplining and eliminating harmful fisheries subsidies.
- **SDG 14.6** mandates ending subsidies that lead to overfishing, overcapacity, or support Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

India:

- **India has not yet ratified the Agreement and continues to seek greater flexibilities for small-scale fishers.**

What is India's Stance on the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies?

- **Protection for Small Fishers:**
 - Seeks wide policy space and exemptions to safeguard artisanal and small-scale fishers' livelihoods.
 - Advocates 25-year S&DT transition for developing countries, against the 5–7 years proposed by developed nations.
- **Per Capita Subsidy Approach:**
 - Proposes that subsidy limits be calculated per fisher, not total subsidy amounts.
 - Highlights disparity: Developed countries give ~USD 76,000 per fisher vs India's ~USD 35 per fisher.
- **Stricter Rules for Historical Subsidisers:**
 - Demands tougher disciplines on nations with long histories of high, harmful subsidies that caused overfishing.
- **Sustainability Focus:**
 - Insists that rules must not penalize countries practicing sustainable, low-impact fishing.
 - Emphasizes alignment with long-term marine conservation and equitable burden-sharing.

Implementation Issues:

- **Limited Capacity:** Several developing nations lack adequate systems and expertise to monitor fisheries and enforce compliance.
- **Information Shortfalls:** Weak or incomplete data on fish stocks and subsidy schemes makes accurate reporting difficult.
- **Monitoring Difficulties:** High-seas and distant-water fishing are hard to oversee due to limited jurisdiction and surveillance capability.
- **Dependence on Subsidies:** Small fishers rely on modest subsidies for livelihood security, making sudden withdrawal problematic.
- **Uneven Burden:** Developing countries may face heavier obligations, while major subsidizers continue support through alternative channels.

Way Forward:

- **Strengthen Capacity:** Expand technical and financial assistance via mechanisms like the WTO Fish Fund to support developing countries.
- **Improve Monitoring:** Build strong national databases and adopt satellite tracking and digital tools for accurate reporting.
- **Promote Equity:** Apply CBDR to safeguard the rights and interests of small-scale and artisanal fishers.
- **Enhance Cooperation:** Deepen coordination among RFMOs and improve global information-sharing to curb IUU fishing.

India's Initiatives and Schemes to Promote Sustainable Fisheries:

- **Blue Revolution (2015–16):** Enhanced fish production and productivity through aquaculture and marine fisheries development.
- **PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (2020):** Aims to modernise the fisheries sector, boost output, create jobs, and promote sustainable practices.
- **FIDF (2018–19):** Supports fisheries infrastructure through concessional finance for marine and inland facilities.
- **National Policy on Marine Fisheries (2017):** Promotes sustainable marine resource use and long-term conservation of fish stocks.
- **State Marine Fishing Regulation Acts:** State laws (e.g., Kerala, Maharashtra) regulate fishing zones, impose seasonal bans, and restrict destructive practices.
- **ICAR-CIFE:** Provides education, training, and research to advance sustainable aquaculture and fisheries management.

Conclusion:

- "The Agreement will eliminate the subsidies granted to fishing vessels or fishing operators engaged in IUU fishing. **Such disciplining will check large-scale IUU fishing which deprives coastal countries** like India of fisheries resources, thereby significantly impacting the livelihoods of our fishing communities." (pib.gov.in)

- The WTO Agreement on **Fisheries Subsidies strengthens global efforts to restore marine ecosystems by disciplining harmful subsidies** and enhancing transparency. It marks a collective commitment to sustainable fisheries, food security, and the long-term protection of our shared ocean resources.

3.4 E-Waste Recycling Through Urban Mining

Context

- India was in the news after a 2025 **Ministry of Environment report showed the country generated 1.75 million tonnes of e-waste in 2023-24**, about 16% of Europe's total, highlighting the scope for urban mining and recovery of critical raw materials like gold, copper, lithium, and cobalt.

Syllabus of Mains – GS-3: Environment & Ecology (Environmental Pollution and

Electronic waste (E-Waste)

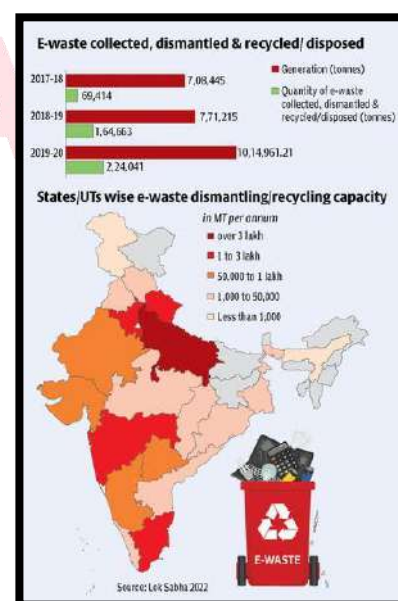
- The discarded and end-of-life **electrical and electronic equipment (EEE)** and products ranging from computers, equipment, home appliances, audio and video products and all of their peripherals are known as electronic waste.
- E-waste is not hazardous if it is stocked in safe storage** or recycled by scientific methods, or transported from one place to the other in parts or totality in the formal sector.
- The **e-waste can**, however, be considered hazardous if recycled or disposed of unscientifically.

Current Status of E-waste in India

- Generation:** India produced **1.75 million tonnes of e-waste**, marking a **72.5% increase since 2019-20**.
- Recycling Rate:** The recycling rate has risen from **22% in 2019-20 to 43% in 2023-24**.
- Metal Recovery:** Each tonne of e-waste can yield roughly **300 g of gold and 1 kg of silver**, according to the **Circular Economy Report, 2023**.
- Rapid Expansion:** E-waste has increased by 150% from the 0.71 million MT recorded in 2017-18, and at this pace, it is likely to nearly double by 2030.
- Urban Concentration:** Over **60% of e-waste originates from 65 major cities**, with key hotspots including **Seelampur and Mustafabad (Delhi)**, **Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh)**, and **Bhiwandi (Maharashtra)**.
- Informal Processing:** Despite having **322 authorised recyclers with a 2.2 million MT annual capacity**, over half of India's e-waste is still processed informally or left unrecycled, with only 43% formally treated in 2023-24.

Key Challenges in Managing E-waste in India

- Informal Sector Dominance:** Over **50% of e-waste** is handled by informal recyclers who use hazardous methods, causing pollution and health risks.
- Weak Implementation:** Poor enforcement of **EPR norms**, fake recycling certificates, and low penalties allow non-compliance by producers.
- Limited Infrastructure:** India **lacks sufficient authorized recyclers**, advanced metal-recovery technologies, and affordable formal recycling systems.
- Low Public Awareness:** Most people **mix e-waste with regular garbage** due to limited awareness and poor access to formal collection points.
- Complex & Hazardous E-waste:** Toxic materials and compact device designs make safe dismantling difficult; India lacks advanced CRM extraction facilities.



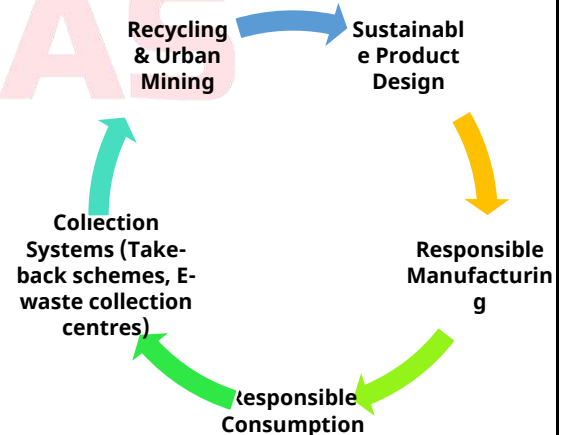
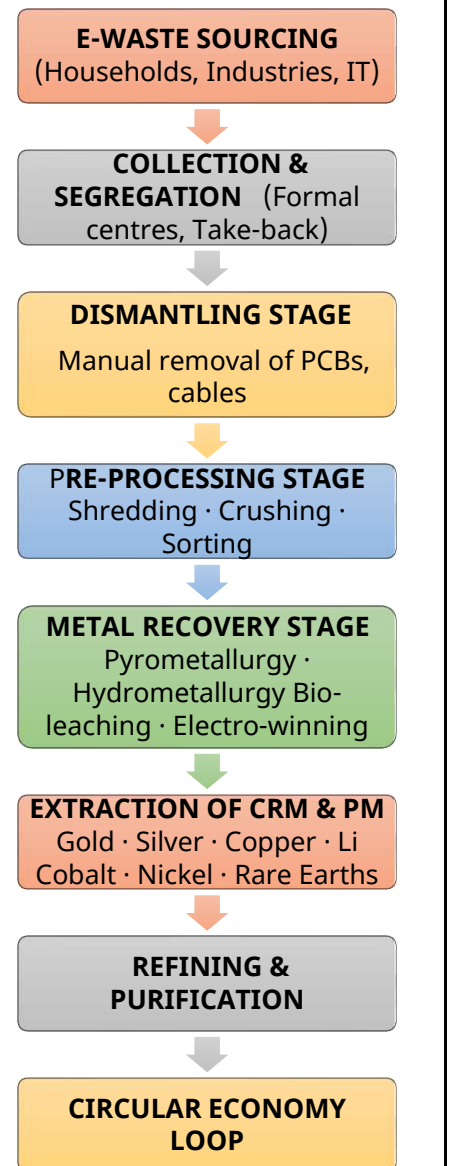
- **Governance Overlap:** Split responsibilities between MoHUA and MoEFCC create coordination gaps.
- **Low Segregation:** Only about 25% of waste is segregated at source, hindering proper e-waste collection.
- **Informal Worker Exclusion:** Around 15 lakh waste pickers remain outside formal recycling systems.
- **Financial Constraints:** Urban local bodies have limited funds, recovering less than 20% of waste service costs.

How India Can Make E-waste Management More Sustainable and Efficient?

- **Urban Mining & Better Infrastructure:** Set up **Urban Mining Parks** and regional CRM recovery hubs, following Japan and China's models, to treat e-waste as a valuable resource.
- **Integrate the Informal Sector:** Train informal workers as **green-collar recyclers**, provide **protective gear** and safe work zones, and link formalization to health insurance, pensions, and social benefits.
- **Strengthen EPR & Monitoring:** Use **blockchain-style digital tracking** of e-waste, mandate annual audits, and tighten penalties to ensure producer accountability.
- **Technology & Innovation:** Invest in advanced recycling technologies like **bioleaching** and **decentralized micro-recycling hubs** to improve material recovery.
- **Consumer Awareness:** Run **awareness drives**, introduce **circular economy** lessons in schools, and make disposal easier through take-back systems and reverse vending machines.
- **Circular Economy Measures:** Promote **Right-to-Repair**, **durable and easily repairable** product designs, and green public procurement.
- **Unified Governance & Global Compliance:** Create a single nodal waste authority and strictly enforce Basel Convention rules to prevent illegal e-waste imports.

E-waste Management Frameworks in India

1. **E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016:** Introduced the concept of **Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs)** to help producers fulfil their waste management obligations.
2. **E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022:** Strengthened **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** by requiring producers to meet annual recycling targets through registered recyclers, supported by EPR certificates to ensure accountability.
3. **Public Institutions:** Required to channel their e-waste only to authorised recyclers or refurbishes, who manage collection and processing.
4. **E-Waste (Management) Second Amendment Rules, 2023:** Added Clause 4 to Rule 5 of the 2022 Rules to ensure the safe and sustainable handling of refrigerants in the refrigeration and air-conditioning manufacturing sector.
5. **E-Waste (Management) Amendment Rules, 2024:** Provided for CPCB-approved trading platforms for EPR certificates. CPCB will set certificate prices within 30% to 100% of the environmental compensation for non-compliance.
6. **Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2025:** Introduced a full EPR system for non-ferrous metal scrap, with producer recycling targets rising from 10% in 2026-27 to 75% by 2032-33.



Conclusion:

- **India's rising e-waste is both a challenge and an opportunity.** With stronger formal recycling, urban mining, inclusion of informal workers, and strict EPR enforcement, the country **can turn toxic waste into valuable resources** and move toward a healthier, circular, resource-secure future.

Mains Question for Practice-

- **"India's growing e-waste burden presents both a major environmental risk and a significant urban mining opportunity." Discuss.**

3.5 RBI Warns States on Fiscal Prudence**Context:**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cautioned states about fiscal slippages, rising debt, and increased pre-election populist spending—where subsidies and welfare schemes are expanded to gain voter

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

What are State Development Loans (SDLs)?

- State Development Loans (SDLs) are government bonds issued by state governments to borrow money from the open market. They help states finance development projects and manage their fiscal deficits.

Why States Issue SDLs:

- To fund infrastructure projects like roads, irrigation, power, schools, and hospitals

How SDLs Work:

- SDLs are auctioned by the RBI on behalf of states.
- Investors buy these bonds and states promise to pay interest (yield) plus the principal amount after a set period.
- The interest paid adds to the long-term debt burden of states.

Why SDLs Matter:

- Higher SDL yields = higher interest cost for states - increasing debt pressure

SDLs are central to the RBI's warning because:

- Borrowing Costs Have Increased
- Yields (interest rates) on SDLs have risen sharply.
- States Are Borrowing Faster Than Expected
- **States borrowed ₹5.23 trillion by October 2025, already 62% of the annual plan.**
- Rising SDL issuance shows mounting fiscal stress.
- **Populist Pre-Election Spending is Fuelling More Borrowing**
- To fund short-term freebies and welfare schemes, states rely heavily on SDLs.
- This increases debt without creating long-term productive assets.
- RBI is worried about fiscal stability

Major Fiscal Risks Identified by the RBI**1. Rising Cost of State Borrowing**

- Yields on **State Development Loans (SDLs)** have increased significantly, raising the interest burden for states.
- Higher borrowing costs worsen debt sustainability and reduce fiscal space for development.

2. Accelerated Market Borrowing

- States have already **borrowed ₹5.23 trillion by October 2025** — 62% of their FY26 target.

- This is much higher than the **₹4.37 trillion borrowed during the same period last year**, signalling early and elevated fiscal stress.

3. Mounting Fiscal Deficit Risks

- The combined fiscal deficit of states is projected **at 3.2% of GDP**.
- Analysts warn that pre-election expenditure could push deficits beyond recommended limits, potentially undermining macroeconomic stability.

4. Populist Spending Ahead of Elections

- **During the 2023-25 election cycle**, states spent nearly ₹68,000 crore on short-term welfare schemes.
- **Example:** Bihar allocated 32.48% of its tax revenue to such schemes, crowding out long-term capital spending and infrastructure investment.

Why the RBI's Warning Is Critical

1. High Share in Public Investment:

- States undertake **nearly 60% of India's total public sector capital expenditure**, making their fiscal health crucial for national development.

2. Impact on Growth:

- **Excessive pre-election or populist spending diverts resources** away from infrastructure, human development, and productive sectors, slowing long-term economic growth.

3. Debt Sustainability:

- Persistent **revenue spending increases debt levels, worsening fiscal sustainability** and reducing the ability of states to respond to future economic shocks.

4. Investor Confidence:

- Fiscal discipline **helps maintain stable borrowing costs**, safeguards credit ratings, and enhances investor trust in state finances.

5. Macro Stability:

- Sound state **finances support stable interest rates**, controlled inflation, and overall macroeconomic balance.

6. Inter-generational Equity:

- **Avoiding excessive borrowing ensures** that future generations are not burdened with unsustainable debt created by short-term political decisions.

RBI's Recommendations

- **Productive Spending:** Shift resources from short-term subsidies toward capital expenditure such as roads, irrigation, health infrastructure, and power assets to support long-term growth.
- **Fiscal Prudence:** Strictly **adhere to FRBM Act targets to maintain fiscal discipline**, reduce deficits, and safeguard macroeconomic stability.
- **Borrowing Strategy:** Spread market borrowings across various maturities and ensure transparent market communication to reduce borrowing costs and avoid refinancing risks.
- **Fiscal Transparency:** Disclose all contingent liabilities, guarantees, and **off-budget borrowings** to prevent hidden debt accumulation and improve credibility.
- **Rationalise Populist Schemes:** Evaluate welfare schemes **based on long-term sustainability** and fiscal impact to avoid pre-election expenditure spikes.
- **Strengthen Revenue Mobilisation:** Enhance GST efficiency, improve tax compliance, and widen the revenue base to reduce dependence on borrowings.
- **Public Financial Management Reforms:** Adopt modern **budgeting practices**, real-time expenditure tracking, and outcome-based budgeting for efficient fund utilisation.

Key Economic Terms

1. Fiscal Slippage:

- When a government's fiscal deficit exceeds its target.
- **Example:** A state aims for a 3% fiscal deficit but ends up at 4%.

2. Populist Spending:

- Short-term welfare spending aimed at gaining voter support rather than long-term growth.
- **Example:** Free electricity before elections, instead of investing in power infrastructure.

3. Capital Expenditure (Capex):

- Spending on long-term assets like roads, irrigation, power, and infrastructure.
- **Example:** A state builds a new highway - boosts growth in the long run.

4. Contingent Liabilities:

- Potential financial obligations that may arise in the future.
- **Example:** A state guarantees loans for a PSU; if the PSU fails, the state must repay.

5. Fiscal Prudence:

- Responsible financial management to avoid excessive debt or deficits.
- **Example:** A state limits freebies and focuses on infrastructure to maintain fiscal health.

- **Debt Management Reforms:** Create or **strengthen independent State Public Debt Management** Cells to monitor debt sustainability and repayment capacity.
- **Expenditure Prioritisation:** Prioritise essential sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure over non-merit subsidies.

Conclusion:

- RBI's warning reinforces the need for states to uphold fiscal discipline and channel resources toward long-term development rather than short-term populism. **As economist C. Rangarajan noted, "Fiscal correction is not a choice, but a necessity for macroeconomic stability."**

Mains Question for Practice-

- "Rising State Development Loan (SDL) yields are a warning signal for India's subnational fiscal stability." Explain the factors driving higher SDL borrowing and discuss their implications for state-level fiscal health.

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PRAYAAS Shorts- UPSC & MPSC

1. Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge

Context:

- Recently, Huajiang Grand Canyon **Bridge in China's Guizhou province** has been opened.

About: -

- With 625 metres **above the Beipan River**, the bridge currently **stands as the world's highest bridge**.
- Its **1,420-metre main span makes it the largest-span bridge** constructed in a mountainous terrain.
- The bridge reduces cross-canyon travel time by two hours, boosting regional connectivity.
- France's Millau Viaduct bridge remains the tallest** by structural height with 343 metres.

2. Sugarcane Production in India

Context (PIB):

- The **Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** announced that a dedicated team will be set up within the ICAR for sugarcane research and policy development.

2.1 ICAR

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), established in 1929, is India's apex autonomous body for agricultural research and education, under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

2.1 About Sugarcane: -

- Sugarcane is a **kharif-season cash crop, classified as a large perennial grass** (*Saccharum* species), grown mainly in hot and humid regions.
- Climatic Condition:** Optimal growth requires a temperature of 21–27°C and 75–150 cm annual rainfall.
- Soil & Harvest:** Thrives on deep loamy soils; it is a long-duration crop harvested from October to March in tropical regions and from February to May in the subtropical areas.
- Cultivation Methods:** Primarily through **stem cuttings** (called setts), traditional methods include flatbed or trench planting, ratooning, and intercropping with pulses or oilseeds.

- Ratooning involves** growing a new crop from the stubble of the previous crop without replanting.

2.1.1 Sugarcane Production in India:

- India is the **world's 2nd largest producer of sugarcane** after Brazil; it is also the **world's largest producer and consumer of sugar**. (PIB)
- Major States:** Uttar Pradesh is the leading producer, followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.
- Uses:** Sugarcane is used for producing sugar, jaggery (gur), khandsari (unrefined sugar), ethanol (as a biofuel), molasses, animal feed, bagasse-based paper, and electricity cogeneration.
- Varieties:** Include the sugarcane variety 0238 among others, which has a high sugar content but is susceptible to red rot disease.
- Red rot is a fungal disease that destroys cane** stalks internally, resulting in significant crop losses.
- Key Challenges:** Production suffers from high water demand, fertiliser overuse, red rot disease, soil fertility loss due to monocropping, labour shortages, delayed payments, and climate risks.
- Potential Solutions:** Include intercropping, drip irrigation under "Per Drop More Crop," disease-resistant varieties, mechanisation, and new value-added products to boost farmers' profits.

3. Philippines



Context: -

- A **6.9 magnitude earthquake recently hit the coastal city of Cebu in the Philippines**, resulting in several deaths and injuries.

About: -

- The **Philippines is an island nation of Southeast Asia** in the western Pacific Ocean; its **capital is Manila**.

- **Maritime Borders:** The Philippine Sea to the east, the South China Sea to the west, the Sulu Sea to the southwest, and the Celebes Sea to the south.
- **Climate:** It has a **tropical monsoon climate characterised** by hot, humid, and rainy conditions.
- **Geographic Features:** Mount Apo is the highest mountain, the Cagayan River is the longest river, and the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River in Palawan is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Volcanoes:** Active volcanoes include **Mayon, Taal, & Pinatubo**, which are **part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire"**.

4. UPSC Enters 100th Year of Service

Context: -

- The **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)** marks **100 years of its establishment on October 1**, reaffirming its role as the **guardian of meritocracy and fairness** in India's governance.

4.1 PRATIBHA Setu:

- UPSC has launched a centralised online repository of verified biodata to connect interview-qualified but non-recommended candidates with alternate employment opportunities.

4.2 Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

- UPSC is an **independent constitutional body under Part XIV** (Article 315-323) of the Indian Constitution.
- It was **established on 1 October 1926** as the Public Service Commission based on recommendations of the **Lee Commission (1924)**, which was later reconstituted as the Federal Public Service Commission by the Government of India Act 1935.
- It was **renamed** the Union Public Service Commission after independence in 1947.

5. Bagram Air Base

Context: -

- US President **Donald Trump demanded the return of Bagram Air Base** (Afghanistan), arguing it was key to **countering** China's nuclear facilities in **Xinjiang**.

About: -

- **Strategic Location:** Located in **Parwan province**, Bagram links major Afghan highways, making it a vital gateway to Central and South Asia.
- **Counterterrorism Role:** Served as the epicentre.

- **Beijing's rapid nuclear modernisation** (JL-3 SLBM, missile silos, mobile systems) makes Bagram a flashpoint in US-China rivalry.

6. Govt Raises MSP for Six Rabi Crops



Context: -

- The Union Cabinet **approved significant hikes in Minimum Support Prices (MSPs)** for six rabi crops for the 2026-27 marketing season.

About: -

- MSP is the **minimum guaranteed price at which the government procures crops** from farmers, ensuring protection from distress sales. It covers 23 crops (7 cereals, 5 pulses, 7 oilseeds, 4 commercial crops).

Key Highlights: -

- **Coverage:** Includes Wheat, jowar, barley, gram, and lentil.
- **Wheat Hike:** MSP raised **by ₹160 per quintal to ₹2,585/quintal** (6.6% increase), giving farmers the highest gain over cost of production (109%).
- **Safflower:** Recorded the highest absolute and percentage increase (Rs 600 per quintal), reflecting government efforts to promote oilseed cultivation and crop diversification.

Process to Determine Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** recommends MSPs twice a year (kharif & rabi).
- The CACP, body formed in 1965, is **attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Its suggestions are not binding on the Government.**
- **Factors Considered:** Cost of cultivation (A2+FL, C2), demand-supply, market trends, price parity, inter-crop parity, terms of trade for farmers, and global prices.

Cost Concept:

- A2 = Paid-out costs,

- $A2+FL$ = Paid-out costs + imputed family labour,
- $C2$ = Comprehensive cost ($A2+FL$ + rental value of land + interest on capital).
- CACP uses $A2+FL$ as the base cost, with a margin (currently 50%) for MSP.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) gives final approval to CACP recommendations, ensuring MSP aligns with overall policy goals (inflation, fiscal burden, food security).

7. Sir Creek

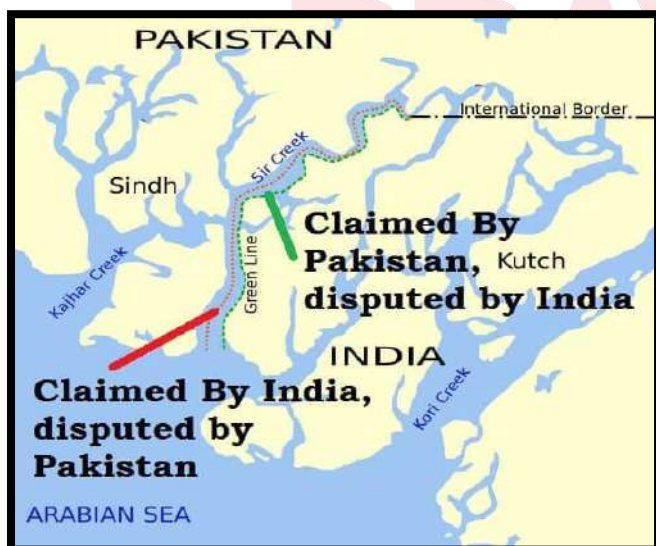
Context: -

- India's Defence Minister cautioned **Pakistan on military activities near Sir Creek** and recalled Operation Sindoor to emphasise India's ability to respond effectively.

About Sir Creek

- Sir Creek is a **96-kilometre tidal estuary in the marshy Rann of Kutch**. It flows into the Arabian Sea and **roughly separates Pakistan's Sindh province** from Gujarat's Kutch region.
- Originally called **Ban Ganga**, it was **renamed Sir Creek** after a **British surveyor** during colonial mapping.
- **Importance:** It has valuable fishing areas, possible oil and gas reserves, and its boundary determines the Exclusive Economic Zone; its proximity to Karachi also makes it essential for naval security.

7.1 Dispute Regarding Sir Creek



- The Sir Creek dispute arises **from differing interpretations of the maritime boundary between Kutch and Sindh**, which were part of the Bombay Presidency before 1947.
- **India's Claim:** The boundary should follow the mid-channel of the creek, **apply the**

Thalweg principle, and insist on a bilateral settlement under the 1972 Simla Agreement.

- **Pakistan's Claim:** Pakistan asserts the boundary lies along the eastern bank, known as the Green Line, under the Bombay Government Resolution of 1914, **giving it controls over the entire creek**.
- **Pakistan states that the Thalweg Principle doesn't apply** to Sir Creek because it's not navigable.
- The **Thalweg Principle** is a concept of international law that states the boundary in a navigable water body should follow its deepest channel, ensuring a fair division of access and resources.
- The **1972 Simla Agreement** was a peace treaty signed after the 1971 India-Pakistan War, emphasising bilateral negotiations, mutual respect, and the establishment of the Line of Control.

8. Global Uranium Reserves

Context:

- Uranium is a **key mineral for nuclear energy, supplying about 10% of the world's electricity**, and is shaping global energy security and geopolitics as clean energy demand grows.

Top 5 Countries with the Largest Uranium Reserves

- **Australia:** Largest **uranium reserves globally with 3.6 million tonnes**, home to some of the richest ore, making it the leading nuclear fuel resource nation.
- **Kazakhstan:** World's **top uranium producer, supplying about 40% of global output** annually; holds nearly 3 million tonnes, mainly via in-situ leaching.
- **Canada:** Third in reserves with 1.7 million tonnes; the **Athabasca Basin hosts the highest-grade uranium deposits in the world**.
- **Russia:** Around 1.2 million tonnes of reserves, powering its civil nuclear plants and military programmes.
- **Namibia:** Africa's uranium hub, with about 1 million tonnes, exports most of its supply to Europe & Asia.

8.1 About Uranium

- A **silvery-grey metallic radioactive element**, naturally formed only in **supernova explosions**.

- Along with **thorium and potassium**, it **contributes** to natural terrestrial radioactivity.
- Naturally Occurring Isotopes: U-238 (99.27%) and U-235 (0.72%).
- **All isotopes are radioactive & fissionable, but only U-235 is fissile** (supports neutron chain reaction).

8.2 Uranium in India

- India's domestic uranium output remains much lower than demand, leading to imports of over 7,600 tonnes in recent years, mainly from Kazakhstan and Canada.
- Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration & Research (AMD) under the Department of Atomic Energy continues active exploration.

9. Government Shutdown in the United States

Context: -

- The **U.S. government faces its first government shutdown since 2019** after Congress failed to pass key budget appropriation bills amid deep partisan divisions.

About: -

- It resulted from a **deadlock over key policy differences**, primarily related to healthcare spending.

About: -

- A government shutdown **takes place when Congress does not pass the annual appropriation bills before October 1**, which marks the start of the new fiscal year.
- This causes a **halt in federal operations** owing to the absence of authorised funding.
- **Legal Basis:** The **1884 Antideficiency Act** prohibits federal spending without Congress's approval. A reinterpretation in 1980 made shutdowns mandatory whenever there is a funding lapse.
- **Temporary Measure:** Congress can avoid a shutdown by passing a Continuing Resolution (CR). It temporarily extends current funding levels until a full budget is approved.
- **Historical Record:** Since 1976, the U.S. has seen 20 shutdowns. The longest one lasted 35 days during 2018-19 under the Trump administration.
- The **U.S. federal government's fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30**, while India's fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31.

10. Banni Festival

Context: -

- Recently, **four people died during the traditional Banni festival**, also known as Karrala Samaram, in Kurnool, **Andhra Pradesh**.

About: -

- The Banni festival is an **annual stick-fight ritual celebrated in Andhra Pradesh** on Dussehra night.
- It takes place at the **Mala Malleswara Swamy Temple in Devaragattu**, located on the border between Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
- **Mythological significance:** The festival commemorates the victory of Lord Mala Malleswara Swamy (a form of Shiva) and Goddess Parvati (Mallamma) over the demonic brothers Mani and Mallasura.
- Historical origin: The tradition is believed to have **originated during the Vijayanagara Empire**.
- The Vijayanagara Empire was **established in 1336 A.D. by brothers Harihara I and Bukka Raya I** on the southern bank of the Tungabhadra River.

11. Presumptive Tax Regime

Context: -

- NITI Aayog has **proposed a presumptive taxation** scheme for foreign companies to simplify compliance, reduce litigation, and provide tax certainty in India.

About: -

- It is a **simplified method of taxation where income is calculated on the basis of a fixed percentage of turnover or receipts**, instead of maintaining detailed accounts.
- India already **applies presumptive taxation in sectors like electronics manufacturing** (25% of gross payments) and non-resident cruise operators (20% of receipts).
- Under Sections 44AD and 44ADA of the Income Tax Act, Small businesses can declare 8% (6% for digital transactions) of turnover as income while professionals can declare 50% of gross receipts as income.

12. Li-Fi Internet System

Context: -

- Gujarat-based **Nav Wireless Technologies announced the successful deployment** of the United States' first commercial Li-Fi internet system in New York City.

About: -

- Li-Fi (Light Fidelity) is a **wireless optical communication system that utilizes light waves from Light-emitting diodes (LEDs) to transmit data** at very high speeds.
- **Comparison:** Unlike Wi-Fi, which relies on radio waves, Li-Fi transmits data using visible, infrared, and ultraviolet light.
- **Mechanism:** LEDs flicker at very high speeds, invisible to the human eye, to transmit digital signals as light pulses.
- **Data Conversion:** A photodiode receiver converts these light pulses into electrical signals. A processor then transforms the signals back into usable data such as text, audio, or video.

Advantages of Li-Fi Internet: -

- **High Speed:** Li-Fi offers a much higher data transmission speed, exceeding 100 Gbps, compared to traditional Wi-Fi systems.
- **Enhanced Security:** Since light signals cannot pass through walls, they are naturally more secure against external snooping.
- **Large Bandwidth:** The visible light spectrum is 10,000 times broader than the radio spectrum, providing much more bandwidth and helping to reduce network congestion.
- **Electromagnetic Safety:** Li-Fi does not interfere with sensitive medical or electronic equipment, making it safe to use in hospitals, aircraft, and factories.
- **Energy Efficiency:** LED lighting can serve a dual role by transmitting data and lighting up spaces. This helps save energy and cut infrastructure costs.

Limitations of Li-Fi Internet: -

- **Line-of-Sight Dependency:** The line of sight between the transmitter and receiver must stay clear. Losing sight results in a weaker signal and slower data transfer.
- **Limited Range:** Since light signals cannot pass through walls, each room requires its own Li-Fi transmitter to provide full coverage.
- **Ambient-Light Interference:** Bright ambient light, especially sunlight, can disrupt Li-Fi signals and restrict their outdoor use.

13. Integrated Cold Chain Scheme**Context (PIB):**

- The **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has highlighted the significant impact** of the Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure (ICCVAI)

Scheme in reducing post-harvest losses of perishable commodities.

1.1 India's Cold Storage Landscape: -

- **Total Capacity:** India operates **8,815 cold storage units** with a **combined capacity of 40.2 million** metric tonnes (MT) yet faces a deficit of ~35 million tonnes.
- **Capacity Utilisation:** Existing cold storage facilities operate at about 70-75% efficiency.
- **Top States:** Uttar Pradesh leads with 15 MT of capacity, followed by West Bengal and Gujarat.
- **Storage Distribution:** Horticultural and agricultural produce occupy 83% of capacity, while pro-cessed foods and animal husbandry products utilise 9% and 7% respectively.
- **Dominant Crop: Potatoes** have historically occupied around 70% of total cold storage space.

About Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure (ICCVAI) Scheme: -

- ICCVAI is a **demand-driven central sector scheme administered by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)** under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)
- **Objective:** To create an integrated cold chain from farm to consumer, minimise post-harvest spoilage and increase farmers' income.
- **Financial Assistance:** Provides grants or subsidies of up to ₹10 crore per project for setting up inte-grated cold chain systems.
- Covers 35% of eligible project costs in general areas and 50% in 'difficult areas' (e.g., Northeast, Himalayan regions, IITDP areas, and Islands), as well as for SC/ST groups, FPOs, and SHGs.
- **Scope:** Encompasses perishable sectors like horticulture, dairy, meat, poultry, marine or fish products.
- Fruits, vegetables, and shrimp are excluded and covered under the Operation Greens scheme.
- **Eligible Entities:** Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) may include individuals, FPOs, FPCs, NGOs, PSUs, cooperatives, SHGs, and private firms.
- **Implementation Condition:** Applicants must link 'Farm-level Infrastructure' with a 'Distribution Hubs' and/or 'Refrigerated Transport Systems' to qualify for financial assistance.

14. Soybean Cultivation

Context: -

- **Madhya Pradesh, India's largest soybean producer, recorded a 10% decline in acreage between 2023 and 2024, as young farmers are abandoning soybean farming.**

About Soybean (Golden Bean)

- **Soybean is a kharif crop** requiring **26–30°C temperature**, about 90 cm of rainfall, & fertile loamy soils.
- It is an **oilseed crop native to East Asia** and widely cultivated across tropical and subtropical regions.
- **Nutritional Value:** Soybeans are high in protein, omega-3, omega-6 fatty acids, and antioxidants.
- **Leading Producers:** **Brazil** is the world's top producer; India ranks fifth globally by output.

15. AmazonFACE Project

Context: -

- **Ahead of COP30 in Belem (Brazil)**, the AmazonFACE project near Manaus simulates CO₂-rich atmospheres to study how the Amazon rainforest adapts to rising carbon levels.

About AmazonFACE Project: -

- It **simulates future atmospheric CO₂ levels** to observe impacts on photosynthesis, water vapour release, and carbon absorption in tropical rainforests.
- The **project is supported by Brazil's federal government and the U.K.**

Working Mechanism:

- Six steel rings **fumigate 50–70 trees each with CO₂ levels projected for 2050–2060.**
- **Sensors record canopy gas exchange** and microclimate data every 10 minutes.
- Three **untreated rings** serve as baselines to compare ecosystem response.

16. Rashtriya Ekta Diwas

Context (PIB):

- Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) is **observed annually on October 31** to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

About: -

- The **Ekta Diwas 2025 celebrations will feature** a grand parade in Ekta Nagar, Gujarat, alongside the nationwide '**Run for Unity**' and the '**Unity March**' to promote national cohesion.
- The **year 2025 marks Sardar Patel's 150th birth anniversary** and the **10th**

anniversary of the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) initiative.

16.1 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

- **Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950)**, born in **Nadiad, Gujarat**, was a prominent **nationalist leader and the first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister** of independent India.
- **Agrarian Struggles:** He led the **Kheda Satyagraha (1918)**, demanding tax relief for drought-affected farmers, and the **Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)** against unfair taxation, earning the title "**Sardar**."
- **National Integration:** He became known as the "**Iron Man of India**" for unifying 565 princely states into the newly independent Indian Union.
- **Civil Services:** He established the modern All India Services as the "**Steel Frame**" to protect India's unity and integrity. This earned him the popular title, "**Patron Saint of Indian Civil Servants**."

16.2 Statue of Unity

- The **Statue of Unity, honouring Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, was unveiled in 2018 in **Ekta Nagar, Gujarat**.
- It is the **world's tallest statue**, standing at 182 meters, designed by Indian sculptor Ram V. Sutar.
- It is **situated on Sadhu Bet Island in Narmada district, Gujarat**, facing the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

16.3 Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB)

- The initiative **was launched on 31 October 2015 by the Government of India** to promote 'unity in diversity' among States and Union Territories.
- **Objective:** Strengthen emotional bonds, promote integration, celebrate cultural diversity, and encourage interstate partnerships.
- **Key Initiatives:** EBSB promotes unity through the **Bhasha Sangam App** (multilingual learning), **Yuva Sangam** (student exchanges), **Kashi Tamil Sangamam** (cultural bonding), and digital campaigns on the EBSB Portal showcasing inter-state activities.

17. EU-India Agenda

Context: -

- The EU has a **proposal to link India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) with**

the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

17.1 Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)

- **Launched by the Ministry of Power** under the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022.
- To establish a **domestic carbon market to incentivise** and regulate the reduction of GHG emissions.
- The **CCTS assigns a carbon credit to each tonne of carbon dioxide** equivalent (tCO_{2e}) reduced, effectively putting a price on emissions and encouraging businesses to adopt cleaner technologies.
- Under this initiative, carbon credit certificates are issued by the BEE to entities that exceed their emission reduction targets.

17.2 Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

- CBAM is a **proposed EU carbon border tax on imports from countries with carbon-intensive** production methods.
- CBAM, which will start in 2026, is a part of the **"Fit for 55 in 2030 package"**.
- Initially, it will be imposed on the **most carbon-intensive imports**, i.e., iron and steel, cement, fertilisers, aluminium, hydrogen, and electricity.

18. India Surpasses 500 GW Power Capacity

Context (PIB):

- India's power sector *reached two major milestones as total installed capacity exceeded 500 GW and renewables provided over 50% of the national demand.*

About: -

- **Total Capacity:** The total installed electricity capacity **reached 500.89 GW** in September 2025.
- **Energy Composition:** **Non-fossil** fuel sources **contributed 256.09 GW (51%)**, while fossil fuel sources stood at 244.80 GW (49%).
- **Renewable Distribution:** Solar energy accounted for the largest share at 127.33 GW, followed by wind energy at 53.12 GW.
- **Capacity Expansion:** Between April and September 2025, India added 28 GW of non-fossil capacity and 5.1 GW of fossil-based capacity.
- **COP26 Milestone:** India achieved its COP26 Panchamrit target of 50% installed non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030, five years ahead of schedule.

19. Loktak Hydroelectric Project

Context: -

- **Modernisation and repair work** for the Loktak Hydroelectric Project (LHP) in Manipur has been postponed due to significant logistical challenges.

About: -

- The LHP is a multipurpose project located in **Manipur with an installed capacity of 105 MW**.
- Commissioned in 1983, it is **operated by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC)**.
- The **project is located on Loktak Lake**, which receives inflows mainly **from the Khuga and Imphal rivers**.
- The **Ithai Barrage is a key component of the project**, serving as an artificial reservoir to maintain consistent water levels for reliable power generation.

19.1 Loktak Lake

- It is the **largest freshwater lake in Northeast India**, located about 40 km south of Imphal, Manipur.
- The lake is **known for its floating islands, known as 'phumdis'**, which are heterogeneous masses of vegetation, soil, and organic matter.
- It hosts the **world's only floating national park, Keibul Lamjao**, and the last natural habitat of the **endangered Sangai deer**, also called the 'dancing deer'.
- **Conservation Status:** Designated as a **Wetland of International Importance** under the Ramsar Convention in 1990 and listed in the **Montreux Record** in 1993.

20. 8th Central Pay Commission

Context: -

- The **Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister**, has approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the 8th Central Pay Commission (CPC).

About: -

- It is an **advisory body with no mandatory authority** for government to accept its recommendations.
- Pay Commissions are **generally formed every 10 years**; the first one was established in 1946.
- The Pay Commission **operates under the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance**.
- The 8th Pay Commission, **chaired by Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai**, will submit its

recommendations within 18 months, expected to be implemented retrospectively from January 1, 2026.

Terms of Reference of the 8th Pay Commission:

- **Pension Reform:** Update pension and retirement benefits for serving and retired employees.
- **Fiscal Prudence:** Align pay **revision with fiscal capacity** and macroeconomic stability.
- **Development Focus:** Protect funds for welfare and infrastructure while revising pay scales.
- **Legacy Pensions:** Assess the unfunded burden of pre-NPS pension liabilities (new inclusion).
- **Parity Across Sectors:** Ensure balance with pay structures in states, CPSEs, and the private sector.
- **State Impact:** Evaluate financial implications on state budgets adopting CPC recommendations.

21. East Asia Summit

Context: -

- The **20th East Asia Summit, held in Malaysia**, adopted the Kuala Lumpur Declaration reaffirming its commitment to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

About:

- The **East Asia Summit (EAS) is an ASEAN-led annual forum** in the Indo-Pacific that addresses regional political, security, and economic issues.
- **Established in 2005 in Kuala Lumpur**, it remains the only leader-led forum in the Indo-Pacific dedicated to strategic dialogue.
- **Members:** 18 Countries; 10 ASEAN members and **8 dialogue partners** (India, China, Japan, US, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea). **Chairmanship** rotates annually among ASEAN members.
- **Timor-Leste has become the 11th member of ASEAN, bringing the total membership to 19.**
- **Objective:** To promote regional peace, prosperity, and rule-based cooperation through open dialogue.
- It upholds openness, inclusivity, and respect for international law with ASEAN centrality.
- **Six Focus Areas:** (a) Environment and energy, (b) Education, (c) Finance, (d) Global health, (e) Natural disaster management, and (f) ASEAN connectivity.

21.1 20th East Asia Summit

- The **20th East Asia Summit was held in Kuala Lumpur** in October 2025 alongside the 47th ASEAN Summit under Malaysia's chairmanship.
- **Theme:** "Inclusivity and Sustainability".
- The summit adopted the 'Kuala Lumpur Declaration', **reaffirming collective commitment to peace, stability, multilateralism, and ASEAN centrality.**

22. United Nations Convention against Cybercrime

Context: -

- **At least 72 of the 193 UN member states signed** the United Nations Convention **against Cybercrime in Hanoi, Vietnam**, marking the first global treaty to combat cybercrime.

About: -

- The UN Convention against Cybercrime is the **first international treaty dedicated** to preventing, investigating, and prosecuting cybercrimes globally.
- **Adoption:** Adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2024 (Resolution 79/243) and opened for signature in October 2025 in Hanoi, Viet Nam.
- It will **become legally binding 90 days** after 40 countries ratify it.
- **Scope:** Covers both cyber-dependent crimes like hacking and ransomware, and cyber-enabled crimes such as online fraud and trafficking.
- **Secretariat:** The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

23. Indian Coffee

Context: -

- Recently, PM Narendra Modi said that **Indian coffee is gaining popularity** worldwide, aiding farmers' income.

About Coffee:

- Two main varieties of coffee — **Arabica and Robusta** are cultivated worldwide, including in India.
- **Climate:** Coffee plants **thrive in warm, humid climates** but need a distinct dry period for berry ripening.
- **Temperature:** Arabica grows best in 15°–24°C; Robusta tolerates higher temperatures of 24°–30°C.
- **Altitude:** Arabica thrives at 600–2,000 meters above sea level; Robusta adjusts to lower elevations.

- Soil: Well-drained, loamy soils rich in humus, iron, and calcium offer ideal conditions for growth.

Coffee Production in India

- India is the **seventh-largest coffee producer** in the world, exporting about 70% of its production to more than 120 countries.
- **Major Producers:** Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha, with Karnataka producing more than 70% of the total output.
- **India is the only country** where all coffee is grown under natural shade, using a two-tier mixed canopy.

Coffee Board of India

- The **Coffee Board of India** is a **statutory body created by the Coffee Act VII of 1942**, functioning under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- It is **based in Bengaluru**, Karnataka.
- It comprises 33 members, including a chairperson, all nominated by the central government.
- It **promotes research and development**, production enhancement, quality improvement, export promotion, and domestic market growth for Indian coffee.



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PRAYAAS Shorts- MPSC Specific

1. M.S. Swaminathan Award 2025

Context: -

- 31st M.S. Swaminathan Award for Environmental Protection was presented in Chennai.

Award Recipients:

- Sahaja Samrudha (Mysuru):** A people's movement dedicated to preserving traditional farming practices and conserving indigenous crop varieties.
- Veerappan (Tamil Nadu):** A 60-year-old fisherman recognised for propagating mud crabs and fish.

About M.S. Swaminathan Award

- It was **instituted in 2004 as a biennial award** named after Dr M.S. Swaminathan.
- It **recognises lifetime contributions** to agricultural research and development.
- Prize:** It carries a cash prize of ₹2 lakh, a medal, and a citation; it is open to all nationalities.
- Eligibility:** Under 65 years, with at least two decades of work in India.
- Related awards:** M.S. Swaminathan Memorial Women Award (women scientists) and Global M.S. Swaminathan Award for Food and Peace (global hunger alleviation).

About M S Swaminathan

- Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan (1925-2023), renowned Indian geneticist and agricultural scientist, is hailed as the **Father of the Green Revolution in India**.
- He pioneered high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice, which transformed India's food security.
- Introduced the concept of the "Evergreen Revolution"** for sustainable agriculture.
- His work **helped India overcome famine threats & achieve food grain self-sufficiency** by the early 1970s.

2. 150 Years of the National Song Vande Mataram

Context: -

- The **Union Cabinet will celebrate 150 years of the national song, 'Vande Mataram'**, throughout India, honouring its role in the freedom struggle.

About the National Song

- The song Vande Mataram was **composed in Sanskrit by Bankimchandra Chatterji in 1875 and featured in his novel Anand Math (1882)**.

- Dr Rajendra Prasad officially designated it as the national song in the Constituent Assembly on January 24, 1950**, stating it would hold equal status with the national anthem, Jana Gana Mana.
- The Constitution of India, under Article 51A(a), requires citizens to respect the Constitution, its ideals, institutions, the National Flag, and the National Anthem, **but does not mention the national song**.

3. Bharat Mata on Currency

- PM Modi unveiled a **₹100 commemorative coin to celebrate the RSS's centenary**, marking the first time Bharat Mata appeared on Indian currency.

About: -

- RSS founded in 1925 in **Nagpur by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar**, the RSS has grown into the world's largest volunteer organization.

4. M.F. Husain Museum in Doha

- A museum dedicated to the life and work of M.F. Husain is set to open in Doha, Qatar.
- Often called "the Picasso of India," he co-founded the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group, integrating global avant-garde styles into modern Indian art.

5. Japan's First Woman PM

- Sanae Takaichi is set to **become Japan's first female Prime Minister following her election as the new leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)**.
- Japan's former PM Shigeru Ishiba resigned after the coalition lost its majority in both houses of parliament.

6. Model Youth Gram Sabha Initiative

Context: -

- The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, is launching the Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS) initiative from October 2025.

About: -

- Aim:** Inspired by the Model UN format, the initiative seeks to provide practical exposure to the functioning of Gram Sabhas.
- Students of Classes 9-12 will assume roles such as sarpanch, village secretary, Anganwadi worker, ANM, and junior engineers to hold mock Gram Sabha meetings.**

- The **first phase will cover 600 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs)** and 200 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS).

7. PM-SETU Scheme

Context: -

- PM Modi launched the **Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU)** to enhance youth employability.

About: -

- PM-SETU is a **centrally sponsored scheme aimed at upgrading 1,000 Government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** under a hub-and-spoke model for inclusive skill development.
- **Objective:** It seeks to make Indian youth job-ready by aligning ITI courses with current and emerging industry skill demands.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) implements the scheme with support from state governments and industry partners.
- **Financing Structure:** With a total outlay of ₹60,000 crore, the project is co-financed by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.
- **Hub-and-Spoke Model:** This model includes 200 advanced "hub" ITIs functioning as innovation and placement centres, connected to 800 "spoke" ITIs for broader access.
- **Cluster Network:** Each hub will connect to an average of four spokes, creating a cluster with advanced infrastructure and incubation facilities.
- A **cluster will be managed by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** with an 'anchor industry partner'.
- **Centres of Excellence:** Five National Skill Training Institutes at Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kanpur, and Ludhiana are being upgraded to Centres of Excellence.

8. PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)

Context: -

- The Centre announced **100 Aspirational Agriculture Districts under PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)** across 29 States and UTs to improve agricultural productivity and self-reliance.

About: -

- PMDDKY is an **umbrella initiative overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.**
- **Selection Criteria:** The 100 districts were identified based on **low productivity, moderate crop intensity, and below-average access** to agricultural credit.
- **Scheme Integration:** PMDDKY consolidates 36 central schemes from 11 departments, for streamlined implementation and unified agricultural support delivery.
- **Inspiration:** It is designed on the lines of **NITI Aayog's Aspirational Districts Programme**, emphasising data-driven, inclusive governance.
- **Implementation:** Each district will form a District Agriculture Development Plan overseen by local committees, with 100 Central Nodal Officers monitoring performance.

9. Cyclone Shakti

Context: -

- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** has issued alerts for Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu due to **Cyclone Shakti, forming over the Arabian Sea.**

About: -

- The name "Shakti" was **proposed by Sri Lanka** and approved by the WMO panel

Cyclone Naming Process

- WMO (World Meteorological Organisation) **divided the world's Oceans into Basins and assigned the responsibility of naming the Cyclones** to the respective regional bodies.
- Worldwide, six regional specialised meteorological centres (RSMCs) and five regional tropical Cyclone Warning Centres (TCWCs) are mandated to issue advisories and name tropical cyclones.
- The **India Meteorological Department (RSMC New Delhi)** names tropical cyclones formed over the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

10. Nobel Prize for 2025 in Medicine or Physiology

Context: -

- The 2025 Nobel Prize in **Physiology or Medicine** was awarded for the **discovery of regulatory T-cells and peripheral immune tolerance**, explaining how the body prevents autoimmune reactions.

About the Awardees

- **Shimon Sakaguchi (Japan)** received the award for discovering regulatory T-cells.
- **Mary E. Brunkow & Fred Ramsdell (USA)** were honoured for identifying Foxp3 gene, controls immune regulation.

10.1 Nobel Prize

- Nobel Prize is a set of **prestigious international awards** given annually for outstanding achievements.
- **Origin:** Established by the will of Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, the first prizes were awarded in 1901.
- **Categories:** Prizes are awarded in six fields: Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature, Peace, and Economic Sciences.
- The **Prize in Economic Sciences** was introduced later in 1968 by the Sveriges Riksbank (Swedish central bank)

10.2 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

- **Awarding Body:** Granted by the Nobel Assembly at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, for outstanding medical research contributions.
- **First Laureate:** In 1901, Emil von Behring received it for developing serum therapy to treat diphtheria.
- **Indian-Origin Laureate:** In 1968, Har Gobind Khorana became the first Indian winner for decoding the genetic code guiding protein synthesis.

11. World Para Athletics Championships 2025

Context: -

- India hosted its first-ever World Para Athletics Championships 2025 in New Delhi.

About: -

- The Championship featured **participation from over 100 nations, making it the largest para sports event ever organised in India.**
- **India's Performance:** India achieved its best-ever performance, **securing 22 medals (6 gold, 9 silver, 7 bronze) and finishing 10th overall in the medal tally.**
- **Significance:** The event is part of India's long-term vision to host major global sporting events, including plans for the 2030 Commonwealth Games and aspirations for the 2036 Olympic Games.
- World Para Athletics Championships **are the leading international para track & field event, held every two years by World**

Para Athletics under the auspices of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

12. President on Rafale (IE)

- Droupadi Murmu became the **first President of India to take a sortie (flight) in a Rafale** fighter jet from Ambala Air Force Station in Haryana. As the **Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces**, she reviewed the operational preparedness of the Rafale fleet.

13. Asian Youth Games 2025

- The 3rd Asian Youth Games 2025 was held in **Manama, Bahrain**, with 45 countries competing in 26 sports.
- **Veer Bhadu made history by winning India's first-ever medal (Bronze)** in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) at the Asian Youth Games.

14. Mukhi

- Becomes First India-Born Adult Cheetah at Kuno
- Mukhi, a female cub of **Namibian cheetah Jwala, becomes the first India-born cheetah** to reach adulthood at Kuno National Park (Madhya Pradesh).
- This was the **world's first intercontinental relocation** of a large wild carnivore species.
- Total cheetahs in India: 27
 - Kuno National Park: 24
 - Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary: 3

15. PM Modi Pens Preface for Giorgia Meloni's Autobiography

- Prime Minister Narendra **Modi has penned a foreword** for the Indian edition of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's memoir, **I Am Giorgia — My Roots, My Principles.**
- **Book Release:** Indian edition to be published by Rupa Publications.

16. RBI keeps repo rate unchanged at 5.5%

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has **kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.5%.**
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has **maintained a neutral stance**, balancing inflation control and economic growth.
- A **neutral stance means the RBI will neither stimulate the economy nor tighten liquidity.**

Inflation Outlook:

- The inflation outlook has improved due to a fall in food prices and recent GST rate cuts.

- The RBI has revised its average inflation projection for 2025-26 to 2.6%, down from the 3.1% projected in August 2025.

17. Global Tourism Award 2025

- The **Andhra Pradesh Tourism Department** has been honoured with the Global Tourism Award 2025 for its remarkable initiatives to establish the State as one of **India's most promising tourist destinations**.
- **Tourism consultant Nishitha Goyal received** the award on behalf of the department at a function held in New Delhi on Tuesday.

18. ZP School Jalindarnagar

- ZP School Jalindarnagar, a **primary school in Taluka Khed, Maharashtra**, has been named the winner of the 2025 World's Best School Prizes Community Choice Award in London this week.
- **Awarded: Community Choice Award** at the 2025 World's Best School Prizes
- Organised by: T4 Education, a UK-based global education organisation
- Location: London, announced during the World Schools Summit
- Significance: Recognises schools globally for excellence in education, community impact, and innovation About ZP School, Jalindarnagar
- Location: Jalindarnagar, Khed Taluka, Pune District, Maharashtra
- Institution Type: Government-run Zilla Parishad (ZP) Primary School
- Medium of Instruction: Marathi
- **Unique Feature:** Peer-learning model known as the Subject Friend system, where students of different ages teach and learn from each other

19. Classical Marathi Language Day

- Classical Marathi Language Day is **celebrated on 3 October**.
- This day is celebrated to mark the state of Maharashtra getting classical language status.
- **Every year, 3 to 9 October is also celebrated as 'Classic Marathi Language Week'.**
- On 3 October 2024, the Central Government granted classical language status to the Marathi language.

20. Nobel Prize 2025 in Medicine

- The Nobel Prize for 2025 in Physiology or Medicine **goes to Mary E. Brunkow, Fred Ramsdell, and Shimon Sakaguchi "for their discoveries concerning peripheral immune tolerance,"** the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announced in Stockholm.

Main Discovery: -

- **Identification and explanation of Regulatory T Cells (Tregs)** — immune cells that prevent the body from attacking its own tissues.
- **Understanding how the FOXP3 gene** controls the development and function of these cells

21. 'KONKAN-2025'

- The **bilateral Exercise KONKAN-2025** between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy commenced today off the western coast of India. Objective & Significance
- **Strengthens maritime cooperation** between India and the UK.
- Reaffirms both nations' commitment to maintaining secure, open, and free seas.

UPSC 1.5 YEAR INTEGRATED BATCH 2027

From NCERT to Rank – One Integrated Journey

01



NCERT FOUNDATION PHASE

January – June

Objective: Build rock-solid
conceptual clarity from scratch

Key Features:

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- Hard Copy Comprehensive **NCERT Notes** available in Marathi & English medium (Exam-oriented)
- 9 **descriptive** & 9 **objective** test
- **Subject-wise** MCQ Tests + Descriptive Tests
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- Ideal for **freshers & repeaters**
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02



MAINS ENRICHMENT PHASE

June – December

Objective: From syllabus mastery to
answer writing excellence

Key Features:

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- Personalized **Mentorship & Evaluation**
- Structured approach for GS I-IV + Essay
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03



PRELIMS DOMINATION PHASE

January – Prelims 2027

Objective: Maximize accuracy,
speed & exam temperament

Key Features:

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